

# **West Rainton Parish Council**

## **DRAFT - Minutes of Parish Council meeting held at Arden House, West Rainton on Thursday 17 November 2016**

### **Present:**

Councillors A Wallage (Chair), I Clifford (Vice Chair), C Cochrane, M Gilbank and P Lowrie. Cllr Boettcher arrived during Item 5.

2 x Members of the Public (MoP)

County Councillors Hall and Kellett

**In attendance:** Parish Clerk - Mark Ramshaw

Project Officer - Graeme Keedy

NOTE: The meeting was audio recorded by Cllr Gilbank for his own personal use. Cllr Wallage advised that any recording is releasable under Freedom of Information. Cllr Gilbank acknowledged this.

### **1) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Haddick (Holiday), Cllr Morson (Work Commitments) and Cllr Swinburn (Work Commitments).

Parish Council resolved to approve these absences.

No apology had been received from Cllr S Patterson.

This absence was noted as unapproved.

### **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 for Parish Council.

### **4) Minutes**

Cllr Gilbank requested that the minutes be amended in relation to a councillor leaving the meeting before conclusion. He stopped short of proposing a specific form of words and then withdrew his request, citing alleged duress and harassment by other councillors present.

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 20 October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

Cllr Boettcher arrived at this point of the Meeting.

## 5) Police Report

Parish Council discussed the Report submitted by PCSO R Raymond and Cllr Gilbank felt that further detail should be sought around the 16 incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Parish Council resolved for the Parish Clerk to seek further detail around the submitted Report and invite PCSO to present the next Report at the December Parish Council Meeting.

Parish Council resolved to receive and note the report submitted by PCSO Robin Raymond for October 2016.

## 6) Finance Report

### Part A: For information:

- Income:

Nil

- Expenditure

#### Expenditure previously approved by Parish Council due this month

	Payee	Purpose	Amount
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk net salary – Nov 16	£334.53
2	G Keedy	Project Officer net salary - Nov 16	£368.48
3	Post Office	Combined HMRC liabilities - Nov 16	£175.80
4	D Lewins	Cemetery Gatekeeper Fee - Nov 16	£80.00
5	The Gilpin Press	Parish Survey x 400 copies	£84.59
6	County Durham Association of Local Councils	Finance Training Session 8/9/16 – Cllrs Gilbank and Goettcher	£54.00
7	Communicorp	Clerks and Councils Direct Subscription	£12.00
8	M T Reddan	Christmas Tree	£100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£1209.40</b>

### Part B: Expenditure requiring approval

	Payee	Purpose	Amount	Budget Provision Y/N
9	Parish Clerk – Advance Payment	Christmas Tree Lighting -	£73.95	Yes

		X 5 sets of lights		
10	Project Officer reimbursement - Nov 16	Postage Costs	£11.03	Yes
11	Parish Clerk reimbursement – Nov 16	Wreath	£17.00	Yes
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£101.98</b>	

**Part C: Bank Balances – For Information**

Total Expenditure included above	<b>£1311.38</b>
Anticipated current a/c bank balance if all paid	<b>£10613.34</b>
Reserve Account Balance	<b>£15028.45</b>

**Parish Council resolved to:**

1. Note income, expenditure and bank balances reported for information. It was noted that the payment to Gilpin Press for £84.59 was a revised payment, the cheque for £96.59 approved at the previous meeting having been cancelled as the actual cost was less than expected.
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B.

**7. West Rainton and Leamside Community Association**

County Councillor Hall presented his view of the current situation with regards to WRLCA and its' operating and financial position.

County Councillor Hall asked Parish Council to consider setting up a sub-committee to meet with WRLCA and Durham County Council to look at options for moving forward.

He informed those present that the County Council will not release any funding to WRLCA due to ongoing debts, although it was his opinion that the County Council may be more accepting if the Parish Council was involved. He did acknowledge that WRLCA continued to seek funding from a variety of sources.

A number of issues were discussed including lack of contact from WRLCA, ownership of Jubilee Hall and the amount of debt and who is responsible for it.

Alan Percival (Chairman of WRLCA) was in attendance at the meeting and gave some further information. Building work should be starting shortly on Jubilee Hall including a suspended ceiling, redecoration and lighting. Whilst Alan felt the County Council would prefer the involvement of the Parish Council he admitted it was a difficult position as it was not clear what the County Council required.

Alan went on to inform Parish Council that some National Agencies are working on WRLCA's behalf, currently looking at possible funding. One issue is an unsecured loan to an individual from 2007 and Alan has approached the County Council with a possible solution to this problem.

Councillor Wallage proposed that, as a first step, the Parish Council seek written clarification and confirmation from DCC of its funding decision and expectations of Parish Council involvement. Parish Council resolved to agree the proposal from Cllr. Wallage and that the relevant officers at DCC are invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council to outline their position. Parish Clerk to action.

## **8. Youth Services in West Rainton**

County Councillor Hall informed the Parish Council that Youth Services funding has been cut by the County Council and is currently 1 night per week until June 2017 as this is when he has secured funding until.

County Councillor Hall felt that Parish Council need to discuss youth provision in the area. He informed the Parish Council that Parish Councils in both Stanley and Coxhoe have increased their precept to fund a Youth Worker.

Councillor Wallage advised that budgets would be looked at in January 2017 for the coming Year and that there was currently an ongoing Community consultation which included the 7 – 17 years old age group which may inform future requirements. In the interim, details of current usage of the service would be requested from the Youth Project Leader.

## **9. Project Officer Update**

Project Officer advised the Parish Council that the Cemetery has a draft rateable value of £320 from April 2017. He had subsequently checked with DCC and had received verbal confirmation that the site would continue to be Business Rate exempt. There are no financial implications for the Parish Council.

Project Officer informed Parish Council that following a suggestion from Cllr Gilbank at the October meeting that funding was available to local councils to support community IT projects, he had sought further information from a variety of sources.

He confirmed that the only funding currently available to qualifying local councils was the "Transparency Fund for Smaller Councils" – this was specifically to facilitate IT needed to meet changed audit requirements for small councils. West Rainton Parish Council did not meet the eligibility criteria.

## **10. Diversity Statement**

The Parish Clerk proposed that the diversity statement from County Durham Association of Local Councils be adopted by West Rainton Parish Council. Parish Council resolved to adopt the statement and publish such on the website.

## **11. National Tree Week**

Parish Council considered applying for funding to plant a tree for National Tree Week. Due to short timescales it was not felt appropriate however Parish Council did resolve for the Parish Clerk to obtain a quotation for two six feet magnolias.

## **12. West Rainton Parish Council Website Policy**

Councillor Clifford presented a draft website policy which Parish Council resolved to approve.

## **13. BDO Issues Arising Report Action Plan**

Project Officer presented an Action Plan and informed Parish Council that both Internal Audit Checks and issues with Minutes had been resolved and the only action ongoing was an issue with the fixed assets.

Parish Council resolved to note contents and approve actions.

## **14. Cemetery Update**

Project Officer informed Council that following notification of two fallen memorials, he had visited the cemetery and found that two adjacent headstones dating from the 1960's had been toppled. Project Officer informed the Parish Council that responsibility for fixing the memorials lay with the respective owners – but due to the time which had elapsed since installation, it had not been possible to trace these from the records he held.

Councillor Gilbank felt that the headstones should be checked on a regular basis and that this may be a legal requirement.

Project Officer advised that in their report, Cemetery Development Services had made a similar recommendation around stress testing being carried out every 5 years.

At the suggestion of County Councillor Hall, it was agreed that Project Officer make enquiries with a neighbouring Parish Council to establish the possible availability of a professional resource to move the fallen headstones to align with the two burial plots; and, to establish their arrangements for stress testing of memorial headstones.

Project Officer advised that dialogue with Durham Diocese relating to existing consecrated areas had been concluded. It had been established that new areas identified for burial and proposed extensions to footways did not encroach on consecrated areas and the Parish Council was now in a position to progress plans put forward by CDS.

## **15. Additional Christmas Lighting for the Christmas Tree**

Parish Council resolved to agree Councillor Wallage's proposal to purchase some new lights. Parish Clerk to order online.

## **16. Councillor Vacancy**

No expressions of interest had been received for the current vacancy. It was noted that delivery of the Parish Newsletter was delayed and the advert regarding the Councillor Vacancy within it had a closing date which closed before the Newsletter was actually delivered.

Parish Council resolved to agree an extension for expressions of interest until 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

## **17. Parish Plan Update**

Councillor Wallage gave an update.

Only 30 adult and 20 young persons returned as reported at the last steering group meeting.

Although Primary school HT and Belmont comp are being supportive to allow young people to complete in school. - Belmont Comp has just confirmed all pupils have now completed hard copies

Need all councillors to help spread the word.

Steering group agreed it would be helpful if the PC had a Facebook and Twitter account so that it could raise awareness through social media. Durham Community Action would be able to help set this up – Parish Council approval requested.

Parish Council resolved to approve the setting up of a Facebook and Twitter Account. Parish Clerk to look at setting these up.

A separate business survey to be developed and link hopefully circulated via WRLVP Editor who is likely to have email address for the majority of businesses. The remainder will be approached direct by steering group members.

Need to keep repeating the message - editor of Village News did a great job in the one line headings throughout latest edition.

Outcome of consultation exercise - Public Meeting around mid-February and the next Steering group meeting will be 7 December 2016.

## **18. Village Partnership Meeting**

Councillor Boettcher suggested that she could forward minutes from the meetings to Parish Councillors for their information. Councillor Cochrane informed Parish Council that she was standing down as Vice-Chair of the Village Partnership.

## **19. General Correspondence**

Parish Clerk asked Parish Council to note the following correspondence:

Durham County Council: Consultation on PSPO for dog control – request to display posters and postcards. **Agreed**

Durham County Council: Tax Base Figures 2017/18 – Email circulated for information 9/11/16. **Noted**

Durham County Council: West Rainton Primary School - Highway Improvement Measures – Email circulated 9/11/16 for comments before 2/12/16.

**Parish Clerk to feedback that Parish Council is supportive of the proposals with regards to the highway improvement measures at West Rainton Primary School.**

Launch of the Police, Crime and Victims' Plan 2016-2021- Email circulated for information 8/11/16. **Noted**

National Association of Local Councils Bulletin 4/11/16 – Email circulated 8/11/16 **Noted**

Free Training Opportunity – Innovative Communities Thursday 8 December 9.30 am – 12.30 am – Email circulated 8/11/16 with link to booking. **Project Officer to attend**

Butterwick Hospice Care: Autumn 2016 newsletter and Christmas Draw raffle tickets. **Noted**

Freedom of Information request from Cllr Gilbank. **Parish Clerk to progress**

Parish Council resolved to receive the report and agree actions outlined.

## **20. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 7.30 pm at Arden House.

MR  
5<sup>th</sup> December 2016