

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2012

Present: Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)  
Councillors Mrs M Goyns, B Maddison, Mrs M Nicholls  
and Mrs C Stogdale

Apologies: Mrs E Carr, E Goyns, J R Lamb and Mrs L Stewart

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 8 October 2012, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(i) Mr J Frost, 94 Johnson Estate, Wheatley Hill

The Chair welcomed Mr Frost who raised the following issues: -

- Fly Tipping – Mr Frost advised that fly tipped rubbish was being dumped to the rear of his property on a regular basis. He had reported the problem to Durham County Council who had agreed to remove the rubbish but had not done so to date.
- Dog Fouling – Mr Frost advised that used poop scoop bags were being thrown into the hedge to the rear of his property. Dog owners were picking up after their dogs but throwing the used bags into the hedge rather placing them in a bin.
- Open Space – Mr Frost referred to an area of green open space adjacent to his property. Mr Frost had previously tried to purchase this area of land from the former Easington District Council. Mr Frost had wanted to purchase the land to use and maintain as garden but was refused permission.

In order to prevent vehicle parking at this location the land was fenced and bollards were erected. The fencing and bollards had recently been removed and vehicles had started to park on the grassed area on a regular basis.

Mr Frost had contacted Durham County Council and was advised that an application had been made for a change of use for the land. Mr Frost was concerned that the change of use was for parking which would lead to the area becoming an untidy eye sore.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Mr and Mrs Cairns, 5 Cypress View, Wheatley Hill

The Chair welcomed Mr and Mrs Cairns of 5 Cypress View, Wheatley Hill who had raised the following issues at the last meeting: -

- Request for Bollard – Mr Cairns advised that a bollard had been installed on the corner of Cypress View.
- Request for Salt Bin - Mr and Mrs Cairns were advised that a request had been submitted to Durham County Council for a salt bin to be located at Cypress View.
- St Godric's Primary School – Chicanes - Mr and Mrs Cairns explained that the chicanes at this location had been damaged and would need to be repaired. Mr Cairns reiterated that the chicanes were not doing their job and suggested that speed humps would be a better option at this location.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

3 ST GODRIC'S PRIMARY SCHOOL – 2012 TOGETHER PROJECT

The Chair welcomed Mrs J Richardson and Mrs A Tomlinson from St Godric's Primary School.

Mrs Richardson and Mrs Tomlinson provided an update on the 2012 Together Project which would produce a mosaic to be installed in the Heritage Centre. The project aimed to bring together various local clubs and organisations as well as all the schools in Wheatley Hill and Thornley.

Members were advised that the project had been successful in securing lottery funding and arrangements were underway to hold workshops to allow the mosaic to be created.

Details of the organisations that had been approached to be involved in the project, many of which had also provided a financial contribution, were outlined to Members. It was stressed that every effort had been made to include the whole community in the project however, if any organisation had been overlooked and were keen to be involved they were welcome to get in touch.

Discussion ensued in relation to how organisations would be represented on the mosaic, including the Parish Council.

The Parish Council had previously given a commitment to provide a financial contribution and Members would discuss this later in the meeting.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PCSO N Bowman to the meeting.

The Officer reported that since the last meeting there had been 111 reported incidences. This included 33 calls related to anti-social behaviour which was further broken down into 11 personal, 20 nuisance and 2 environmental.

With regard to anti-social behaviour, A Jepson had issued a number of 146 Forms and would be speaking to the parents of children involved in anti-social behaviour. In some cases an Acceptable Social Behaviour Agreement would be sought, which was the stage before an Anti-Social Behaviour Order was issued. The number of anti-social behaviour incidences reported was down by 8% on last year's figures.

Other incidences reported included 4 thefts, 2 criminal damage, 3 thefts from a motor vehicle and 2 reports of damage to a motor vehicle. Crime overall was down 49% on last year's figures.

With regard to problems associated with off road bikes, there appeared to have been an improvement in the situation and the number of calls had reduced.

The Chair made reference to the problem of youths riding micro scooters along the Front Street, particularly between the hours of 7pm and 9pm and stated that it was only a matter of time before there was an accident. The Officer advised that the information would be forwarded to both the Police and the Street Wardens.

With regard to Speed Watch it was proposed to undertake a further survey on Woodlands Avenue as the initial survey carried out had resulted in no vehicles speeding.

With reference to problems associated with parking at Sandwick Terrace Members were advised that A Jepson would be delivering letters to all residents in this area regarding the problem.

In relation to detected crime a number of incidences, which included driving a motor vehicle without consent, wounding and common assault had been solved. There were also a number of on-going investigations.

Problems associated with vehicles parking to the rear of the Jet garage appeared to have improved but the Police would continue to monitor the situation.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**5 STREET WARDENS**

There were no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

**6 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 towards the cost of repairing and renewing fencing at their Headquarters.

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

(ii) Great North Air Ambulance

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Great North Air Ambulance.

**RESOLVED** that a donation of £100 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(iii) Wheatley Hill Angling Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Wheatley Hill Angling Club towards future plans for the Club.

**RESOLVED** that a donation of £1,000 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(iv) Wheatley Hill Mothers Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Mothers Club.

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

(v) Over 20's Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Wheatley Hill Over 20's Club towards their annual Christmas party.

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

(vi) Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club – Women's Dart Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Constitutional Women's Dart Club.

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

(vii) **St Godric's – 2012 Together Project**

The Clerk reported that following the update provided by Mrs J Richardson, Members were requested to consider a financial donation towards the project.

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

(2) **Letters of Thanks**

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

Greenhills Centre – Children's and Elderly Members Christmas parties  
Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club  
Councillor Mrs E Carr

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

(3) **Wheatley Hill Mother's Club – Christmas Carol Concert**

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation for Members to attend the annual Christmas Carol Concert on 5 December 2012.

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

**7 PLANNING MATTERS**

There were no planning matters to report.

**8 DELEGATES REPORTS**

(i) **East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau – Annual General Meeting**

Councillor Mrs Goyns reported that she attended the Annual General Meeting of the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau on 19 September 2012.

Councillor Mrs Goyns provided Members with a comprehensive report on the meeting, particularly in the relation to the withdrawal of the outreach service from the Community Centre at Wheatley Hill. The level of funding provided by neighbouring Parish/Town Councils was also discussed at the meeting.

The Bureau currently provided a monthly advice service at the Surestart Centre which was funded by the PCT.

The Chair also provided an update in relation to Durham County Council's funding of the Citizens Advice Bureau and Welfare Rights.

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

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

Councillor Mrs Goyns reported that she attended the County Durham Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting on 3 November 2012. The meeting was opened by Councillor M Williams.

It was reported that with regard to double taxation Durham County Council would cease paying this to Parish and Town Councils in 2013.

Members were advised that Durham County Council would continue to provide support of around £35,000 to the Association. However, it was expected that this funding would be reviewed as part of the County Councils Medium Term Financial Plan for 2014/2015. If this funding was reduced then Parish and Town Councils would be required to cover the shortfall.

There had been no increase in CDALC's subscription fees since April 2010, when the fee was increased to 8p per electorate. In the light of the possibility of reduced funding in future years and to avoid a future steep increase in fees, it was felt appropriate to increase the subscription fee to 9p per electorate for 2013/2014, with further increases possible in future years, should the County Council cut support.

Details were provided of Councils that had recently achieved Quality Status and of those that had been re-accredited for a further 4 years.

Due to technical problems Groundwork North East were unable to provide their presentation which allowed time to discuss the role of Parish/Town Council representatives on the AAP's. It was acknowledged that it was an almost impossible task to adequately represent their respective Parish and Town Councils on this organisation. The geographical area to be covered was just too large.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 HEAD GROUNDS PERSONS REPORT

General

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.

10 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) Annual Allotment Rents – Mr Stevenson

Members were advised that following the last meeting Mr Stevenson was contacted regarding the poor condition of allotment number 14.

Members were advised that Mr Stevenson claimed to have been in and out of hospital all summer and acknowledged that he had neglected the allotment and apologised for the state of the plot. Mr Stevenson claimed to have spent a lot of money on the allotment and intended to use it in the future when he was feeling better.

The Clerk advised that Mr Stevenson was invited to attend this meeting but had declined due to his poor health.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED that Mr Stevenson's rent be accepted and he be given 3 months to improve allotment number 14.

(iii) Outstanding Rents

The Clerk reported that rent had not been received from Mr S Harper, allotment number 2 and Mr J E Jones, allotment number 3.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact both Mr Harper and Mr Jones to ascertain if they intended to keep their allotments.

(iv) Road Planings

The Clerk reported that road planings had been delivered to the allotments to allow repairs to the pathways prior to the bad weather.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Heritage Centre Extension - Update

The Clerk reported that following a meeting with Durham County Council on 19 September 2012, pre planning advice had been received in relation to the proposed extension to the Heritage Centre.

The Clerk took Members through the lengthy response from the County Council which included relevant site history, the principle of the development and the relevant development plan policy.

In summary, the County Council had advised that the addition of a small extension which was sensitively sited, well designed and in appropriate materials

would also be in accordance with the local plan policies and Officer's would welcome sketched schemes prior to a formal application being submitted.

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

**(3) Football Field**

The Clerk reported that Mr Wilson and his sister, Mrs Sabota, had made a complaint to the Police on 20 October 2012. Mr Wilson claimed he was the victim of abuse from players when he challenged them as they went to retrieve the ball from his field.

The Clerk had made some enquiries and been advised that the teams playing on that day were under 7's. Nobody had witnessed anyone entering Mr Wilson's field or verbally abusing him.

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

**(4) Greenhills Centre**

The Clerk reported that over the summer months the Greenhills Centre had left the top gate open on an evening and weekend to allow access to the play area.

The Centre had recently been requested by the Police to lock the gate when the Centre was closed as they had received complaints from local residents regarding anti-social behavior from youths who were congregating at the back of Woodlands Avenue/Greenhills Terrace.

During the dark winter nights access to the play area was not such an issue, however, it did mean that the park could not be used by families when the Centre was closed over the weekend.

It was explained that youths were frequently accessing the grounds, even when the gates were locked, by going over the top or via the field.

The Centre would now lock the top gate when activities finished on an evening, which was typically around 8 to 8.30pm. The gates would remain locked over the weekend.

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

**(5) Purchase of Poop Scoop Bags**

The Clerk reported that as part of a bulk purchase made through the County Durham Association of Local Councils, the Parish Council had purchased 20,000 poop scoop bags, at a cost of £169.80.

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

(6) Special Meeting – Estimates of Expenditure 2013/2014

The Clerk sought approval to hold a Special Meeting of the Parish Council on 10 December 2012 to discuss the estimates of expenditure 2013/2014.

**RESOLVED** that a Special Meeting of the Parish Council be held on 10 December 2012 at 5.30 pm.

(7) Request for Dispensation

The Clerk reported that as well as repealing the legislation relating to the former Code of Conduct, the Localism Act 2011 also repealed the general dispensation allowing Councillors with an interest to take part in meetings, related to setting their Councils precept. As all Members of Wheatley Hill Parish Council were tax payers in this area, they all had a declarable pecuniary interest in setting the precept. As such, all Members would need to request a dispensation before they could take part in the budget and precept setting.

It was necessary for all Councillors in this situation to seek a dispensation from their Council via the Clerk. The dispensation was needed before the Council discussed or set it's precept to enable Councillors to legally set the precept. The dispensations needed to be applied for, in writing, to the Clerk.

Following the 2013 elections after new Councillors had signed their declaration of acceptance of office, it would then be necessary for all Councillors to seek a dispensation in readiness for setting the 2014/2015 budgets. This dispensation would last for 4 years, until the next ordinary elections in 2017.

The Clerk accepted a letter signed by all Members of the Parish Council requesting a dispensation.

**RESOLVED** that all Members of Wheatley Hill Parish Council be granted a dispensation to allow them to take part in the budget and precept setting.

**11 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.

**12 RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

**13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(i) Dog Fouling**

Councillor Mrs Stogdale reported dog fouling to the rear and front of South View and East View, Woodlands Avenue and Quilstyle Road.

**RESOLVED** that Durham County Council be advised of the situation.

..... Signed

..... Dated