

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2021**

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Collingwood and County Councillors L Howvells and C Varty.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 8 November 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

The Police had advised that 85 incidents were reported in November. There were 9 reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB), 4 thefts, 5 criminal damage and 4 burglaries. Incidents reported and incidents of ASB in November were down 5% and 45% compared to the previous year.

Members were advised that the Police were continuing to work to address ASB and youth related issues. They were also working on producing a monthly leaflet that would provide details of what had been happening in the village and what work had been undertaken.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

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

- A CASBRAC meeting had been held to discuss issues related to the flats on the front street. Despite requesting to be present at the meeting County Councillors were not invited or made aware of the meeting until after it had taken place. The matter would be taken up with the Police.
- A meeting was held with Durham County Council to discuss a regeneration scheme for Wheatley Hill. A Targeted Delivery Plan (TDP) would focus on the front street and neighbouring streets. Improvements would be made to the fronts of some properties and the back streets. A report would be approved by Durham County Council early in the new year and monthly meetings would be held to monitor progress.
- Durham City Youth Project – Refer to minute number 10(3)
- Durham City Youth Project had donated 20 food hampers for families in need in Wheatley Hill.
- Litter continued to be an issue around the takeaway at Peterlee Cottages
- Several lampposts had been damaged in the storm and reported to Durham County Council.

- Believe Housing had not signed off the land opposite the school for parking.
- Storm Arwen had affected the whole county, but the worst affected villages were Trimdon Grange, Thornley and Ludworth. County Councillors wanted to create a local Emergency Plan for the Division and had scheduled a meeting to be held on 4 January 2022.
- A Selective Licensing scheme had been approved and would start in County Durham in 2022.
- Durham County Council had instructed staff to work from home where possible. This would not affect the way members of the public contacted the County Council.
- There was a vacancy for a public representative on the East Durham AAP Board. The closing date for applications was 10 January 2022.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(a) St Godric's Primary School

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from St Godric's Primary School to purchase selection boxes for the pupils.

RESOLVED that a donation of £76 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(b) Christmas Tree Festival - All Saints Church

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from All Saints Church for the Parish Council to sponsor a Christmas tree at the Christmas Tree Festival.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council sponsor a Christmas tree at a cost of £15 from the Section 137 Budget.

(c) Wheatley Hill Workmen's Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Workmen's Club for the aged members Christmas party.

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 All Saints Church.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Haswell and District Mencap

The Clerk reported the receipt of an invitation to attend the Mencap nativity service at Durham Cathedral.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Peter Lee's Grave – Signage

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request from Wheatley Hill History Club to erect a new information board at Peter Lee's grave.

The History Club had advised that the cost of a new wooden sign was £275, and a steel sign was £775. The History Club had asked if the Parish Council would consider making a donation towards the cost of the sign.

Members felt that a steel sign would be more robust and better value for money. It was suggested that the Parish Council contribute £300 towards the cost of a steel sign or alternatively pay the £275 for the wooden sign if that was what the History Club preferred.

RESOLVED that the History Club be granted permission to erect a new information board at the grave of Peter Lee and a contribution of £300 be made towards the cost of a steel sign or £275 for a wooden one.

(5) Greenhills Centre

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

(a) Christmas Trees

Greenhills had thanked the Parish Council for the two Christmas trees at the centre.

(b) New Playpark

Greenhills had placed the order for the new play park and expected the work to be complete by the end of April 2022.

(c) Christmas Launch Event – 27 November 2021

Storm Arwen meant all outdoor activities were cancelled but the event was a success with a good turnout despite the weather. The event used £3,770 of parish council funds and £2,000 from Wheatley Hill Community Association core funds. Donation boxes on the day raised £19.71. Payable activities raised £130 – grotto, £350 – crafts and £190 – food on sale in café.

Greenhills did not lose any money on the cancelled outdoor activities and managed to reschedule or rebook the activities. Greenhills had thanked the Parish Council for the help and support that made this event possible.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(6) Website

(a) Technical Problem

At the last meeting the Clerk reported the receipt of an anonymous email which the parish council had been unable to respond to. Following the meeting it came to light that there was a problem with the “contact us” page on the parish council’s website. The issue was reported to Durham County Council, who host the site, and the problem was resolved.

An apology had been posted on the parish council’s website to anyone who had attempted to contact the council via the website and had not received a response.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(b) Civility and Respect

The Clerk reported the receipt of a newsletter from The Civility and Respect Working Group suggesting that councils include information on their website advising everyone that the council would not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or intimidation.

Members were advised that a statement would be posted on the councils website, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 PLANNING

Application - DM/21/03889/FPA – Erection of agricultural building for keeping and breeding of goats with amended access at land to the east of Warden Lodge, Durham Road, Wheatley Hill DH6 3LJ for C Mole

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

(a) Storm Damage

The Clerk reported that there had been considerable damage at the allotments and several boundary fences had come down.

RESOLVED that a site visit be held to assess the damage.

(b) Plots 17 and 19

The Clerk reported that plots 17 and 19 were vacant.

RESOLVED that a site visit be held to determine how to proceed with the vacant plots.

(2) Budget Setting 2022/2023

The Clerk provided details of the figures related to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant and tax base for the forthcoming 2022/2023 financial year.

Members were advised that the LCTRS grant for 2022/2023 had reduced from £12,672 to £8,432 which was a reduction of £4,240 from the previous year and the tax base had increased from 741.9 to 777.9.

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 activities, events and projects in the village it would need to consider increasing the 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 4.8% to the precept which

would provide the Parish Council with an additional £1,117. This would equate to a standstill charge for a property in Band D in Wheatley Hill.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was suggested that a special meeting of the Parish Council be held to determine the precept and budget for 2022/2023. The Clerk was asked to prepare a draft budget based on a standstill Band D charge for consideration at the special meeting.

RESOLVED that the Clerk prepare the 2022/2023 budget based on a standstill Band D charge which was a 4.8% increase to the precept.

(3) Durham City Youth Project

The Clerk reported that Members had previously agreed to fund Durham City Youth Project (DCYP) to deliver weekly youth sessions in Wheatley Hill. One session for juniors and one outreach session for seniors.

The cost of the project for 1 year was £7,646, including staff costs and room hire and was based on 2 sessions a week, one indoors for juniors and one outdoors for seniors.

Members felt that youth provision in the village was a priority and agreed to fund the project for an initial period of 6 months, including an initial 7 week trial period at the Greenhills for the juniors.

DCYP had provided positive feedback on the 7 week trial at the Greenhills. Moving forward the juniors would remain at the Greenhills for the remaining 19 weeks. The seniors had been meeting at the workmens club at a cost of £20 per session and this would continue.

Staff costs for the remaining 19 weeks was £2,251 and room hire at the Greenhills was £427.50.

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

(4) Changing facilities – Football Field

The Clerk reported that Members had previously agreed to purchase a 32 x 10 foot unit at a cost of £15,620 plus VAT from Mac Container Company Limited. Delivery of the unit was £895, and the Parish Council would also need to employ a company called Sunbelt Rentals to provide Trackway for the haulier to use to deliver the container on site.

Members were advised that the application for £21,180.79 Section 106 funding had been successful and planning permission had now been granted by Durham County Council.

A 25% deposit of £4,686 was required to place the order with the balance due on delivery.

RESOLVED that the 32 x 10 container be ordered from Mac Container Company Limited and the 25% deposit be paid.

(5) Salt Bins

The Clerk reported that following a request from the Chair for additional salt bins the County Council had advised that if the Parish Council funded the bins, they would grant permission.

The County Council would need to know where the bins were located, and they would need to be labelled in a way that identified them as belonging to the Parish Council.

Members were advised that the cost for a standard 10 cubic foot bin was £105.15 excluding VAT.

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 13 December 2021

Following discussion on locations it was suggested that 10 salt bins be ordered.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council order 10 salt bins.

(6) Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk provided an update on the Remembrance Day service that was held on Sunday 14 November 2021.

Trimdon Brass Band had been thanked for their attendance at the event and an invoice from them was awaited.

The Parish Council had been unable to purchase any lamp post poppies from the Royal British Legion but as soon as the poppies were back in stock 50 would be purchased for next year's Remembrance Service.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(7) Ex-Gratia Christmas Payments

The Chair suggested that an ex-gratia Christmas payment of £300 be made to J Davies, D Lamb and J Thompson.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for an ex-gratia payment of £300 to J Davies, D Lamb and J Thompson from the Chair's Account.

11 PAYMENTS

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

CHEQUE NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	British Gas	Gas - Heritage Centre	112.20	5.61	117.81
Direct Debit	e-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	65.69	3.28	68.97
Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Machine Repairs	107.45	21.49	128.94
Internet Banking	Horns Garden Centre	Christmas Trees and Accessories	412.91	82.57	495.48
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Workmens Club	Section 137 Donation	100.00		100.00
105690	Councillor E Carr	Reimbursement - Section 137 Donation	15.00		15.00
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	57.95	11.59	69.54
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements	31.11	6.22	37.33
Internet Banking	Mac Container Company Limited	Changing Rooms	3,905.00	781.00	4,686.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	J Davies	Ex- Gratia Christmas Payment	300.00		300.00
Internet Banking	D Lamb	Ex- Gratia Christmas Payment	300.00		300.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Ex- Gratia Christmas Payment	300.00		300.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - December 2021	4,626.61		4,626.61
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - December 2021	2,808.49		2,808.49
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - December 2021	15.40	3.08	18.48

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 13 December 2021

Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	26.97	5.40	32.37
Invoice 55	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	15.25		15.25
TOTAL			13,225.03	920.24	14,145.27

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) Quad Bikes

Members reported that quadbikes had been racing up and down the road outside the school. This was happening at the end of the school day when parents were collecting their children.

The quadbikes had also been on the grassed area opposite the school. The grassed area had been destroyed and the surrounding footpaths were covered in mud.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to Believe Housing and the Police.

..... Signed

.....Dated