

West Rainton Parish

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

19:00 Thursday 9th May 2018

Jubilee Hall, West Rainton

1. Present

Councillor Wallage (Chairperson) and Councillors M. Boettcher, M. Gilbank, P. Lowrie, P Morson
Mark Ramshaw – Parish Clerk
1 member of the public initially. 2 further members of the public joined the meeting at 19:40.

2. Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Wallage welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and advised that it was not a meeting of the Parish Council but it was a meeting to allow residents the opportunity to speak to members of the Parish Council.

3. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 25 May 2017

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting were approved as an accurate record.

4. 2017/2018 Annual Report of the Parish Council

The 2017/18 Report was circulated and Cllr Wallage presented the Report highlighting some of the key areas:

Specific Activities during 2017/18

Cemetery Improvements

During the year a more robust maintenance contract was awarded to help improve the appearance of the cemetery. Health and safety checks have also been carried out on memorial headstones to identify and make safe unstable headstones.

Opencast Mining – Field House Farm

A Parish Council representative has attended the Community Liaison Committee

(CLC) meetings during the year and plays an important role in providing information as work progresses, enabling any concerns in the local community to be addressed. It will also determine the priority of requests for grants to a Community Fund that Hargreaves must provide. Work has now begun on site in preparation for the start of coal extraction. Extraction is expected to start once the numerous planning conditions have been met.

Parish Plan

The Parish Plan was formally adopted by the Parish Council in June 2017. In adopting the Plan, the Parish Council is responsible for monitoring the delivery of all actions agreed by community groups/organisations, as well as those the Parish Council is leading on, and for the updating the Plan as and when necessary. The Plan has helped the Parish Council to determine its' priorities for the year and will continue to do so in future years.

Regular updates on progress made in delivering the Plan are given in the village newsletter.

Youth Service

During the year, Durham Area Youth (DAY), a community incorporated organisation was set up by trustees and other volunteers to continue to provide youth services in the parish and neighbouring areas, following the withdrawal of mainstream funding provided by DCC. During 2017/18 the service was funded by a grant from the Durham Area Action Partnership. To protect the service and ensure that it continued throughout 2018/19, the Parish Council has agreed to provide £6,000 funding to DAY. This decision supports community priorities identified through the Parish Plan consultation exercise regarding the importance of activities for young people and will help address residents' concerns about anti-social behaviour.

Future of Jubilee Hall

At its December meeting, the Parish Council considered a report from West Rainton and Leamside Community Association (WRLCA), outlining proposals for the future of Jubilee Hall involving the Parish Council and DCC.

The Parish Council acknowledges the importance of the Hall and agreed to consider the proposal subject to confirmation and clarification of DCC's expectations and support available.

Planning Applications

During the year, the Parish Council has been pro-active in checking planning applications and played a role in challenging applications where they felt it appropriate.

Financial Position

Budget pressures which the Parish Council is facing include:

- Funding required to deliver actions in the Parish Plan
- An increase in Data Controller fees as a result of new Data Protection legislation
- Provision for legal advice associated with consideration of Jubilee Hall proposals
- The need to maintain adequate reserves to fund unexpected expenditure

At its January meeting, the Parish Council considered and approved a draft budget for 2018/19. This reflects; existing service provision and priorities; funding for the youth service and other budget pressures and a forecast of available funding. In order to balance the budget and provide an appropriate level of reserves, the Parish Council made an informed, but difficult, decision to increase the parish precept for 2018/19.

Looking ahead

We will continue to implement actions in the parish plan and monitor and review overall delivery of the expected improvements and outcomes. We will update the plan as and when necessary and continue to keep you updated.

We will monitor the new youth service provision to ensure that funding provided delivers the expected outcomes.

We will continue to work with DCC and WRLCA to try and secure the future sustainability of the Jubilee Hall.

We will continue to work in partnership with the Village Partnership to provide co-ordinated, informed activities and services and help identify any potential external funding opportunities.

We will monitor the implementation of approved planning developments and strive to make the best use of funding opportunities for the parish arising from the S106 agreements associated with them.

We will begin work to implement the challenging requirements of new data protection legislation.

We will progress consideration of further cemetery developments to optimise the use of land as additional burial space and improve landscaping.

We will continue to progress full compliance with the requirements of the Local Council's Award Scheme.

5. Parish Plan Update

Cllr Wallage advised that some areas of the Parish Plan were completed and some were still to be progressed.

Some recent issues around fly tipping are within the Parish Plan. Cllr Wallage advised that actions within the Plan will develop, for example Youth Services,

which will develop based on children and young people's desires.
Further actions can be added as required.

6. Public Participation

The Chair invited members of the public to raise any issues of concern.
A member of the public enquired if there was any development with speed checks on the 'top' road as this was getting worse. Cllr Wallage advised some community speed checks had been undertaken with Police support and some letters have been issued to some drivers by the Police. Durham Constabulary is launching a new community speed check scheme. This will be volunteer led. The Police will train volunteers to undertake checks without a police presence.. Such volunteers would need to be vetted.
A member of the public enquired whether a mirror could be installed at the entrance to Lea Rigg to improve vision when exiting the junction. Cllr Wallage advised that this links to actions within the Parish Plan regarding improving road safety and this will be raised with DCC as a potential option.

The Meeting closed at 20:10.

M Ramshaw
Parish Clerk