

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 10 MARCH 2014**

Present: Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)
Councillors Mrs E Carr, E Goyns, Mrs M Goyns,
B Maddison, J Miller, Mrs M Nicholls, Mrs L Stewart
and Mrs C Stogdale

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 10 February 2014 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There was no public present at the meeting.

3 COMMUNITY POLICING

There was no Police present at the meeting.

4 STREET WARDENS

There was no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) Wheatley House Moving Forward

The Clerk reported that at a meeting of the Parish Council held in November 2011, Members agreed to provide financial support to Wheatley House which was under threat of closure. The Council agreed to provide a three year commitment to provide £5,000 in the financial years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14.

To date 2 payments of £5,000 had been made to Wheatley House. Member's approval was sought to pay the third and final instalment of £5,000 to Wheatley House Moving Forward for the financial year 2013/14.

RESOLVED that the third and final payment of £5,000 be paid to Wheatley Hill Moving Forward.

(ii) Wheatley Hill Community Association

Consideration was given to the report of the Clerk which gave details of the Meals on Wheels service provided by Wheatley Hill Community Association, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Clerk took Members through the report in detail and following a lengthy discussion it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (i) approval be granted for a financial donation, from the Section 137 Budget, of £4,805 to Wheatley Hill Community Association**

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to assist with the following costs related to the provision of the Meals on Wheels service: -

- Paid staff - Meals on Wheels delivery - £2,484
- Trade refuse collection – Meals on Wheels, Luncheon Club and general running - £1,226
- Lift maintenance – essential for all users with limited mobility - £1,095

(ii) the Parish Council continue with grass cutting at the children's play area during the summer months.

(iii) Butterwick House

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Butterwick House.

RESOLVED that no donation be made.

(iv) Durham County Brass Band Association

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Durham County Brass Band Association.

RESOLVED that no donation be made.

(v) Peterlee Town Twinning

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Peterlee Town Twinning.

RESOLVED that consideration of this item be deferred.

(2) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from the County of Durham School Benevolent Fund.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) MP Query

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Mr R Jackson via the MP Phil Wilson. Mr Jackson had requested the Parish Council to place a hard copy of the Parish Council's minutes at Wheatley Hill Community Association.

The Clerk advised that a similar request from Mr Jackson was received last year.

Members were advised that in line with the Councils Publication Scheme Minutes of the meetings of Wheatley Hill Parish Council were available for residents to view as follows:-

Hard copy – Minutes were on deposit and available to view at the Heritage Centre, Woodlands Avenue, Wheatley Hill.

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Parish Council Website – Minutes were available to view on the Parish Councils website

Wheatley Hill Community Association – Residents were welcome to use the IT Suite at the Greenhill's Centre to access minutes online – staff were available on site to offer assistance if required.

By appointment – Minutes could be viewed by appointment with the Clerk.

A poster advising of the availability of the minutes had been placed on the noticeboard at the Greenhills Centre. It was suggested that a poster also be placed on the noticeboard at Wheatley House.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Henderson Avenue Regeneration Scheme

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Durham County Council advising of its intention to sell land at Henderson Avenue for residential development.

Following a “soft marketing exercise” direct contact was made with a number of developers and following an offer from Gleeson Developments Limited Durham County Council proposed to dispose of the land to them.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Wheatley Hill Heritage Society – Work Experience Placement

The Clerk previously reported that Wheatley Hill Heritage Society had been approached by Northumbria University to provide a work placement for an undergraduate studying history. Mr Gilson, a volunteer with the Society, had been planning work to the Societies graves register database and felt the undergraduate could assist with this work.

The Heritage Society would be solely responsible for the work placement, supervise all work and undertake all administrative tasks related to the placement.

The Parish Council had no objection to the placement working in the Cemetery. The Clerk had however raised concern in relation to insurance cover and stressed that the work placement was not covered by the Parish Councils insurance. Following discussion with the Heritage Society they had confirmed that appropriate insurance cover would be in place prior to the start of the placement.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) East Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils

The Clerk advised that the Annual General Meeting of the East Durham Association of Parish and Town Council would be held on 11 March 2014. The next ordinary meeting would be held immediately following the AGM.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

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(7) Customer First Strategy Consultation

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Durham County Council advising that it was reviewing its Customer First Strategy. The Strategy would set out the County Councils approach to customer services over the next three years taking into account changes in technology, customer expectations and financial resources.

As part of the consultation customer focus groups were being held across the county, details of which were outlined to Members.

Members expressed concern that the Glebe Centre was being used as the venue for a focus group for residents living in the east of the county. Residents from Wheatley Hill, without their own transport, would need to catch a bus to Peterlee then a second bus to Murton to attend the consultation event. It was pointed out that the Greenhills Centre was a suitable venue but was never used by the County Council.

RESOLVED that the County Council be requested to consider the Greenhills Centre as a suitable venue for future events of this nature.

6 PLANNING

Applications

DM/14/00038/FPA – Erection of 5 number dwellings (resubmission) at former West House and Collingwood Bus Services, 1 Gable Terrace, Wheatley Hill, Durham DH6 3JT for J Kemp Ltd.

RESOLVED that no objection or comment be made to Durham County Council.

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

(1) Chairs Update

- Durham County Council – The Chair reported that Durham County Council would be required to make budget reductions of more than £224M by 2017 due to large reductions on Government grants.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 HEAD GROUNDS PERSONS REPORT

The Clerk reported that routine work had been undertaken in the Cemetery and around the village since the last meeting, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 CLERKS REPORT

(1) Allotments/Stable Blocks

(i) Waiting List

The Clerk provided Members with details of waiting lists for allotments and stable blocks.

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RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Request for an Allotment

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for an allotment from Mr L Barnett of 16 Jack Lawson Terrace, Wheatley Hill, Durham DH6 3RT.

RESOLVED that Mr L Barnet of 16 Jack Lawson Terrace, Wheatley Hill be accepted onto the waiting list for an allotment.

(2) Estimates of Expenditure 2014/2015

The Clerk reported that at a special meeting of the Parish Council held on 9 December 2013 Members resolved that the net spending requirement of the Parish Council for 2014/15 be set at £127,743.00. This was made up of a Local Council Tax Support Grant of £32,579.00 and an additional £95,164.00 precept.

At the time the Parish Council had deferred submitting its precept request to Durham County Council until the outcome of the Government's intention in relation to the extension of the capping limits to town and parish councils for 2014/15 was known.

The Clerk reported that the Local Government Finance Report and the Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increase (Principles) (England) Report 2014/15 was formally approved in the House of Commons on 12 February 2014.

There was therefore no extension of the capping limits to town and parish councils for 2014/15. However, notice remained that the Government was prepared to extend the provisions to larger town and parish councils from 2015/16.

Following liaison with the Chair the Clerk had formally submitted the agreed precept to Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Summer/Winter Bedding

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had been requested to supply information in relation to the current contracts for flower beds and hanging baskets.

To date limited information had been provided and the Clerk was trying to establish a comprehensive schedule of flower beds and hanging baskets the Parish Council was responsible for.

The Clerk explained that savings needed to be made in this area. This could be achieved by reducing the number of flower beds and hanging baskets or looking at alternative suppliers.

It was suggested that in order to establish a baseline for what the Parish Council was responsible for a meeting be sought with Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Durham County Council and request a meeting to discuss this matter further.

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(4) Additional Office Accommodation

The Clerk reported that since the last meeting two quotations had been received for the erection of a temporary office accommodation to the rear of the Heritage Centre.

The Clerk was assessing the quotations and would provide further details at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 PAYMENTS AND ORDERS

The Clerk presented Members with a written report of all payments and receipts made since the last meeting.

Members were also provided with details of the financial position of the Parish Council in comparison with the Annual Budget.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the payments itemised be approved.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) April 2014 – Change to Meeting Date

The Chair reported that the next meeting of the Wheatley Hill Parish Council would be held on Monday 7 April 2014.

RESOLVED that the next meeting be held on Monday 7 April 2014.

(ii) Fly Tipped Rubbish

Members reported fly tipped rubbish to the rear of the factory units, bottom of Percy Street leading towards the Scout Hut.

There was also rubbish in the vicinity of The Avenue/First Street and the Doctors Surgery.

RESOLVED that the Clerk report the rubbish and request a clean-up.

(iii) Public Right of Way

Councillor Mrs Stogdale reported that the public right of way that ran along the Dog Track had been blocked off with barbed wire.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact O Shaw, Public Rights of Way Officer, Durham County Council.

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..... Signed

.....Dated