

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 14 JUNE 2021**

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

Also Present: County Councillor C Varty

- 1** The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 May 2021 together with those of the Annual Assembly of Electors held on 11 May 2021 copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 Co-Option

The Clerk reported that 3 residents had been invited to attend the meeting following their interest in joining the Parish Council.

Members were advised that Mr J Collingwood was the only resident to attend the meeting. The Chair welcomed Mr Collingwood to the meeting and gave a brief outline of the work undertaken by the Parish Council and the role of a Parish Councillor.

Mr Collingwood outlined his background and experience and stated why he would like to join the Parish Council and what he felt he could bring to the role.

RESOLVED that Mr J Collingwood be co-opted onto the Parish Council.

3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There was no public present at the meeting.

4 POLICE

The Police reported that incidents reported between 2 May and 1 June 2021 included 9 anti-social behaviour, 1 theft from a vehicle, 1 criminal damage to a vehicle, 2 burglaries and 8 criminal damage.

The Police reported that several youths had been issued with Community Protection Warnings (CPW's) and 1 youth had been issued with an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC). Since 23 May 2021 there had been no reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the Police continued to engage with local schools in relation to ASB. A prolific shoplifter had been arrested and charged with multiple offences.

Members referred to a serious assault that had taken place on 1 June 2021 on the Front Street and queried why it was not included in the report. The Clerk agreed to query the incident with the Police.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

The Chair provided an update on the following issues.

- Marley Fields – following the last meeting the Chair contacted Durham County Council and Dere Street Homes regarding the developer erecting boundary fencing over the

- manholes on the estate.
- Potholes – various locations reported to Durham County Council.
- Nicholls Close – a complaint related to the height of fencing being erected at the new bungalows was received from residents living on Meadow View. The issue was referred to Durham County Council and had been resolved.
- Dog Bin – an additional bin had been requested for the bottom of Sandwich Terrace.
- Johnson Estate – request for the footpaths to be re-surfaced.
- Wheatley Hill Primary School – Believe Housing had offered to lease or sell an area of land opposite the school for additional parking. The matter had been referred to Durham County Council.
- Neighbourhood Plan – the 3 County Councillors were looking at the possibility of a Neighbourhood Plan to cover the whole division.
- DLI – Durham County Council were looking at options related to the re-opening of the DLI.
- Durham County Council – the County Council were undertaking an options appraisal for the newly built headquarters at the Sands whilst also reviewing the options for the existing headquarters site at Aykley Heads.
- Free Parking – County Councillors were lobbying for free parking for key workers to be extended beyond 21 June 2021.
- Police Cameras/Youth Workers – County Councillors were discussing with the Police the possible installation of Police cameras throughout the Division and the funding of detached youth workers.
- Police and Crime Commissioner – a meeting was scheduled to be held with the newly appointed PCC Joy Allen.
- Boundary Changes – details of the recently announced boundary changes were outlined.
- CCTV – Durham County Council had been asked to consider erecting CCTV at the former clinic on the Front Street.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Request for Financial Assistance – All Saints Church, Wheatley Hill

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from All Saints Church requesting financial assistance to fund transport for trips to South Shields, “The Barn” outdoor learning centre, Easington and the pantomime.

RESOLVED that a donation of £250 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 Association.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Paul Howell MP

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from P Howell MP advising that he was keen to engage positively with the Parish Council, especially as the local area recovered from the pandemic.

Mr Howell had offered, subject to diary commitments, to attend the Parish Council to discuss local matters and answer questions.

RESOLVED that the offer from Paul Howell MP to attend a meeting be accepted and he be advised of the dates of the Parish Council meetings.

(4) Code of Conduct

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from CDALC recommending the adoption of the new Durham County Council Code of Conduct.

Members were advised that Durham County Council had been working on the amended code since 2019 and had taken the view that it embraced and was more robust than the LGA Model. CDALC had been involved in its creation through representation on Durham County Council's Standards Committee. It also made sense for Durham County Council's Monitoring Officer to work with a consistent Code of Conduct for both tiers of local government.

RESOLVED that the revised Code of Conduct be adopted.

7 PLANNING

Application - DM/21/01696/OUT – 2 detached dwellings at land adjacent Woodside, Black Lane, Wheatley Hill

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 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.

9 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments

The Clerk suggested that an Allotment Sub-Committee meeting be convened.

RESOLVED that an Allotment Sub-Committee be held on 8 July 2021 at 4pm.

(2) Cemetery Bungalow and Heritage Centre

The Clerk reported that major repairs were required to the cemetery bungalow and Heritage Centre, details of which were outlined to Members.

Members were advised that quotations were being sought for the work.

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

(3) Cemetery Trees

The Clerk reported that 1 ash and 2 sycamore trees, located in the Cemetery, were dead and needed to be removed. A further sycamore required the removal of epicormic growth and a large split branch needed to be inspected.

Members were advised that three quotations had been received for the work, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that Special Branch Tree Services be authorised to undertake the work at a cost

of £380 plus VAT.

(4) Cemetery Fees

Consideration was given to the report of the Clerk which gave details of the current Cemetery fees, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Members were advised that the last increase in fees was in 2012. Following a review of the current fees, which included looking at neighbouring council's fees and charges, it was recommended that the Parish Council's Cemetery fees be increased.

The Clerk took Members through the draft proposals and suggested that the increase in fees be effective from 1 September 2021.

RESOLVED that the Cemetery fees, as outlined in the report be approved and the increases be implemented from 1 September 2021.

(5) Summer Bedding/Hanging Baskets

The Clerk reported that the summer hanging baskets had been erected at the aged miner's bungalows and the summer bedding plants had been received from Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Anti-Social Behaviour

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the newly appointed Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) J Allen.

Members were advised that the PCC was aware of the Parish Council's concerns in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB) and had given an assurance that the Chief Constable would be providing the Parish Council with a full update. The PCC had agreed to meet with the Parish Council if needed.

The Chair advised that a response from the Chief Constable had been received and would be circulated to Members for information.

The Parish Council had asked Thornley Parish Council to consider sending a similar letter to the Chief Constable expressing their concerns about the escalating ASB in the area. Thornley Parish Council had advised that they had considered the matter and would not be sending a letter to the Chief Constable.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Meeting with Residents

The Clerk reported that the Chair and County Councillors L Hovells and C Varty had met with residents from the aged miners bungalows on 27 May 2021 to provide an update on the problems they had been experiencing and what was proposed by the Police.

At the meeting residents referred to the continued unauthorised access onto the Community Centre field by off road bikes and quads. It was suggested that the installation of an additional 2 or 3 boulders would restrict all access.

Durham County Council were asked to provide a quotation for additional boulders. They had advised that it was not feasible to order such a small number of boulders and had suggested hooped fencing would be a better option.

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Members were advised that a site visit had been arranged with Durham County Council to look at the options.

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

(8) New Play Park - Greenhills Centre

The Clerk reported that Wheatley Hill Community Association (WHCA) were seeking quotations for the supply and installation of a new play park, draft details of which were circulated to Members.

Members were advised that the preferred company was quoting in the region of £85,000 exclusive of VAT. WHCA would be applying to Durham County Council for Section 106 funding. It was likely that the County Councillors and Parish Council would be asked to contribute towards the cost of the project.

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

(9) Pit Pony – A181 Roundabout

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting Trimdon Foundry Parish Council had contributed £750 towards the restoration and re-siting of the pit pony on the A181 roundabout. Members were advised that a letter of thanks had been sent to Trimdon Foundry Parish Council on behalf of the Parish Council.

Thornley Parish Council had advised that they would not be contributing towards the cost of the restoration or re-siting.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for “The Peoples Project” to undertake the restoration and re-siting of the pit pony on the A181 roundabout.

(10) Chair’s Mobile

The Clerk reported that the contract for the Chair’s mobile had been terminated.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure at 31 May 2021.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Internet Banking	CDS Security & Fire	Maintenance	68.74	13.75	82.49
Internet Banking	British Gas	Gas - Heritage Centre	86.56	4.32	90.88
Internet Banking	e-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	72.77	3.64	76.41
Internet Banking	R C & C Gregory	Machine Fuel	72.36	3.62	75.98
Internet Banking	North East Regional Employers Organisation	Annual Subscription	295.00	59.00	354.00
Internet Banking	MKM	Cemetery Supplies	76.12	15.22	91.34
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements	25.43	0.33	25.76
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	161.31	30.29	191.60
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursement - Machine Fuel	84.17	16.83	101.00

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Internet Banking	Anglian Water Business	Water - Allotments		127.42		127.42
Internet Banking	All Saints Church	Section 137 Donation		250.00		250.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance		25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - June 2021		4,626.61		4,626.61
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - June 2021		2,808.49		2,808.49
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - June 2021		15.40	3.08	18.48
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet		26.97	5.40	32.37
Direct Debit	O2	Chairs Mobile Telephone		26.67	5.33	32.00
Invoice 49	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges		15.85		15.85
				TOTAL	8,864.87	160.81
						9,025.68

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

11 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Potholes

Members reported potholes on the footpath between 22/23 and 28/29 East View at either side of the entrance to Johnson Estate. There were also potholes along the rear of Gable Terrace.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(2) Loose Kerb

Members reported that the kerb at the entrance to Wordsworth Avenue was loose and in need of repair.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(3) Paths

Members reported that the footpath at 1 Burns Street was in a poor state of repair and needed to be re-surfaced.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(4) Caravan Park – A181

The Chair reported that Durham County Council had been asked to confirm that the new caravan park, just off the A181 had planning permission.

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