

# HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

c/o 17 East Green, Heighington, Co Durham. DL5 6PP

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 MARCH 2017 AT 7.00 PM

**PRESENT:** Cllr C Teare (Chairman)

Cllr E Thompson

Cllr G Blenkinsopp

Cllr M Woodward

Cllr G Lee

Cllr L Garner

Cllr L Bedocs

S Lenegan

L Dunn

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr B Anderson

Cllr M French

### **027:2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Anderson and Cllr French had given apologies.

### **028.2017 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

None

### **029:2017 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 16 FEBRUARY 2017**

The minutes of the meeting on 17 February 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

### **030:2017 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Cllr Lee pointed out that the figures stated in section 025:2017 Reports/Correspondence of the February meeting minutes were incorrect and should state £100,000 and £300,000 rather than £1m and £3m respectively.

John Anderson, Head of Strategic planning at DBC is to attend the next meeting in April to discuss current planning policy which will affect the Parish.

Mr Routledge is to attend the next meeting to outline his proposals for his intended planning application to build houses on part of a field to the east of the village, accessed from East Green.

The Parish Clerk will arrange an appropriate time for both attendees.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

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Cllr Lee informed the meeting that Low Coniscliffe Parish Council had received grant funding of £490 towards the set up costs of their website. He will bring further information when available.

South Durham Hunt have been contacted regarding their parking around the village on 1st February. No response has been received.

DBC has been contacted regarding the parking on the village green at the corner of Hopelands from Highside Road. The matter has been passed onto the Housing Department via Highways for action.

## **031.2017 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Cllr Anderson was to carry out the Health and Safety inspections for the month before he went on holiday and there was nothing further to report.

## **032.2017 SPORTSFIELD**

Cllr Anderson has been collating a number of quotes for the new play equipment and is currently comparing the prices.

No further information has been received on the proposed extra fencing or extension of the sports pavilion. It was understood that Cllr Anderson was making enquiries regarding the fence.

Cllr Anderson and Cllr Teare intended to cut the part of the hedge which had been missed by DBC but when they went to do it, they had already been back and completed the job. It was agreed to send a note of thanks to DBC for carrying out the work.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

Cllr Anderson is to schedule a meeting with the footballers within the next month.

A cheque has been received from British Gas for the Feed In Tariff for the period 25/10/16 - 07/03/17 amounting to £84.85.

The Clerk has received a letter from Northumbrian Water regarding de-regulation of the water industry from 1st April 2017. De-regulation will enable all non-domestic users, regardless of size, to switch their water and sewerage services to an alternative supplier and negotiate competitive contracts. The impact on HPC is expected to be minimal, considering the quarterly bill is currently around £20 - £25.

## **033:2017 FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING**

Ongoing – nothing to report.

## **034:2017 REDWORTH**

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that there has been a few problems with poachers and dog walkers in Redworth Wood.

The Clerk understands that a site survey has been completed regarding the speed visor but no invoice has yet been received. It is expected to be imminent.

Cllr Bedocs enquired as to who was responsible for the footpath leading out of the village towards Redworth as it is covered in rotting leaves and soil which has washed down from the adjoining field. DBC is responsible and the Clerk was asked to contact them accordingly.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

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## **035:2017 THE CHESTNUTS**

Cllr Bedocs had attended a public drop-in event organised by Miller Homes regarding a proposed housing development on land to the West of School Aycliffe, providing 103 homes.

As far as Cllr Bedocs could assess there were two issues:

1. The traffic feeding from the development onto School Wycliffe Lane, as the junction is near to the junction leading onto High Barn Road; proposed
2. The land slopes so there may be an issue with surface water.

He informed the meeting that a Bat survey was also to be undertaken.

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that he understood that the developers were in talks with both DBC and DCC regarding school places.

A formal application is planned to be submitted at the end of March, with hopes for approval being granted in July. Building work will then start mid to late summer with the first occupation by Christmas 2017.

## **036:2017 PLANNING**

Application Ref **17/00106/FUL** related to the increase in the maximum number of children educated and living within Oakwood Learning Centre at any one time to 15 (from 14). The Clerk was instructed to give a no comment response.

Application ref **17/00173/FUL** was tabled. It related to the erection of a first floor extension to the side and singly storey extension to the front elevation of 22 Twinsburn Road. The Clerk was instructed to give a no comment response as inadequate information was available to assess the proposal.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

## **A037:2017 FINANCE**

The monthly bank statement was read out to the meeting and all transactions noted. The Vat claim has not yet been submitted, the invoice for the speed visor is to be included so the claim will be completed once this has been received. The Clerk informed the meeting that although a detailed forecast had not been carried out yet to determine any year end surplus, it was considered that funds in the region of £5,000 - £6,000 was expected at the end of the financial year. Cllr Lee questioned whether this was too high and if consideration of a lower precept request / budget should be considered and so a general discussion followed regarding other committed expenditure and projects which would require funding from this balance.

A letter had been sent by the bank informing that the community benefit fund payment of £1,500.30 had been made by Lightsource on 10th March. It was understood that this payment should be received in January each year and the Clerk was asked to contact Lightsource to ensure this was the case going forward.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

It was reported that the electricity bill for the changing rooms was again higher than normal. Cllr Teare had checked the changing rooms on Sunday and all the immersion heaters had been on. Cllr Anderson is to raise the issue with the football managers at the next meeting. Cllr Garner suggested that any timer fitted could be done so to the fuse box to reduce the number of timers required.

**ACTION: CLLR ANDERSON/PARISH CLERK**

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Further letters have been received from the Pension Regulation regarding auto-enrolment. The declaration stating that there are no eligible employees can be given after the Staging Date of 1st May 2017.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

Cllr Bedocs queried the percentage increase in the HPC precept following receipt of his Council Tax bill for 2017/18 from DBC. The document states that the percentage increase applicable to HPC is 16.4%. This does not correspond with the HPC budget which increased by £726, equivalent to a 4.5% rise.

Cllr Bedocs asked that DBC be queried over this and also asked how much income are they collecting on behalf of HPC.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

***Following the meeting clarification was received from DBC. The increase in the Heighington Parish Council precept shown on the DBC Council Tax bill for 2017/18 is due to DBC withdrawing the Parish Council Support Grant. This has resulted in an additional amount of £1,560 (as per 2016/17 figures) having to be levied upon HPC parishioners on top of the small 4.5% increase in the HPC budget.***

## **038:2017      REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that DBC were currently looking into their responsibilities with regards to the ditch / drain issue on Batts Lane.

## **039.2017      OTHER MATTERS**

The annual salary review was due and following discussion it was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED to increase the hourly rate of the Environmental Warden to £8.00 per hour from the current £7.46 (7.2%). The Parish Clerk salary was budgeted for a 3% increase and it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to implement this rise with effect from 1st April 2017. The Parish Clerk will write to the Warden to confirm the outcome of his annual review and implement the changes to standing orders at the bank in due course.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

A request has been received from Mrs Gibson of Pinewood Crescent for permission to erect a 6' garden bench on the Village Green outside the Bay Horse in memory of her husband who sadly passed away on 12th February 2017.

Following discussion Cllr Woodward suggested plots be drawn up of available areas for erection of benches on all Village Greens and a record of contact details for the purchaser of the bench be kept on file. It was agreed that following any agreement for parishioners to erect a bench they must be made aware of the need to repair / replace it when its condition dictates. Cllr Bedocs proposed that the request be granted and Cllr Thompson seconded that proposal with the condition that on this occasion the exact siting of the bench be agreed in consultation with HPC.

**ACTION: PARISH CLERK**

As this was the existing Parish Clerks last meeting Cllr Teare, on behalf of all of the Parish Council thanked Mrs Lenegan for her hard work and dedication over the previous five years and wished her well for the future. He then welcomed Mrs Dunn who is taking over the role.

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There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.