

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L White and County Councillors L Hovvels and C Varty.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 October 2021 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There was no public present at the meeting.

5 POLICE

Members were advised that between 2 October and 1 November there had been 7 reports of anti-social behaviour, 2 vehicle crimes, 5 criminal damage and 2 burglaries.

The Police had reported that anti-social behaviour had reduced by 50% and they would continue to engage with local schools to address youth anti-social behaviour. A prolific burglar and crime instigator had been arrested and charged with multiple offences.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor J Miller provided an update on local and county wide issues.

- Meeting held with Durham County Council to discuss the possibility of a roundabout on the A181 at Wheatley Hill. The County Council had advised that a roundabout or traffic lights were not possible at this location due to the cost. It was proposed to install bollards at the crossing over to the farm which would highlight where pedestrians could cross safely and alert drivers. If Marley Fields was extended at the rear of Sandwick Terrace the area would be assessed and there was the possibility of installing a roundabout. A slip road from the garage was a cheaper option and was not ruled out.
- Meeting held with Durham County Council to discuss the problems associated with cars parking on the bend opposite Miners' Villas. The County Council had been asked to look at developing the land opposite to provide a small car parking space.
- Durham County Council were looking to increase the number of charging points in smaller villages and had asked the County Councillors for suitable locations. County Councillors had suggested the Greenhills Centre, the school and the Co-op .
- New fencing at Dodds Close was complete and an email was sent from the Chair thanking everyone involved.
- County Councillors had written to PCC Joy Allen and the Chief Constable to state how dissatisfied they were with the response to quadbikes and that they wanted to see

something better happen, including revaluating the off-road bike team. The PCC was holding a Public Accountability Meeting on 24 November to discuss off-road bikes. This meeting would be recorded and uploaded on YouTube.

- Durham City Youth Project – Refer to minute number 10(4)
- County Councillors were holding a surgery at the Greenhills Centre on 9 November 2021.
- The PCC Joy Allen had appointed Nigel Bryson as the Deputy Commissioner.
- Elvet Bridge had reopened.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(a) All Saints Christmas Fayre

At the last meeting the Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from All Saints Church to purchase selection boxes for school children visiting Santa at their Christmas fayre.

Members were advised that the Christmas fayre had been cancelled but All Saints Church would still be purchasing a selection box for every child attending Wheatley Hill School

RESOLVED that a donation of £150 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(b) 2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the 2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group.

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

(c) 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) Letter of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of a letter of thanks from the Great North Air Ambulance.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Greenhills Centre

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Greenhills Centre which provided the following updates.

Playpark – There had been no progress on the new playpark at the Greenhills. Confirmation of funding from the County Councillors neighbourhood budget was still awaited from Durham County Council. At this stage it was unlikely the completion date of Easter 2022 was achievable.

Community Christmas Celebration – 27 November 2021. Details of activities planned for the day were outlined and an invitation was extended to all Members of the Parish Council to attend.

To assist with the cost of the Christmas event it was suggested that those attending be given the opportunity to make a financial donation to the Greenhills if they so wished. It was also suggested that food and refreshments should be charged for.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Queens Platinum Jubilee

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) which gave details of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

Members were advised that beacons were being lit throughout the UK, UK Overseas Territories, and each capital city of the Commonwealth at 9.15pm on 2nd June 2022, to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

Members were advised that parish and town councils were being encouraged to light a beacon as their tribute to Her Majesty.

A guide to taking part in this event had been produced which gave information about the type of beacons that could be lit and the procedure to be followed. It was likely that this would be the last chain of beacons that would be lit during The Queen's reign, so it was hoped to make it the largest and the most dramatic.

It was suggested that the Parish Council agree, in principle, to light a beacon on 2 June 2022. It was further suggested that the local primary school be asked if they would like to undertake this as a joint project.

The Clerk had also received correspondence from Trimdon Foundry Parish Council asking about the Parish Council's plans for celebrating the Jubilee in 2022. Trimdon had dismissed the idea of lighting a beacon but had suggested joining forces with local parishes to achieve fewer, but better resourced and attended events.

It was suggested that Trimdon be advised of the Parish Council's plans but that we would also like to be involved in any discussions for a potential joint event between parishes.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Wheatley Hill Primary School and respond to Trmndon Foundry Parish Council.

(5) Anonymous Complaint

The Clerk reported the receipt of an anonymous email complaining about the state of the village. A similar email had also been received from Mr J L Smith complaining that there were no flower displays at the entrances to the village with decorative signage.

The Clerk was reported that she was unable to respond to the anonymous email but had replied to Mr Smith. Mr Smith was advised that the Parish Council provided summer and winter bedding plants at both entrances to the village. Entering Wheatley Hill from the A181 there was 2 large flower tubs and a formal flower bed. At the other end of the village there was 2 formal flower beds directly in front of the Pit Wheel. In addition to this there was 2 large flower tubs outside Wheatley House and 1 at Marley Fields. The Parish Council also provided summer hanging baskets at

the aged miners' bungalows.

Members discussed the provision of Christmas trees in the village and suggested that in addition to the trees at the Heritage Centre and Greenhills Centre a further tree be provided on the Front Street. Various locations were discussed, and it was felt that the most suitable would be the Workingmen's Club. It was suggested that Mr Hammond be contacted regarding the erection of a tree at the Club.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and the Clerk contact the Workingmen's Club regarding the provision of the Christmas tree.

8 PLANNING

Application - DM/21/03439/FPA – Siting of a portable steel container to be used as a changing facility on edge of football pitch at football ground west of Quetlaw Road, Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

9 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.

10 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments

(i) Annual Rents 2021/2022

The Clerk reported that annual rent letters had been issued.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) Plots 11, 12, 17 and 19

The Clerk reported that a site meeting was held with the tenant of plots 11, 12, 17 and 19 to discuss the improvements required on all the plots.

Members were advised that the tenant had given up the tenancies of plots 17 and 19. The tenant had been given to the end of November to remove all personal belongings from the plot including the wire fencing. The tenant would retain plots 11 and 12.

Once the plots were vacant a site visit would be needed to determine how to proceed with the area as it was exceptionally large.

The Clerk reported that when plot 17 was vacant the rubbish to the rear of the plot would need to be removed. The easiest way to access the area to remove the rubbish was through plot 14. The Clerk had contacted the tenant of plot 14 and explained the situation. The tenant was happy to take on the tenancy once all the work was complete.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) Plot 13

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from the tenant of plot 13 to add his father to the tenancy.

RESOLVED that plot 13 be amended to a joint tenancy.

(2) Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk provided an update on the arrangements for the Remembrance Day service to be held on Sunday 14 November 2021.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Lamp Post Poppies

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had been unable to purchase any lamp post poppies from the Royal British Legion due to a lack of stock.

Members were advised that Haswell Parish Council had kindly gifted the Parish Council 10 lamp post poppies.

As soon as the poppies were back in stock 50 would be purchased for next years Remembrance Service.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Durham City Youth Project

At the last meeting the Clerk reported that Durham City Youth Project (DCYP) were seeking funding to deliver weekly youth sessions in Wheatley Hill. One session for juniors, aged 8-11 years and one outreach session for seniors, aged 13-19 years. Members were advised that the cost of the project for 1 year was £7,646, which included £6,161 staff costs and £1,485 room hire and was based on 2 sessions a week, one indoors for juniors and one outdoors for seniors. The Greenhills Centre had given approval for the junior session to be held in the café for a 7 week trial period 4 November to 16 December 2021.

Members felt that youth provision in the village was a priority and agreed to fund the youth project for an initial period of 6 months, including the 7 week trial period at the Greenhills. If the 7 week trial period did not work out at the Greenhills an alternative venue would be needed for the remaining 19 weeks of the 6 month period.

Following the last meeting the Chair and Clerk met with DCYP on 19 October 2021 to discuss the cost of the 7 week trial period at the Greenhills Centre and the cost for the remaining 19 weeks either at the Greenhills Centre or an alternative venue.

The Clerk reported that staff costs for the 7 weeks junior and senior sessions was £829. Staff costs for the remaining 19 weeks was £2,251 and room hire was £427.50. Room hire was based on reducing the room hire by half an hour in the hope that the Greenhills Centre would allow 15 minutes either side for setting up and putting away.

DCYP were advised that the Parish Council would fund the youth project staff costs for the initial 7 week trial period at a cost of £829. Following an assessment of the trial period the Parish Council would fund the remaining 19 weeks either at the Greenhills or an alternative venue.

To continue funding the project long term, it was proposed to approach neighbouring Parish Councils to ask for assistance with the cost.

DCYP would provide feedback on the trial which would allow the Parish Council to evaluate how successful it had been and plan the remaining 19 weeks, particularly in relation to the venue.

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

(5) Changing facilities – Football Field

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting approval was granted for the purchase of a 40 x 10 foot portable changing room facility to be located at the football field.

The unit would be purchased from Mac Containers and following discussions with them they had suggested that a smaller unit would be a better option given the location of where the unit was to be sited.

Members were advised that a smaller unit measuring 32 x 10 foot could be purchased at a cost of £15,620 plus VAT. The 40 x 10 unit was £25,318 plus VAT. Delivery of the unit would be an additional £895 and the Parish Council would also need to employ a company to assist with siting the container which Mac Containers could advise on.

The Clerk reported that the application for £21,180.79 Section 106 funding had been successful. A decision on the planning application was still awaited from Durham County Council.

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

(6) Portrait of the Queen

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had purchased a framed photograph of Queen Elizabeth II at a cost of £59.95 including delivery.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Parish Council Noticeboard

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council noticeboard, originally located on the Heritage Centre, was removed to make space for a community defibrillator. The Parish Council had been using the Heritage Society's noticeboard as a temporary measure since the introduction of Coronavirus restrictions in March 2020.

Members had previously agreed to erect a new free-standing noticeboard in the Cemetery.

The Clerk reported that several companies were approached. KBS Depot had provided a quotation of £613 plus £122.60 VAT including delivery.

RESOLVED that the quotation from KBS Depot in the sum of £735.60 be accepted.

11 PAYMENTS

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

CHEQUE NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	British Gas	Gas - Heritage Centre	87.37	4.36	91.73
Direct Debit	e-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	67.98	3.40	71.38

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 8 November 2021

Internet Banking	MKM		Cemetery Supplies		28.10	5.62	33.72	
Internet Banking	Blacktrac Ltd		Machine Parts		100.00	20.00	120.00	
Internet Banking	Peterlee Gas		Annual Boiler Service		245.00		245.00	
Internet Banking	All Saints Church		Section 137 Donation		150.00		150.00	
Internet Banking	2nd Wheatley Hill Scout Group		Section 137 Donation		100.00		100.00	
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Community Nursery		Section 137 Donation		100.00		100.00	
105689	Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal		Poppy Wreath		17.50		17.50	
Internet Banking	J Davies		Reimbursements		136.63	27.33	163.96	
Internet Banking	J Thompson		Reimbursements		95.01	12.67	107.68	
Internet Banking	J Thompson		Telephone Allowance		25.00		25.00	
Internet Banking	Councillors M Goyns & L Stewart		Attendance Allowance		434.56		434.56	
Internet Banking	Payroll		Wages - November 2021		4,626.61		4,626.61	
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC		PAYE/Pension - November 2021		2,856.69		2,856.69	
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited		Payroll Services - November 2021		22.00	4.40	26.40	
Direct Debit	British Telecom		Telephone/Internet		26.97	5.40	32.37	
Invoice 54	Co-Op Bank		Service and Commission Charges		14.70		14.70	
					TOTAL	9,134.12	83.18	9,217.30

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

12 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) South View

It was reported that cars were parking on the pavement at South View. Pedestrians were having to leave the pavement and walk onto the road to pass the cars. There were also several hanging trees at this location which were also restricting visibility.

RESOLVED that the Chair request an update from Durham County Council.

(2) Rubbish - Old Post Office

Members reported rubbish left at the old post office.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

..... Signed

.....Dated