

West Rainton Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 21st September 2017 at Arden House, West Rainton

Present: Councillors M Boettcher, I Clifford (Chairman), M Gilbank, I Haddick, P Lowrie, P Morson and A Wallage

3 x Members of the Public

In attendance: M Ramshaw, Parish Clerk and G Keedy, Project Officer.

NOTE: The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1) **Apologies:** None.

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 public raised the issue of the footpath beside the GP Surgery. Cllr Clifford informed those present that he had noticed a planning notice in the Northern Echo on 19/9/17. It was noted from the planning application that there is a stipulation in the Agreement that a footpath must be in position.

The issue of traffic on Station Road was also discussed. The member of the public mentioned there had been a four car crash in the 40mph zone and asked if consideration could be given to speed restrictions on the road near the School. Cllr Gilbank informed the Meeting that as there is a 20mph limit imposed in that area during school times and advised that he did not feel Durham County Council would impose any further restrictions.

4) **Minutes.**

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th July 2017 be approved as a correct record.

5) **Crime Statistics.**

Cllr Clifford produced a report on crime statistics for West Rainton. It was acknowledged that anti-social behaviour had decreased.

6) **Finance Report.**
Part A: For information:

Income – Durham Stonemasonry (Late Mr T Watson – Headstone) £50.00

Expenditure

Expenditure previously approved by Parish Council due this month

	Payee	Purpose	Amount
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk net salary –	£350.23
2	G Keedy	Project Officer net salary –	£372.16
3	Post Office	Combined HMRC liabilities -	£180.60
4	D Lewins	Cemetery Gatekeeper Gratuity Payment –	£80.00
5	Leamside Nurseries	Grass Cuts x 6 (£1380) & Bark/Mulch Trees/Shrubs (£200) plus VAT	£1643.20
6	Durham City Homes	Hire of Arden House 20/7/17 (2hrs)	£10.00
7	CDALC	Councillor Training Session (MB) - Chairmanship Training	£27.00
		TOTAL	£2663.19

Part B: Expenditure requiring approval

	Payee	Purpose		Amount	Budget Provision Y/N
8	BDO	Review of Annual Return 2016/17	276.00	£276.00	Y
9	Smith of Derby	30% Deposit re: Repair to Bell Box and replace controller	789.84	£789.84	Y
10	Smith of Derby	Service Visit – Church Clock July 2017	238.80	£238.80	Y
11	NWG Business	Water Supply Cemetery 2/5/17 – 1/8/17	12.16	£12.16	Y
12	Communi corp	Annual Subscription – Clerks and Councils Direct	12.00	£12.00	Y
		TOTAL		£1328.80	

Part C: Bank Balances – For Information

Total Expenditure included above	£3991.99
Anticipated current a/c bank balance if all paid	£15713.80
Reserve Account Balance	£15031.16

Parish Council resolved to:

1. Note income, expenditure and bank balances reported for information.
2. Note payments made during August recess:

Mr M Ramshaw – Parish Clerk Net Salary August 2017	£337.63
Mr G Keedy – Project Officer Net Salary August 2017	£372.36
HMRC Liabilities – August 2017	£177.40
D Lewins – Cemetery Gatekeeper Gratuity August 2017	£80.00
A Baker – Heritage Garden Maintenance	
June 2017	£281.00
July 2017	£150.00
August 2017	£120.00

3. Approve expenditure listed in Part B.

7) Annual Return 2016/17

Parish Council resolved to approve the audited Annual Return 16-17 by BDO (External Auditor). An issue raised by BDO in the report had been addressed by Parish Clerk to the satisfaction of the external auditor. There was no requirement to produce an action plan.

Parish Council resolved to note the content of the Issues Arising Report.

8) Planning Applications

a) Parish Council comments on previously circulated weekly planning notifications from DCC

No comments on the previously circulated information.

b) Benridge Bank development

Cllr Clifford discussed his previously circulated Report. Although no planning application has been received at this point, **Parish Council resolved** to agree to the proposed objection as outlined in the Chairman’s report.

Cllr Gilbank discussed the Sec 106 monies which may be available to the local area and suggested that Parish Council could look at bidding for monies to create some form of renewable energy for the Village. This could lead to free electricity for the Village, with any surplus being sold back to electricity suppliers.

Cllr Wallage advised that formal applications may need to be submitted in the next few weeks. The Parish Plan was acknowledged as representing the community’s feedback and Cllr Wallage suggested that any funding proposals should be based on the Parish Plan.

Parish Council agreed to look at options at a later stage but in the interim **Parish Council resolved** to agree two priorities including provision for the youth in the Village and also funding for Jubilee Hall. These were both identified within the Parish Plan and also by County Councillor Hall. Parish Clerk to advise County Councillor Hall.

9) Parish Councillor Co-option

a) Parish Councillor Applications

Parish Clerk advised Council that two applications had been received and they intend to attend the next Meeting of Parish Council in October.

b) Community Governance Review

Project Officer presented his previously circulated Report. If Parish Council wanted to reduce the number of Councillors due to difficulties filling the vacancies, 187 signatures would be required from local residents in the form of a petition initiated by Parish Council.

Following discussion, two resolutions were put forward:

- 1) "That the number of councillors comprising Parish Council remain at eleven"
- 2) "That Project Officer further investigate the process and practicalities for initiating a Community Governance Review to reduce the composition of the Parish Council"

Parish Council resolved to vote by show of hands:

The first resolution received two votes and the second received five votes.

Parish Council resolved to agree resolution 2 as detailed above.

10) Project Officer Role

Project Officer left the room for this item to enable open discussion. Cllr Clifford presented a Report on the Project Officer role. **Parish Council resolved** to approve its contents and the recommendation that the role be extended for a further twelve months and be reviewed after six months.

11) Field House Surface Mine

Parish Council noted the minutes circulated from the Meeting held 12/7/17 and the subsequent email from the Planning Consultant for Hargreaves Surface Mining outlining an indefinite delay in works.

12) Village Green – Response received from Durham County Council re: Bee Hive Cottage infringement

Cllr Clifford informed the meeting that due to possible legal implications and upon receipt of advice sought from the Society of Local Council Clerks this item should be dealt with under confidential business. Accordingly, **Parish Council resolved** to change the order of the agenda for the item to be considered last

and to then exclude the press and public from that item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

13) Public Footpaths in the Parish

Cllr Gilbank discussed the footpaths around the Village and the poor signage and an increased amount of dog fouling. Cllr Gilbank stated that it is a statutory requirement for Parish Councillors to walk the footpaths in the Village on a regular basis.

Parish Council resolved to agree that Cllr Gilbank produce a recording form and obtain a map of the paths within the Village for the October Meeting of Parish Council.

14) Parish Plan Update

Cllr Wallage gave a brief update reminding those present that PACT Meetings are now being held every four weeks with the next one being held 11th October. These are however under review by the Police due to poor attendance. Speed checks have been discussed for the 'top road' and a limited number of volunteers have come forward to help with the speed checks. Anyone is welcome to volunteer.

15) Pride in Our Village Day

Cllr Wallage discussed her previously circulated report. The **event** will be held 7th October and involve a litter pick and bulb planting amongst other things. Durham County Council have agreed to get involved and the County Councillors have donated £300 towards the event. The event will be publicised on the Village Partnership's Facebook page and the Parish Council's website. Cllr Wallage asked Parish Council to consider the estimated costs of the following; Booking of Jubilee Hall £60.00, A5 publicity sheets x 200 £44.00, provision of refreshments £50.00 and the cost of bulbs for the bulb planting amounting to £537.84. **Clerk's Note:** *The figure shown excludes VAT. The total to be paid would be £645.40.*

Cllr Gilbank offered to approach Sainsbury's to see if he could get some refreshments for the event.

Parish Council resolved to approve the expenditure.

Cllr Wallage asked that if any Parish Councillors are available could they support the event.

Project Officer asked that anyone present obtain some good quality photographs wherever possible as evidence of the Council being active in the Community and for possible media publication.

16) Village Green Maintenance

Cllr Wallage informed the Meeting that the edges of village green had been strimmed. The work had taken around two hours at a cost of £30.00. Anthony Baker has advised that these areas should be strimmed every 4-6 weeks and it would take around an hour at £15.00 per hour. **Parish Council resolved** to approve this expenditure.

17) Christmas Celebrations 2017

Cllr Wallage proposed the date of Tuesday 19th December for local celebrations with the same format as the previous Year for the evening with Pittington Brass Band providing musical support. The Community Choir would also like to be involved. Cllr Wallage agreed to investigate if there would be a cost associated with the involvement of the Community Choir.

18) Cemetery Update

Project Officer referred to his previously circulated report. There are in the region of 28 memorials currently unsafe. The deadline for remedial works was 31/8/17. Project Officer informed the Meeting that an email had been received from a local resident suggesting that Parish Council seek funding from Durham AAP for a notice board at the Cemetery to include information about the unsafe memorials. Project Officer had followed this up but, unfortunately there is no funding currently available.

Project Officer informed the Meeting that at least two people would be required to lay the headstones down.

General maintenance around the Cemetery required to clean paths. Grass has recently been cut and one more cut expected.

Parish Council resolved to proceed as previously agreed and that any costs involved for laying the headstones flat be established and Project Officer to report to next meeting.

19) Documentation Retention and Disposal

Project Officer reported that he still held a substantial amount of historical documents that are taking up storage space within his home. SLCC have advised that minutes be retained along with annual finance statements but that much correspondence can be discarded after a reasonable period of time.

Parish Council resolved to approve that the Chairman and Project Officer jointly sift the information held and appropriately dispose of non-essential documentation.

20) Parish Council Website SLA with Durham County Council

Parish Clerk presented the previously circulated SLA for the DCC maintenance and support for the Parish Council Website which has an annual cost of £578.36.

Parish Council resolved to agree its contents and the SLA was signed by the Parish Clerk.

21) Date and Time of next meeting.

Parish Council resolved that the next Meeting of the Parish Council be held on Thursday 19th October at 7.00pm at Arden House, West Rainton.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS:

Parish Council resolved to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

22) Village Green – Response received from Durham County Council re Bee Hive Cottage infringement

Project Officer circulated a confidential paper relating to this item and verbally provided context. Members gave a variety of views on the subject during discussion.

Parish Council resolved to agree that Project Officer seek advice from Durham County Council and that Parish Clerk establish levels of cover provided by insurances.

MR
8th October 2017