

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2020

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

Apologies: Councillor C Stogdale

- 1 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 September 2020 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

Members were advised that since the last meeting 122 incidents had been reported which included 11 anti-social behaviour, 4 burglaries, 4 criminal damage and 5 vehicle crimes. Year to date anti-social behaviour had increased by 9% and crime was down 9%.

The Police Newsletter for October was received and had been posted on the Parish Councils website.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

There was no County Councillors present at the meeting.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Request for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the Great North Air Ambulance.

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

(2) Letters of Thanks

The Clerk reported the receipt of the following letters of thanks.

Haswell and District Mencap Society
Wheatley Hill Community Association
Rev J Grieve

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Front Street

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Police advising of a proposal to erect fencing on the wall at the Industrial Estate on the Front Street to deter youths congregating.

Members were advised that the wall was the responsibility of Durham County Council and the Police had contacted them for their permission to erect the fencing.

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

(4) Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from the Royal British Legion providing guidance for Remembrance Sunday activities.

As a result of Covid-19 restrictions the Royal British Legion were asking individuals and communities to consider new ways of performing Remembrance activities. Details of suggested Covid safe activities that were inexpensive to create were outlined to Members and included the following:

- Hold a small Remembrance service in your garden
- Create a Remembrance space in your garden by planting plants with a connection to Remembrance
- Use ZOOM or Facebook to host an online Remembrance service or activity
- Set up a community Remembrance forum to discuss different residents' Remembrance stories
- Create an online exhibition of Remembrance related photos from residents
- Do an online interview with a local veteran or someone currently serving
- Open an online book of Remembrance
- Write letter of Remembrance to veterans or serving personnel
- Use Remembrance education activities to help children learn about Remembrance
- Children and families could be asked to create a Remembrance art piece and display it in their window like the rainbows for the NHS

Members were advised that the Royal British Legion had created a virtual field of remembrance where people could virtually plant their Tribute from home, and explore other Tributes made to remember the fallen.

Members discussed the Remembrance Service held in the Cemetery. Clarification was still awaited on the holding of Remembrance events, but that this year's service would need to be scaled back and Government guidance adhered to.

It was suggested that in order to minimise the number of people gathering at the Cenotaph the wreaths could be left in the Heritage Centre the day before and laid at the Cenotaph by the Vicar and a small number of participants on the Sunday.

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

6 PLANNING

There were no planning matters.

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

(a) Application for an Allotment

The Clerk reported the receipt of an application for an allotment.

RESOLVED that application 9/2020 be accepted onto the waiting list for an allotment.

(b) Annual Rent 2020/2021

The Clerk reported that annual rent letters were issued at the end of September 2020.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(c) Allotments 4 and 6

The Clerk reported that the tenant of allotments 4 and 6 had advised of their intention to hand both gardens back.

Members were advised that the tenant of allotment 10 had asked to swap his plot for the now vacant plot 4.

RESOLVED that approval be granted for the tenant of allotment 10 to swap his plot for plot 4.

(2) Annual Audit

The Clerk reported that Mazars LLP had completed the annual audit for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Members were advised that Mazars had reviewed Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and in their opinion the information was in accordance with proper practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Budget Setting 2021/2022

The Clerk reported the receipt of correspondence from Durham County Council advising of the indicative forecast of reductions in Local Council Tax Support Scheme Grant for the period 2021/2022.

The forecasts provided could be used for budget planning purposes, but COVID-19 was making it difficult to accurately forecast a tax base. The actual tax base forecasts for 2021/2022 would be compiled in October 2020.

Members were advised that using the forecasts provided the Parish Council would see an increase in its Tax Base of 13.6 and a reduction in grant of £600.26.

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

(4) Wheatley Hill Community Association

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Community Association (WHCA).

The Parish Council had allocated £15,000 in the 2020/2021 budget to fund the provision of recreational activities, to be delivered by WHCA at the Greenhills Centre, on behalf of the Parish Council. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions the Greenhills Centre had been unable to offer regular school holiday activities.

At the last meeting Members agreed to fund the October half term holiday activity packs at a cost of £1,000. Further detail in relation to these planned activities were outlined to Members.

WHCA had investigated the possibility of providing a Covid secure, socially distanced Santa experience but had been unable to justify the costs. It was thought that activity packs would be the safest option and the Parish Council were asked to consider the following.

- Christmas - 300 Christmas activity packs for 100 children based on 3 packs per child, 1 per day over 3 days in the week leading up to Christmas. It was also intended to add in a selection box and sweets

Distribution of the packs would start on 21 December and the activity would build up over the 3 days in the run up to the big day.

Costs were still to be finalised but would be in the region of £1,750 based on 200 craft packs at £5 per head and 100 at £7.50 per head.

- Remembrance Sunday – Suggestions, ideas and prices were being sought for Remembrance Day activity packs for families given that this year parades would be cancelled.

A local bakery had been contacted to discuss ideas and costs to supply Poppy/Remembrance biscuits for older clients and Christmas treats for children.

The Parish Council were asked to consider supporting the approach proposed by WHCA.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that approval be granted for a financial donation of £2,500 towards the Christmas activity packs and Remembrance activities.

(5) Parish Council Vacancy

The Clerk reported that the vacancy on the Parish Council had been advertised for a period of 14 days and the requisite number of signatories required to call an election was not received. The Returning Officer had advised that the Parish Council was now able to co-opt.

Members discussed the vacancy and **RESOLVED** not to co-opt at this time.

(6) New Bungalows - Durham Aged Mineworkers Homes Association

The Clerk reported that the new bungalows to be built in Wheatley Hill and managed by Durham Aged Mineworkers Homes Association would be named after Councillor Morris Nicholls.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure as of 30 September 2020.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Internet Banking	British Gas	Gas - Heritage Centre	114.65	5.73	120.38
Internet Banking	npower	Electric - Heritage Centre	154.36	7.72	162.08
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements	27.15	0.75	27.90
Internet Banking	Anglian Water Business	Water - Allotments	76.05		76.05
Internet Banking	J Davies	Heating Allowance - 2nd instalment	100.00		100.00
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance	25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Great North Air Ambulance	Section 137 Donation	100.00		100.00
Internet Banking	Wheatley Hill Community Assoc	Recreational Activities	2,500.00		2,500.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - October 2020	4,592.81		4,592.81
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - October 2020	2,844.36		2,844.36
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - October 2020	20.90	4.18	25.08
Direct Debit	Information Commissioner	Data Protection Registration	35.00		35.00
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet	62.09	12.42	74.51
Direct Debit	O2	Chairs Mobile Telephone	26.31	5.26	31.57
Invoice 41	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges	15.50		15.50
TOTAL			10,694.18	36.06	10,730.24

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

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

There was nothing to report.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that personal and confidential information would be disclosed.

12 STAFFING ISSUES

The Clerk provided Members with an update on staffing issues.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

..... Signed

.....Dated