

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2014

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

Apologies: Councillor Mrs L Stewart

- 1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 13 October 2014 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair welcomed Mrs J Hughes and Mrs L Gallon to the meeting.

Mrs Hughes explained that she lived at High Crows House Farm and had been advised that from next year, the bin motor would no longer come to her property as it was too far from the main road.

There were five properties in the vicinity and residents would be required to pull the bins to the main road which was half a mile away. Mrs Hughes explained that the majority of residents were elderly and were unable to drag a bin over half a mile to the main road.

RESOLVED that Durham County Council be asked what the position was in relation to bin collections at this location.

3 COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PCSO A Robson to the meeting.

Members were advised that since the last meeting there had been 123 incidents which included 18 reports of anti-social behaviour, 2 burglaries, 7 thefts, 6 criminal damage, 1 theft from a motor vehicle and 9 incidents' of criminal damage to motor vehicles.

The Chair advised that problems at the entrance to Johnson Estate had improved.

The Chair reported that the lights were not working at the MUGA pitch at the Greenhills Centre which meant the facility was unable to be used. As a result of this youths were congregating on the Front Street, throwing stones and generally causing a nuisance. Durham County Council was looking into the problem but at this stage it was unclear what the costs would be. The Chair asked if any funding was available from the Police to help with the lighting costs. The officer advised that he would forward details to the officer responsible for funding.

Reference was made to the on-going problems associated with horses in the village. The officer acknowledged the problem and explained that the situation was not unique to Wheatley Hill. It was explained that the Police had very few powers to tackle the problems related to horses and could only enforce the law. If they were trotting the Police had no powers but if they were racing they would be

stopped. If they stopped on the highway they could be charged with causing an obstruction, the same as a car.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 STREET WARDENS

There was no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) Wheatley Hill Banner Appeal

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Wheatley Hill Banner Appeal.

RESOLVED that a donation of £1,600.00 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(ii) Greenhills Centre – Children’s Christmas Party

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Greenhills Centre advising of the Children’s Christmas Party.

RESOLVED that a donation of £100.00 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(2) Letters of Thanks

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

All Saints Church
Great North Air Ambulance
Wheatley Hill Constitutional Club

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Infinis

The Clerk reported that Infinis held a meeting on 24 September 2014 with representatives from local community centres and parish councils representing the parishes surrounding the site of the proposed Windfarm.

Infinis advised that they had established a relationship with Trimdon Station and Wingate Community Centres as well as the Greenhills Centre, Wheatley Hill.

Infinis were keen to strengthen their commitment to local communities surrounding the development, and had proposed a one off payment, equal

to one years' community benefit of 62,500, to be distributed between the community centres during the construction period.

Initially they had proposed a theme of capital investment but this was not suitable for the community centres. There was however a consensus that running costs, such as utilities bills, were a preferable funding priority.

It was therefore suggested that a possible option, given Infinis' need for audit-able activity to demonstrate added value, would be for each community centre to use the funding to meet energy costs. This would enable each centre to free up funds that would otherwise have been used to meet energy overheads.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Road and Footpath Closure – Henderson Avenue/Luke Terrace

The Clerk reported that an Order had been made under the provisions of Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to close to all traffic, from 27 October 2014, a 135 metre length of Henderson Avenue/Luke Terrace from number 26 Henderson Avenue to number 4 Luke Terrace, Wheatley Hill.

The closure was necessary to enable new dwelling construction works to be undertaken, including utility connections and driveways. The work would take approximately 52 weeks to complete and would be carried out on or adjacent to that length of road and footway.

Throughout the period of closure an alternative route would be available to traffic via Jack Lawson Terrace and Henderson Avenue/Cain Terrace or Luke Terrace/Quetlaw Road and Quilstyle Road.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) East Durham Area Action Partnership - Autumn Forum

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to attend the East Durham Area Action Partnership Autumn Forum on 26 November 2014.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) St Godric's RC School

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from St Godric's RC School to attend a drama club performance about World War 1 on 12 November 2014.

RESOLVED that Councillors Mrs Carr and Mrs Stogdale be authorised to attend.

(7) East Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils - Citizens Advice Bureau

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the East Durham Association of Parish and Town Councils which gave details of a letter sent to the Citizens Advice County Durham from the Association and their subsequent response.

It was explained that the Citizens Advice was discussed at the September meeting of the Association and it was agreed that both letters be circulated to member councils for their views which would be discussed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(8) Wellfield Community School

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation from Wellfield Community School to attend its formal opening on 21 November 2014.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning matters to report.

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

(i) 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 8 November 2014. The meeting was officially opened by the Chair of Durham County Council, Councillor J Robinson and the Mayor of Durham.

Tributes were made to both Parish Councillors and Clerks who were coping with austerity cuts. Tribute was also made to Councillor P Charlton who passed away this year. Reference was also made to the anniversary of the start of World War 1 and the coming down of the Berlin Wall.

Members were advised that following the success of the Lindisfarne Gospels 3 copies of the Magna Carta would be on display later this year.

With regard to NALC subscriptions for 2015/16 it was agreed the fees would be increased to 5.6p per elector, an increase of 0.1p per elector or 1.8%.

With regard to funding of the CDALC Secretariat the recommendations outlined in the report were accepted and it was also agreed that the new post would be offered to the current Executive Officer.

At the meeting members had queried a reduction in fees from 2012/13 to 2013/14. It was explained that some member authorities had paid their 2013/14 subscription early and this accounted for the discrepancy in the accounts.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 HEAD GROUNDSPERSONS REPORT

(i) General

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.

(ii) Memorial Bench

The Clerk reported that in September 2009 the Parish Council adopted a policy whereby anyone wishing to place a new memorial bench within the Cemetery was required to purchase a Glasdon, recycled Phoenix Seat.

The purpose of the policy was to ensure all benches in the Cemetery were of a similar design and quality. The seat was manufactured from recycled material, was environmentally friendly, durable, weather resistant, robustly designed and low maintenance.

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from Mrs Tyers to install a seat from a different manufacturer which was of similar construction and design but was less expensive.

Following investigation and discussion with the Head Groundsperson, it was felt the seat was of a good design and quality. It was therefore recommended that the Harewood Seat manufactured by British Recycled Plastic be added to the select list of seats allowed in the Cemetery.

RESOLVED that the request from Mrs Tyers to place a Harewood Seat in the Cemetery be approved.

9 CLERKS REPORT

(1) Allotments/Stable Blocks

(i) Waiting List

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

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Annual Rents

The Clerk reported that the annual rent letters were issued at the end of September and to date 4 rents remained unpaid. The Clerk had spoken to 2 of the tenants by telephone and the other 2 would be contacted by letter.

It was agreed that if rent remained unpaid by the end of the week then the Clerk be authorised to advise the tenants that their tenancy had been terminated with immediate effect

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Estimates of Expenditure 2015/2016

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Durham County Council in relation to the tax base and Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant figures for 2015/2016. The County Council had updated its tax base modelling and re-calculated the Parish Councils tax base, which would be confirmed by Cabinet on 17 December 2014.

RESOLVED that the estimates of expenditure for 2015/16 be considered at a Special Meeting of the Parish Council on 8 December 2014 at 5.30pm.

(3) Fees and Charges 2015/2016

(i) Cemetery Fees

The Clerk reported that the current cemetery fees were implemented in April 2012. The Clerk sought Members views on the fees for 2015/16 and following discussion it was suggested that fees remain at their current level.

RESOLVED that no increase be made to the current Cemetery fees.

(ii) Allotment Fees

The Clerk reported that the current allotment and stable block fees were implemented in 2011. The Clerk sought Members views on the fees for 2015/16 and following discussion it was suggested that the annual rent for both allotments and stable blocks be increased by £5.00 per year.

RESOLVED that:

- (i)** allotment and stable block rents be increased by £5.00 to £35.00 and £65 respectively
- (ii)** all tenants are advised of the proposed increase at the start of the 2015/16 financial year.

(4) Re-Purchase of Burial Plot

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Mrs M Walker for the Parish Council to re-purchase a burial plot she no longer needed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council re-purchase burial plot G719 from Mrs Walker and she be reimbursed that £50.00 purchase price.

(5) Newsletter

The Clerk reported that a newsletter jointly produced by the Parish Council and Friends of Wheatley Hill was complete and ready to go to print.

Members were advised that funding for the newsletter had been provided by County Councillors M Nicholls and L Hovvels from their Members Initiative Fund.

Distribution of the newsletter was being discussed with The National Leaflet Company. As previously agreed the Parish Council would contribute towards the cost of the distribution which was expected to be in the region of £150.00.

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

10 PAYMENTS

The Clerk presented Members with a 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 information given, be noted and the payments endorsed.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised there was nothing to report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Damaged Road Surface

Councillor Mrs Goyns reported that following work undertaken at a property in South View the road surface had been damaged by the presence of a skip on site.

RESOLVED that the issue be reported to Durham County Council.

..... Signed

.....Dated