

Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 13th April 2015 at 7.00 pm,
Parish Community Room, Monteith Close, West Auckland

Present: Cllr Hazel Charlton, Chairperson
Cllr J Bell
Cllr C Mairs
Cllr V Raine
Cllr L Rielly
Cllr M Roberts
Cllr W Robinson
Cllr G Smith
Cllr N Thomas
DCC Cllr Christine Wilson

15.22 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence from the main meeting were received from Cllr Farrer, Cllr Ferguson & Cllr Turner; Cllr Farrer was in attendance for the finance working group's pre-meeting to review the annual accounts in readiness for full council consideration of approval.

15.23 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

- Cllr Roberts expressed an interest in item 15.28ii, 15.28 iii & Cllr Charlton expressed an interest in item 15.29.iv

15.24 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate account of the meeting and signed accordingly.

Matters Arising

Quotes for permanent Christmas tree – Cllr Rielly advised that she had obtained a quote for a 3 meter high Nordic Spruce tree, which was thought by those present to be a suitable size and cost for a permanent Christmas tree.

Spring Clean – Cllr Roberts thanked everyone involved for their contributions to the recent Spring Clean litter pick and agreed to provide an article covering the event for Westlife in due course.

Cemetery – Cllr Wilson advised that she has approached Smurfit regarding their rubbish in the cemetery which is blown by the wind across the road. The Smurfit representative advised that they will clear up their litter and also that they are keen to support the community and would consider community funding and possible involvement in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Wilson, PC Blaney and representatives from the Parish Council were invited to attend a meeting to pursue this.
ACTION: Cllr Wilson to arrange a mutually suitable meeting.

Skate Park Proposal - As no reply has been received from Oliver Graham further to the request for detailed information on the skate park, the Clerk was asked to follow this up. ACTION: Clerk to contact Oliver Graham, Groundwork.

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15.25 TO INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

- Residents from East Green attended to request Parish Council support with the nuisance youth behaviour at the old East Green nursing home. Cllr Wilson advised that Mr Fenwick has said that if the sale of the premises does not go ahead he has plans to develop the property in partnership with another interested party. PC Blaney advised those present that the old nursing home has been highlighted as a 'hot spot' and that patrols are working in that area. It was advised that the camera currently sited at The Well is to be removed as its specified life span at one site has expired. It was agreed that this is unfortunate as the footage has provided police with useful information on several occasions. The Parish Council highlighted that they are extremely keen to have the security camera back again in due course. PC Blaney advised that the process of obtaining permission for this would need to be initiated from the beginning to ensure that the camera's presence in not seen has too intrusive when relocated. Cllr Thomas questioned whether a new law, recently introduced to tackle ant-social behaviour could prove useful in managing local problems; Cllr Wilson agreed to investigate the possibility of this. Cllr Roberts suggested a meeting between residents, the property owners and representatives from the Parish Council in an attempt to improve security at the former nursing home and reach agreement with developers on ways to progress with the development and reduce the numbers of youths congregating at the site.
- To tackle problems with quad bikes racing around footpaths and across green area, Cllr Roberts proposed ways to prevent this. He suggested identifying the popular routes and seeking to provide wheelchair only access barriers at strategic points to prevent quad bikes access. It was suggested that the residents be included in a meeting with the Enforcement Officer; the Clerk has written to request a meeting with the Enforcement Officer and a reply is awaited. Cllr Rielly proposed that a letter be sent to Mike Barton requesting that he attend a meeting to advise the PC and local residents who are at a loss on how to resolve problem issues in the East Green area. It was resolved that initially Cllr Roberts' proposals are implemented in an attempt to resolve some of the problems endured by residents.
- A resident requested the Parish Council's views on the results of the recent questionnaire completed by youths 8 – 18 years of age. Cllr Smith summarised the findings and it was agreed that the Parish Council should be supporting the request to provide a 'café/hub' for youths to congregate. ACTION: Cllr Smith and the Clerk to produce graphs of results to provide at a glance details of the questionnaire's outcomes. It was agreed that the information obtained should also be used for the Neighbourhood Plan in due course.
- Residents and Parish Councillors agreed that the Oakley Cross school sports' facilities not being used to full capacity is a waste of a valuable resource. PC Blaney agreed to arrange a meeting between the Head teacher, Parish Council representatives and police to pursue to possibilities of reinstating a warden to cover the re-introduction of evening sports classes and activities at the venue.

15.26 TO RECEIVE CHAIRPERSON/COUNCILLORS REPORT

- Cllr Rielly advised that the concrete bollard near the Jet garage has been recently removed.
- Cllr Wilson advised that she is tackling problems with graves being vandalised in the cemetery. PC Blaney agreed to follow-up on the complaints but would require specific times youths generally gather there to arrange patrols.
- Cllr Charlton requested a meeting between local Councillors, DCC highways, police and the Parish Council in an attempt to resolve the increasing parking problems around the village. Cllr Wilson agreed to arrange this meeting.

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15.27 CLERK'S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORISING INVOICE CHEQUES.

The Clerk advised that the year-end bank reconciliation is complete and has been checked by the finance working group. All Parish Councillors have been provided with an electronic or manual copy of the accounts; they were approved in readiness for submission to the internal auditor, Allen Sykes.

The Clerk tabled all correspondence received and cheques were endorsed for invoices as below:

200036	Open Spaces Subscription			£45.00
200037	Northumbrian Water			£13.52
BP	Durham Council Pre28/15/00578 Doors/windows			£15.00
DD	npower gas			£47.24
BACS	Group Donations		£94.99	

15.28 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE.

(i) To consider rescinding decision to plant a permanent Christmas tree

There has been ongoing discussion about the feasibility and potential problems in supplying electricity to a Christmas tree at some previously proposed sites; these sites have therefore been ruled out. It was resolved that the Groundwork quote, obtained by Cllr Rielly, for a Nordic Spruce be approved and a permanent Christmas tree be planted where an annual cut Christmas tree is usually lit. Cllr Rielly confirmed that the tree will be suitable for net lighting immediately and, as there is already an electrically supply to that point, the objections to investing in a permanent tree were eliminated.

Cllr Rielly agreed to produce a Westlife article explaining to residents why this is the most feasible long-term option. Cllr Rielly will forward the details of the quote to the Clerk so the official order can be placed and the tree planted October 2015.

(ii) To consider quotes to landscape Fleece/Nursery village green

It was resolved that an approved specification to improve grassed area be sent to Scott Ellwood, Darren Hardman and Brian Mundell; new quotes, meeting this standard specification, will be considered at a future meeting. In the meantime it was resolved that the Clerk should follow-up with Cllr York on the request to have the grass cut as part of the DCC seasonal programme.

(iii) To consider feedback from youths and financial support for the youth club

It was suggested that the youth leaders should be invited to include an article in the next edition of Westlife to advertise their summer activities' schedule. It was resolved that at present the Parish Council cannot provide the requested financial assistance to the youth club. There was no detail provided on what funding is specifically needed for and the Parish Council plan to investigate the village youths needs via the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process prior to committing any resource to youths' facilities.

(iv) To consider quote for replacing dead rose beds

This item is to be considered at a future meeting.

15.29 TO RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE.

(i) To arrange Neighbourhood Plan public meeting

It was resolved that Cllr Thomas will open the event with an introduction on the need and benefits

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of a Neighbourhood Plan and Cllr Roberts will follow the introduction with a power-point presentation highlighting potential areas for improvement and seeking residents' views. The Memorial Hall is booked for Saturday, 20th June 2015 commencing at 2.00 pm. Refreshments will be provided by the Parish Council and it was previously agreed that there will be a small prize drawn for any ideas to improve the village submitted by residents attending the event.

(ii) To consider draft specification for football monument information board

As no quote has been provided it was resolved that the Clerk would follow up on the request to Cre8ive graphics for a quote.

(iii) To consider additional seat at the Manor House green site.

In Cllr Ferguson's absence, the Clerk raised his concern highlighting residents' complaints on the stone seat being too wide to sit comfortably, too cold and having sharp edges. Following consideration of the complaints it was agreed that there have also been numerous compliments received on what is perceived to be an asset to the village.

(iv) To consider replacing shrubs at the end of Rydal Grove

It was resolved that this proposal should not be pursued further due to potential maintenance and litter accumulating amongst unattended planted shrubs.

(v) To receive update on the Wetlands

This item was deferred until the June meeting.

(vi) To consider maintenance of Monteith Close Parish Room garden

It was resolved that a quote be obtained to provide options to cut grass for the season, gravel or pave the grassed area in the small garden to the rear of the Parish Room.

15.30 TO DISCUSS CURRENT LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

No planning issues were raised.

15.31 TO RECEIVE ITEMS FOR THE MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, 18TH MAY 2015 (INTERIM MEETING 27TH APRIL)

- AGM & Public meeting
- Time permitting, any quotes obtained on the following could be considered or deferred to the June meeting
- To consider quote for replacing dead rose beds
 - To receive quotes for Nursery & Fleece village green
 - To receive quote for football monument information board
 - To receive quote for managing Parish Rooms garden

June Agenda

- To receive update on Wetlands
- To consider East Green home and The Mill sites

July Agenda

- To consider replacing Christmas lights

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