

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2010

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

Apologies: Mrs E Carr

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 19 July 2010, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Travellers Site

The Chair welcomed Mr K Reid, a resident from Wheatley Hill Park, who was present at the meeting to discuss the possibility of a permanent site for travellers in Wheatley Hill.

The Chair explained the current situation with regard to travellers stopping over in Wheatley Hill and explained the procedure for dealing with this type of incident. It was pointed out that Durham County Council had established a sub group to look at the possibility of designating a permanent site within the former Easington District area for travellers.

The Clerk advised that following numerous queries from residents during August, the Gypsy Liaison Officer at Durham County Council was contacted. A member of staff from the Gypsy Liaison Unit had advised that Wheatley Hill, along with other villages in the former Easington District area, had been assessed in terms of establishing a permanent traveller's site. However, Wheatley Hill had been deemed unsuitable and an assurance was given that no permanent site for travellers would be established in Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

3 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PC G Davies to the meeting.

The Officer advised that 121 incidences had been reported in Wheatley Hill between 16 August and 13 September 2010, which included 2 burglaries, 5 criminal damage, 21 anti social behaviour/youths causing nuisance and 2 thefts.

The Officer provided an update on the hot spot area around Pizza Nova. The Chair pointed out that the Parish Council had always objected to the location of the pizza shop and made reference to the problems associated with parked vehicles and youths congregating at this location. The Officer advised that the Police did give the area

special attention, however, the problem persisted. At a recent PACT Meeting the problems associated with the area around the pizza shop were acknowledged and the Police would continue to monitor the area.

The Police advised that one of the priorities set for Wheatley Hill was speeding vehicles, particularly along the Front Street and Woodlands Avenue. Community Speed Watch had been requested to look at the speeding traffic in the village in an attempt to find a solution to the problem. The Chair advised that Durham County Council were also looking at traffic calming measures throughout the village.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 STREET WARDENS

The Chair welcomed 2 Street Wardens from Durham County Council to the meeting.

The Street Wardens advised that between 1 August and 13 September 2010 they had received 15 calls from Wheatley Hill which included 1 street drinking, 5 nuisance vehicles, 2 youths causing nuisance, 1 animal complaint, 2 anti social behaviour, 1 fire and 3 ball games calls.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Request for Financial Assistance

(i) Hartlepool and District Hospice

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Hartlepool and District Hospice.

RESOLVED that a donation of £50 be made from the Section 137 budget.

(2) Letters of Thanks

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

- (i) East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau**
- (ii) Women's Section - Royal British Legion**

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Durham Constabulary

The Clerk advised that following the last meeting a letter of thanks was forwarded to the Police thanking them for their efforts in reducing crime in Wheatley Hill.

A letter from the Assistant Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary acknowledging the Parish Council's thanks was received.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Charity Golf Day

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from the Chair of Durham County Council to attend a Charity Golf Day on 1 October 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Police Community Consultative Group

The Clerk advised that the next meeting of the Police Community Consultative Group in the Easington area would be held on 30 September 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Durham Heritage Coast - Annual Forum 2010

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to attend the Durham Heritage Coast Annual Forum to be held on 29 September 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Greenhills Centre

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to attend the formal opening of the Greenhills Centre's new kitchen and café area on 17 September 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(8) East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau - Annual General Meeting

The Clerk reported that the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau Annual General Meeting would be held on 22 September 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(9) Training - Section 106 Agreements

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from Durham County Council to attend a training event on Section 106 Agreements on 20 October 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(10) East Durham Heritage Group

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from the East Durham Heritage Group to attend a Charity Race Night on 1 October 2010 at the Glebe Centre, Murton to raise funds for the restoration of the Seaham RNLB, the George Elmy Lifeboat.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(11) Charter Review Event

The Clerk reported the receipt on an invitation for Members to attend a meeting to discuss the review of Charter arrangements on 2 October 2010.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(12) Future of Standards for England and the Standards Framework

The Clerk reported details of the Governments "Programme for Government" which contained a commitment to abolish the Standards Boards Regime. Primary legislation was needed to abolish Standards for England and it was expected that provisions would be included in the planned Decentralisation and Localism Bill which was due late 2010.

At this stage there were no transitional provisions and Members would be provided with an update as and when it was known. In the meantime the Local Standards Framework would continue to exist and Standards Committees and Monitoring Officers would have an obligation to keep the system operating.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING MATTERS

Applications

Consideration was given to the following planning applications received from Durham County Council: -

Proposed private Garage (resubmission) at 6 Church Park for Mr Grove

Proposed pitched roof to rear extension at 13 East View for Mr G Collin

Proposed single storey front and rear extension at 18 South View for Mr K Monaghan

Proposed rear conservatory at Rosscairn, Durham Road for Mr G Wheatley

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

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

(i) Parish and Town Councils Conference

Councillor Mrs M Goyns advised that she had attended the Parish and Town Councils Conference held at Durham County Council on 19 July 2010.

The Conference had discussed the Local Assessment of Complaints, highlighting the pitfalls of distinguishing between trivial complaints and genuine complaints of dissatisfaction.

A video presentation was given which generated a healthy debate which led to differing views and opinions.

Quality Status was discussed and the importance of this to Parish and Town Councils, particularly the expense related to the Clerk obtaining the SILCA Qualification and subsequently leaving the authority.

A Progress report on the review of the Local Charter was given and Durham County Council was organising events during October to discuss the review.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Wheatley Hill Clinic

The Chair provided an update on the clinic and advised that discussions had been held between the PCT and the Doctors at the Surgery and further meetings were scheduled to be held. The Chair was being kept up to date with progress by Mr Gallagher, Director of Partnerships and Services, NHS County Durham and Darlington.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) Wheatley House

The Chair provided Members with an update on the proposed closure of Wheatley House and advised that residents were working with AAP Co-ordinators to establish a committee to take the project forward. Work was also underway to establish what long term finance would be required to repair and maintain the building.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 HEAD GROUNDS PERSONS REPORT

(i) General

The Clerk advised that routine work had been undertaken in the Cemetery since the last meeting, details of which were outlined.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments

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

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Cemetery Wall

The Clerk advised that at a previous meeting Members discussed a quotation received from a local builder which was based on a daily work rate and provided no indication of how long the work would take or the cost of materials. This was felt to be unacceptable and since the last meeting a number of local builders had been approached to provide a quotation to undertake either repairs or rebuilding of the Cemetery wall.

A quotation had been received from R & B Roofing and Building, a company based in Horden who had quoted £4,995.00 to grind out the old cement and re-point the wall with cement where accessible. This did not include any of the areas behind trees, bushes or the bus stop.

Whilst this was felt to be a reasonable quotation, Members expressed concern that "it was throwing good money after bad" and would only provide a short term solution to the problem.

Following a lengthy discussion on the options available and the costs involved, it was suggested that Durham County Council be approached to see if they could assist the Parish Council in undertaking this work.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Durham County Council in relation to the work needed.

(3) Cemetery Bungalow

The Clerk reported the receipt of a quotation from R & B Roofing and Building for work to be undertaken on the Cemetery bungalow.

The quotation to renew missing cement to ridge tiles, secure loose slates and replace broken slates above the back door was £255.

The Parish Council had also been advised that the main chimney needed grinding out and re-pointing. At the back door, five courses of brickwork required grinding out and re-pointing at a cost of £345.

The Clerk advised that it was in the interest of the Parish Council to have the necessary repairs undertaken.

RESOLVED that the work required to the Cemetery bungalow, as outlined by the Clerk, at a cost of £600 be approved.

(4) Annual Audit for the Year Ended March 2010

The Clerk advised that BDO LLP had completed the Annual Audit for the year ended 31 March 2010 and there were no separate additional issues that required further attention. The cost of the Annual Audit was £646.25.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Annual Insurance Premium

The Clerk advised that the Annual Insurance Premium for 2010/2011 was £7,221.00, an increase of £146.54 since last year.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) ROSPA Inspection

The Clerk reported the receipt of the annual ROSPA inspection carried out at the football field at Quilstyle Road, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Retirement Gift - Chair's Account

The Clerk advised that during recess the Parish Council were requested to make

a donation towards a retirement gift for the local GP, who was retiring after many years service in Wheatley Hill.

Following liaison with the Chair and Vice-Chair a donation of £150 was made on behalf of the Parish Council from the Chairman's account.

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 ASSESSMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Safety Barrier - Vincent's Corner

Councillor B Maddison referred to the missing safety barrier at Vincent's corner. The Chair advised that the barrier had been damaged and a new section had been ordered. The barrier had to be specially made and could take up to 2 months to install. However, in the meantime a further section of barrier had been stolen and a further section had been commissioned which could take a further 2 months.

(ii) Hawthorn Tree

Councillor Mrs C Stogdale reported that a Hawthorn Hedge at 17 Dodds Close required cutting back. The Chair advised that he would contact Mr Houghton, Durham County Council to have the hedge cut back.

(iii) Weeds - School Path

Councillor Mrs C Stogdale advised that the path leading to the school needed clearing of overgrown weeds and nettles. The Chair pointed out that the weeds were growing out onto the path from the adjoining gardens.

(iv) Light to the rear of Gable Terrace

Councillor Mrs C Stogdale reported the light (No. 204) to the rear of Gable Terrace.

(v) Northumbrian Water

Councillor Mrs M Goyns advised that Northumbrian Water had advised residents that works were to be undertaken in the village between 16 and 25 September 2010. Councillor Goyns felt the letter advising residents of the work was unclear

and did not provide sufficient information regarding the suitability of drinking water during the works.

The Clerk agreed to write to Northumbrian Water expressing the Parish Councils concerns.

(vi) Weeds - Wheatley Hill Front Street

The Chair advised that a number of complaints had been received regarding the number of weeds on the Front Street and generally around the village. It was suggested that a village walkabout be organised with Officers from Durham County Council.

(vii) Arriva X27 Sedgefield to MetroCentre Service

The Chair advised that the Arriva X27 service to the Metro Centre had recently been withdrawn. This service would be a great miss to residents in Wheatley Hill, particularly in the lead up to Christmas.

Following a lengthy discussion on the options involved it was suggested that the Clerk write to Durham County Council and ask if there was any possibility that another company would take on the route or if the villages effected by the cut in service would be able to pay or contribute towards a Saturday service.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

..... Signed

..... Dated