

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on

At 19:00 on Thursday 26 November 2020

(Remote Meeting Via Zoom Technology –

Permissible under Sec 78 of the Corona Virus Act 2020)

Present: Councillors M Boettcher, I Diggory, M Gilbank (part meeting) , P Lowrie & A Wallage (Acting Chairman)

In attendance:

M Ramshaw, Parish Clerk

NOTE The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1) Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Kellett (unable to access via technology), Cllr Gilbank (advised that he may have work commitments) and Cllr Haddick (family bereavement).

Parish Council resolved to approve these absences.

Cllr Morson and Cllr Storey were not in attendance and had not submitted any apologies.

Parish Council resolved to not approve these absences.

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 members of the public were present.

4) Minutes

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

Cllr Gilbank joined the meeting at 19:10.

5) Finance Report

PART

A: FOR INFORMATION

1. INCOME	Memorial App - William Scott Memorials LS09	£78
	Burial - Cochranes LS11 (Single)	£311

Signature.....

Date.....

2. EXPENDITURE

A) Expenditure previously agreed by Parish Council due this month

ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	AMOUNT (£)	CHEQUE NO.
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk Net Salary - November 2020	398.70	303110
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liabilities - November 2020	99.60	303111
3	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk Net Salary - December 2020	398.70	303112
4	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liabilities - December 2020	99.60	303113
5	Special Branch Tree Services	Cemetery - 2 x Tree Removal & Cut Back Holly Bush	1800.00	303116
6	Marmax Products Ltd	Village Planters Various x 15	5173.20	303117
7	M Ramshaw	Re-Imbursement - Zoom monthly subscription	14.39	303114
8	Special Branch Tree Services	Cemetery Maintenance - October 2020	308.40	303119
9	Special Branch Tree Services	Cemetery Maintenance - November 2020	308.40	303125
10	Special Branch Tree Services	Cemetery Improvements - Prepare and seed area adjacent to compound	1200.00	303126
11	1st Rainton Gate Brownies	Donation - Virtual Pantomine	50.00	303121
TOTAL			9850.99	

B) Expenditure requiring approval

ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION	CHEQUE NO.
12	M Ramshaw - Reimbursement	Poppy Wreath (British Legion)	21.98	y	303122
13	Anglian Water Business (National) Ltd.	Cemetery Water Bill - 2/8/20 - 1/11/20	14.21	y	303123
14	M Ramshaw	Re-Imbursement Top Soil and Gravel for new planters (MKM)	498.96	y	303115
15	Special Branch Tree Services	Cemetery - Top Soil and turf x 5 graves	288.00	y	303118

16	Leamside Nurseries	Winter Planting - 250 Pansy, 22 Compost, 6 x Sedum & 18 Cordalynes	681.72	y	303124
17	Gary Coates	Village maintenance - Existing and new tub planting	185.00	y	303120
TOTAL			1689.87		

C) Bank Balances - For Information

Total Expenditure A + B	£11,540.86
Current A/C bank balance if all paid	£54,230.46
Reserve Account Balance	£15,155.45

Parish Council resolved to:

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

6) 2020/21 Budget –Q2 Bank Reconciliation

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated Q2 budget report. After talking through the Report there were no questions from members. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the report.

7) Planning Applications

Whilst there were no specific planning applications for consideration, Parish Council discussed fliers delivered to 58 properties from the developer regarding the football HQ proposed development. In response, some residents have raised similar concerns to those previously identified by the Parish Council. The proposal is not at the planning application stage.

8) Jubilee Hall - Request for financial support

Parish Council discussed a request from the Community Association (CA) for financial support for the running of Jubilee Hall due to the current pandemic situation. The Parish Clerk raised the issue of the £2250 balance from the DCC Grant for the valuation and survey of the Jubilee Hall still being available but this would need to be refunded to DCC for them to agree any proposed reallocation of funding. .

Parish Council noted information provided by the CA in support of their request and acknowledged that the Hall is facing exceptional circumstances. The Parish Council were happy to consider supporting but thought further clarity was required to fully appreciate the current financial position, especially as some of the funding being requested appeared to relate to expenditure that had already been incurred.

Parish Council resolved to support a request for funding in principle if supported by the submission of a council grant application form and the necessary supporting information to help clarify the specific current funding need.

Signature.....

Date.....

Parish Council resolved to approve that delegated responsibility be given to the Chairman and Vice Chairman to review a submitted application and allocate funding if deemed appropriate.

Parish Council also resolved to approve the returning of the balance of the DCC Grant (£2250) with a letter to ask that this money be ring fenced to support the Jubilee Hall.

9) Tollgate Fields – Parking Issues

A discussion around some correspondence received regarding parking issues around Tollgate Fields was discussed. Cllr Wallage agreed to forward some information regarding the area in question.

10) Village Maintenance

a) Village Planters

The new planters have now been planted and situated throughout the Villages. Cllr Wallage informed everyone that this was in the main due to two local farmers, Angus Lowrie and Tom Swinburn, who took delivery, provided storage and then transported them into position. Cllr Wallage advised that she had been contacted by a member of the parish regarding the removal of one of the old wooden planters, located on the payment on the corner of Lea Rigg, that was not planned to be replaced. The resident has requested that Parish Council consider either leaving the old one in situ or to purchase a new one to replace it. Parish Council felt that the original plan was still correct, and the particular planter should not be replaced. Cllr Wallage agreed to let the resident know.

Parish Council resolved to approve a small 'gift' for both farmers to thank them for their invaluable help and support and to publicise its thanks on the Parish Council Website and in the next edition of Village News..

b) Tree Maintenance – South Street

Parish Council discussed the removal of two trees under power lines on South Street. These had previously been cut back severely by the Northern Power Grid and look unsightly. One tree is also interfering with the adjacent street light.

A quote of £250 plus VAT was obtained by the Parish Clerk for their removal by Special Branch Tree Services. This was discussed. **Parish Council resolved** to accept this quote and commission the work.

Cllr Gilbank advised that Northern PowerGrid may remove the trees free of charge for the Parish Council as they had offered to do this in the past when they had to come out and cut them back away from the power lines. Parish Clerk agreed to follow this up but if this was not an option, he would contact the contractor and ask for the two trees to be removed in line with Parish Councils resolution.

c) Heritage Garden – Hawthorn Bush

The Hawthorn Bush in the Heritage Garden is now of a size which is difficult to maintain. As a result, a quote had been requested from Special Branch Tree Services to trim the bush.

Parish Council resolved to approve the quote of £30 plus VAT.

11) Cemetery Maintenance Contract

The Parish Clerk advised members that the current maintenance contract with Special Branch Tree Services is due to expire on 31st March 2021. A quotation for 2020/21 had been submitted by the current contractor. Parish Clerk advised the Parish Council that its Standing Orders require that 3 quotations should be sought for a contract of this size. However, he

added that in the current difficult circumstances, with regards to the Covid19 pandemic and the need to ensure continuity of service, there would be several benefits of continuing with our existing contractor next year. The contract was subject to a competitive tendering exercise in 2018 and the tender accepted at that time was very competitive. The price submitted for next year has only marginally increased. There have been no performance concerns regarding the operation of the current contractor and the contractor has been very responsive and competitive in undertaking additional ad hoc work outside the remit of the contract when required. The appearance of the cemetery has greatly improved over the last 2 years and the majority of feedback from cemetery users has largely also been very positive. Cllr Wallage proposed that Parish Council waive Financial Regulations to allow Parish Council to consider acceptance of the quotation from Special Branch Tree Services to ensure continuity of service with the existing contractor for another year in these uncertain times. This was seconded by Cllr Boettcher. **Parish Council resolved** to waive Financial Regulations and approve the acceptance of the quotation from Special Branch Tree Services for 2021/22.

12) Cemetery Waste Contract

The Parish Clerk informed members that the cemetery waste management contract with DCC is on a rolling year on year contract. Again, there has been no negative feedback regarding the operation of the contract. At this stage the fees for 2021/22 are not available but the existing annual value of the contract is well within the limits within Financial Regulations Orders where competitive tenders are not required. There has been no increase in fees in the last 2 years. Parish Council resolved to continue with the rolling contract with DCC. The Parish Clerk will inform Parish Council of next year fees when received.

13) Cemetery Maintenance

a) Management of Trees

b) Quotation regarding overhanging trees

Parish Council discussed both Agenda items together. The overhanging trees into a neighbour's property continue to be an issue and there was discussion around the general management of trees within the cemetery.

There were concerns expressed around pruning the overhanging trees only on the neighbouring property side and how this would affect the appearance within the cemetery. The Parish Clerk was asked to seek advice from the contractor.

14) Christmas Tree Update

Cllr Wallage advised that the Xmas tree and lights were now in situ. The Parish Clerk advised that there were some difficulties in organising a meter and a contract for electricity supply however DCC were ready to step in and organise a temporary fix to ensure the tree could be lit.

DCC have advised the lights will be turned on 4th December and turned off 4th January. Due to the current pandemic, there would be no switch on event although Cllr Wallage did advise that the Village Partnership may try to stream the lighting of the tree on their Facebook page.

15) Parish Councillor Vacancies

Once again, no applications had been received. **Parish Council resolved** for another advert to go out.

Signature.....

Date.....

16) West Rainton & Leamside Village Partnership

Cllr Wallage advised that free Christmas meals are being provided by Julies Deli. Other initiatives are also underway; the Winter Wonderland which encourages to light up a window or the house and an elf's trail within the Village.

The Church clock has now been refurbished and back in situ.

Cllr Wallage advised that the Village Partnership have asked if their 2020 grant applications could be considered for 2021. Parish Council asked the Parish Clerk to confirm with each applicant if they wished the funding request to be rolled over. Parish Council could then consider these funding requests at the next meeting as part of the budget setting process.

17) Smaller Councils Forum Feedback

Cllr Boettcher fed back on the virtual meeting. Double taxation and the review of the planning application process were discussed.

18) General Correspondence

The Parish Clerk advised of the DCC find it and fix it initiative and if anyone knew of anything requiring repair throughout the Parish, they should let him know. A list had been submitted previously but this will be resubmitted with any further additions.

19) Date and Time of Next Meeting

Parish Council noted the next Parish Meeting to be held 21st January 2021 at 19:00. The Meeting will be held with due regard to Government guidance regarding the Covid 19 pandemic.