

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 10 OCTOBER 2011**

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

Apologies: Councillor Mrs E Carr

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 12 September 2011, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

- 2 **COMMUNITY POLICING**

The Chair welcomed PC P Gooding to the meeting.

The Officer made reference to the village walkabout held on 8 September 2011 at which 19 properties, mainly owned by private landlords, were identified as being in a bad state of repair. The walkabout involved various organisations including the Police and Durham County Council, and it was agreed that a monthly meeting would be held to discuss progress in relation to the identified properties. Members were advised that the majority of the properties were owned by one landlord who was looking to sell his portfolio of properties. There was concern that the properties would be sold to another absentee landlord and the problems would continue.

It was explained that the poor state of the properties was having a detrimental effect on the number of people shopping on the Front Street and many complaints had been received from residents.

To date only one property had been boarded up with steel shutters and there was still a long way to go in improving both the inside and outside of the properties. Many of the gardens were strewn with litter and a number of properties had guttering which was in need of repair. Members would be kept up to date with progress in relation to the identified properties.

Members were advised that a number of drugs warrants had been issued and small amounts of cannabis had been seized. However, this was not sufficient to make any arrests.

Councillor Mrs M Goyns referred to the recent 'Rock the Barn' event held at Wingate Grange Farm between 30 September and 3 October 2011. Members were advised that music had played very loudly from 9.30pm on the Friday evening until 6.00am the following morning. There had been numerous complaints from residents throughout the village regarding the length of time the music was played and the volume it was played at. The Officer advised that this was a licensing issue and the Parish Council should forward complaints to Mr J Purcell, Durham County Council.

The Chair referred to problems related to youths congregating and drinking on the Front Street and an incident related to fighting outside the Constitutional Club. The Officer advised that the CCTV currently installed on the Front Street was not working.

Councillor Mrs L Stewart confirmed that youths were congregating on the Front Street. In addition youths were “parking up” on the road and causing a road safety hazard. They were also blatantly walking on the road in front of traffic and this type of behaviour could lead to an accident. There had also been a number of complaints regarding youths throwing stones at passing cars and objects at people’s windows.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**3 STREET WARDENS**

There were no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

**4 CORRESPONDENCE**

**(1) Request for Financial Assistance**

**East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau**

The Clerk outlined to Members the information that had been received from the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau regarding the service provided in Wheatley Hill and the level of contributions from neighbouring Parish Councils.

**RESOLVED** that a donation of £600 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

**(2) Letters of Thanks**

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

Wheatley Hill Disabled Club  
Hartlepool and District Hospice

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(3) Durham County Council – Civic Reception**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation for the Chair of the Parish Council to attend a Civic Reception on 20 October 2011.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(4) County Durham Association of Local Councils – Annual General Meeting**

The Clerk advised that the Annual General Meeting of the County Durham Association of Local Councils would be held on 29 October 2011.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(5) Surplus Grazing Land**

The Clerk advised that Durham County Council had identified seven areas of land within Wheatley Hill which were surplus to requirements following a property review exercise.

On estate management grounds there was no reason for the County Council to retain this land and the areas identified would be disposed of on terms to be agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(6) Wheatley Hill Roundabout**

At the last meeting Members were advised that the Mid Durham Projects Club, Children and Young Peoples Services, Durham County Council, had provided a quotation for the erection of a new pony and tub on Wheatley Hill roundabout.

The total cost of the project would be in the region of £6,000 and Trimdon Foundry Parish Council had been asked if they would agree to match a contribution from Wheatley Hill Parish Council.

Trimdon Foundry Parish Council had confirmed they would match the contribution from Wheatley Hill Parish Council to a maximum of £2,500.

The Chair advised that the Mid Durham Projects Club had requested an initial payment to purchase materials for the project. As the Area Action Partnership had become involved with the project the Chair had allocated £5,000 from his County Council budget. This left a shortfall of £1,000 which could be made up of a £500 contribution from both Trimdon Foundry Parish Council and Wheatley Hill Parish Council.

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

**(7) Durham County Council - Community Buildings Review**

Members were advised that Durham County Council were undertaking a review of the community buildings under their ownership and those that were owned by the former district councils. The review was the subject of a public consultation which would run from 19 September to 12 December 2011, where the County Council would be consulting widely on the proposals to develop a sustainable network of community buildings.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**(8) Car Parking – Shakespeare/Burns Street, Wheatley Hill**

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident of Shakespeare Street in relation to parking problems.

Residents from Shakespeare Street and Burns Street were experiencing problems when visitors to the Heritage Centre parked across their drives and

blocked access to their properties. The situation had been exacerbated by the building work currently underway at the Cemetery.

The Chair advised that an Officer from Durham County Council had been requested to investigate the situation with a view to installing white “keep clear” lines at this location.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

**5 PLANNING MATTERS**

There was no planning matters to report.

**6 DELEGATES REPORTS**

**(i) Queens Diamond Jubilee 2012**

The Chair advised that he had attended a meeting at the Community Centre to discuss proposals for the Queens Diamond Jubilee in 2012. An invitation was extended to all Members of the Parish Council to attend future meetings.

**(ii) Meals on Wheels**

The Chair advised that the AAP Co-ordinator, had been asked to assist with grants for the provision of the Meals on Wheels service in Wheatley Hill.

**(iii) Youth Projects**

The Chair advised that he had contributed £2,000 from his County Council budget towards a youth project within the village.

**(iv) Wheatley House**

The Chair provided an update on progress to retain Wheatley House.

**(v) Health Clinic**

The Chair provided an update on the current situation regarding proposals for a new clinic and reported that it was hoped building work would start during the summer of 2012.

**(vi) Front Street Path**

The Chair advised that all work was now complete.

**(vii) Boundary Commission Proposals**

The Chair advised that the proposals in relation to Wheatley Hill were still awaited.

**7 HEAD GROUNDS PERSONS REPORT**

The Clerk advised that routine work had been undertaken in the Cemetery 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**

(i) **Waiting List**

Members were provided with details of waiting lists for allotments and stable blocks. The Clerk advised that following the receipt of the Annual rents a review would be undertaken of the current waiting list.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **Annual Allotment Fees**

The Clerk advised that, to date, 11 tenants had paid their allotment fees for 2011/2012.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

(2) **Cemetery Wall**

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members were advised that the completion date for the Cemetery wall would be 14 October 2011.

Following a site meeting on 30 September 2011, it was clear that this completion date was unachievable.

Mr P Burr, Facilities and Maintenance Manager, Service Direct, had provided an update on the current timescale for completion of the work and would continue to provide a twice weekly update on progress.

Members were pleased to note that progress was being made and the work had been done to a good standard.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

(3) **Poop Scoop Bags**

The Clerk advised that a further 2,000 poop scoop bags had been purchased at a cost of £34.75.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

(4) **Purchase of Cart**

The Clerk advised that the Head Groundsperson had requested approval to purchase a new cart for general use within the Cemetery and throughout Wheatley Hill.

The cost of the new cart was £539.95 inclusive of VAT and £19.95 delivery.

**RESOLVED** that approval be granted for the purchase of the cart.

(5) **Memorial Benches**

The Clerk advised that a recent review had been undertaken of memorial benches currently within the Cemetery.

Members were advised that a number of benches had been put to one side on the grounds of health and safety and where possible the owners had been contacted to advise them of their options regarding either repairing the existing bench or replacing it.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

(6) **Website Training**

The Clerk advised that progress had been made regarding the new Parish Council website and the Clerk would be attending a training course on 12 October 2011.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

9 **CLERK'S WORKING HOURS**

The Clerk advised that over the past few months the workload and number of hours being worked by the Clerk had increased significantly.

The Chair suggested that the hours worked by the Clerk be increased to reflect the increase in workload.

Following a lengthy discussion it was suggested that the Clerk's hours be increased from 16 to 37 hours per week. The Clerks terms and conditions of service would remain as at present.

**RESOLVED** that;

- (i) The Clerks hours be increased from 16 to 37 hours per week from 1 October 2011,
- (ii) Approval be granted to pay the Clerk 84 hours overtime to reflect the increased hours already worked.

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) **Pothole**

Councillor B Maddison advised that there was a pothole at the junction of Wordsworth Avenue and The Aged Miners Homes.

..... Signed

..... Dated