

West Rainton Parish Council

Minutes of Parish Council meeting held at

Arden House, West Rainton on

Thursday 15 September 2016

Present:

Councillors A Wallage (Chair), I Clifford (Vice Chair), C Cochrane, M Gilbank, P Lowrie and P Morson.

County Councillor Bill Kellett

5 x Members of the Public (MoP)

In attendance: Parish Clerk - Mark Ramshaw

Project Officer - Graeme Keedy

NOTE: The meeting was audio and video recorded by Cllr Gilbank for his own personal use. Project Officer advised that any recording is releasable under Freedom of Information. This was acknowledged by Cllr Gilbank.

1) Introduction of the New Parish Clerk

Project Officer introduced the new Parish Clerk. Greetings and introductions were made.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Boettcher (School Meeting), Cllr S Patterson (Caring Responsibilities) and Cllr I Haddick (Holiday). Parish Council resolved to approve these absences.

No apology had been received from Cllr A Swinburn.

His absence was noted as unapproved.

3) Declarations of interest

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

4) Public participation

Questions were taken from members of the public for 15 minutes in line with the Parish Council's Public Participation policy.

Discussions centred on the complaints process and the actions of Parish Councillors. Cllr Wallage informed those present that any complaints should be directed to Durham County Council who would respond to the complainant directly.

Project Officer clarified that he was unaware of any complaints which were not being addressed.

4) Public Participation (cont'd)

MOP questioned CCTV within the Village and sought individual Councillor views. No views were given as it was not deemed appropriate.

Cllr. Gilbank left the Meeting for a short period.

5) Minutes

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21 July be approved as a correct record.

6) Durham County Council Budget Consultation

John Murphy, Durham AAP was in attendance and informed Councillors that Durham County Council were currently in a consultation period regarding the current financial situation of the County Council.

Consultation closes 7th October 2016 and he encouraged those present to make their views known. This can be done online at www.durham.gov.uk, Clayport Customer Access Point (Durham City) or at the AAP Meeting at the Town Hall in Durham 20th September 2016.

Cllr Wallage thanked John for his input and he then left the meeting.

7) Police Report

Parish Council resolved to receive and note the report submitted by PCSO Robin Raymond covering period 15th August – 14th September 2016.

8) Project Officer Role

At this stage Project Officer left the meeting.

Parish Council received a Report on the Project Officer role and a Work Plan.

Cllr Wallage stated that village green issues, support to the new Parish Clerk and the forthcoming elections in 2017 could also be added to the Project Officer role.

Parish Council unanimously resolved to maintain the Project Officer Role until 31st March 2017 on 10 hours per week.

Project Officer returned to the Meeting and was informed of the outcome.

9) Finance

Part A: For information:

Income: NIL

1. Expenditure

Expenditure previously approved by Parish Council due this month

	Payee	Purpose	Amount
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk net salary - Sept 16	£334.53
2	G Keedy	Project Officer net salary - Sept 16	£707.25
3	Post Office	Combined HMRC liabilities - Sept 16	£331.58
4	D Lewins	Cemetery Gatekeeper Fee - Sept 16	£80.00
5	County Durham Ass. of Local Councils	Training course fee: Managing Events - 9 /3/16	£27.00
6	Cemetery Development Services	Payment 2: Design and management brief	£6480.00
7	WA Churches Action Strn	Office rental: 1 Aug - 30 Sept 16	£180.00
8	Durham Community Action	1st stage payment: Parish Plan	£3330.00
9	AB Smart Gardens	HG maintenance Jun/Jul	£491.00
10	A Baker	HG maintenance Aug/Sep	£210.00

Part B: Expenditure requiring approval

	Payee	Purpose	Amount	Budget Provision Y/N
11	Post Office	Revised figure for HMRC liabilities for Aug 16 (Jones Boyd misunderstanding)	£237.31	Yes
12	Project Officer reimbursement - Sept 16	Stationery supplies for new Clerk – Asda Postage stamps for new Clerk – Asda	£14.85	Yes

		Postage "signed for"	£10.44	
			£1.74	
			Total: £27.03	
13	Jones Boyd Accountants	Payroll services: July – Sept 2016	£84.00	Yes
14	Smith of Derby	Service - Church Clock	£231.60	Yes
15	St. Mary's Church	Room Hire x 5: Apr - Aug 16	£75.00	Yes
16	Durham Stonemasonry	Refund for duplicate fee	£50.00	Yes
17	Northumbrian Water	Cemetery water 06-08	£11.68	Yes
	TOTAL: A + B		£12887.98	

Part C: Bank Balances – For Information

Total Expenditure included above	£12887.98
Anticipated current a/c bank balance if all paid	£13583.10
Reserve Account Balance	£15023.74

Parish Council resolved to:

1. Note income, expenditure and bank balances reported for information
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B

10) Durham County Council Standards Committee Hearing(6th September)

MOP requested to record this item on the Agenda and that request was granted.

Project Officer reported that the Standards Committee had issued a decision notice which upheld complaints made against Cllr Gilbank. The recommendation of the Committee was that Cllr Gilbank gives a public apology and attends training around the Code of Conduct.

A request to defer the item was proposed by Cllr Gilbank but not seconded.

Cllr Gilbank read out his apology, in a whispered voice, then left the Meeting and did not return.

Council resolved to create a link on the Website to the appropriate documents relating to the Hearing Outcome and subsequent apology.

11) Cemetery Update

Project Officer circulated a Management Brief for West Rainton Cemetery which has been prepared by Cemetery Development Services. The Report outlines some key issues, recommendations and a proposed schedule if the Council wished to go out to tender for maintenance of the Cemetery.

Council resolved for Project Officer to work through the Report on a phased basis and to bring topic specific items back to Council for discussion.

Some concerns around vermin sightings and wasps nests within the cemetery grounds were discussed. Whilst it was felt that the wasps would be dying out due to the time of year Council did resolve for the Project Officer to contact Durham County Council pest control with regards to the issues.

Project Officer reported that he had had discussions with Durham Diocese around the Cemetery and the fact that some or all of the land may be consecrated which could have an impact on any beautification of the Cemetery.

Durham Diocese will charge £500 +VAT to research the records held for details of any consecration. Council members felt that the charge was excessive and queried the potential ramifications if Parish Council did not proceed.

Project Officer agreed to make further contact with Durham Diocese for further advice and clarification.

12) Parish Plan

Cllr Wallage gave an update on the Parish Plan. Consultation is underway with a deadline of the end of the current Year.

Hard copy surveys and a link to the on line survey are to be made available on the Parish Website. Further information to be provided in next edition of Village Newsletter. Hard copies can be returned to the Primary School, 3 Horse Shoes Leamside, Homer Hill Farm Shop, Jubilee Hall and Arden House. Closure date 28 November 2016.

Cllr Clifford to upload a copy of the survey to the Parish Website.

13) Learning and Development

Project Officer shared information relating to learning and development opportunities.

14/10/16 Meeting with Local MP's and a workshop from the Parliamentary Outreach Team – Cllr Wallage to consider attending. Parish Clerk to invite Cllr Boettcher to attend.

26/10/16 Local Council Award Scheme – Project Officer and Parish Clerk to attend

1/3/17 Election Training – Project Officer and Parish Clerk to attend at a cost of £27.00 per delegate.

14) Councillor Vacancy

Project Officer gave report on current situation regarding the vacant Councillor position. Despite the appropriate processes no candidates have come forward. Parish Council resolved for Project Officer to seek advice from Electoral Services with regards to the next steps in appointing to the vacancy bearing in mind the proximity to Full Council elections in 2017.

15) General Correspondence

Members of the public x 2:

Request for placement of skip and erection of scaffolding – South Street (Village Green) - **Parish Council resolved the request with a proviso that any damage to the Village Green be repaired at no cost to the Parish Council. Parish Clerk to inform MOP.**

Concerns re Adventure Playground – anti social behaviour and condition of site – **Noted. Parish Clerk to contact Robin Raymond (PCSO) to notify concerns and respond to an email from MOP in relation to concerns.**

BDO (External Auditors):

Query re Fixed Assets valuation affecting annual audit – **Noted. Project Officer awaiting further information**

Durham County Council (Neighbourhood Services):

Response to Parish Council query re installation of power supply to Heritage Garden – **Costs are prohibitive. Discussion took place around the possibility of getting a solar panel to produce electricity at the Garden. Cllr Morson agreed to look into options regarding this.**

County Durham Association of Local Councils:

Reminder for Members to review Register of Interest forms – **Noted.**

Invitation to participate in NALC survey re devolution – **Noted. Cllr Wallage to complete.**

Signposting to Planning Aid England resources – **Noted.**

September 2016 Durham Association News (Newsletter 58) – **Noted.**

DCC consultation re dog control (also notified by County Councillor D Hall); and associated press release – **Noted.**

Poverty and the Workplace conference - 23 September – **Noted.**

County Association AGM, 22 October 2016 – **Noted. Cllr Wallage and Parish Clerk to attend.**

20) Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 20th October 2016 at 7.30 pm venue Arden House

MR

08/10/2016