

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON 11 JANUARY 2021**

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

**Apologies:** Councillors E Carr, C Stogdale

**Also Present:** County Councillor L Hovvels

Prior to the commencement of business, the Clerk advised that this meeting was being held remotely via ZOOM in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

**1** The Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 December 2020 together with those of the Special Meeting held on 7 December 2020 and the Appointments Panel held on 21 December 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 126 incidents had been reported which included 26 anti-social behaviour, 6 criminal damage and 4 vehicle crimes. Year to date anti-social behaviour had increased by 21% and crime was down 5%.

Details were also provided of a serious assault at Dodds Close on 1 January 2021.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

County Councillor L Hovvels provided an update on various issues which included the following.

- Funding available through the County Councillors Neighbourhood Budget, the Area Action Partnership and Believe Housing
- Incidents of fly-tipping in the village
- New bungalows to be managed by DAMHA
- Rollout of the Covid vaccine and Covid Champions
- County Hall would be a vaccine hub from 18 January 2021
- Wheatley Hill Surgery - Update

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**5 CORRESPONDENCE**

(1) Request for Financial Assistance – Wheatley Hill History Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley

Hill History Club.

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

(2) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from Wheatley Hill Community Nursery.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING – APPLICATIONS

DM/20/03621/FPA – Refurbishment into 5 individual self-contained flats at Community Health Clinic, School House, Front Street, Wheatley Hill.

Members discussed the application to refurbish the former health clinic to provide flats and expressed the following concerns.

The Front Street was a mix of residential and commercial properties. The Front Street also suffered from high levels of anti-social behaviour and low-level petty crime. Many of the properties in the vicinity of the former clinic were currently unoccupied, empty or boarded up. Members were of the view that this demonstrated a lack of demand for residential accommodation at this location.

It was pointed out that the applicant was Durham County Council. Concern was expressed regarding the future management and maintenance of the flats. Would the flats be let and managed by the County Council, handed over to a social landlord to manage or was it intended to sell them privately.

RESOLVED that the concerns of the Parish Council be forwarded to Durham County Council.

DM/20/03648/FPA – Single storey extension to provide dining room/gym storage at Wheatley Hill Primary School, 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) Budget 2021/2022

The Clerk reported that Members had previously been provided with figures related to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant and tax base for the financial year 2021/2022.

At the last meeting Members agreed a 3% increase to the precept and the Clerk had prepared a detailed budget based on this, a copy of which was circulated to each Member.

The Clerk took Members through the budget and advised that the Parish Council required a budget of £127,855 for the 2021/2022 financial year. It was suggested that the Parish

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Council use £3,683 of reserves to provide a precept of £111,500 which together with the grant of £12,672 gave a figure of £124,172.

As part of the budget process Members considered the burial and allotment fees and suggested that they be retained at their current levels.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) the Parish Council set a budget of £127,855 for the 2021/2022 financial year
  - (ii) approval be granted to use £3,683 of reserves to give a precept request of £111,500
  - (iii) Durham County Council be advised that the Parish Councils precept request for 2021/2022 was £111,500 in addition to a grant of £12,672 giving a total of £124,172.
- (2) 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 area at this location.

At the time it was suggested that the installation of boulders would prevent access to vehicles but retain pedestrian access. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the matter was deferred.

The Clerk reported that a site meeting was held on 8 December 2020 to discuss the continuing problem. Various options were discussed on site and Durham County Council provided the following quotations.

Option 1 – £22,000 to boulder the area highlighted on the map circulated and install a 3M boom gate for machine access

Option 2 – £30,000 to boulder the area highlighted on the map circulated and install 5 anti-motorcycle barriers and a 3M boom gate for machine access

Option 3 – £29,000 to erect 3ft high roll top mesh fence to the same area of land highlighted in option 2 and install 5 anti-motorcycle barriers and a 3M boom gate for machine access

Option 4 – £40,000 to install hooped perimeter fencing to the same area of land highlighted in option 2 and install 5 anti-motorcycle barriers and a 3M boom gate for machine access

Members were advised that at this stage all costs were approximate. Due to the cost and the fact the land did not belong to the Parish Council, Durham County Council, the Police, County Councillors and Believe Housing were asked to consider a financial contribution towards the scheme.

The Clerk reported that the Police were unable to assist financially and Believe Housing were considering the matter.

County Councillors Brookes and Grant had spent their Neighbourhood Budget for this year and as the County Council elections were due to be held in May 2021, they were unable to commit any funding from next year's allocation.

County Councillor Hovvels reported that she had nothing left from this year's

Neighbourhood Budget but would be willing to contribute from next year's allocation. Whilst the situation was uncertain regarding the County Council elections it was hoped that all three County Councillors would consider a financial contribution towards the project.

It was pointed out that the land was owned and managed by Durham County Council and their approval would be needed for any works. County Councillor Hovvels gave details of external funding streams that may be available to assist fund the project. Members also discussed the need for consultation with residents on the proposals.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was RESOLVED that option 2 be agreed, in principle and further developments be awaited.

**(3) Dispersal Orders**

The Clerk reported that Members had previously been advised of village walkabouts. One of the main areas of concern was anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the frustration felt by residents that not enough was being done to tackle the problem in the village.

Members were advised that the Chair had been approached by a resident asking if a Dispersal Order, like the one imposed by the Police in Shotton could be implemented in Wheatley Hill.

The Clerk advised that the Police were asked if it would be possible to introduce a Dispersal Order in Wheatley Hill.

The Police had responded and acknowledged the concerns of residents in relation to ASB in Wheatley Hill. They provided details of the different tools currently being used in Wheatley Hill to tackle ASB which included ASB contracts and escalation letters, Community Protection Warnings and referrals to the Youth Offending Service.

The Police felt these measures were working and there had been a reduction in reports of youth ASB. In order to implement a Dispersal Order there needed to be significant evidence of ongoing ASB and disorder. Figures related to incidents of ASB in Wheatley Hill from October to December 2020 were provided for Members information.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

**(4) Wheatley Hill Community Association – Christmas Meal**

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members agreed to fund a free Christmas meal for elderly residents living in Wheatley Hill who were in receipt of Meals on Wheels.

The Clerk reported that Wheatley Hill Community Association had advised that they delivered 22 meals at a cost of £4.25 per meal giving a total spend of £93.50.

RESOLVED that approval be granted to pay Wheatley Hill Community Association £93.50 for the 22 Christmas meals delivered to elderly residents living in Wheatley Hill who were in receipt of Meals on Wheels.

**(5) Gore Burn Nature Reserve**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a report from a resident in relation to an incident involving youths on quad bikes damaging the fence at the entrance to Gore Burn Nature Reserve.

Member were advised that the resident had reported the matter to the Police and County Councillor Grant. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had reported the damage to the fence to Durham County Council's Countryside Section.

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**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 December 2020.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Internet Banking	Co-op Funeralcare	Gravedigging Fees	80.00		80.00
Internet Banking	Cochranes's Funeral Directors	Gravedigging Fees	80.00		80.00
Internet Banking	Durham Funeral Services	Gravedigging Fees	80.00		80.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Anglian Water Business	Water - Allotments	47.97		47.97
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill History Club	Section 137 Donation	300.00		300.00
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Community Association	Meals on Wheels - Christmas meal	93.50		93.50
Internet Banking	British Gas	Gas - Hereitage Centre	296.23	14.81	311.04
Internet Banking	British Gas	Gas - Hereitage Centre	11.91	0.59	12.50
Internet Banking	e-on next	Electric - Heritage Centre	151.25	7.56	158.81
Internet Banking	Horns Garden Centre	Christmas Tree	79.17	15.83	95.00
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	223.77	42.75	266.52
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements	43.17	5.47	48.64
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Summer/Winter Bedding	1,397.04	279.41	1,676.45
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - January 2021	3,381.20		3,381.20
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - January 2021	2,183.96		2,183.96
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - January 2021	12.10	2.42	14.52
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 44	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	12.80		12.80
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,571.21</b>	<b>383.26</b>	<b>8,954.47</b>

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

**10 RISK MANAGEMENT**

There was nothing to report.

..... Signed

.....Dated