

Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 9th June 2014 at 7.00 pm,
Parish Community Room, Monteith Close, West Auckland

Present: Cllr J Bell
Cllr H Charlton
Cllr E Farrer
Cllr J Ferguson
Cllr C Mairs
Cllr V Raine
Cllr M Roberts
Cllr G Smith
Cllr A Turner

Also in attendance:
Cllr Christine Wilson
PC Lee Blaney

14.25 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr Robinson and Cllr Thomas

14.26 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were no expressions of interest.

14.27 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were agreed to be a true account of the previous meeting and signed accordingly.

14.28 TO INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

A group leader attended the meeting to complain about issues raised via an informal telephone call made by the Clerk to her. It was explained that one group had made a request that the other group be made aware of a couple of issues. The Clerk apologised for any upset caused and reiterated that, in her view, the message had become misinterpreted and no offence was meant. The Clerk requested a meeting at a more appropriate forum to resolve any concerns about the management of and communication with groups. It was agreed that this will be an item in the next agenda and the Clerk reiterated that there was never any intension of offending anyone and she tried to explain the reasoning for each comment as it was raised. The Clerk also wished to record that she considered the outburst inappropriate and unnecessary, advising parish council members that any such emotionally charged confrontation is unacceptable from anyone during meetings.

It was reported by Cllr Ferguson that needles had been found on the carpet by toddler groups. The Clerk advised that this concern was raised and addressed several weeks earlier. A follow-up letter will be sent to all groups once the communication process is agreed at the next meeting. ACTION: Clerk to write.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

PC Blaney attended the meeting to report the issues surrounding the Prince of Wales vacant public house. It was agreed that the sooner the property is re-developed the better. Cllr Raine had invited the police to attend to raise her concerns about, in her view, the lack of police presence in West Auckland. Cllr Raine raised concerns about the numbers of problem families being housed on the Oakley Green and East Green areas. Following the recent shooting, it was suggested that the police return the CCTV to the post office corner to record any untoward activity in the area. PC Blaney agreed to investigate the current whereabouts of the CCTV.

The possibility of speed calming was raised by Cllr Christine Wilson. The history of the requests for calming systems throughout West Auckland was discussed and it was agreed to write to DCC again highlighting that concerns are still evident within the village. ACTION: Clerk to contact DCC and request an update on any traffic calming measures being considered including the request to relocate the 30 mph sign at the top of Copeland Road,

Further to concerns raised it was agreed that the DCC be contacted to request that the post office corner car park be weeded. ACTION: Clerk to write.

14.29 CLERK’S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORISING INVOICE CHEQUES.

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

12/04/2014	DD	npower gas			£24.85	£28,788.21
12/05/2014	DD	npower gas			£191.68	£28,596.53
25/04/2014	100490	Unpresented-Working with Councils Book			£40.91	£28,555.62
01/06/2014	SO	Broadband/phones			£20.00	£28,535.62
16/05/2014	CR -DD	npower Gas – reimbursed		£249.97		£28,785.59
25/05/2014	BACS	Ordnance Survey			£65.70	£28,719.89

The Clerk advised that she has worked with Ross Cowling, DCC in submitting numerous grant applications relating to the update of Monteith Parish Rooms and was delighted to advise that a conditional grant of £10,000 has been approved to replace all windows, external doors and provide a rear door canopy at the premises.

(i) To receive Westlife articles

Cllr Roberts offered to provide an article on rare birds nesting locally. The problem with obtaining sufficient articles to fill Westlife was discussed and various options were suggested including requesting that the police contribute a brief statistics report, Parish Councillors meet regularly to produce the articles and that anyone with articles submit to them preferably via email. This issue will be considered further at the interim meeting.

(ii) To review event management

Cllr Ferguson requested that the event management process be more detailed and the Clerk requested that Cllr Mairs and Cllr Ferguson provide a list of the steps necessary to site the annual Christmas tree to be included with the file copy already produced by the Chairperson and Clerk. ACTION: Cllr Ferguson and Cllr Mairs to provide Clerk with list of Christmas tree purchase/siting instructions.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

14.30 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE.

Further to recent internal audit recommendations it was suggested and agreed that a finance group should be resumed. It was resolved that Cllr Farrer, Cllr Ferguson, Cllr Mairs and Cllr Turner would meet quarterly with the Clerk prior to the regular monthly meeting to review the accounts for that quarter. It was proposed and agreed that the first such meeting will be held **Monday, 14th July 2014 at 6.15 pm**. The Clerk will prepare and circulate the accounts at the earliest convenience prior to that meeting.

i. **To consider siting of permanent Christmas tree (update only by Cllr Farrer)**

Cllr Farrer provided an update on the various options for siting a permanent Christmas tree and summarised individual's views about the potential sites. Cllr Farrer reminded everyone that the only reason the alternative site was being considered was the excessive service cost quote. This item will be considered fully at the next meeting.

ii. **To consider bulk purchase of dog fouling bags**

The Clerk advised that she has purchased 2,000 dog waste bags and requested that adequate notice be given if further supplies are required because by purchasing after the DCC bulk order deadline the cost was doubled. It was resolved that future supplies of these bags will not be purchased by the Parish Council.

14.31 TO RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE.

i. **To consider progressing with Neighbourhood Plan**

Josephine Ellis, DCC will attend the July meeting and it agreed to leave this item until the next meeting.

ii. **To consider River Gaunless initiative – Cllr Roberts**

Cllr Roberts provided an update on the initiative for developing wildlife along the Gaunless path. The benefits of the 4-5 year project were listed and it was suggested that the Parish Council support this initiative as it was considered that benefits to the village would be commensurate an initial outlay. The Parish Council have written to offer the support for this project but it was highlighted that any financial contribution would be considered at the budget setting meeting in October 2014.

iii. **To discuss provision of skips for allotments**

The Clerk advised that the allotment holders have confirmed that the skips are stored within the allotments fence and are not used for anything but disposal of allotment holders' rubbish that cannot be burnt. It was agreed that the provision of skips would be arranged on request and their use monitored.

iv. **To consider prevention of overnight parking along by-pass**

Further to various correspondence over recent weeks, it was confirmed that the Parish Council are not allowed to introduce any measures to prevent vehicular access on the by-pass as the area belong to DCC. Cllr Turner advised that the issue is being addressed.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

v. **To consider continuation of library room book exchange area**

Due to time restrictions this item will be carried forward to the next meeting. It was emphasised that the Parish Council are aware that they do not have the authority to operate a library and the continuation of the current book exchange will be reviewed.

vi. **To review condition of landscaping at Betts homes**

It was agreed that a letter should be written to Betts homes to request whether they used grass seed instead of turf as it hasn't taken properly. ACTION: Clerk to write.

**14.32 TO RECEIVE ITEMS FOR THE MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY 14TH JULY 2014
(INTERIM MONDAY, 23RD JUNE 2014)**

- To review potential site for permanent Christmas tree.
- Josephine Ellis, DCC Neighbourhood Plan
- To consider replacing the Pant slip-road with turf
- To consider siting of Copeland Road seat.
- To consider management of groups
- To consider updating website
- To consider updating Simpson Road recreation area.

Apologies for next meeting were received from Cllr Rielly and Cllr Farrer.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....