

Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 7.00 pm,  
Parish Community Room, Monteith Close, West Auckland

**Present:** Cllr Hazel Charlton, Chairperson  
Cllr J Bell  
Cllr E Farrer  
Cllr J Ferguson  
Cllr V Raine  
Cllr M Roberts  
Cllr W Robinson  
Cllr G Smith  
Cllr A Turner

#### **14.65 To ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mairs, Cllr Rielly and Cllr Thomas.

#### **14.66 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

Cllr Roberts declared an interest in item 14.70.ii.

#### **14.67 To CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING & MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr Roberts pointed out that Minute reference 14.63.v stated Cllr Martin instead of Cllr Roberts. The Clerk apologised for this minor oversight and confirmed that the file copy will be amended accordingly.

#### **Matters Arising**

- Update on Police Progress following 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

No formal report has been received following Ron Hogg's attendance at the last meeting. Cllr Raine advised that SMART water pens have been distributed in the area.

- Update on quote for Pant slip road

For consideration at February meeting.

- Update on liaison with schools.

Cllr Ferguson and Cllr Smith advised that due to Christmas activities no articles are available from either school. This item will be raised again on the January agenda.

- Update on request for picnic site waste bin.

The Clerk advised that she had submitted a request for a bin to be sited closer to the picnic tables; it was confirmed that the bin has been relocated.

- Stone Seat

Cllr Roberts advised that the site for the stone seat needed to be changed slightly to avoid a gas main. A plan was circulated for information. ACTION: Cllr Turner to request press coverage for the seat siting ceremony to be held at 2 pm on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

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**14.68 To INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

A local resident attended to inquire about progress with siting the bollard near the Nursery/Spar area. Cllr Turner confirmed that DCC will be siting the bollard in January 2015.

**14.69 CLERK’S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORING INVOICE CHEQUES.**

- i. To request Westlife articles

Cllr Smith suggested an article on vandalism of Christmas tree and it was highlighted that the police caught 3 offenders found to be damaging the tree lights. Cllr Smith emphasised the significant cost incurred in replacing bulbs. It was resolved that fencing will be erected around the tree if any further incidents occur.

Cllr Charlton requested that each Parish Councillor consider articles for inclusion in Westlife and submit on or before the January meeting.

It was advised that Neil Simpson is now delivering Westlife and there will be no change to the delivery fee.

- ii. To consider internal audit provision

Following discussion it was resolved that internal audit will remain with Allen Sykes accountants for the next year.

- iii. To consider future Quality Status aim

The Clerk advised that full details of the new Quality Status scheme are not yet available and will be circulated on her receipt. This item will be considered on a future agenda

- iv. To confirm hamper delivery process

It was agreed that the hampers will be delivered to Devonshire House and Roslyn House nursing homes on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014. They will be collected from the Clerk’s house by Cllr Smith the previous night.

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

13/11/2014	BACS	Remembrance Refreshments - Manor House		£70.00
17/11/2014	SO	Domestic 1 Salary		£5.00
17/11/2014	SO	Domestic 2 Salary		£5.00
24/11/2014	200016	Christmas Tree		£288.00
24/11/2014	SO	Domestic 1 Salary		£5.00
24/11/2014	SO	Domestic 2 Salary		£5.00
24/11/2014	200017	Thursday Bingo Group Christmas meal		£200.00
25/11/2014	200018	CDALC Policy Training		£108.00
25/11/2014	200019	Newsletter		£140.00
25/11/2014	DD	Npower		£39.73
01/12/2014	SO	Telephones/Broadband		£20.00
01/12/2014	SO	Domestic 1 Salary		£5.00
01/12/2014	SO	Domestic 2 Salary		£5.00
02/12/2014		WI Donation to Monteith Room use	£65.00	
08/12/2014	200020	Newsletter Delivery		£70.00
08/12/2014	SO	Domestic 1 Salary		£5.00
08/12/2014	SO	Domestic 2 Salary		£5.00
08/12/2014	200021	Bondgate Electric- 125 replaced tree light bulbs		£427.50

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It was resolved that, in view of last year's 10% Band D increase, the previous month's resolution not to increase the precept final amount should remain unchanged despite the decision being queried by DCC finance department as it is irregular to actually reduce the Band D. The Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council will lose approximately £400 from next year's precept following this decision. ACTION: Clerk to inform Susan Oliver, Finance, DCC that there is to be no increase.

Further to the Clerk's request for confirmation of 2015 meetings in readiness to prepare the website, it was agreed that the 2015 AGM/Public meeting will be held Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Following amended plans for the Prince of Wales conversion being circulated, it was resolved that the Parish Council will object to the changes made. Plans to convert the property into 2 dwellings are welcome but the conversion quality is now considered below a conservation area's acceptable level. ACTION: Clerk to write.

**14.70 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE.**

**(i) To consider quote/approval of siting bollards at piece of land near Spa shop**

DCC have agreed to site bollards to prevent future caravan access at the land near the Nursery. As previously advised, the bollards are due to be sited January 2015.

**(ii) To consider finalising Nursery action plan**

Cllr Roberts produced a proposed action plan to improve the Nursery. Following a brief overview from Cllr Roberts, it was agreed that the Parish Council need to continue with measures to obtain ownership of the land and registration with the Land Registry. Enquiries into historical land ownership will be made by Cllr Smith. It was resolved that Cllr Roberts can pursue land ownership but it was emphasised that the Parish Council cannot commit any significant financial resource until they are registered as owning the land.

Cllr Roberts advised that he and local residents are cutting the grass at the Nursery at present in an attempt to preserve the area as much as possible until a long-term solution can be arranged. Various problems were raised with a minority of residents' activities in that area and it was resolved that the Enforcement Officer be asked to visit. ACTION: Clerk to arrange.

It was resolved that whilst land ownership is being considered quotes should be obtained to improve the damaged landscape. It was suggested that Brambledown, Verywell, Terry Batson, Tow Law and Darren Hardman be contacted for a quote. ACTION: Clerk to request quotes and Cllr Roberts to provide landscapers with standard specification.

**(iii) To consider quote for tidy up of area near old planter site near Crusty Loaf**

A quote from BDM Services was approved to tidy up the area at the old planter site near the Crusty Loaf. It was resolved that the area should be improved and a sign sited stating that parking is not permitted on village green. ACTION: Clerk to arrange.

**(iv) To consider quotes for flooring at Monteith Close**

Quotes have been obtained to replace carpets and vinyl flooring in readiness for the Monteith Parish rooms asset transfer. A supplier will be appointed on completion of the process.

**(v) To consider provision of Hawthorn hedges at top of Copeland Road**

It was resolved that the Copeland Road site will be reviewed in January 2015. It was requested that Cllr Yorke be asked for a progress report on his agreement to explore the possibility of providing a small fence at Rydal Grove. ACTION: Clerk to write.

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**14.71 TO RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE.**

**(i) To consider site for permanent Christmas tree**

Cllr Roberts offered to provide an options appraisal of all potential sites for a permanent Christmas tree. Following discussion it was resolved that the originally agreed site on the small triangular green near the Manor House is the best option. Cllr Turner requested that it be recorded that he is against siting a permanent Christmas tree.

It was resolved that 3 quotes will be sourced for a permanent tree and that a plan of several years will be factored into future budget setting to provide electricity to the tree when it has sufficiently, naturally matured. The Clerk highlighted that the finance group had not included provision for the purchase of a permanent Christmas tree in the 2015 budget and therefore any approved quote will need to be funded from 2014 contingency.

**(ii) To consider improving approaches to village planters and grass cutting**

Various options for planters were discussed. Cllr Roberts suggested that each village approach be considered individually as there are other issues to be considered as part of a scheme. The maintenance and watering of planters was discussed. It was resolved that members of the Parish Council will arrange a date at the January meeting to carry out a site visit.

**(iii) To consider request for support on local wind farm objections**

It was resolved that the Parish Council cannot object collectively to the wind farms but Parish Councillors can reply individually. ACTION: Clerk to provide contact details.

**(iv) To consider Stockton & Darlington railway initiative**

For consideration at February 2015 meeting.

**(v) To discuss the Fleece & Nursery village green**

Discussed at agenda item 14.70.ii

**(vi) To consider replanting of village green rose beds**

Cllr Roberts provided details of suitable roses to replace those diseased in the two rose beds on the village green. It was resolved that the beds be replaced and suggested that local councillors be approached with a request to donate towards the £800 cost from their Members Initiative Fund (MIF). ACTION: Clerk to request.

**14.72 TO RECEIVE ITEMS FOR THE MEETING TO BE HELD MONDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015**

- To consider progressing Neighbourhood Plan
- To consider raised bed for memorial crosses at Pant
- To arrange replenishing salt bins
- To receive update on liaison with schools for Westlife articles
- To consider improving approaches to village planters and grass cutting
- To consider resident's request for supporting the revival of a village carnival

Items for meeting Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 Agenda

- Update on quote for Pant slip road
- To consider Stockton & Darlington railway initiative

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