

**THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 13 MAY 2013**

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

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor M Nicholls be elected Chair of Wheatley Hill Parish Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Nicholls accepted the office of Chair of Wheatley Hill Parish Council and thanked the Members for all their help and support. He thanked them for their confidence in him and stated that he would act in the best interests of the village and community over the forthcoming year.

Councillor Nicholls paid tribute to Councillor J R Lamb who had not stood for re-election in the May Elections. Councillor Lamb had served many years on the Parish Council and had been an integral part of its success. On behalf of the Parish Council, Councillor Nicholls wished him every success for the future.

Members were also asked to welcome Councillor J Miller, the newly elected Member for Wheatley Hill Parish Council.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs E Carr be appointed Vice-Chair of Wheatley Hill Parish Council for the ensuing year.

3 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

RESOLVED that Mr G Fletcher be appointed Internal Auditor to Wheatley Hill Parish Council for the ensuing year.

4 APPOINTMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs C Stogdale be appointed to serve as School Governor to Wheatley Hill Primary School.

5 APPOINTMENT TO SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the following appointments be made:-

Cemetery Sub-Committee
Councillors Mrs M Goyns, B Maddison and Mrs E Carr

Allotment Sub-Committee
Councillors B Maddison, M Nicholls and J Miller

6 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED that the following Members be appointed to serve as representatives of the Parish Council on the following external bodies for the forthcoming year:-

East Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils
Councillors Mrs M Goyns, E Goyns and J Miller

County Durham Association of Local Councils
Councillors Mrs M Goyns and E Goyns

Citizens Advice Bureau
Councillor Mrs L Stewart

Durham Rural Community Council
Councillor Mrs L Stewart

7 DATE AND TIME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED that meetings of Wheatley Hill Parish Council be held on the second Monday of each month commencing at 6.00pm, with the exception of August where no Council Meeting would be held due to recess. Meeting dates were subject to change with the consent of the Chair of the Parish Council.

8 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 8 April 2013, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

9 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) St Godric's RC Primary School

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from St Godric's RC Primary School to purchase equipment for a cookery project.

RESOLVED that a donation of £300 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(ii) Sandwich Terrace Allotment Society

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Sandwich Terrace Allotment Society towards maintenance costs.

RESOLVED that consideration of this item be deferred.

(2) Letters of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of the following letters of thanks: -

Wheatley Hill Community Association
Wheatley Hill Workmen's Social Club and Institute

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau advising that a short term advice service for residents of Wheatley Hill would be offered from 5 June to the end of August 2013.

Members were advised that the sessions, located at the Greenhills Centre, would be held on a fortnightly basis on a Wednesday afternoon.

Members had previously been advised that discussions were underway regarding the merger of up to four Bureau, namely East Durham, Durham City, Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street, into a new Greater Durham CAB.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and further developments be awaited regarding the merger of the Bureau.

(4) Training – Councillors and Chairmen

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the County Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership which gave details of a training session for Councillors and Chairmen to be held on 9 July 2013 at Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

It was suggested that Councillor Miller, as a newly elected Member, may benefit from the training. Councillor Miller advised that he would contact the Clerk if he was able to attend.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Standards – Briefing Session

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the County Durham Association of Local Councils advising that a Standards briefing session would be held on 26 June 2013 at Durham County Council.

It was suggested that Councillor Miller, as a newly elected Member, may benefit from the training. Councillor Miller advised that he would contact the Clerk if he was able to attend.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) County Durham History and Heritage Forum

The Clerk reported that a local and family history and heritage event would be held on 18 May 2013 at Durham County Council.
RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Mosaic – Heritage Centre

The Clerk reported that the mosaic was complete and an official ribbon cutting ceremony would be held on 21 May 2013 at 10.30am in the Heritage Centre.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(8) ROSPA Inspection – Football Pitch

The Clerk advised that ROSPA would undertake a safety inspection of the football pitch during June 2013.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning matters to report.

11 DELEGATES REPORTS

The Chair provided an update on the following issues: -

- Provision of affordable housing – The Chair reported that a meeting was scheduled to be held with the ESH Group to discuss the possibility of providing affordable housing and two bedroom bungalows in Wheatley Hill.
- Front Street – The Chair reported that a meeting was scheduled to be held with Mr S Reed, Planning Development Manager, Durham County Council to discuss problems related to the growing number of empty properties and absentee landlords in Wheatley Hill.
- Allotments to the rear of Weardale Park – The Chair reported that discussions were continuing in relation to the allotments to the rear of Weardale Park.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

12 HEAD GROUNDPERSONS REPORT

The Clerk advised 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.

13 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments/Stable Blocks

(i) Waiting List

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

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Stable Block No. 23

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting stable block number 23 was divided into 2 allotments, numbered 23A and 23B. Number 23A was allocated to Mrs J Dinsdale and 23B was allocated to Mr D Barnett.

The Chair reported that Mrs Dinsdale had advised that Mr G Coxon, the tenant of allotment number 6, intended to surrender his tenancy and she was interested in this plot. Mr Barnett had advised that he would take the tenancy of stable block number 23. The Clerk advised if the plot remained as one it would be designated a stable block.

RESOLVED that Mr D Barnett be offered the tenancy of stable block number 23 and Mrs Dinsdale remain on the waiting list.

(2) Payroll Services

The Clerk provided Members with an update in relation to payroll services and the change of signatories on the Parish Council's bank account.

Members were advised that authorised signatories were:-

Clerk – J Thompson
Councillor M Nicholls
Councillor Mrs C Stogdale
Councillor Mrs L Stewart
Councillor Mrs M Goyns
Councillor Mrs E Carr

The signing authority on the account remained the Clerk plus any two of the authorised signatories.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Memorial Garden

The Clerk reported that additional space was needed in the Memorial Garden as only six spaces were available on the left hand side.

As Members had previously agreed to develop the area of land to the right hand

side when additional space was required, it was proposed that two rows of spaces on the left hand side of the Memorial Garden, be developed.

RESOLVED that the area of land to the left hand side of the Memorial Garden be developed.

(4) Dog Bags

The Clerk advised that the County Durham Association of Local Councils were undertaking a bulk purchase of poop scoop bags. Members were advised that in October 2012, the Parish Council purchased 20,000 poop scoop bags at a cost of £169.80. To date 5,000 bags had been used.

It was proposed that the Parish Council purchase a further 20,000 bags. The exact cost of the bags was currently unknown and would be dependent on the total number of bags ordered, however, it was expected to be a similar cost to last year.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for the purchase 20,000 poop scoop bags.

(5) Internal Audit Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2013

The Clerk reported the receipt of the internal audit report for 2012/2013 undertaken by Mr G Fletcher.

Members were advised that local councils in England were expected to complete an annual return which summarised their annual activities at the completion of each financial year.

It was Members responsibility to ensure that financial management was adequate and effective and the Council had a sound system of internal controls.

A section within the annual return was to be completed by the Parish Council's independent internal auditor who gave an opinion of the Parish Council's internal controls, details of which were outlined to Members.

All the key controls contained within the annual return were examined and found to be working satisfactory. It was suggested that it would be good practice to officially record in the minutes the fact that Members considered the Council's Asset Register as part of the annual financial return.

The Report therefore concluded that there were no recommendations concerning the Audit.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Report 2012/2013 be accepted.

14 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.

15 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Potholes

Councillor Mrs Goyns reported that the potholes to the rear of 1-18 and 19 South View had been repaired.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Police Issues

- 38 South View – the Chair reported on the poor condition of this property, particularly the hedge to the rear of the property which required attention.
- Parking on yellow lines outside the knoll – Councillor Mrs Stewart reported that cars were parking on the yellow lines outside the knoll and restricting visibility for motorists turning onto the Front Street at Vincent’s corner.

RESOLVED that the issues be reported to the Police.

..... Signed

..... Dated