

# West Auckland Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 7.00 pm,  
Parish Community Room, Monteith Close, West Auckland

**Present :** Cllr G Smith, Chairman  
Cllr K Bolton  
Cllr J Curl  
Cllr E Farrer, Vice-Chairman  
Cllr A Palfreyman  
Cllr L Rielly  
Cllr M Roberts  
Cllr W Robinson  
Cllr N Simpson  
Cllr C Smith  
DCC Cllr Mark-Idwal Roberts  
DCC Cllr Rob Yorke

## **21.61 To ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Pattison.

## **21.62 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Cllr Palfreyman expressed an interest in Agenda Item 8 for West Auckland Football Club support funding.

## **21.63 To CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed accordingly.

## **21.64 INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Government Levelling-Up Funds Application - Bypass. John McMennum, Sportsman landlord from Toft Hill, attended the meeting to raise concerns about the link road proposed to go from the Sportsman public house, Toft Hill to meet the A68 half way up Etherley Bank; this would bypass part of Toft Hill. Mr McMennum advised that he and local residents attended a meeting with the local MP, Dehenna Davison to express their concerns about the proposal which would dissect their village. Notification of the proposal was given to residents, without any consultation, via landowners receiving a letter to ask if they want to sell part/all of their property. The proposal would significantly affect a newly developed glamping pod site with newly planted woodlands, the local nursery and some individual residents' properties. Since that meeting the MP visited some properties to understand their reservations but has advised that the proposals will proceed regardless of their concerns. John McMennum has since liaised with Cllr Rob Yorke and, following discussion, it was resolved that as they seek the same outcome it would benefit Toft Hill residents opposing the current bypass proposal to combine efforts with West Auckland residents objecting to the bypass proposal. It was proposed that a petition commenced in

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Toft Hill is continued within West Auckland and Spring Gardens to raise residents' awareness and gather evidence of request for a DCC consultation on this.

Cllr Rob Yorke advised that he and Cllr Mark-Ildwal Roberts have met with DCC officers to query the process and reason for no consultation; it was advised that DCC have worked closely with the MP. Cllr Yorke emphasised that the proposal had:

- 1. No urgent deadline as there are three rounds for the Levelling-Up fund.
- 2. No consultation.
- 3. Insufficient number of vehicles going through Toft Hill to warrant a bypass according the Department of Transport criteria. (Dave Wafer, DCC has quoted that 19,000 per day along the current St Helens A688 bypass, currently 8,000 per day vehicles going through Toft Hill). A current assessment of West Auckland traffic at Chapel Street and Toadpool were requested; Cllr Yorke agreed to request that a survey of traffic through these areas be carried out in coming months.

Cllr Yorke suggested obtaining as many letters of support from local businesses and organisations to go with the Bypass Petition to submit to Government officials. Various issues were raised about the volume of traffic, size of the vehicles and the pollution and road safety problems they bring. It was resolved by all that while they welcome a bypass of Toft Hill, it should include Spring Gardens and West Auckland. It was highlighted the resistance from residents is essential to hinder progress with the current Toft Hill only bypass.

Village In Bloom A resident requested permission to use Monteith Close Community Room on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021 for a lunch for Village in Bloom Judges and also for a coffee morning on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021. Both dates were approved by the Parish Council with no charge and an offer for any required assistance from several Parish Councillors.

**21.65 To RECEIVE CHAIRPERSON/COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Thanks was given to Bishop Auckland Cllr Sam Zairs for his support with the recent bypass proposal objections.

It was reported that DCC Find and Fix employees have been in the village for the past 2 months helping with fixing, planting, pruning and painting. They will be providing herbs will for planting next Wednesday which will be available to anyone to pick as required. Thanks were given Cllr Neil Simpson for his assistance to the Village in Bloom scheme.

The Parish Council expressed their disappointment that Cllr Mark Roberts did not voice his support for the objections to the current bypass proposal.

Cllr Rielly advised that there is a meeting this coming Friday to provide an update on the Street Games and youth club proceeding.

It was advised that Believe Housing are offering funding via grant applications to local initiatives. It was resolved that the Parish Council will submit two applications towards youth initiatives in the village.

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## 21.66 CLERK'S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORISING OF INVOICE CHEQUES

Correspondence received was tabled and payments endorsed as follows:

|                          | Receipt | Payment |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| BT - Monteith Internet   |         | £37.08  |
| Clerk's Salary           |         | £850.00 |
| Telephones and Broadband |         | £30.00  |
| Eon Next Electric        |         | £23.07  |

- The June quarter end bank reconciliation was reviewed and approved.
- The Clerk requested Parish Council consideration of the community groups returning to use Monteith Close for social gatherings. It was resolved that with a group leader's agreement to accept responsibility for ensuring the group adheres to any COVID restriction and cleaning checklist for each session the sessions can resume after 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 in line with Government's COVID 19 Guidance.
- Those present were made aware of a St Helens School Governor vacancy; no-one from the Parish Council is able to express an interest in this position.

## 21.67 RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

### i. To consider speed restrictions in Robson Road and consideration of congestion

Concerns were raised about the volume of traffic and number of cars speeding down Robson Road, West Auckland. Residents have sought advice from the Parish Council. It was resolved that the County Councillors will raise the concerns with the relevant DCC department. ACTION: Clerk to write to Cllr Roberts and Cllr Yorke. It was suggested that speed cameras and other mitigation works are required.

### ii. To receive update on the provision of a bollard on the Staindrop Road narrow path

It was reported that the resident is concerned that nothing has happened to resolve the problems of quad bikes accessing the 'narrow path' footpath from Staindrop Road. It was suggested that Cllr Roberts and Cllr Yorke raise this issue again with DCC.

### iii. To receive an update on Leaflet 1

A final draft of Leaflet 1 had recently been circulated and Cllr Roberts agreed to finalise the minor changes and have the leaflet ready for printing prior to the September meeting.

### iv. To consider protection and enhancement of the Village Green, inc Fleece & Nursery area

Cllr Martin Roberts has drafted a report highlighting several points which would improve the above areas. Cllr Yorke offered to support the Parish Council in achieving these improvements to the village green areas.

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## **21.68 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

### **i. To consider additional funding for the New Street play area**

It was confirmed that the current works on the New Street play area are almost complete and proposed that James Young be asked to consider providing a plan and costs for a further phase. It was resolved that, in principle, the Parish Council would support providing two or three more pieces of equipment and funding will be considered once the plan is received.

### **ii. To consider the Football Club Funding Support Breakdown**

Cllr Yorke advised he has recently received information and pictures of the recent improvements and commended the Football Club on what they have achieved with their available funds so far. It was advised that they require £24,000 to complete the works and proposed that if the two County Councillors could consider contributing £8,000 each and the Parish Council could consider contributing the remaining £8,000 to allow them to complete the works. It was resolved that the Parish Council will provide £8,000 towards the Football Club works.

### **iii. To consider upgrading Village Christmas lights**

It was advised that the cost of dressing each Christmas tree is £1,800 and the cost of DCC fitting 10 commando units to lamp posts is £5000. It was resolved that a maximum of £11,000 was agreed for 2021 Christmas lighting.

### **iv. To consideration cemetery improvements**

This agenda item will be deferred for inclusion in the September meeting.

### **v. To consider resurfacing of path between Oakley Cross School and A68**

It was advised that the road plainings laid on the Oakley Cross school path last year are not suitable. Gill's of Cutherstone, who laid the plainings last year, have advised that a subsidised cost would be £1,100 to re-lay with road plainings or £2,400 to tarmac the path. It was proposed that County Councillors seek consideration of the footpath being adopted by DCC; it was highlighted his process was commenced several years ago and ceased without completion. Cllr Roberts and Cllr Yorke agreed to pursue this.

## **21.69 TO CONSIDER LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES**

There were no significant planning issues for review.

## **21.70 To receive items for Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 meeting**

- To receive update on Bypass Proposals
- To receive update on Traffic Management at Robson Road
- To consider protection and enhancement of the Village Green, inc Fleece & Nursery area
- To consider additional phase funding for the New Street play area
- To consider requesting that Oakley Cross school consider allowing the Multi-user games and activities (MUGA) to be accessible for community activities.
- To consider resurfacing of path between Oakley Cross School and A68
- To receive update of provision of upgraded Christmas lights

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