

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 12 JULY 2021**

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

Apologies: Councillor J Huntington

Also Present: County Councillor C Varty

The Chair welcomed Councillor James Collingwood to the Parish Council

- 1** The Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 June 2021 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

There was no Police report.

Councillor B Miller reported that he had been advised that the newly refurbished flats on the Front Street had been vandalised. The Chair agreed to refer the matter to Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

The Chair provided an update on the following issues.

- Nicholls Close – concerns had been raised which related to the height of the bungalows and privacy issues. Following a site meeting Durham County Council were investigating the elevations and the possibility of erecting a fence or mature hedges
- Potholes – various locations reported to Durham County Council
- Wordsworth Avenue - loose kerb reported and repaired
- Invite from Durham County Council to the opening of the flats on the Front Street
- Discussions on-going with Durham City Youth Project to re-establish a youth project in the area
- The Chair had been appointed to the Board of the East Durham AAP
- Details provided of the County Council committees the County Councillors had been appointed to
- Durham County Council would be considering a motion to write to the Government to make the £20 uplift in Universal Credit permanent
- Report into the new County Council headquarters was awaited
- County Councillors were meeting with the new PCC Joy Allen to discuss the lack of confidence residents felt when reporting crime
- Update on the number of COVID infections in the county.

Councillor Varty asked that it be placed on record that Councillor J Miller was doing a fantastic job as County Councillor for the division.

Councillor Goyns requested an update on the fencing issue at Marley Fields. The Chair agreed to chase this up with Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from All Saints Church, Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Shotton Colts Football Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Shotton Colts Football Club to use the Parish Councils small football pitch for the 2021/2022 football season.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Shotton Colts Football Club to use the small football pitch for the 2021/2022 football season.

(3) Code of Conduct

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) which gave details of an online petition asking for the introduction of legislation to enable Councillors to be disqualified or suspended for poor conduct.

Members were advised that it was widely considered that the current Code of Conduct did not provide any real sanctions to provide a sufficient deterrent to stop bad behaviour.

The Government was being asked to amend legislation to enable Councillors to be disqualified or suspended for breaching relevant Codes of Conduct. Some Councillors behave unacceptably, yet currently sanctions do not enable Councillors to be disqualified or suspended for breaches of a Code of Conduct.

Whilst most Councillors maintained high standards of conduct, a significant minority engaged in unacceptable behaviour, such as harassment, bullying, racist and sexist abuse. This type of activity would be grounds for dismissal in an employment setting, and equivalent sanctions should exist for Councillors.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Police and Crime Commissioner

The Clerk reported that Joy Allen, the new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for County Durham and Darlington would like to introduce herself to parish and town councils and give an update on her plans and priorities.

To assist with this CDALC had arranged for the PCC to address parish and town councils via a ZOOM meeting on 22 July 2021.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING - APPLICATIONS

DM/21/02032/FPA – Single storey front and rear extensions, replacement brick cladding and concrete roof tiles at Bradburn, Wingate Lane South, Wheatley Hill

DM/21/02141/FPA – Erection of permanent equestrian workers dwelling at Westley Stables, 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

The Clerk reported that an allotment site visit was held on 8 July 2021.

Members were advised that most plots were in a good state of repair. There was however, issues related to plots 11, 12, 14, 17 and 19.

Plot 14 was overgrown and needed to be cut back and tidied up. Plots 11, 12, 17 and 19 were in a poor state of repair. Members were advised that the tenant of these plots had previously been warned about the poor condition of the plots and had been advised that an improvement was needed, particularly to the boundary fences.

Whilst on site Members discussed access to the plots adjacent the football field. Access to these plots was only possible via the football field and it was suggested that a new access be created from within the site. This would provide tenants with a secure access to their plots without needing to access the football field.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was suggested that the Clerk contact the tenant of plot 14 to advise that it must be maintained and cut back. The Clerk would also contact the tenant of plots 11, 12, 17 and 19 to request a meeting to discuss the improvements that were needed on all 4 plots.

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

(2) Annual Insurance Premium 2021/2022

The Clerk reported that the annual insurance premium for 2021/2022 had been received from Zurich Insurance in the sum of £5,306.53. The previous year's premium was £4,690.07 which was an increase of £616.46.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Cemetery Bungalow and Heritage Centre

The Clerk reported that 2 quotations had been received for the repairs required to the cemetery bungalow and Heritage Centre, details of which were outlined to Members.

Members were advised that a third quotation was being sought from Durham County Council.

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

(4) Cemetery Fees

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting approval was granted to increase the current Cemetery fees from 1 September 2021.

Members were asked to consider several minor amendments to the fees, details of which were outlined.

RESOLVED that the minor amendments to the Cemetery fees be approved and implemented from 1 September 2021.

(5) War Memorial

The Clerk reported that Wheatley Hill History Club had been contacted by Mrs Schaefer, who lived in Canada and was researching her family tree.

Mrs Schaefer had advised that her grandfather was listed on the War Memorial located in Wheatley Hill Cemetery but had not been killed in the First World War and had died in 1939. Mrs Schaefer had provided documents which proved that William Wilson listed on the Memorial was from Preston, Lancashire. The History Club subsequently carried out their own research which confirmed Mrs Schaefer's findings.

The error had occurred during research for the publication of "The Employees and Residents of Thornley, Ludworth and Wheatley Hill – their contribution in the Great War" in 2006, when researchers used local newspapers as a source of information. It was likely that researchers found a casualty report that referred to William Wilson of Wheatley Hill being killed in 1915. Official documents reported him killed but a later document stated he was alive. The report of William Wilson being alive, wasn't uncovered by researchers, and therefore he was recorded as dead on the website and in the book.

Members were advised that the information related to this on the History Club's website would be amended and the North East War Memorials Project would be advised.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Defibrillator Training

The Clerk reported that the North East Ambulance Service had advised that it was unlikely they would be allowed to deliver any defibrillator training sessions before August 2021.

Members were advised that the defibrillator, located in the Cemetery, had been retrieved numerous times since its installation. It was suggested that an additional defibrillator be provided in the village. Various locations were considered and it was suggested that Abbots Court nursing home could be a suitable location.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Abbots Court to discuss the possibility of installing a defibrillator at the nursing home.

(7) Boulders – Community Centre Football Field

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members were advised of the continued unauthorised access onto the Community Centre football field by off road bikes and quads and the suggestion from residents that additional boulders were required.

Members were advised that a site meeting was held with Durham County Council and it was agreed that additional boulders were not needed. It was however suggested that the boulders and concrete filled containers already in situ be re-positioned to further restrict access onto the field. The County Council agreed to do this and the situation would continue to be monitored.

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RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(8) Future Meetings

The Clerk reported that for the foreseeable future the Parish Council would be holding its monthly meetings in Wheatley House.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure at 30 June 2021.

PAYMENT	RECIPIENT	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Internet Banking	Playsafety Limited	ROSPA Inspection	68.50	13.70	82.20
Internet Banking	Special Branch Tree Services	Works to Trees - Cemetery	380.00	76.00	456.00
Internet Banking	CDS Security & Fire	Alarm Maintenance	85.00	17.00	102.00
Internet Banking	Horns Garden Centre	Hanging Baskets and Trees	268.30	53.66	321.96
Internet Banking	MKM	Cemetery Supplies	19.35	3.87	23.22
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Annual Trade Waste	662.22		662.22
Direct Debit	British Gas	Gas - Heritage Centre	29.16	1.45	30.61
Direct Debit	e-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	56.68	2.83	59.51
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	126.89	24.50	151.39
Internet Banking	SAS Skip Hire	Skip Hire	230.00		230.00
Internet Banking	Zurich Municipal	Annual Insurance Premium	5,306.53		5,306.53
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - July 2021	4,626.41		4,626.41
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - July 2021	2,808.69		2,808.69
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - July 2021	15.40	3.08	18.48
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	26.97	5.40	32.37
Invoice 50	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	11.55		11.55
		TOTAL	14,746.65	201.49	14,948.14

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

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Changing Facilities – Football Field

The Chair suggested that the Parish Council explore the feasibility of providing basic changing facilities at the football field. It was pointed out that an application could be made for Section 106 funding to assist with the cost.

Following discussion on the type of facility that was possible, given the location, it was agreed that the Parish Council investigate the feasibility of providing basic changing facilities at the football field

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

(2) Potholes

Members reported potholes outside 2 Cemetery Road, 5/6 Wordsworth Avenue and 6/8 Gable Terrace.

RESOLVED that the potholes be reported to Durham County Council.

(3) Rubbish – Pizza Nova

Members reported that the commercial bins located at Pizza Nova were constantly overflowing and not large enough to cope with the amount of rubbish generated by the business. This was particularly the case over a weekend when the pizza shop was at its busiest.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(4) Missing Waste Bin

Members reported that the waste bin attached to the lamppost adjacent Pizza Nova was missing and needed to be replaced.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(5) Signage

Members reported that there was little or no signage related to dog fouling in the village and suggested that Durham County Council be asked to provide more.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to Durham County Council.

(6) Salt Bins

The Chair reported that Durham County Council had been asked to provide additional salt bins in Wheatley Hill as there was currently only 7 across the village.

Members were advised that Thornley had 17 salt bins. After entering into an agreement with the County Council Thornley Parish Council were granted approval to purchase additional salt bins. The Chair suggested that the Parish Council enter into a similar agreement with the County Council which would then allow it to purchase its own salt bins.

The Clerk advised that in 2012 the Parish Council entered into a Service Level Agreement with the County Council. The Parish Council assisted the County Council with snow clearing and the County Council provided the Parish Council with salt.

The Parish Council had previously requested the County Council to provide additional salt bins in the village but all requests were refused on the basis the locations did not meet the County Council's criteria.

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

..... Signed

.....Dated