

**West Rainton Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Parish Council meeting held at**  
**St. Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton**  
**Thursday 17 March 2016**

**Present:**

Councillors A. Wallage (Chair), I. Clifford (Vice-Chair), M. Gilbank, E Bulmer, P Lowrie (left after item 8 ), P. Morson, and S. Patterson (arrived at 7.30pm, prior to item 8).

NOTE: The meeting was not audio recorded.

3 Members of the public (MoP).

**In attendance:**

Parish Clerk – Kate Cuthbert  
Alan Percival – Community Association  
Jeff Morland – Community Association  
Janet Taylor – Community Association

**1) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr A. Swinburn (due to work commitments) and Councillor Haddick (due to unavailability).

These were noted as approved apologies for absence.

**2) Declarations of interest**

It was agreed that declarations of interest would be dealt with as and when the need arose.

**3) Public participation**

No issues were raised.

**4) Minutes**

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18 February, 2016 be approved as a correct record.

**5) Co-option Process**

The Clerk advised the Parish Council, that as previously reported at the last meeting, there were two casual vacancies and two residents had expressed an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor and had completed the "Self-Certification of meeting statutory requirements". Formal expressions of interests had now been received

and circulated to members in advance of the meeting to consider. Both residents were in attendance to discuss with the Parish Council, their suitability for the role.

The Clerk outlined the co-option procedure (previously agreed) which was duly undertaken by the Parish Council.

Following consideration of both candidates, the Parish Council resolved to: appoint Cynthia Cochrane and Maureen Boettcher as Parish Councillors.

## **6) Presentation on proposed developments to Jubilee Hall (delivered by the Community Association)**

Alan Percival, Jeff Morland and Janet Taylor (Community Association) delivered a presentation to the Parish Council on the proposed developments to Jubilee Hall.

The Parish Council was advised that they were currently in the process of evaluating tenders to change the exterior of the building, with a particular emphasis on erecting a pitched roof, subject to funding.

Additional plans included a suite upstairs with disabled access and also light/sound systems.

The Parish Council was thanked for their financial assistance and support, which would be used to pay for professional fees and it was anticipated that the renovations would increase both membership and activity.

Councillor Gilbank referred to a discussion which took place at the December 2013 meeting of the Parish Council and questioned whether the outstanding £5,000 should be paid to the Community Association.

The Parish Council resolved that further information needed to be obtained in relation to this, prior to any decision being made, and that this would be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

## **7) Role of the Project Officer**

Cllr Wallage presented an update report on the role of the Project Officer which had been previously circulated.

It was noted that, the creation of the part time post of Project Officer (10 hours per week) was approved at a meeting of the Parish Council in September 2015.

The purpose of this post was to create an additional resource to enable a number of developmental and aspirational aspects of Parish Council Business to be progressed, alongside the day to day administration and financial responsibilities of the Parish Clerk.

Mr Graeme Keedy, the former Parish Clerk, was appointed to the post with effect from 1 December 2015 on a fixed term basis up to 31 March 2016 on an hourly rate of £10.26 per hour.

The report outlined:

- The project officer submitted monthly timesheets for scrutiny to the Chair & Vice Chair identifying all work carried out.
- As expected, some of the project officer's time to date, necessarily, has been spent on transitional issues and to support the new Parish Clerk on historical issues.
- Updates regarding progress on the cemetery development and the risk register have already been reported and considered by the Parish Council at previous meetings.
- A summary prepared by the Project Officer capturing tasks identified, further action required and an indicative estimate of hours needed to complete, was attached as Appendix A of the report.
- The need for the project role to be extended.
- The 2016/17 draft budget was approved by the Parish Council at its meeting in January 2016.
- The budget reflected the likelihood of a continued additional staff resource, over and above the contracted 10 hours a week of the Parish Clerk, to support the delivery of council priorities and aspirations for next year.
- There was budget provision for a total staff resource of 20 hours per week for the whole year. (£10,900).

The Parish Council resolved to:

- Extend the role of Project Officer until the 30 June 2016; and
- Asked that a further update on progress be provided for the June meeting, when the position would be further reviewed.

### **8) Consideration of Payment to Project Officer in Lieu of Un-Taken Annual Leave and Additional Hours Worked**

Councillor Wallage referred Parish Councillors to a report, prepared and previously circulated by the Mr G Keedy, which advised that from his commencement as Parish Clerk in September 2014, intense efforts were required by G Keedy to familiarise himself with, and tackle issues facing the Parish Council after a period of instability.

This continued until Autumn 2015 when Parish Council recognised and agreed to divorce the routine administration and developmental demands of the organisation and establish two roles.

Throughout this period, leave accrued in line with conditions of service, but the Parish Clerk did not take full leave entitlement.

Dialogue had taken place with the National Employment Adviser of the Society of Local Council Clerks, and advice obtained to clarify leave entitlement (which includes annual leave plus pro rata entitlement for statutory, bank and public holidays) and reflect the differing contractual hours throughout the employee's tenure.

The Chairman and Vice Chair have had sight of this advice and the detailed calculation to identify costs involved in making payment in lieu. Both were satisfied as to the validity and accuracy.

For the financial year 2014-2015, leave accrued but not taken amounted to 36.12 hours with an equivalent gross pay value of £353.04.

For the financial year 2015-2016, leave accrued but not taken amounted to 44.20 hours with an equivalent gross pay value of £446.01.

With regards to additional hours, the following final claim for 15-16 was submitted for consideration:

July 2015 – 8.00 hrs @£9.90 / hr = £79.20  
September 2015 – 31.00 hrs @£10.26 / hr = £318.06  
October 2015 – 26hrs. 45 mins @£10.26 / hr = £274.45

Parish Council was advised that due to forecasting and virement, financial provision for payment exists within the 2015-16 budget.

It was noted that, if the contract for the Project Officer was extended, annual leave entitlement of 10.00 hrs (Full Time Equivalent 5 days), would be carried over from 15-16 to 16-17.

Combined cost implications for any additional payments for both elements outlined in the report were:

- a) Full reimbursement (contract conclusion) - £1470.76
- b) Partial reimbursement (contract extension) - £1368.16

Parish council were advised that when aggregated with the monthly salary, the payment would incur an employer National Insurance liability for March 2016 of £171.03 (option a); or £156.87 (option b).

The Parish Council resolved to make a payment to Mr Keedy (in line with option b outlined above) in lieu of leave not taken in 2014-15 and 2015-16; together with remuneration for additional hours worked in Q2 and Q3, 15-16.

## 9) Village Plan Update

The Parish Council considered a proposal (previously circulated) from Durham Community Action to support the Parish Council in leading on the development of Parish Plan. A proposed timeline for the process (previously circulated) was also considered.

It was noted that the proposal from Durham Community Action included indicative costings and would be subject to some flexibility as work required to support the preparation of the plan was firmed up through the various stages of its development.

The Parish Council acknowledged that £5,000 grant funding had been received from DCC to support the development of the plan and that it would take approximately 12 months to complete if work commenced in March/April 2016.

The Parish Council resolved to :

- a) Accept the proposal from Durham Community Action, to be funded from DCC grant.
- b) Hold a "launch event" to begin the consultation process, to take place at the conclusion of the Annual Parish Meeting. This would outline the benefits to the community of developing the plan and provide information for residents, councillors, and other interested parties about what was involved and how they could help prepare it.

## 10) Finance

The Parish Clerk referred to the Finance report previously circulated. Members were advised of the following:

### **Income received since last report dated 18/02/2016 totalled:**

Co-op Funeral Care: £ 200.00

S Wright Funeral: £100

Grant DCC (Village Plan) £5,000

### **Expenditure**

#### **Expenditure previously approved by Parish Council due this month**

	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1	K Cuthbert	Parish Clerk Net Salary	£ 343.20
2	G Keedy	Project Officer Net Monthly Salary	£355.60
3	Post Office	Combined HMRC on monthly salaries	£174.80
4	D Lewins	Cemetery Gatekeeper Fee	£ 80.00

5	St. Mary's P.C.C	Grant	*£200
6	West Rainton FC	Grant	*£500
7	West Rainton & Leamside Partnership	Grant	*£250
8	West Rainton Primary School PTA	Grant	*£1,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£2,903.60</b>

\* Cheques to be post-dated 1/4/2016 as to be met from 2016/17 budget

#### Expenditure requiring approval

	Payee	Purpose	Amount	Budget Provision Y/N
1	G Keedy	Additional Hours and payment in lieu of annual leave (Option B of Agenda Item 8 )	£957.67	Yes
2	Post Office	<b>Additional</b> HMRC liabilities as a consequence of additional gross payment to G Keedy (Option B of Agenda Item 8)	£567.36	Yes
3	Came & Company	Insurance	£378.53	Yes
4	Northumbrian Water	Water Supply (Cemetery)	£11.50	Yes
5	Max Recycle	Annual Duty of Care	£135.00	Yes
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£2050.06</b>	

#### Bank Balances – For Information

Total Expenditure included above	£4,953.66
Anticipated current a/c bank balance if all paid	£14,778.54
Reserve Account Balance	£ 15,019.03

The Parish Council resolved to:

- (1) Note the income, expenditure and bank balances reported for information; and
- (2) Agree the expenditure requiring approval.

#### 11) Financial Position as at 31 March 2016

The Clerk advised that an update in relation to the financial position as at 31 March, 2016 would be submitted at the next meeting, after the financial year end.

## **12) Annual Parish Meeting**

Councillor Wallage advised the Parish Council that the Annual Parish Meeting was normally held in May. At this meeting the Parish Council's Annual Report for 2015/2016 would be presented by the Chairman. Upon discussion, the Parish Council agreed that this meeting should be held before the Parish Council's Annual General Meeting (Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May). Subject to availability, it was agreed that the Annual Parish Council Meeting would be held in the Jubilee Hall at 7.00pm.

## **13) Heritage Garden Annual Maintenance Contract**

The Parish Clerk referred to the report previously circulated, and reminded members that a discussion took place at the January Meeting in relation to the Heritage Garden Maintenance Contract. At this meeting it was agreed that Councillors Wallage and Bulmer would produce a tender specification for the financial year (2016/17), in consultation with the Clerk.

This work was duly undertaken and the tender specification document was published on the website on Thursday 18 February, 2016. Applicants were given the deadline date of Thursday 3 March, 2016 to respond.

Applicants were given the option to quote for the provision of labour only and /or the supply of materials and plants.

Two applications were received. Applicant A responded on 28<sup>th</sup> February and Applicant B on 22<sup>th</sup> February. On 8<sup>th</sup> March, Applicant B withdrew their application due to personal circumstances.

The Clerk explained that she had evaluated the non-competitive tender document received from Applicant A and confirmed that the costs quoted, were for material/plants and labour, inclusive of VAT, and deemed to be reasonable (£1,578.51). This was within the budget set for 2016/17.

The Parish Clerk went on to say, that if materials/plants could be sourced directly at a more competitive price, the Parish Council reserved the right to do this. An hourly charge for ad hoc work had also been provided as requested, should additional works be required. Again, this was deemed to be reasonable.

The work undertaken would be monitored by the Clerk, Chairman and Councillor Bulmer, including the approval of any additional works required. Progress would be reported to the Parish Council on a regular basis.

Applicant A was an experienced Grounds man and Gardener and the Parish Clerk was confident that the applicant had completed the application carefully and was able to deliver to a high standard.

The Parish Council resolved that:

- (i) the contract be awarded to Applicant A;

- (ii) A regular review of the work be carried out including costs (to be undertaken by the Clerk, the Chairman and Councillor Bulmer);
- (iii) The Parish Council reserve the right to source materials/plants directly, if it was believed to be economically advantageous to do so.
- (iv) Any additional work required up to £100, be authorised for approval by the Parish Clerk (under the existing general delegated authority as per Standing Orders); and
- (v) Any additional works identified in excess of £100 would be reported to Parish Council to consider prior to work commencing.

#### **14) Annual Donation to CAB 2016/2017**

Parish Councillors were advised that a request for a donation had been received for the 2016/17 financial year. This amounted to £1,400.00. The Parish Council acknowledged that this was an extremely worthwhile service, however needed further advertising. A discussion would therefore take place with the Citizen's Advice Bureau to ascertain what publicity would be of benefit.

The Parish Council resolved to approve a donation of £1,440.00

#### **15) Anti-Social Behaviour Update**

Parish Councillors acknowledged that anti-social behaviour was still an issue in the Heritage Garden and resolved to take immediate action to install three battery operated security lights, at a cost of £69.99, to act as a deterrent.

#### **16) Planning Application: Ref – DM/16/00511/OUT**

Parish Councillors were advised that the weekly notification of planning applications dated 7 March 2016, previously circulated by the Parish Clerk, included the above application in relation to a housing development proposal at Broom House, Cocken Lane. Councillors were advised this was the planning application that a representative of the Community Association (CA) had referred to in the public participation section of the January 2016 Parish Council Meeting when an approach was made to individual councillors, in their capacity as residents, to sign a letter of support of the application because if approved the CA would receive £100K from the applicant to pay off CA debt.

Councillors were advised to review the application, and other documentation on the Durham County Council (DCC) planning portal, to consider if the Parish Council should submit any comments on the application to DCC.

#### **17) General Correspondence**

The Parish Council resolved to the following actions in relation to the correspondence received:

A Thank You card from West Rainton Brownies – noted

All other correspondence had been electronically circulated to Councillors.

**18) Police Report**

PSCO Raymond advised that since the last meeting there been:

3 – incidents of burglary

1 – theft

3 – incidents of criminal damage

12 – incidents of anti-social behaviour

**19) To agree date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 21 April 2016, 7.00pm at St. Mary's Church meeting room.

The meeting closed at 21.00 hrs.