

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON 8 MARCH 2021**

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

Apologies: Councillors E Carr, C Stogdale

Also Present: County Councillor L Hovvels

Prior to the commencement of business, the Clerk advised that this meeting was being held remotely via ZOOM in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

1 The Minutes of the last meeting held on 8 February 2021 a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair welcomed Mr G Tempest and Mr C Hackworth to the meeting.

3 POLICE

Members were advised that since the last meeting 69 incidents had been reported which included 10 anti-social behaviour, 1 criminal damage, 1 theft, 6 burglaries and 2 vehicle crimes. Year to date anti-social behaviour and crime was down 42% and 24% respectively.

The Police advised that there had been a spate of wheeled bin thefts. Several youths had been identified and referred to the anti-social behaviour team and one male had been referred to the youth offending service for the theft of the bins.

Members expressed concern at the lack of a Police presence in the village. There was only 1 reported incident for covid breach which was surprising given that gangs of youths were congregating and causing a nuisance on a daily basis.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

County Councillor L Hovvels provided an update on various issues as well as the local elections scheduled to be held on 6 May 2021.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Local Council Tax Support Grant

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had advised that local authority council tax taxbases had been impacted by the covid pandemic. In recognition of this the Government had provided local government with an un-ringfenced grant called the Local Council Tax Support Grant. The funding was in recognition of the impact the covid pandemic had had upon council tax but also the need for local authorities to assist economically vulnerable residents with council tax and local welfare schemes. Major preceptors would receive the

Grant but not Town and Parish Councils.

Members were advised that there had been a reduction in the tax base for many Town and Parish Councils albeit for small amounts. In recognition of this the County Council were making a one-off payment to Town and Parish Councils where year on year tax raising capacity had been impacted.

The County Council had suggested that the Parish Council may wish to revise its precept considering the additional funding. However, given the fact that the funding being awarded was £329.35 it was suggested that it be treated as one-off unbudgeted income.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6 PLANNING APPLICATION – DM/20/03621/FPA – Refurbishment into 5 individual self-contained flats at Community Health Clinic, School House, Front Street, Wheatley Hill.

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting Durham County Council were asked to refuse planning permission for the refurbishment of the former Health Clinic. The County Council were asked to refer the application to the Area Planning Committee and a site visit was requested to allow Members of the Planning Committee the opportunity to view the site and the surrounding area.

Members were advised that the planning application would be considered by the Area planning Committee on 9 March 2021. The Chair and Clerk would be attending the meeting and the Chair was registered to speak against approval of the application.

The Clerk advised that the Police had initially supported the Parish Council and objected to the application. However, they had subsequently withdrawn their original letter of support and replaced it with a letter supporting the application. Without the support of the Police, it was expected that the application would be approved.

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

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 a break-in at the allotments which had resulted in the killing of several chickens. The incident had been reported to the Police.

Members were advised that 2 Televisions fly-tipped at the allotments had been removed.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(2) New Machinery – Cemetery

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members approved the purchase of a new Solis 26 Tractor, with backhoe and front bucket at a cost of £13,750 plus £2,750 VAT.

Following the meeting the Parish Council were advised that the price of the Tractor had increased and this applied to all quotations received.

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Following negotiation, a quotation from Blacktrac was received in the sum of £14,250 plus £2,850 VAT. Whilst this was a higher quote than previously agreed the quotation included additional equipment and road registration.

Following discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair the additional expenditure was agreed and the quotation was accepted. The new machine was delivered 2 March 2021. It was taxed and added to the Councils insurance policy at a cost of £200.10 pro rata to the renewal date of the policy.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) Machine Fuel

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Members were advised that Durham County Council were no longer able to provide the Parish Council with machine fuel. The cost paid to the County Council for the fuel was considerably lower than if purchased from a commercial garage.

Members were advised that following negotiation with Mr C Gregory he had agreed to supply the Parish Council with machine fuel at cost.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(4) Salt bins

The Clerk reported that during periods of bad weather the Parish Council received regular requests, from residents, for additional salt bins.

Members were advised of the criteria used by Durham County Council to assess the suitability of a location for a salt bin, a copy of which was provided for Members' information.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Dodds Close/Pit Wheel

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting the County Council's Clean and Green section were asked to submit the application for Section 106 funding to provide hooped perimeter fencing at Dodds Close.

Members were advised that the Clean and Green section were in the process of obtaining the necessary approvals for the proposed work.

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

9 PAYMENTS

The following schedule of payments was circulated together with figures for all income and expenditure as at 28 February 2021.

CHQ NO	PAYMENT TO	DETAIL	COST	VAT	TOTAL
Internet Banking	Blacktrac Ltd	Solis Compact Tractor	14,250.00	2,850.00	17,100.00
Internet Banking	e-on Next	Electric - Heritage Centre	43.77	2.19	45.96
Direct Debit	British Gas	Gas - Heritage Centre	121.33	6.06	127.39
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Reimbursements	26.05	5.22	31.27

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Internet Banking	Durham County Council	Machine Repairs		292.92	58.58	351.50
Internet Banking	Zurich Municipal	Insurance - New Tractor		200.21		200.21
Internet Banking	J Thompson	Telephone Allowance		25.00		25.00
Internet Banking	Payroll	Wages - March 2021		4,626.81		4,626.81
Internet Banking	HMRC/DCC	PAYE/Pension - March 2021		2,810.36		2,810.36
Internet Banking	JAC's Accountancy Limited	Payroll Services - March 2021		30.80	6.16	36.96
Direct Debit	British Telecom	Telephone/Internet		25.83	5.16	30.99
Direct Debit	O2	Chairs Mobile Telephone		26.31	5.26	31.57
Invoice 46	Co-Op Bank	Service and Commission Charges		12.35		12.35
				TOTAL	22,491.74	2,938.63 25,430.37

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

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

There was nothing to report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Pot Holes

Members reported pot holes at the rear of Gable Terrace. The Clerk reported that the condition of the road to the rear of Gable Terrace had been reported to Durham County Council.

RESOLVED that the pot holes be reported to Durham County Council.

(2) Fly-Tipped Rubbish

Members reported fly-tipped rubbish at the rear of Church Street.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

(3) Marley Fields

Members reported that the bollards located on the footpath leading from Marley Fields onto the A181 were positioned in the wrong location. An additional bollard was needed to prevent access to quads and off-road bikes, or the existing bollards needed to be re-positioned.

RESOLVED that the matter be reported to Durham County Council.

..... Signed

.....Dated