

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2022**

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Carr and L Stewart and County Councillors L Hovvels and C Varty.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L White declared an interest in items 8(1) and 11(2).

3 The minutes of the last meeting held on 26 September 2022, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

4 COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM PROJECT

The Chair welcomed Claire Storey and Paul Dent representatives from the Community Action Team (CAT) to the meeting.

Members were provided with an overview of the CAT which brought together residents and a range of organisations to tackle housing and environmental issues in a specific area by identifying local priorities and making the best use of resources.

The CAT were planning an 11 week project in Wheatley Hill that would run from 10 October to 24 December 2022 and would include 865 properties in the target area.

The CAT would liaise with neighbourhood wardens, the fire service and police to carry out a programme of works in the target area. Typically, the CAT dealt with empty properties; rubbish and flytipping; abandoned bins; loan sharks; the sale of illegal cigarettes; pests; energy efficiency and anything else which affected the enjoyment of an area where people lived and/or worked. The CAT used enforcement powers to encourage owners, occupiers and landlords to take responsibility for their neighbourhood and their properties.

The 11 week project was broken down into two weeks to identify issues and plan priorities, seven weeks of action and two weeks of review.

During the two weeks of identifying issues and planning priorities residents, businesses and members of the local community would be asked for input into areas and problems they would like to see tackled. Local knowledge was invaluable, and the CAT would be speaking to as many residents as possible. Details of planned engagement events and weekly walkabouts were outlined.

Members were happy with the proposed target area and suggested additional areas/issues that they would like to see included and investigated.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There was no public present at the meeting.

6 POLICE MATTERS

The Police reported that between 1 September and 9 October 2022 there had been 12 reports of anti-social behaviour, 10 thefts and 4 reports of criminal damage.

The monthly report prepared by the Neighbourhood Warden which detailed incidents across the division, including Wheatley Hill, was circulated to Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

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

- The following issues raised at the last meeting were reported to Durham County Council and/or the Police.
 - Church Street - anti-social behaviour – Police agreed to patrol the area more frequently and investigate the issues raised
 - Rubbish to the rear of Church Street
 - Property with storm Arwen damage
 - Potholes at Black Lane and the Coop
 - West House
 - Lights off on the Front Street – Durham County Council and National Power Grid were trying to resolve the issue with the lights and a cable fault
 - Spray paint on a property was reported but the owner had not signed a disclaimer
 - The planning application for Warden Lodge had been withdrawn
 - Hedge at Marley Fields – with Highways
- Community Action Team (CAT) - residents were encouraged to feed into the process to provide a comprehensive picture of the problems and focus the work to be undertaken.
- A local emergency plan meeting would be held on 13 October 2022
- County Councillors were working with the Banner Group to get a new banner

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Request for Financial Assistance – 2nd Wheatley Hill Scouts Club

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

RESOLVED that a donation of £500 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(2) Letters of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of thanks from the Great North Air Ambulance Service and Wheatley House Senior Citizens Club following donations from the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Arriva Bus Service 22

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident advising of concerns related to the Arriva Bus Service 22 to and from Wheatley Hill.

The resident was concerned that Arriva services, particularly the 22 service, was in crisis and every day buses were cancelled or late and there were multiple breakdowns on route.

Residents living in Wheatley Hill relied on the bus service to get to work, school or college. Older people relied on it to shop and visit family and friends. An elderly person was recently seen in tears after waiting two and a half hours, in the cold, at Peterlee for a bus.

The resident was concerned that they would lose their job as they were unable to consistently get to work on time in Durham. This was solely due to the poor bus service provided by Arriva and passengers were becoming increasingly angry.

Members were advised that the resident had complained several times to Arriva and had also contacted Paul Howell MP. There had been no change and the service continued to worsen. As a relatively remote village, the bus service was a lifeline which was being taken away from Wheatley Hill making it harder for residents to gain and retain employment, study and engage in activities of daily living.

Members had previously discussed this issue and were aware of the problems related to the Arriva bus service in Wheatley Hill.

RESOLVED that the Chair refer the matter to Durham County Council.

9 PLANNING MATTERS

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting consideration of the following application was deferred. Members were advised that the application had been withdrawn.

DM/22/02187/FPA – Erection of bungalow at land south of 18 Weardale Park, Wheatley Hill

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 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.

11 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Allotments

(a) Rubbish Removal

The Clerk had previously reported that the boundary fence at the allotments could not be finished until the area was cleared of rubbish. Quotations had been sought and a verbal quotation was received from WBL Groundworks Ltd for the hire of machinery and an operator to clear the site.

WBL Groundworks Ltd were asked to provide a detailed written quotation with an estimate of how long would be required to clear the area. The written quotation was still awaited.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted

(b) Annual Rents

The Clerk reported that the annual rent letters had been issued.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) Proposed Car Park - Land Opposite Wheatley Hill Primary School

Members had previously been advised that Wheatley Hill Primary School were in the process of acquiring land opposite the school to convert into a car park.

An update was provided together with details of sources of funding for the project.

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

(3) Christmas Trees

The Clerk sought approval to order Christmas trees for the Cemetery and the Workingmen’s Club. Regarding the Christmas trees traditionally donated to the Community Centre it was agreed that this be deferred to the November meeting.

It was suggested that a Christmas tree be provided outside Wheatley House. The Clerk agreed to check that there was an accessible source of electricity available for the tree lights.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Thank You - Mr Davies

The Clerk reported that at the time of Her Majesty the Queen’s death Mr Davies was on holiday. Mr Davies undertook a long drive back to Wheatley Hill to ensure that a book of condolence was available for residents to sign, and the portrait of the Queen was on display.

This was appreciated, and it was suggested that a letter of thanks be forwarded to Mr Davies. It was also suggested that Mr Davies be reimbursed £100 for fuel, and he be awarded one day’s additional holiday to compensate for the day he lost whilst on annual leave.

RESOLVED that a letter of thanks be forwarded to Mr Davies, and he be reimbursed £100 for fuel and awarded one additional day’s holiday.

(5) Cemetery Bungalow

The Clerk reported that major work to the cemetery bungalow roof was undertaken earlier this year by Durham County Council at a cost of £3,622. Further work was required and Durham County Council had provided a quotation of £5,963 plus VAT.

RESOLVED that the quotation for the work to the cemetery bungalow in the amount of £5,963 plus VAT from Durham County Council be accepted.

12 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure at 30 September 2022.

PAYMENT	PAYABLE TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Direct Debit	e-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	64.68	3.23	67.91
Internet Banking	2nd Wheatley Hill Scouts Club	Section 137 Donation	500.00		500.00
	Club				
Internet Banking	J Davies	Reimbursements	148.54	22.70	171.24

Wheatley Hill Parish Council – 10 October 2022

Internet Banking	J Davies		Reimbursement - Petrol			100.00		100.00
Internet Banking	J Davies		Heating Allowance - 2nd Instalment			100.00		100.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson		Reimbursements			73.74	7.13	80.87
Internet Banking	J Thompson		Telephone Allowance			25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Payroll		Wages - October 2022			4,584.44		4,584.44
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC		PAYE/Pension - October 2022			2,862.23		2,862.23
Internet Banking	Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Services		Attachment of Earnings			199.43		
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited		Payroll Services - October 2022			30.00	6.00	36.00
Direct Debit	Information Commissioner		Data Protection Registration			35.00		35.00
Direct Debit	British Telecom		Telephone/Internet			29.77	5.95	35.72
Invoice 65	Co-Op Bank		Service and Commission Charges			11.20		11.20
						TOTAL	8,764.03	45.01
								8,609.61

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

13 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

..... Signed

.....Dated