

West Rainton and Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 20 November 2014

Present: E Bulmer, I Clifford, V Gibson, M Gilbank (Chairman), S Patterson,
A Sowerby and R Swinney.

Apology: Councillor A Wallage

In attendance: County Councillor S Guy, 5 Members of the public (MoP)

Parish Clerk: Graeme Keedy

NOTE:

Prior to formal commencement of the meeting, the Parish Clerk advised all present of the intention of Councillor R Swinney to audio record proceedings.

The meeting was subsequently subject to digital audio recording throughout by Councillor R Swinney.

1) Apologies

An apology received from Councillor A Wallage due to holiday committment was approved by the Parish Council.

2) Declarations of interest

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

3) Public Participation

A MoP queried the reasons for the audio recording. The Parish Clerk advised this was permissible due to recent changes in legislation. Councillor Swinney advised that he was recording to ensure the accuracy of minutes.

County Councillor Guy queried the retention period for audio recordings. The Parish Clerk agreed to follow this up as part of a future review of the Council's document and records retention policy.

1 of 8

Signed:

Date:

4) Minutes

The minutes of 23 October 2014 meeting were approved as a true record subject to the following amendment:

Page 5, item 15 - reference to Leamside should read West Rainton.

This was agreed by the Parish Council and a handwritten amendment was made by the Parish Clerk and countersigned by Councillor Gilbank.

5) Matters arising

The Parish Clerk drew to the attention of the Parish Council a typographical error in the previously agreed minutes of the 18 September meeting. Page 1, item 5 referred incorrectly to the minutes of 18 September 2014 - instead of 21 August 2014.

A pre-prepared, substitute minute correcting this with an explanatory note was agreed by the Parish Council and signed by Councillor Gilbank.

6) Acceptance of Office

Parish Council agreed to receive the "Acceptance of Office" submitted by Councillor A Wallage.

7) Police report

Parish Clerk advised that PCSO Gilley was unable to attend but she had submitted a written report. This was circulated. Parish Clerk advised that PCSO Gilley had been successful in gaining a role with Northumbria Police. Future contact for the Parish Council would be PCSO I Madsen. This was noted by the Parish Council.

8) Neighbourhood Warden report:

Parish Clerk reported that he had received a telephone update from Gary McCardle advising that an incidence of fly tipping at Leamside had occurred in October. No action had been able to be taken against the perpetrator(s). It was agreed that the Parish Clerk advise the Neighbourhood Warden team of future meeting dates.

9) Finance

Income and expenditure since 23 October 2014 meeting

Money in:

Co-operative Funeral Care	£400.00
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Cheque payments for expenditure for Parish Council approval:

Parish Clerk salary (13/10/14 -21/11/14)	£464.80
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Post Office (for HMRC)	£116.00
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Parish Clerk reimbursement:

HP Toner 131A (Black) purchased from PC World Business	£57.26
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Excess postage charge paid	£1.11
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West Rainton & Leamside CA (Room Hire 23 Oct 14)	£10.00
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County Durham Association of Local Councils - Training 15 Oct 14	£81.00
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Durham County Council (Hire of Arden House 28 May 14)	£12.50
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Coun M Gilbank reimbursement:

Agreed Parish Council contribution to Royal British Legion (wreath)	£30.00
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Postage costs incurred x 3	£11.17
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D Lewins - October and November payment	£160.00
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Total cheques: 10

Total costs: £943.84

The Parish Clerk sought approval to pay all itemised expenditure. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

NOTE: The full financial position of the Parish Council remains unable to be reported due to current unavailability of bank statements from May 2014 to date. The Parish Clerk reported that he remains in ongoing dialogue with the Co-operative Bank to gain access to the Parish Council's account as agreed by Parish Council on 23 October 2014.

Signed:

Date:

10) Co-op Bank account

Parish Clerk reported that he had spoken with Co-op Bank staff and had explained the Parish Council's circumstances. Following receipt of their advice, Parish Clerk had formally written to Co-op with background information and requesting account access. Although Co-op bank would consider this, they were clear there was no guarantee that this approach would satisfy their criteria for release of information. Their response was awaited.

As a "belt and braces" approach, the Parish Council's formal approval was sought to change Business Registration contact details to that of the current Parish Clerk and to agree to the Co-op Bank terms and conditions which had previously been circulated to members. This was proposed by Councillor Gilbank and seconded by Councillor Sowerby. Parish Council agreed the course of action outlined by the Parish Clerk.

It was also necessary to review bank account signatories due to changes in Parish Council composition. It was agreed by Parish Council that Councillors I Clifford and E Bulmer be added to the list of authorised signatories and they were asked to discuss with the Parish Clerk the completion of Co-op Bank documentation at conclusion of the meeting.

11) Governance review

The Parish Clerk outlined the comprehensive information he had received from Durham County Council relating to a governance review needed to consider amending the formal name of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council agreed to leave this in abeyance until 2015 and asked the Parish Clerk to consider possible consultation methods (including the Annual Parish Meeting) with stakeholders.

12) Boundary change

Councillor Sowerby declared an interest and left the meeting for this item.

Parish Clerk reported that he had received a request from Pittington Parish Council asking the Parish Council to consider a boundary change.

The Parish Council discussed this request. It was proposed by Councillor Gilbank and seconded by Councillor Patterson that there be no agreement to the request from Pittington Parish Council. This was agreed by the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk was asked to notify Pittington Parish Council accordingly.

13) Heritage Garden

Councillors Swinney, Gilbank and Patterson declared an interest in this item and did not take part in the discussion.

Parish Council agreed to further defer this item to the December meeting until clarity had been obtained about the Parish Council's current financial position.

14) Environmental issues

Councillor Gilbank reported that tree maintenance work had been completed.

He advised Parish Council of a potential health and safety issue at a Village Green location. Councillor Clifford recommended that a risk assessment be undertaken.

Councillor Gilbank agreed to explore possible remedial solutions and costs and report back to Parish Council.

15) Donation requests

Parish Council agreed to further defer to the December Parish Council meeting the following requests until clarity had been obtained about the Parish Council's current financial position:

Cynthia Cochrane, West Rainton and Leamside Green Group - £250.00

Keely Fingleton, Mid Durham Projects Club - £1000.00

16) Freedom of Information

The Parish Clerk gave an update on progress with current FoI requests. Concerns were expressed by Members about the time and costs being spent on dealing with FoI requests and the potentially vexatious and repeat nature of these.

Parish Clerk advised that the Parish Council was legally bound to respond to these requests.

A query was raised around the use of Members' personal email addresses for Parish Council business. The Parish Clerk confirmed that these were within the scope of FoI legislation and these could legitimately be requested.

It was noted that some Members had now set up personal email addresses exclusively for conducting Parish Council business. Parish Council agreed to recommend that all Members consider establishing an email addresses exclusively for Parish Council business.

17) Website

Councillor Gilbank advised that work on the website was at an advanced stage.

Parish Council agreed that the Parish Clerk liaise with Durham County Council over the availability of training dates and attend at a cost of £50-00.

18) Learning and Development update

Councillor Gilbank provided a detailed update on recent training organised by the County Durham Association of Local Councils and attended by himself, Councillor Swinburn and / or the Parish Clerk.

He highlighted a number of topics which would require the ongoing attention of the Parish Council including play areas, employer responsibilities and local contingency planning.

19) Apologies and attendance at meetings

Councillor Gilbank reminded Members of the importance of submitting in advance their written apology along with a reason if they were unable to attend a meeting.

This was to ensure attendance records could be properly maintained and monitored.

20) Co-option process

The Parish Clerk advised that he had received notification from Electoral Services at Durham County Council that no nominations had been received for the two casual vacancies which had arisen following the resignations of Councillors Kay Graham and Fiona Duckworth.

The Parish Council was now in a position to co-opt members. The Parish Clerk had sourced and circulated to Members the National Association of Local Councils model guidelines relating to co-option process.

Parish Council agreed to adopt the guidelines and publicise the vacancies with a view to co-opting in February 2015.

21) General correspondence

The Parish Council agreed the following in relation to correspondence received.

Durham County Council:

Notification of Tax Base and Request for Precept 2015/16

Deadline of 31 January noted. Chairman and Parish Clerk to meet to discuss.

21) General correspondence continued ...

Fly-tipping campaign - Householder waste duty of care **Noted**

Code of Conduct complaint **Noted**

County Durham Association of Local Councils:

Pay award 14/15 and 15/16

Noted. Parish Clerk to advise Council when formal notification received and of financial implications.

DCC consultation - Environment, Health and Consumer Protection Enforcement Policy **Noted**

G Hodson, Programme Correspondence Manager, Post Office Ltd:
Parish Council response to consultation exercise **Noted**

R Mehan, Senior Case Officer, Information Commissioner's Office:
Re Case reference FS50536628 **Noted**

K Tweddle (West Rainton Play Scheme Group):

Land ownership query and potential of site for location of Multi Use Games Area

Agreed in principle, subject to sight of plans and outcome of consultation.

J Watson (West Rainton and Leamside Partnership):

Request for unspecified amount as a donation for refilling flower tubs.

Parish Council agreed to further defer this item to the December meeting until clarity had been obtained about the Parish Council's current financial position.

D Kelly: Request for unspecified amount as a donation for "aged members"
Christmas lunch.

Parish Council agreed to donate £250-00. This was contrary to the advice of the Parish Clerk to adopt a consistent approach when considering donation requests at this time.

CommuniCorp:

Subscription renewal for "Clerks and Councils" Direct publication

Parish Council agreed to renew subscription for the nine current members of the council at a cost of £108.00 per annum.

21) General correspondence continued ...

Alison McDonough, Head Teacher, West Rainton Primary School:
Request for unspecified donation towards cost of Christmas Pantomime trip.

Parish Council agreed to donate £250.00 initially and consider a further donation of £250.00 at December meeting. This was contrary to the advice of the Parish Clerk to adopt a consistent approach when considering donation requests at this time.

Annette Simpson Accounting & Financial Services: Fee for Internal Audit - £150.00
Parish Council agreed payment.

West Rainton and Leamside CA: Room Hire for 20 November - £10-00
Parish Council agreed payment.

22) Date and time of the next meeting:

Thursday 18 December 2014 at 7.00pm