

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2020**

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

Apologies: Councillors E Carr and E Goyns

1 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 January 2020 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 since the last meeting the following incidents had been reported; 20 anti-social behaviour, 2 criminal damage, 1 burglary and 3 vehicle crimes.

The Police had advised that youths identified as being involved in anti-social behaviour were being progressed through the County Council and Police anti-social behaviour procedures. A Section 59 Traffic 183 Notice had been issued to a male driving his car off road and if the offender was involved in another incident it would result in his car being seized.

The Police were still rolling out the “Keep in the Know” survey in the village.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

There was no County Councillors present at the meeting.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from Wheatley Hill Community Nursery.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Durham Miner’s Association

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Durham Miner’s Association (DMA) advising that in its 150 year, the DMA were partnering with the Northern Echo in a campaign to promote and support The Redhills Appeal which was a campaign to secure the future of the Durham Miners Hall.

The Northern Echo intended to run a series of articles as well as a pull-out supplement highlighting the history and achievements of the DMA and Redhills. The DMA were asking Parish Councils to place a supportive advert alongside the Echo’s content.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Scams Awareness Event

The Clerk reported that a scams awareness event would be held on 5 March 2020 at County Hall, Durham.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Royal Garden Party 2020

The Clerk reported that the County Durham Association of Local Councils had advised that Great Aycliffe Town Council and Seaton with Slingley Parish Council had been allocated places to attend the Royal Garden Party in 2020.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Wheatley Hill Steering Group

The Clerk reported that the last meeting of the Wheatley Hill Steering Group was held on 6 February 2020.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING

There were no planning matters.

7 HEAD GROUNDPERSONS 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.

8 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments

(i) Boulders

The Clerk reported that Mr L Carr attended the last meeting to discuss the boulders located at the allotments.

Mr Carr explained to Members that the boulders presented difficulties for tenants accessing their plots other than on foot. Tenants felt that the gates installed at the entrance to the site had worked well and there had been no flytipping. Mr Carr had offered to install a set of 5 foot gates, to replace the boulders.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was RESOLVED that subject to the following Mr Carr be granted approval to install a set of 5 foot gates in place of the boulders.

- The gates to be located and erected in consultation with the Parish Council
- The Parish Council to remove the boulders once the gates were erected
- The gates must always be kept locked and keys only issued to tenants who required access to their plot via the gates
- The Parish Council retained the right to remove the gates at any time and in the event of any flytipping the gates would be removed and the boulders re-instated

(ii) Application

The Clerk reported the receipt of an application for an allotment.

RESOLVED that application 1/2020 be accepted onto the waiting list for an allotment.

(iii) Waiting List

The Clerk reported that following the publication of the new Electoral Register the addresses provided by applicants on the waiting list were checked and anyone not registered in Wheatley Hill was removed from the waiting list.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Community Defibrillator

The Clerk reported that the electric supply for the defibrillator located in the Cemetery was installed on 31 January 2020 at a cost of £220.

The defibrillator had been registered with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and was on their emergency system and available to the general public. To ensure the defibrillator was always ready in the case of an emergency, the Parish Council had appointed 2 guardians, who checked the device on a weekly basis and reported to the NEAS each month.

The NEAS had offered a free training session on how to use the defibrillator and Members would be advised as soon as a date was confirmed.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Believe Housing – Meeting 30 January 2020

The Chair provided a report following a meeting with Believe Housing on 30 January 2020 to discuss the following issues, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

- Housing

Believe had 350 properties in Wheatley Hill. They had received numerous complaints related to quad and off-road bikes, but these incidents were not being reported to the Police. The Chair had asked Believe to provide the Parish Council with details of the number of complaints received.

- Wordsworth Avenue

Believe had received numerous complaints related to speeding, particularly late at night. They had proposed installing 4 speed bumps at Wordsworth Avenue at a cost of £10,600. However, it was felt that speed humps would not solve the problem and following discussion it was agreed that this would not be pursued.

It was suggested that blocking off the road at the top of Wordsworth Avenue and providing a turning point would provide a better solution. It would still allow access for residents but would prevent cars driving and speeding the length of the road. Believe had agreed to consult with Durham County Council's Highways on the feasibility of the proposals and costs.

- Proposed play park opposite Sure Start

Believe advised that during consultation with tenants in Wheatley Hill it was raised that there was nowhere for children to play and it was suggested that an area of land opposite Sure Start would be an ideal location for a play park.

Believe had advised that they could possibly gift the land to the Parish Council, who would then assume its upkeep and maintenance. External funding would need to be sourced to provide the play park.

- Old council depot site

The old council depot site had been vacant for a long time and suggestions were being sought on what to do with it. County Councillor Hovvels had suggested a community/sensory garden for the elderly, as neighbouring properties were bungalows. This idea was welcomed but the land was enclosed and unseen and would need to be opened to prevent undesirable and/or anti-social behavior, particularly late at night.

Believe had agreed to tidy the area and consult with neighbouring residents for their opinions and ideas.

- Dodds Close

The problems related to quad and off-road bikes damaging the grassed areas at Dodds Close was discussed. It was suggested that fencing could be erected around the grassed area, or parts of it. However, it was felt that fencing off large areas made the area look ugly and derelict and was not the preferred option. County Councillor Hovvels had suggested a further meeting with the Police to discuss the on-going problems associated with off-road and quad bikes in this area.

Members thanked the Chair for the comprehensive report and following a lengthy discussion it was **RESOLVED** that;

- (i) whilst at an early stage the Parish Council welcomed the idea, in principle, of a play park opposite Sure Start. However, no decision would be made until further consultation was undertaken with neighbouring properties to ascertain the views of residents on the proposal.
- (ii) in relation to the on-going problems related to quad and off-road bikes in the Dodds Close area various suggestions were put forward. These included the planting of trees and shrubs. Boulders could also be installed, particularly where there were dropped kerbs to prevent vehicular access.

(4) Wheatley Hill Primary School

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Mr Scarr, Head Teacher at Wheatley Hill Primary School to assist with works to extend the school car park to provide additional car parking spaces and move the schools play provision to the rear of the school.

Mr Scarr advised that to move the existing fencing and provide additional new fencing was £2,206.10 plus VAT and new parking bay markings was £550 plus VAT.

Members were advised that the size of the school yard would be reduced so the school were keen for the children to use the school field. To ensure the children could use the field in wet weather the school wanted to provide wellies for the children to avoid school shoes getting muddy. The cost of the wellies was £1,738.15 plus VAT and new playground equipment such as skipping robes, bats and balls was

£299.95 plus VAT.

The Parish Council had previously given a commitment to assist with the car parking to alleviate congestion on the road to the front of the school and it was suggested that the Parish Council fund the fencing and new road markings at a cost of £2,756.10. The Parish Council would not fund the wellies or play equipment.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council make a financial contribution to Wheatley Hill Primary School in the amount of 2,206.10 for fencing and £550 for new road markings giving a total contribution of £2,756.10.

(5) Off-road Bikes and Quads

At the last meeting the Clerk reported details of an incident at the Pit Wheel/Dodds Close where the grassed area was damaged by off-road bikes and quads.

The Neighbourhood Wardens had advised that they were aware of the problems related to off-road bikes and quads in this area and carried out regular patrols.

With regard to the damage to the grass the County Council had advised that the land was too wet to try and fix the problem and they would look at the area in the Spring when the ground was drier to see if there was anything they could do to resolve the problem.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Pavement Parking - Wordsworth Avenue

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members reported cars parked on the pavements at Wordsworth Avenue. The parked cars caused a hazard and obstruction to pedestrians, forcing them to step off the pavement into the road. The cars restricted the width of the pavement, which made it difficult for anyone with a pushchair or wheelchair to pass safely. The cars also damaged the pavement.

Members were advised that the Police had advised that they would only become involved if there was an obstruction to a garage or driveway.

They could do a letter drop but this would cause other issues on the road as it was too narrow to park vehicles on and still allow a steady flow of traffic. The Police would only act if vehicles parked on pavements forced pedestrians to walk on the road when it was a bus route.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Request for Extension for Non Attendance

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Councillor E Goyns asking Members to consider an application for an extension to the six-month period of his non-attendance at meetings due to ill health.

Members were advised that Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 stated that if a Member of a Local Authority failed throughout a period of six consecutive months, from the date of his or her last attendance, to attend any meeting of the authority, he or she shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of the Authority.

It was reported that Councillor Goyns had not attended any Council or Committee meetings since September 2019, and consequently would cease to be a Member

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of the Council in March 2020, unless the Council approved the reason for the failure to attend before that date.

RESOLVED that the failure to attend by reason of illness be approved until Councillor Goyns was well enough to return.

9 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures of all income and expenditure as at 31 January 2020.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
105672	Mr D Owens	Electric installation - Defibrillator	220.00		220.00
105673	Shaw & Sons	Burial Grants Register	298.00	59.60	357.60
105674	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
105675	J Thompson	Reimbursements	14.64		14.64
105676	Wheatley Hill Primary School	Contribution to fencing works and road Markings at School	2,756.10		2,756.10
105677	Shaw & Sons	Book of Condolences	40.95	8.19	49.14
105678	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - February 2020	15.40	3.08	18.48
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	196.10	31.75	227.85
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - February 2020	4,453.34		4,453.34
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - February 2020	2,795.51		2,795.51
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	45.83	9.16	54.99
Direct Debit	O2	Chairs Mobile Telephone	25.62	5.12	30.74
Invoice 33	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	10.05		10.05
		TOTAL	10,676.54	116.90	10,793.44

RESOLVED that the information given, be received and the payments be approved.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

There was nothing to report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Damaged Road Sign

Members reported that the road sign at 1 East View was damaged and needed replacing or repairing.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

..... Signed

..... Dated