

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2020

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

- 1 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 November 2020 a copy 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 122 incidents had been reported which included 16 anti-social behaviour, 5 burglaries, 5 criminal damage and 3 vehicle crimes. Year to date crime had increased by 1% and anti-social behaviour was down 8%.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

County Councillor L Hovvels provided an update on various issues which included parking in Durham City on the lead up to Christmas and the roll out of the Covid vaccine in care homes in the county.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) Request for Financial Assistance – Wheatley Hill Community Nursery

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

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

- (2) Letters of Thanks

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

Durham Cathedral
2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

- (3) Application for Minor Licensing Variation

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Durham County Council which gave details of an application from Wheatley Hill Filling Station to add the sale of coffee to the current premises licence.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING - APPLICATIONS

DM/20/03216/FPA – Balcony bordered by timber railing above flat roof kitchen extension (retrospective) at Thorne Villa, 23 Woodlands Avenue, Wheatley Hill

DM/20/03254/FPA – Two storey side and rear and single storey front extensions at 7 Sandwich Terrace, 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) Allotments

(a) Application for an Allotment

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

RESOLVED that application 11/2020 be accepted onto the waiting list for an allotment.

(b) Allotments 6 and 10

The Clerk reported that applicants 5/2020 and 7/2020 had accepted the tenancies for allotments 6 and 10.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Budget Setting 2021/2022

The Clerk provided details of the figures related to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant and tax base for the forthcoming 2021/2022 financial year.

Members were advised that the LCTRS grant for 2021/2022 had reduced from £14,766 to £12,672 which was a reduction of £2,094 from the previous year and the tax base had increased from 730 to 741.9.

The Clerk provided Members with various options and a range of figures for consideration. It was pointed out that the LCTRS grant was reducing year on year and if the Parish Council wished to continue financially supporting events at the Greenhills Centre as well as various groups in the village it would need to consider increasing its budget.

It was pointed out that in previous years the Parish Council had used reserves to keep the precept as low as possible. Members suggested an increase of 3% which would provide the Parish Council with an additional £1,154. This would equate to an annual increase of approximately £2 for a property in Band D in Wheatley Hill.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was suggested that a 3% increase be applied to the precept and the Clerk prepare a budget based on this for consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Clerk prepare the 2021/2022 budget based on a 3% increase to the precept.

(3) Dodds Close/Pit Wheel

The Clerk reported that Members had previously been advised that in March 2020 a meeting was held at Dodd's Close with representatives from the Parish Council, the Police, Durham County Council and Believe Housing to discuss ways to prevent vehicular access to the grassed areas at this location.

At the time it was suggested that the installation of boulders and an anti-motorcycle barrier would prevent access to vehicles but retain pedestrian access. Durham County Council had quoted £1,556 to install 16 boulders and an anti-motorcycle barrier adjacent 1 Dodds Close.

Cars, off-road bikes and quads were also gaining access to the grassed areas at the bottom of Dodds Close and various options, including the installation of boulders and tree planting, were considered. Durham County Council had quoted £4,776 to install 61 boulders from the entrance to Lynn Terrace up to 8 Greenwood Close.

Members considered the options but due to the Covid 19 pandemic the issue was deferred.

The Clerk reported that following further damage to the grassed area at this location a site meeting was scheduled to be held on 8 December 2020 to discuss possible options to prevent vehicular access.

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 a multi-agency village walkabout was held in 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.

Members were advised that a second meeting, to discuss progress was held in November 2020. It was hoped that a further meeting would be held in December 2020.

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

(5) Wheatley Hill Community Association – Christmas Meal

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members agreed to fund free Christmas meals and family food parcels for residents living in Wheatley Hill.

Members were advised that Wheatley Hill Community Association (WHCA) had secured funding from the Coop to cover the costs related to the free Christmas meals for families.

WHCA had suggested that the Parish Council consider funding a free Christmas meal for elderly residents living in Wheatley Hill in receipt of Meals on Wheels at a cost of approximately £200 for 20 meals.

RESOLVED that approval be granted to fund a free Christmas meal for elderly residents living in Wheatley Hill who were in receipt of Meals on Wheels with the costs to be confirmed by WHCA.

(6) Covid 19 Interview Protocol

Consideration was given to a report of the Chair which outlined a Covid 19 Interview Protocol. The protocol was aimed at protecting Elected Members, employees of the Parish Council as well as candidates attending for interview with the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the Covid 19 Interview Protocol be adopted.

9 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure as of 30 November 2020.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Internet Banking	Mazars	Annual Audit	400.00	80.00	480.00
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Community Nursery	Section 137 Donation	100.00		100.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements	57.79		57.79
Internet Banking	J Davies	Ex Gratia Christmas Payment	400.00		400.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Ex Gratia Christmas Payment	400.00		400.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - December 2020	3,381.00		3,381.00
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - December 2020	2,184.16		2,184.16
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - December 2020	2.64		2.64
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 43	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	13.65		13.65
		TOTAL	7,036.38	94.42	7,130.80

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

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

There was nothing to report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Ex-Gratia Christmas Payments

The Chair suggested that an ex-gratia Christmas payment of £400 be made to J Davies and J Thompson.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for an ex-gratia payment of £400 to J Davies and J Thompson from the Chair's Account.

(2) Manhole Cover – Johnson Estate

Members reported an issue with the manhole cover located on the footpath at the entrance to Johnson Estate.

RESOLVED that the issue be reported to Durham County Council.

(3) Covid 19 Vaccine Hubs

Members asked if any information had been provided in relation to Covid 19 vaccine hubs in East Durham.

RESOLVED that the Chair contact the East Durham Medical Group to enquire about the Covid 19 vaccine hubs.

..... Signed

.....Dated