

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held

at 19:00 On Thursday 20th January 2022

At St Mary’s Church Meeting Room, West Rainton

Present: Councillors I Diggory, B Kellett, P Lowrie, A Wallage (Chairperson) & G Warby (part of the Meeting)

In Attendance: M Ramshaw (Parish Clerk)
One Member of the Public (Part of the Meeting)
James Young – DCC Outdoor Facilities Manager (Part of the Meeting)

NOTE The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Boettcher (AAP Meeting clash), Cllr Bulmer (unwell), Cllr Boettcherer (AAP commitment) and Cllr Haddick (family commitments). **Parish Council resolved** to approve these absences. Cllr Morson was not in attendance and had not submitted an apology. **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

One member of the public was in attendance and raised the following issues.

- The footpath from Leamside to Three Horse Shoes, previously cleared by DCC after having been raised with the Parish Council, has become narrow and embedded leaves. Cllr Lowrie added that the path opposite Lea Rigg was in a similar state and needed clearing. The Parish Council offered to report the situation to DCC.
- The Parish Council was complemented on its response to the Ryehill Farm planning application. Cllr Wallage advised that Cllr Diggory had written the response.

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- There is a lack of a footpath at the bottom of Marks Lane when you turn left there for around 50 metres and then it starts again at The Three Horse Shoes. Could a request for the path to be extended be made to DCC? The Parish Council agreed to refer the issue to DCC, on the residents behalf, for consideration.
- The Parish Council was asked if there were any plans or thoughts regarding supporting a community Queens Platinum Jubilee event. They advised that the Village Partnership is progressing with the Big Lunch in June and had some ideas around the Jubilee celebrations. Cllr Wallage advised that the Parish Council hadn't had an opportunity to discuss the Jubilee yet and advised that she would keep abreast of any ideas via attendance at Village Partnership meetings.

4) Minutes

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

Cllr Wallage advised members that James Young who is the Outdoor Facilities Manager from DCC was in attendance to discuss the Outdoor Gym Project. As such she proposed that the Project that would have been discussed as part of Item 12 be brought forward. **Parish Council resolved** to agree to the item being moved up the Agenda.

James introduced himself to members and began to discuss the Project. He advised that there were some initial concerns regarding the location for the Project but that DCC would be happy to proceed with the agreed location. He advised that the equipment available is much improved giving users the ability to alter the resistance.

He advised that funding streams for the Project are available that include S106 monies of £25000 as well as possible AAP Towns and Villages funding.

He would complete the S106 funding application and an application for 30% matched funding from the Towns and Villages funding through the AAP.

An indicative estimated cost for the equipment and installation, based on a sample selection of equipment would be around £36000.

James advised that DCC would run a procurement exercise from a panel of equipment suppliers after drawing up a specification to include essential and desirable options.

Examples where the better equipment has been used were Wharton Park in Durham and Bearpark Recreation Ground.

Cllr Wallage asked what additional costs would there be. James advised that there would be a post installation inspection (est. £500), site welfare while works ongoing (est. £500) and Harris fencing around the Site (est. £500).

James advised that there would need to be a formal consultation exercise carried out by the Parish Council to help determine priorities for the individual items of

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equipment to be installed. He suggested this could be done by preparing a list, with pictures, of 20 pieces of equipment, from different price ranges, and then asking target users to choose 10 pieces they would be more likely to use.

Cllr Wallage raised the issue of access to the area and that a footpath may be required.

James advised that DCC would cover insurance and maintenance costs.

Cllr Warby offered to work on a consultation document.

James then left the meeting.

Parish council agreed to consider other updates on Item 12 at the original point on the agenda.

5) FINANCE REPORT

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WEST RAINTON & LEAMSIDE PARISH COUNCIL					
ITEM:	5	FINANCE REPORT			
DATE:	19/01/2022				
PART A:	FOR INFORMATION				
1. INCOME	VAT Refund 2020/21		£4,308.92		
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 - Jan 22	398.50	303214	
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - Jan 22	99.80	303215	
3	EON	Electricity Supply 28/11-1/12/21	5.84	DIRECT DEBIT	
4	EON	Electricity Supply 2/12/21-31/12/21	30.29	DIRECT DEBIT	
5	Jones Boyd (Durham) Ltd	Payroll Maintenance 31/12/21	90.00	303216	
6	Special Branch Tree Services	Cemetery Maintenance Contract Nov & Dec 21	678.48	303217	
TOTAL			1302.91		
B) Expenditure requiring approval					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION	CHEQUE NO.
7	The Gilpin Press	Printing - Christmas posters	74.34	Y	303213 (issued Dec 21)
8	Information Commissioner	Data Protection Fee - Annual Renewal	40.00	Y	303218
9	St Marys Church	Room Hire - 21/10 & 18/11/21	20.00	Y	303219
10	Leamside Nurseries	Winter Bedding Plants & Compost	353.60	Y	303220
11	County Durham Association of Local Councils	Training - Managing Meetings	10.00	Y	303221
12	West Rainton & Leamside Community Association	Jubilee Hall - Hire and Christmas Event	161.28	Y	303222
13	G Coates	Maintenance - HG tidy up	35.00	Y	303223
14	M Ramshaw	Reimbursement - 1st class stamps x 18 (£15.30) & batteries for HG Xmas lights (£20)	35.30	Y	303224
TOTAL			729.52		
Total Expenditure A + B			2032.43		

Parish Council resolved to:

1. Note income and expenditure reported for information in Part A
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B

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6) Budget Position Q3 2021/22

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated Quarter 3 update. The current position is a healthy one for the Parish Council. There were no questions from members. **Parish Council resolved** to note the content.

7) Budget 2021/22 – Q3 Bank Reconciliation

The Parish Clerk referred members to the Quarter 3 bank reconciliation. This is used as a check of income and expenditure reported reconciling to the actual bank balance. **Parish Council resolved** to note the content and Cllr Diggory agreed to check the figures against the corresponding bank statement.

8) Grant Applications 2022/23

The Parish Clerk advised members that 3 applications had been received and circulated a summary of the funding requests. All three had provided the required information in line with the Grant Policy.

Parish Council discussed the 3 applications and **resolved to approve** the following:

APPLICANT	PROJECT	GRANT APPLICATION
WR&LVP	Support for the annual community 'Big Lunch' 2022	£580
1 ST RAINTON GATE BROWNIES	A Brownie family trip to the Pantomime, at the Gala Theatre.	£250
Durham Area Youth	West Rainton Youth Project	£5000

9) Precept 2022/23

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated report. To comply with the deadline of 21 January 2022 set by Durham County Council (the Council Tax administering Authority), the Parish Clerk advised that the Parish Council is required to agree, set and request the precept for the financial year 2022-23. The Parish Clerk took members through the Report and the draft budget that had been prepared. The Parish Clerk advised that the 2022/23 draft annual budget, prepared on a standstill basis, forecasts a surplus of £8689 which would increase general reserves further from the forecast balance of £42,886 as at 31 March 2022. Consequently a £20,000 transfer from general reserves to the earmarked Village Improvement Plan (VIP) Reserve was proposed at 31/3/22, increasing this reserve to £30,000. This would result in a general reserve forecast balance at 31 March 2023 of £31,575. The Parish Clerk informed members that as a result of the healthy forecast financial position no increase in precept was considered necessary. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the transfer of £20000 to the VIP, the draft 2022/23 budget and no increase in precept.

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10) Planning Applications

The Parish Clerk referred members to the circulated information. One planning application had been highlighted for the Parish area. There were no comments.

11) Russell Foster Football Centre Planning Application

Cllr Wallage referred members to the draft response that had been circulated to members in respect of the further information submitted by the applicant. The applicant has taken the ‘Very special circumstances route’ with regards to their application. (Suggest delete)

Cllr Kellett advised that he would ask if a site visit could be arranged to allow people to visualise the area and the proposal.

Cllr Wallage advised that further information relating to flood defence is still awaited from the applicant.

Parish Council resolved to approve the draft response and the Parish Clerk agreed to send it to the Planning Team in DCC.

12) Annual Plan

Cllr Wallage advised that she had met with Craig Morgan (Durham AAP) regarding a request for organisations to approach them with any plans that may attract funding. A copy of the Annual plan had been provided highlighting the School Avenue Park Project.

With regards to the proposed removal of boulders on the ‘top road’ and replacement fencing, Cllr Wallage advised that she had received a quotation of just under £24000 from DCC but some clarification and further information was still needed from DCC before an informed decision could be made. The idea of using Marmax fencing was not supported by DCC.

Cllr Warby left the meeting at 20:17.

13) Memorial Wall

Cllr Diggory advised that he had spoken with New College Durham regarding the installation of a memorial wall in the cemetery and then using the Project for brick work trainees. Whilst not ruling the idea out totally, they did advise that the trainees tend to go out on placements with other Companies and taking on a Project wouldn’t be something they usually do.

Cllr Diggory informed members he has had some further discussions with **potential** suppliers around the provision of a ‘memorial tree’ and that he hoped to get further information in the coming weeks.

Costs appear to be in the region of £10000 with an 8 week delivery time. Cllr Diggory advised that he would bring a further paper to the next meeting.

14) Register of Assets 2021/22

Parish Council resolved to approve the updated Register of Assets.

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15) Cemetery – Landscaping Improvements

The Parish Clerk advised members that in looking to improve the cemetery provision the area to the left near the boundary with the adjoining property had been identified as looking somewhat out of keeping with the rest of the Cemetery. The area had been used for soil spoils from graves and there is a variety of undergrowth and bushes along with at least one old tree stump. A quote had been received from the cemetery contractor at the request of the Parish Clerk. Parish Council agreed that it would be a good opportunity to clear the area and it could also be utilised for burials in the future. **Parish Council resolved to approve** the project and the quotation.

16) Storm Damage

The Parish Clerk advised that he had been contacted by DCC who advised that they had been contacted by a resident of South Street in West Rainton who reported a storm damaged tree. DCC had removed the fallen debris following the storm in November but have only recently advised that the remaining tree is unsafe and that they did not have the time and resources at the current time to make good. The tree is located on registered village green in the name of the Parish Council. After consultation with the Chairperson, due to the risks around health and safety, the Parish Clerk asked our grounds maintenance contractor to assess the situation. The Contractor advised that due to the damage the tree should be removed. Following further consultation with the Chair, the Parish Clerk advised the contractor to go ahead and remove the tree and stump. **Parish Council resolved to retrospectively approve** the quotation of £975.00 plus VAT.

17) Village Benches

Cllr Wallage advised members that consideration of the restoration and /or replacement of Village benches is an action in the Annual Plan. Cllr Morson (not in attendance) had offered to refurbish the two wooden benches in the parish that have wrought iron ends. This would be done free of charge. Parish Council **resolved to approve** the refurbishment of the wooden benches.

18) West Rainton & Leamside Village Partnership

Cllr Wallage advised that she was unable to attend the last meeting.

19) Smaller Councils Forum

Cllr Boettcher was not in attendance and no update had been received.

20) General Correspondence

The Parish Clerk advised that he had been contacted by a resident from South Street requesting the removal of a tree and tree stump on Village Green. Cllr Wallage advised that there is an agreed action in the Annual plan about improving the maintenance of village greens and that rather than considering

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this request in isolation this could be considered as part of a wider review at the next Parish Council Meeting.

The Parish Clerk advised that another email had been received regarding speed limits and speeding cars in Pit House Lane, Leamside. The Parish Clerk advised that he would seek permission from the resident to forward the email on to the relevant person within DCC and ask for a response.

21) Date and Time of Next Meeting

Parish Council noted the date and time of next meeting: Thursday 17th February 2022 at 19:00 in St Marys Church Meeting Room.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

22) Renewal of Cemetery Maintenance Contract 2022/23

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated report and advised members that the item was being considered as a confidential item due to the financial information contained within it. The Parish Clerk took members through the report and identified the rationale regarding the proposals contained within it.

Parish Council resolved to approve Option 1 - Accept the quotation of £3731.64 + VAT from the current contractor and extend the contract a further year up to 31st March 2023.

The decision was made because the quotation was considered to be good value for money and because of the importance of continuity of a good consistent level of maintenance. In addition, the current situation with regards to being able to attract further reliable competitive contractors as a result of the COVID pandemic was a concern. The current performance of the existing contractor who as a qualified tree surgeon is also able to offer additional services such as tree pruning and removal, which have been utilised, was also a key consideration.

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