

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2019**

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

Also Present: County Councillor P Brookes

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 14 January 2019 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 POLICE

Members were advised that the following incidents had been reported to the Police;

December 2018 – 94 incidents

Anti-social Behaviour – 13

Theft - 5

Criminal Damage - 2

Burglary - 2

Vehicle Crime – 3

Members were advised that year to date crime was down 18% and anti-social behaviour was down 23% in December.

January 2019 – 116 incidents

Anti-social Behaviour – 14

Theft - 6

Criminal Damage - 1

Burglary - 3

Vehicle Crime – 5

Members were advised that year to date crime was down 19% and anti-social behaviour was down 10% in January.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

County Councillor Brookes provided Members with an update on the following;

- Durham County Council Budget – Further savings of £36M were required this year
- County Durham Plan – Out for consultation
- Durham County Councils Cycling and Walking Strategy - Adopted
- Marley Fields – Mud on road had been reported
- Front Street – a “deep clean” of the pavements would be undertaken in the spring. Councillor Carr referred to the uneven pavement at the Koll. Councillor Brookes agreed to report the paving

- Quad/Off-road Bikes – Destruction they are causing in the village

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) 2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the 2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that a donation of £300.00 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(ii) Wheatley Hill History Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill History Club, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that a donation of £300.00 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(iii) Wheatley House Moving Forward

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley House Moving Forward, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that a donation of £300.00 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(iv) North East War Memorials Project

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the North East War Memorials Project, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that a donation of £50.00 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(2) Royal Garden Party 2019

The Clerk reported that the County Durham Association of Local Councils had advised that Wheatley Hill Parish and Barnard Castle Town Councils had been allocated places to attend the Royal Garden Party in 2019.

The Parish Council had nominated Councillor L Stewart to attend and Councillor Stewart would be accompanied by Mrs I Hutchinson.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Wheatley Hill Steering Group

The Clerk reported that the next meeting of the Wheatley Hill Steering Group would be held on 28 February 2019 at 1pm in Wheatley House.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING

Application - DM/19/00191/FPA – Substitution of house types on plots 78 and 79 on planning approval DM/17/00142/VOC at field to the south of Wayside, Wingate Lane, Wheatley Hill for Dere Street Homes

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 HEAD GROUNDPERSONS REPORT

The Clerk reported 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.

8 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments/Stable Blocks

The Clerk reported that the fencing at allotments 13 and 14 was complete and suggested that a site visit be held on 25 February 2019 at 2pm.

Members were advised that in order to facilitate the removal of the remaining rubbish at the site a skip, costing £165.00 plus VAT, was ordered which also allowed for the removal of the remaining rubbish on allotment 15.

The Clerk advised of a further incident of fly tipping at the site which had been removed.

RESOLVED that an allotment site visit be held on 25 February 2019 at 2pm.

(2) Quads/Off-Road Bikes/Parking – Primary School

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members discussed the on-going problems related to off-road and quad bikes throughout the village, particularly the damage they caused to the grassed areas and the nuisance and danger they posed to residents.

Councillor White had reported problems at Wheatley Hill Primary School, particularly issues related to parking, traffic congestion and off-road bikes. The problems outside the school were mainly, but not only, confined to drop-off and pick-up times. The school had suggested that an area of waste land, formerly Peterlee Cottages, could be levelled to create additional parking for the school. The land belonged to County Durham Housing Group and the request was forwarded to them for consideration.

The Clerk reported that following concerns raised by a resident a meeting was held on 1 February 2019 at Wheatley Hill Primary School, which included representatives from the Police, the County and Parish Councils and the Primary school to discuss these concerns and what could be done to help ease the situation.

At the meeting it was agreed that the County Council, school and Parish Council would all forward a letter to County Durham Housing Group requesting that they gift some of the waste land at the school, formerly Peterlee Cottages, for use as a car park.

At the meeting the Police had advised of a product called SelectaDNA which was a single use spray with a 'DNA' in it which could be used by Police to mark illegal riders and bikes. The Police had suggested that the Parish Council consider funding the purchase of sprays for use by the local Policing team.

Members were advised that the spray would not physically prevent bikes/quads but current data suggested it could be a substantial deterrent. If used it could link 'unknown' offenders to specific crimes/locations/bikes and this would hopefully lead to arrests and seizure of bikes. Any sprays purchased by the Parish Council would remain with the local policing teams and carried and deployed by them.

The Police had offered to give a presentation of the SelectaDNA sprays. It was suggested that as Wingate and Thornley suffered similar problems they be invited to attend the presentation with a view to joining forces and purchasing the sprays.

Members were advised that Wingate Parish Council had indicated they would like to be involved in discussions and Thornley Parish Council would discuss it at their March meeting.

In addition to the sprays it was suggested that A frame signs and banners could be erected outside the school to prevent cars parking illegally. The A frame signs cost £110.00 each and the banners were £45.00. It was suggested that the school confirm how many they required, and the Parish Council fund a maximum of 5 A frame signs and 4 banners.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and further developments be awaited.

(3) Summer/Winter Bedding

The Clerk reported that following a request to Durham County Council to attach a flower trough to the village signs at the entrance to the village at Marley Fields they had advised they would not grant permission, details of the reasons for this decision were outlined to Members.

It was suggested that an additional tub at Marley Fields be provided at a cost of £541.45.

Following the last meeting Durham County Council were requested to provide a quotation to re-locate the planters from the Front Street to Wheatley House and supply the flowers. The County Council had provided a quotation of £427.14 plus VAT. It was suggested that due to the high cost to re-locate the planters that the Parish Council undertake the job.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council re-locate the planters and the County Council be asked to supply the flowers.

(4) Grounds Maintenance - Community Centre

The Chair reported details of a meeting held at the Community Centre to discuss issue related to overgrown trees and shrubs on their land, which was leased from Durham County Council.

It was suggested that once the boundary issues were resolved and the area cut back that the Parish Council assist with future maintenance of the trees and shrubs.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council assist with future maintenance of the trees and shrubs at the Community Centre.

(5) Greenhills Centre – Events

The Clerk reported on the activities planned at the Greenhills Centre using the funding provided by the Parish Council and provided a financial breakdown of the spend to date.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had a website and used email to communicate.

Members were advised that the use of social media would enable the Parish Council to provide information and updates regarding its activities. To facilitate this the Chair suggested the Parish Council have a Facebook and Twitter account.

All communications from the Parish Council would be moderated by either the Chair of the Council or the Clerk. The accounts would not be monitored 24/7 and we would not be able to reply individually to messages or comments received. Sending a message/post via Facebook or Twitter would not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes.

The Chair had agreed to set up both the Facebook and Twitter accounts and it was suggested that the Chair be provided with a Parish Council mobile telephone to assist with this.

The Council was continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media was a major factor in delivering improvement.

Consideration was given to a Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that;

- (i) The Parish Council set up a Facebook and Twitter account
- (ii) The Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy be adopted
- (iii) All official business on the Facebook and Twitter accounts be moderated by the Chair of the Parish Council or the Clerk
- (iv) The Chair of the Parish Council be provided a mobile telephone

(7) Cemetery

The Clerk reported that Members had previously agreed to forward a request to the owner of the land adjacent the Cemetery asking about the possibility of the Parish Council purchasing some of the land for expansion.

Members were advised that the owner had appointed a representative to handle negotiations and was happy to consider a proposal from the Parish Council in relation to the purchase of the land.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 PAYMENTS

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 18 February 2019

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
105534	MKM	Fencing Supplies	103.82	20.76	124.58
105535	Durham County Council	2 Planters	1,082.90	216.58	1,299.48
105536	Durham County Council	Machine Fuel	119.55	23.91	143.46
105537	Durham County Council	Website Hosting	589.93	117.99	707.92
105538	J Miller	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
105539	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
105540	J Dent	Skip Hire - Allotments	165.00	33.00	198.00
105541	2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group	Section 137 Donation	300.00		300.00
105542	Wheatley Hill History Club	Section 137 Donation	300.00		300.00
105543	Wheatley House Moving Forward	Section 137 Donation	300.00		300.00
105544	North East War Memorials Project	Section 137 Donation	50.00		50.00
105545	J Davies	Reimbursements	156.42	26.90	183.32
105546	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - February 2019	14.00	2.80	16.80
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - February 2019	4278.73		4278.73
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - February 2019	2685.34		2685.34
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	48.49	9.70	58.19
Invoice 21	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	8.15		8.15
		TOTAL	10,252.33	451.64	10,703.97

RESOLVED that the payments listed be endorsed.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

There was nothing to report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Marley Fields

Members reported mud on the road from the new estate at Marley Fields heading towards the roundabout.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council for a clean-up.

(2) Pot Holes

Members reported pot holes in the footpath outside the Co-op and to the rear of South View and Gable Terrace.

RESOLVED that the pot holes be reported to Durham County Council.

(3) Traffic Calming Chicane – Cemetery Road

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 18 February 2019

Members referred to the traffic calming chicane and speed hump on Cemetery Road.

Members had previously expressed concern that the speed hump was too high, the “give way” signs were the wrong way around and the bus stops in the immediate vicinity exacerbated the problem.

It was felt that the chicane and speed hump created a road safety problem and should be removed.

RESOLVED that Durham County Council be requested to remove the speed hump.

..... Signed

..... Dated