

West Rainton Parish Council
Minutes of Parish Council meeting held at
St. Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton
Thursday 19 May 2016

Present:

Councillors A. Wallage (Chair), M. Boettcher, E. Bulmer, C. Cochrane, M. Gilbank, P. Lowrie and I. Haddick, A Swinburn

5 Members of the public (MoP).
County Councillor Bill Kellett

In attendance:

Parish Clerk – Kate Cuthbert
Project Officer – Graeme Keedy

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Morson (due to unavailability), Cllr Patterson (due to unavailability) and Councillor Clifford (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 21 April, 2016 be approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of a £1440.00 donation to the Citizens Advice Bureau being included within Item 8 – Expenditure.

6) White Lines on South Street/Hall Lane Junction

The Clerk reported that following a discussion at the last meeting regarding 'white lines' appearing at the junction on South Street and Hall Lane, information had subsequently been received from Durham County Council (DCC) confirming that a request for these to be put down had been made by Councillor Gilbank, acting on behalf of the Parish Council. An email received from a DCC highways officer confirming this was read out by the Chair. The Chair made reference to standing order 24 regarding restrictions on individual councillor activities and in particular the issuing of orders, instructions and directions, unless there had been a council

resolution authorising such action. As there had been no such resolution, Cllr Gilbank was asked to explain his actions.

Councillor Gilbank disagreed that he had made the request on behalf of the Parish Council, and explained that instead, contact was made as a resident of the village. He acknowledged that DCC officers may have known that he was a Parish Councillor from contact in the past, but maintained that the officers were mistaken in their believe he was acting in a councillor capacity in relation to this request.

Cllr Kellett agreed to investigate the matter further.

The discussion ensued and Councillor Gilbank was asked to moderate his behaviour by the Chair. Despite this request, disorderly conduct continued and Councillor Gilbank was asked to leave the meeting. As Councillor Gilbank refused to leave, he was advised that should the inappropriate behaviour continue the meeting would have to be suspended. Councillor Gilbank advised that he would be making a formal complaint.

Some members expressed concern that the action taken by DCC regarding the placement of the lines required further consideration by the Parish Council.

The Chair suggested that this be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

6) Cemetery Update

The Project Officer introduced the formal report and appendix. He outlined current developments and the new requirement for Cemetery Development Services (CDS) to commission utility service searches for the site as no such records were available from the Parish Council.

Parish Council resolved to:

Note the content of the report and appendix

and

Approve additional payment of up to £250 (plus VAT) to CDS to commission work to identify the existence of utilities and drainage within the cemetery site.

7) Cemetery Waste Collection Contract

The Clerk to the Parish Council advised that a tender for contract had not been agreed in the years 2014/15 or 2015/16, however given the good service received by Max Recycle, it was proposed that the service continue for the current financial year, with a tender exercise being undertaken for the next financial year.

8) Parish (Village) Plan

The Chairman advised that the launch event held on 12 May 2016 had gone well with 7 volunteers offering to be involved on the Steering Group. A further consultation event was to be carried out by Durham Community Action at the big lunch 5 June. The first meeting of the Steering Group would take place on Wednesday 8th June at Arden House.

A copy of the Service Level Agreement received from Durham Community Action Group had been circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk requested comments or feedback, by Friday 27 May, 2016.

9) West Rainton & Leamside Community Association (CA)

The Clerk advised that following a discussion at the March meeting of the Parish Council in relation to a potential £5,000 outstanding balance owed to the Community Association by the Parish Council, the Chair and herself had been in communication with the Treasurer of the CA to clarify the position. The reference to £5,000 outstanding debt, relates to the Community Association's understanding that this £5,000 was the second instalment of a £10,000 parish council grant award, made in 2013, for professional fees associated with the proposed refurbishment. Background information available to confirm this grant award was incomplete and importantly no record could be found in council minutes of a £10,000 award ever having been made by the Council. In the circumstances, the Community Association have been advised that the best way forward would be to submit a new grant application for the Parish Council to consider in accordance with its grants and donation policy.

Parish Council **resolved** to note that a new application would need to be made for any further funds, with supporting information being provided.

10) Local Council Award Scheme

The Project Officer advised that at its' meeting held on December 2014, Parish Council resolved to support work towards achievement of an appropriate level of the scheme. Given that since this time, the Parish Council had made progress on a variety of methods, including the launch of a website; enhanced financial reporting, and commencement of work on a Village Plan, it was felt appropriate that the Parish Council work to accreditation of Foundation Level.

Members resolved to:

- 1) Work towards Foundation Level accreditation during 2016-2017;
- 2) Authorise the Project Officer to register the Parish Council's intention with NALC; and
- 3) Authorise payment of the £50.00 registration fee.

11) Vexatious and persistent contact/complaints

The Project Officer advised that Parish Council had previously adopted policies (December 2009 and March 2011) in an attempt to address members' concerns relating to disruption to the working of Parish Council arising from "live" issues at those periods.

As part of this work remit, the Project Officer was tasked with reviewing a range of policies and procedures including those related to this topic. Parish Councillors were referred to a draft, refreshed policy, detailed at Appendix 1 of the report.

Members were asked to note that the draft policy focussed on broad customer contact which included complaints however did not include requests submitted under

Freedom of Information (FoI) legislation, as Section 14 included provision for refusing vexatious requests.

Members resolved to:

- 1) Adopt the policy (attached as Appendix 1) for dealing with vexatious, persistent and abusive contact including complaints; and
- 2) Agree to delegate responsibility for application of the policy to the Parish Clerk and Project Officer.

12) Finance

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

- **Expenditure**

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

Part B: Expenditure requiring approval

	Payee	Purpose	Amount	Budget Provision Y/N
5	G Keedy (Reimbursement) Postage/Stationery	1) BDO Papers to Clerk (5 th April) 2) Annual Returns x 2 to Clerk (11 th May) 3) 6 x 2 nd Class Stamps 4) 10 x punch pockets (Wilko) 5) 40 x assorted envelopes (Tesco)	£1.27 £7.25 £3.30 £8.00 £2.00	Yes
		TOTAL Project	£21.82	

		Officer Reimbursement		
6	SLCC	G Keedy Membership Renewal	£103.00	Yes
7	A Baker	Heritage Garden	£368.87	Yes
8	St. Mary's Church	Room Hire (21 January & 17 March 2016)	£30.00	Yes
9	West Rainton & Leamside Community Association	Jubilee Hall (Venue Hire + teas/coffees)	£85.00	Yes
10	Leamside Nurseries	Grass Cutting	£156.00	Yes
11	Jones Boyd	Payroll Service(1 st April – 30 th June)	£84.00	
12	Max Recycle	Cemetery Waste Disposal	£1417.68	Yes
	TOTAL			

Part C: Bank Balances – For Information

Total Expenditure included above	£3,219.97
Anticipated current a/c bank balance if all paid	£40,138.96
Reserve Account Balance	£15,023.74

Members resolved to:

- 1) Note expenditure and bank balances reported for information; and
- 2) Approve expenditure listed in Part B.

13) 2016/2017 Budget

The Parish Clerk referred to a proposed revised 2016/17 budget. The original draft 2016/17 budget, approved in January 2016, had been updated to reflect the actual balance carried forward from 2015/16 (subject to audit). Members were asked to note the carried forward balance of £17,217 to 2016/17 and the forecast general reserve position at the end of the year of £3,030.

It was **resolved** that: the revised budget position be noted.

14) Draft Annual Return 2015/16

It was **resolved** that: this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

15) Annual Review of Standing Orders

It was **resolved** that: this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

16) Annual Review of Financial Regulations

It was **resolved** that: this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

17) Dates, times and venue for Parish Council Meetings (2016/17 Municipal Year)

Parish Council agreed that all meetings would take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7.00pm (St. Mary's Church), with the exception of the Annual Parish Meeting which would take place on Thursday 11th May 2017 at 7.00pm (Jubilee Hall) and no meeting in August.

18) General Correspondence

The Clerk reported that all items had been circulated electronically.

19) Police Report

In the absence of PCSO Raymond, no police report had been received.

20) To agree the date and time of next meeting

Thursday 16 June 2016 at 7.00pm, St. Mary's Church meeting Room.

The meeting closed at 20.05 hrs.