

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Councillor J Miller (Chair)  
Councillors E Carr, M Goyns, B Miller,  
L Stewart, C Stogdale, L White

Prior to the commencement of business, the Chair asked Members to observe a minute's silence to remember friends, relatives and colleagues who had died since the last time the Parish Council had physically met.

- 1** The Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 July 2020 together with those of the Staffing Sub Committee held on 17 August 2020 copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

**2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There was no public present at the meeting.

**3 POLICE**

Members were advised that since the last meeting 144 incidents had been reported which included 18 anti-social behaviour, 3 burglaries, 7 criminal damage and 7 vehicle crimes.

Regarding vehicle crime Members expressed concern at the increase in the number of vehicles that had been set on fire and noted that in the last month there had been at least 6 incidents. Details related to an incident on Cemetery Road, involving a stolen car linked to a hit and run were provided.

Year to date anti-social behaviour and crime were down 19% and 37% respectively.

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

**4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

There was no County Councillors present at the meeting.

**5 CORRESPONDENCE**

**(1) Request for Financial Assistance**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Haswell and District Mencap Society.

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

**(2) Letter of Thanks**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from Mr J Wilson

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

**(3) Small Business Rate Relief**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council was in receipt of Small Business Rate

Relief for the Cemetery and was therefore eligible to apply for the COVID-19 Small Business Grant.

Previous Government guidance had stated that precepting authorities were not eligible to apply for the grant. Following clarification on the issue the Clerk had applied and received a grant of £10,000.

RESOLVED that the receipt of the £10,000 grant be noted and earmarked to assist with ongoing costs in the Cemetery.

(4) Woodland Trust

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Woodland Trust advising of their intention to create a new woodland adjacent to Wheatley Hill and Thornley.

The proposal was in the early stages of planning and the Parish Council would be consulted further once a draft design was available.

The woodland would be freely accessible to the public and provide ecological and environmental benefits.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Wildflower Proposal – A181

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident suggesting that a wildflower patch be created along the A181, between the pit pony roundabout and the entrance to Wheatley Hill.

The Clerk reported that the grass verge to the side of the A181 came under the responsibility of Durham County Council. The proposal was referred to the County Council and they had advised that nowhere along this stretch of road was suitable for wildflowers as it would be a sight line issue for traffic.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) DVD – Wheatley Hill 100 Year Festival

The Clerk reported the receipt of 3 DVD's from a former resident of Wheatley Hill which captured a festival held in Wheatley Hill in 2007.

RESOLVED that the DVD's be given to the Heritage Society for the use of everyone in the village.

(7) Parish Boundaries

The Clerk reported that a set of user-friendly annotated maps of the Parish boundaries for Wheatley Hill had kindly been prepared by a local resident and placed on the Parish Councils website.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(8) Public Rights of Way

The Clerk reported that a detailed report of the Public Rights of Way and Bridleways in and around Wheatley Hill had been prepared by a local resident.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(9) Speeding – Wingate Lane

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from a resident for traffic calming measures at Wingate Lane.

Members were advised that the matter was referred to Durham County Council and the Police. The Police had advised that they would undertake a speed watch in the area.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING

(i) Applications

DM/20/02236/FPA – Detached private garage at 5 Sandwich Terrace, Wheatley Hill

(ii) Approvals

DM/20/01074/FPA – Retention of detached outbuilding (retrospective) at allotment gardens east of Sandwich Terrace, Durham Road, Wheatley Hill

DM/20/01461/FPA - Conversion of existing conservatory to habitable room at 9 Sandwich Terrace, Wheatley Hill

(iii) Refusals

DM/19/02982/FPA – Change of use of land for the siting of 10no. caravan homes with amenity block at Plot No 1 south of Weardale Park, Wheatley Hill

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 HEAD GROUNDPERSONS REPORT

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.

8 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Parish Council Meeting Venue

The Clerk reported that due to COVID-19 and the need to observe social distancing the Heritage Centre was no longer a suitable venue for Parish Council meetings and suggested that all future meetings be held at the Greenhills Centre.

RESOLVED that Parish Council meetings be held at the Greenhills Centre.

(2) Allotments

(a) Application for an Allotment

The Clerk reported the receipt of an application for an allotment.

RESOLVED that application 8/2020 be accepted onto the waiting list for an allotment.

**(b) Allotment 2**

The Clerk reported that applicant number 2/2020 had been added to the tenancy agreement for allotment number 2.

**RESOLVED** that the action taken, be endorsed.

**(c) Annual Rents 2020/2021**

The Clerk reported that annual rent letters would be issued at the end of September 2020.

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

**(3) Defibrillator**

The Clerk reported that on 1 September 2020 the Parish Council were advised that the Defibrillator, located in the Cemetery, had been stolen.

The North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) were contacted to determine if the device had been deployed to an incident. They advised that the device had not been deployed and had been stolen. The defibrillator was therefore removed from the system and reported stolen to the Police and Council's insurers.

The Parish Council were subsequently advised that the defibrillator had been taken by a resident at the request of Paramedics attending an incident in the village. The device was not used by the Paramedics and returned to the Cemetery.

The Clerk contacted the NEAS to advise of the situation and re-instate the defibrillator back onto the system. The Clerk also queried why the device had been deployed and the Parish Council not made aware of this. The NEAS confirmed that the Parish Council should have been advised when the defibrillator was deployed. Their procedures were falling short and the NEAS advised that they would be undertaking an internal investigation into the matter.

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

**(4) Village Walkabout**

The Clerk reported that following concerns raised by residents with Paul Howell MP and County Councillors the Police arranged a walkabout on 26 August 2020.

The concerns raised related to various issues at Meadow View, Black Lane and the former Greyhound track. There was also concern raised in relation to Dennis and Percy Street. The main concerns were fly tipping, anti-social behaviour, fires and criminality.

The Parish Council had also raised issues related to burnt out cars, anti-social behaviour, fires at Gore Burn Nature Reserve and speeding throughout the village.

The walkabout brought together numerous organisations and following the visit an action plan would be produced.

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

(5) Wheatley Hill Surgery

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members were advised that during the Covid-19 pandemic Wheatley Hill surgery was operating as an administrative centre for the East Durham Medical Group (EDMG) and doctors were working from other surgeries throughout the partnership.

Following the meeting the Chair wrote a detailed letter to the EDMG outlining numerous concerns raised by residents, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member. The EDMG's response to the letter was also circulated.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Pit Pony Statue

The Clerk reported that the Pit Pony statue was being stored at the Community Centre. Mrs Hill had undertaken an initial inspection of the horse and advised that some repairs would be needed. A survey of the roundabout would also be undertaken to see what was required to re-site the horse.

Mrs Hill would provide the Parish Council with a quote for the work needed.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Wheatley Hill Community Association

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Community Association.

The Parish Council had allocated £15,000 in the 2020/2021 budget to fund the provision of recreational activities, to be delivered by Wheatley Hill Community Association (WHCA) at the Greenhills Centre, on behalf of the Parish Council.

However, as Members were aware the Greenhills Centre, due to Covid-19 restrictions had been unable to offer regular school holiday activities and during the May half term and summer holidays had offered activity packs as an alternative.

Members were advised that WHCA had confirmed that all planned activities for the October and Christmas school holidays, including the Halloween and Christmas pantomimes had been cancelled. It was thought that activity packs, like those offered in the summer, would be the safest option and the Parish Council were asked to consider the following.

- October Half Term – 1 week at a cost of £1,000 – to provide a spooky activity pack, with treats and a Pumpkin (£10 per head x 100)
- December/Christmas – 1 week at a cost of £1,000 – to provide assorted Christmas crafts and a selection box (£10 per head x 100)

Members agreed to fund the October half term activities and suggested that a decision regarding the Christmas holidays be deferred.

RESOLVED that approval be granted to fund the October half term holiday activity packs at a cost of £1,000.

(8) Benches – Front Street

The Clerk reported that the benches located on the Front Street had been removed

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and re-sited in the Cemetery.

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

### 9 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure as of 31 August 2020.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL	
Internet Banking	East Durham Funeral Service	Gravedigging	80.00		80.00	
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00	
Internet Banking	MKM	Cemetery Supplies	127.46	25.49	152.95	
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	119.95	19.98	139.93	
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - August 2020	4,478.62		4,478.62	
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - August 2020	2,775.99		2,775.99	
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - Pension Declaration	5.50	1.10	6.60	
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - August 2020	15.40	3.08	18.48	
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	45.83	9.16	54.99	
Direct Debit	O2	Chairs Mobile Telephone	26.31	5.26	31.57	
Invoice 39	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	14.55		14.55	
Internet Banking	CDS Security & Fire Service Ltd	New Keypad	292.73	58.55	351.28	
Internet Banking	CDS Security & Fire Service Ltd	Annual Maintenance Charge	487.00	97.40	584.40	
Internet Banking	North East Granite Company Ltd	Cemetery Supplies	112.00	22.40	134.40	
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Machine Repairs	390.48	78.09	468.57	
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Annual Trade Waste	648.96		648.96	
Internet Banking	Haswell & District Mencap Society	Section 137 Donation	100.00		100.00	
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Community Assoc	Recreational Activities	1,000.00		1,000.00	
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00	
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements - Postage	23.40		23.40	
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - September 2020	5,075.61		5,075.61	
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - September 2020	3,377.81		3,377.81	
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - September 2020	15.40	3.08	18.48	
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	55.03	11.00	66.03	
Direct Debit	O2	Chairs Mobile Telephone	26.31	5.26	31.57	
Invoice 40	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	11.65		11.65	
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,355.99</b>	<b>339.85</b>	<b>19,695.84</b>

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted and the payments be approved.

**10 RISK MANAGEMENT**

There was nothing to report.

**11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that personal and confidential information would be disclosed.

**12 STAFFING ISSUES**

The Clerk provided Members with an update on staffing issues.

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

..... Signed

.....Dated