

**West Rainton Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Parish Council meeting held at**  
**St. Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton**  
**Thursday 21 January 2016**

**Present:**

Councillors Wallage (Chair), I Clifford (Vice-Chair), M. Gilbank, I Haddick, E Bulmer P Lowrie, P Morson and A. Swinburn.

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

3 x members of the public (MoP)

**In attendance:**

Parish Clerk – Kate Cuthbert  
Project Officer – Graeme Keedy  
Councillor Kellett – Durham County Council

**1) Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr S. Patterson (due to unavailability).

This was noted as an unapproved 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**

A member of the Community Association (CA) made a request for the members of the Parish Council to sign a petition on an individual basis in support of the resubmission of a planning application that would help secure funding to pay off CA debts relating to the Jubilee Hall. It was stressed by the CA representative that members were being asked as individual residents not as parish councillors as the meeting provided an opportunity to contact a number of residents at the same time. A similar approach had been made to all community groups in the village for the same reason.

The Parish Council was sympathetic of the difficulties the Community Association currently faced, however the Chair advised that a parish council meeting was not the appropriate place for such a request. Members were reminded that the parish council would be advised of all planning applications as a matter of routine by the

County Council. The parish council could consider its views on the application at that stage.

#### **4) Minutes**

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17 December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

#### **5) Legislative Issues affecting the Parish Council**

The Project Officer tabled a report to update the Parish Council on a response received from NALC (National Association of Local Councils) in relation to each of the issues raised by a Parishioner at the meeting on 15 October, 2015.

After considering the response of NALC (previously circulated) and noting the conclusions of the Project Officer, Parish Council resolved:

- (i) To accept and act upon the advice received from NALC and in view of this;
- (ii) To agree to the continuation of Parish Council business;
- (iii) To confirm the legitimacy of the co-option process and the subsequent involvement of members in the process of the appointment of the current Parish Clerk; and
- (iv) That the Project Officer formally advise the Parishioner of its' decision." As having sought and received legal advice from NALC as the national representative body for parish and town councils, the Parish Council regarded their comments as authoritative and had therefore exhausted its' enquiries.

#### **6) Councillor Vacancies**

The Clerk advised that following the resignations of Councillor Graham and Sowerby a formal "Notification of Vacancies" had been displayed in both the notice boards and also on the website.

As the requisite number of signatures had not been received by 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, an election would not be called and the Parish Council would therefore co-opt under their own co-option procedures. This would be advertised in the next edition of the Village Newsletter and also within notice boards and on the website.

Parish Council were keen to proceed with co-options without undue delay. The Project Officer was therefore requested to properly document the procedure and policy with a view of formal adoption at the February meeting.

#### **7) Village Plan: Presentation by Yvonne Probert**

Yvonne Probert was in attendance to provide a presentation to the Parish Council with information in relation to the development of a Village Plan.

Yvonne explained the difference between a Neighbourhood Plan and a Village Plan as detailed below:

1] Neighbourhood Planning – this was local planning aspirations and policies for the area which would sit under the Durham County Plan (Local Plan). It was a very formal document and robust process, and would normally take around 18 months to achieve, therefore a longer process.

2] Parish Planning – this was more about community aspirations mostly environmental and community/social, often informed by a survey of residents. It involved shorter consultations with a resultant action plan for partners to take forward, and could normally be achieved within approximately 6-12 months.

Yvonne explained that those Parish Councils working towards a Neighbourhood Plan, normally had a Parish Plan already in place and explained the level of work required to be undertaken, in order to develop and execute these plans.

The Parish acknowledged that they currently had £5,000 grant funding earmarked for the development of a Parish Plan and requested that Yvonne forward further details as to what was required and also any potential available support to the Parish Council. Yvonne agreed to action this and also extended an invitation for Councillors to attend two events to be held in March.

## **8) Cemetery Update**

The Project Officer circulated an update together with a 'Proposal of a full cemetery development and management programme document' from Cemetery Development Services (CDS).

The proposal from CDS included investigatory work to establish the extent of any remaining burial areas within the existing site, the preparation of layout and landscaping design, and if approved, the preparation of tender and construction documentation to commission this. An estimated timescale for CDS to fulfil all elements would be the end of April 2016.

The proposal from CDS comprised three cost elements:

Item 1 – Site burial survey & production of new burial plans - £6,300 (inc. VAT)

Item 2 – Cemetery Design - £4,620 (inc. VAT)

Item 3 – Management Brief - £1,860 (inc. VAT)

Total cost - £12,780 (inc. VAT)

CDS had indicated that should all three elements be commissioned together, they were prepared to reduce the costs by around £1,000 (plus VAT). If accepted, the £600 previously approved by the Parish Council would also be waived.

The Parish Council resolved to:

(i) proceed with all three elements at a total cost of £12,780 (inc. VAT) less any discounts; and

(ii) an extension of the current grass cutting contract be offered to the existing contractor, on a temporary but open-ended basis from 31 March 2016; pending the development by CDS of a wider environmental maintenance programme and subsequent tendering process.

## **9) Project Work Update**

The Project Officer advised that since his post had been established he continued to work on residual tasks. The cemetery update had been discussed earlier on the agenda and work would also be undertaken in conjunction with the Clerk, in relation to the VAT return for 2014/15. The Project Officer also intended to establish a Risk Register by 31 March, 2016.

## **10) Heritage Garden Annual Maintenance**

The Parish Council were reminded that it had previously agreed to the annual maintenance contract for the Heritage Garden being put out to tender from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2016.

It was resolved that: the preparation of the tender specification be delegated to the Chairman, Councillor Bulmer and the Clerk to the Parish Council.

## **11) Bank Account Signatories**

The Clerk advised that it would be prudent to have additional authorised signatories to the Parish Council bank account.

It was resolved that: Councillors P. Morson and P. Lowrie complete the necessary mandate form, to be authorised signatures on the account.

## **12) Opencast Appeal Decision**

Councillor Wallage referred to the letter which had been received advising of the Opencast Appeal decision.

The Parish Council resolved that this would be communicated via the Village Newsletter.

## **13) Finance**

**Money in since December 2015 meeting: £400.00**

Co-op current account balance as at 20 January 2016: £17,426.70

Expenditure requiring approval since 17 December 2015 meeting:

Project Officer (G Keedy) net salary – Jan 2016 £355.60

Parish Clerk net salary – Jan 2016 (K Cuthbert) £343.20

Post Office (HMRC liabilities - combined employees) £174.80

Project Officer (G Keedy) reimbursement:

Postage costs: Special Delivery £7.25

Parish Clerk (K Cuthbert) reimbursement: Christmas Tree Lights: £31.97

Other expenditure:	
Jones Boyd (Chartered Accountants) – Salary Calculations	£84.00
David Lewins (January payment) – Cemetery	£80.00
Anthony Baker – Maintenance of Heritage Garden	£15.00
CA (Hire of Hall – 21st December 2015)	£45.00
Total expenditure:	£1,136.82
Anticipated current account balance after above approved expenditure:	£16,289.88
Co-op deposit account balance @ 20 January 2016:	£15,019.03

The Parish Clerk sought approval to pay all itemised expenditure.

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

#### **14) Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report**

The Parish Clerk referred to a copy of the quarterly budget monitoring report previously circulated.

The Clerk explained that the budget for 2015/16 amounted to £28,190.00 with forecasted spend to the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 totalling £36,232.00 (including the Heritage Garden). Given the proposed income as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 of £38,357.00 an underspend of £2,125.00 was anticipated.

The Parish Council resolved to note the quarterly budget monitoring report.

#### **15) Precept 2016/17**

The Parish Clerk referred to the draft budget for 2016/17 which had been previously circulated.

The Parish Council resolved: to approve the provisional draft budget and set the precept at £25,581.00 (Band D £37.92) resulting in a 0% increase to the electorate. Given the LCTRS Grant of £2,972.00 the overall income generated for the 2016/17 financial year would amount to £28,553.00.

#### **16) General Correspondence**

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

HM Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations – Noted

Durham Community News (Information, events and funding) – Noted

County Durham Devolution Poll 2016 – Noted

NE Regional Event (9<sup>th</sup> March 2016) – Councillor Wallage to attend

ICO Annual Registration Charge – Parish Clerk to include within next Finance Report.

### **17) Police Report**

PCSO Stephen Waddingham was in attendance for this item of business.

Parish Councillors were advised that there had been reports of both damage and anti-social behaviour on South Street.

Councillor Bulmer advised that some youths had also destroyed the bus-stop in addition to also displaying anti-social behaviour.

In response to an issue raised from Councillor Gillbank in relation to the anti-social behaviour at the back of the Church, PCSO Waddingham agreed to investigate this and report back in due course.

### **18) To agree date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 18 February 2016, 7.00pm at St. Mary's Church meeting room.

The meeting closed at 21.00 hrs.