

West Rainton and Leamside Parish Council

Draft minutes of Parish Council meeting held at St. Mary's Church Meeting room

Thursday 16 July 2015

Present: Councillors E Bulmer, I Clifford, M Gilbank, S Patterson, A Sowerby, A Wallage (Chair).

2 x members of the public (MoP)

In attendance: County Councillor Kellett

Parish Clerk - Graeme Keedy

NOTE: Cllr Gilbank audio recorded the meeting for personal use.

Cllr Wallage audio recorded the meeting for official purposes.

1) Apologies for absence

No apologies had been received from Cllr A Swinburn and this was noted as an unapproved absence.

An apology was received from County Cllr D Hall.

2) Declarations of interest

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

3) Public participation

There were no questions or items raised by members of the public.

4) Minutes

Parish Council meeting held on 18 June 2015:

Cllr Gilbank sought clarification about declarations of interest. Parish Clerk confirmed that none had been declared. Cllr Gilbank reiterated his view that Tees Valley Housing had committed to provide a new cemetery as part of their development plans and suggested that notes of the initial planning hearing be reviewed.

It was proposed by Cllr Clifford and seconded by Cllr Bulmer that the following resolution proceed to a vote: "The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16 July 2015 be approved as a correct record."

This was carried, with four votes for and one against. Cllr Sowerby abstained as he had not been present at the 18 June meeting.

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of 16 July 2015 Parish Council meeting be approved as a correct record.

Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 25 June 2015:

Signed

Date

4) Minutes cont

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 25 June 2015 be approved as a correct record.

5) Parish Clerk update

Parish Clerk reported that Nobles Funfair had advised him that they no longer wished to go ahead with an August event and would consider a 2016 date.

The Clerk had been unable to progress the purchase of audio recording equipment and further research was required.

6) August recess

After discussion, Parish Council resolved to agree a recess for August 2015 and for the approval of payments of known expenditure as follows:

Parish Clerk net salary (August)	£514.90
Post Office (HMRC tax liability on Clerk salary)	£128.60
D Lewins (August payment)	£80.00
Leamside Nurseries (3 x anticipated cuts @£156.00 pre 20 August)	£468.00
A Baker (Heritage Garden maintenance)	£180.00

7) Parish Clerk working arrangements

Following a query from members, the Parish Clerk gave a breakdown of issues contributing to additional hours. The Parish Clerk then left the room to enable open discussion. In his temporary absence, it was agreed that Cllr Clifford would minute this item.

After discussion, it was the general view that as the Clerk had worked additional hours, they would need to be paid. The Clerk would be asked to further prioritise work to minimise the potential for additional hours.

The need to make progress with development of the Parish Council's website was noted, as this was a significant task for the Parish Clerk at this time. Cllr Clifford volunteered to assist with initial setting up of the website and this was agreed by Parish Council.

Parish Council resolved to authorise payment of 145.00 additional hours worked by the Clerk during Q1 April- June (2015-16).

8) Finance

Income and expenditure since 18 June 2015 meeting

Money in:

Derek Moss Funeral Directors	£300.00
North East Granite	£50.00
Wades Memorials	£100.00
Co-op current account balance as at 14 July 2015:	£28185.70

Signed

Date

Expenditure:

Parish Clerk net salary (July 2015 including additional hrs for Q1, 15-16)	£1494.36
Post Office (HMRC liabilities: Employer NI £193.61; Employee tax and NI £584.64)	£778.25
Parish Clerk reimbursement:	
Postage costs – Meeting papers to Cllr. for 25/6/15	£0.95
FoI response to resident	£4.40
Audit return to A Simpson (Internal Auditor)	£6.45
FoI response to councillor	£4.40
Annual Return to BDO (External Auditors)	£6.45
First Class stamps x 6	£3.78
Second Class stamps x 12	£6.48
Sub-total postage costs:	£32.91
Other costs - Travel costs (2 x meetings at County Hall on 24/6/15)	£11.00
Stationery – Tesco: 2 x A4 HP paper offer	£6.50
2 x 25 packs punch pockets	£4.00
Post Office: Jiffy bag	£1.10
Jiffy bag	£1.30
PC World Business (HP black toner cartridge 131X)	£52.05
Sub-total other costs:	£75.95
Total Parish Clerk reimbursement:	£108.86
Other costs:	
County Durham Association of Local Councils: Chairmanship training 10 June	£27.00
Leamside Nurseries: Grass cutting 25 June 2015	£156.00
Supply of plants for Heritage Garden	£145.60
Grass cutting 9 July 2015	£156.00
Co-operative Bank: request for copy of a cheque (Initiated under Clerk's delegated authority)	£12.00
A Simpson Accounting and Financial Services (Internal Auditor): Internal Audit fees for financial year ending 31 March 2015	£210.00
St. Mary's Church (Room Hire x 3: for 21 May, 18 June and 16 July 2015)	£30.00
D Lewins (July payment)	£80.00 Hedley's
Solicitors (Advice re Village Green) amount not exceeding more than £350.00+VAT	£420.00
Mr A Baker (Heritage Garden maintenance)	£285.00
Total other costs:	£1521.60
Total cheques: 11	Total combined expenditure: £3903.07
Anticipated current account balance after above approved expenditure:	£24282.63
Co-op deposit account balance @ 14 July 2015:	£15014.25

The Parish Clerk sought approval to pay all itemised expenditure.

The Parish Council resolved to agree payment of all expenditure and approve the financial report.

9) Budget position

Parish Council considered the budget position paper and noted the need to factor in risks and known or expected budget pressures from the contingency provision including any additional hours worked by the Parish Clerk. It was noted in particular that the budget provision for maintenance would likely need to increase to meet the cost of those improvements required at the cemetery as discussed at the June meeting.

Parish Council resolved to note the report, including the balance brought forward from 2014/2015, but agreed not to reallocate the contingency provision until the Q2 (July –

Signed

Date

9) Budget position cont

September) budget monitoring report was considered at the October meeting of Parish Council, by which time the estimated cost of cemetery improvements would be known.

10) Opencast appeal

Cllr Patterson expressed view that a majority of West Rainton residents were in favour of the open cast operation. Cllr Wallage advised that the agreed position of the Parish Council was to oppose the open cast development. Cllr Wallage added that she would be providing a statement to the hearing to be held at Pittington Village Hall on 29 September.

There was a general discussion about the proposed routes to and from the site and an increase in traffic which would impact on West Rainton.

Cllr Wallage agreed to circulate to Members the original submission objecting to the open cast plan, and invited comments from Members on what they considered should be the focus of this latest submission to the Planning Inspector.

Parish Council resolved to support a public meeting on the topic.

11) Donation/Grant requests

A grant request for £500.00 had been received from 'Stop the Opencast in Pittington and West Rainton' (STOPWR). Discussion took place around what this amount would be used for and the effectiveness of spending this amount.

Parish Council resolved to decline the application, but offer alternative support in the form of funding for a local venue for a public meeting and the submission of an editorial item to the village newsletter on the subject.

Parish Clerk agreed to recirculate details of village newsletter deadlines. Cllr Wallage would follow up the sourcing of a venue for the public meeting.

12) Internal Audit

Members considered the report and recommendations of the internal auditor. Members expressed concern about the reference to missing invoices and queried if a VAT claim had been made for 13/14. Parish Clerk was asked to follow up these aspects.

Parish Council resolved to receive the report and noted the action taken by the Parish Clerk in response to the recommendations of the internal auditor.

13) Community Association Trustees meeting

Due to the absence of Cllr Swinburn, Parish Council resolved to defer this to the September meeting.

14) Village News

Cllr Wallage outlined a range of topics to be provided for editorial coverage in the newsletter, including grants policy, councillor details and progress with the heritage garden.

Signed

Date

14) Village News cont

Parish Council agreed topics for inclusion in the August edition and supported a regular news update in future editions.

15) Heritage Garden

Cllr Wallage reported that an offer of a further £500.00 towards Heritage Garden works had been made. This had been secured via the AAP Co-ordinator by linking the Heritage Garden project with the Mining Heritage sculpture project. The latter being funded by AAP and County Council funds. To receive the funding, the two projects were to be linked and there had been an assumption that the mining sculpture would be located in the Heritage Garden.

The Parish Clerk reminded Parish Council that no such agreement had been reached. The project had been discussed at the December 2014 meeting, when it had been agreed in principle that the sculpture could be located on Parish Council owned land. This was on the basis that installation would be at no cost to the Parish Council and subject to proper agreement being reached in relation to responsibilities for ownership, ongoing maintenance / repair and other legal considerations.

As the sculpture dimensions provided now demonstrated that it could not be physically accommodated in the Heritage Garden, Parish Council resolved to allow it to be located on Village Green immediately in front of the site.

However, it was noted that information relating to the queries raised in December with Mid Durham Youth Project remained outstanding.

It was agreed that Cllr Wallage would liaise with County Cllr Kellett, the AAP Co-ordinator and Youth project lead and report back.

15) Heritage Garden cont

Discussions also took place about the purchase of an identification plaque for the Heritage Garden and various options were discussed. Cllr Wallage would report back to Parish Council when firmed up costs had been identified.

16) Councillor vacancies / co-options

The Parish Clerk reported that following a challenge from a resident to the previously agreed approach to co-options (a panel to meet to consider candidates and then make recommendations to full council) he had sought advice from the County Durham Association of Local Councils and National Association of Local Councils. Although no prescriptive advice had been forthcoming it was suggested that a meeting of the full Parish Council to consider co-options was the way forward.

Parish Council resolved that:

An Extraordinary meeting be arranged for 10 September 2015 for the purpose of co-options;

Further expressions of interest be sought through an editorial item in the summer edition of Village News and a deadline of 31 August be set;

Signed

Date

16) Councillor vacancies / co-options cont

Candidates be requested to submit a supporting statement of no more than one side of A4 outlining their suitability for the role and invited to speak for up to three minutes at the 10 September meeting;

and

Parish Clerk would contact all who expressed an interest to notify them of the arrangements and requirements.

17) West Rainton Cemetery

Parish Clerk advised that he had been signposted by Durham County Council to Cemetery Development Services, Bedfordshire to seek specialist advice on solutions to the range of issues affecting the cemetery including those highlighted by concerned visitors.

Cllr Patterson provided the Clerk with an initial list of required environmental improvements to form the basis of discussions with maintenance contractors.

18) General correspondence

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

County Durham Association of Local Councils:

Localisation of Council Tax Support and Council Tax Base **circulate to members**

Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Consultation **circulate to members**

18) General correspondence cont

Durham Community Action:

Try it Out" Young People's Event- 5 August **previously circulated**

Awards Information **previously circulated**

Local resident: re observations on proposed co-option process and arrangements for Extraordinary meeting of 25 June. **Noted - Clerk in ongoing dialogue**

County Cllr Kellett x 2 re Cemetery and speed limits

Noted – CC Kellett to meet with Police

County Cllr Hall x 2 re Cameras and Cocken Ford Bridge **circulate to members**

Plantscapeuk.com re solar powered Christmas trees **circulate web link to members**

19) Police report Parish Council resolved to receive the report.

20) Neighbourhood Warden report

No report had been received.

21) To agree date and time of next meeting

Thursday 17 September 2015, 7.00pm at St. Mary's Church meeting room.

Signed

Date