

# HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 27th July 2017 AT 7.00PM

**PRESENT.** Cllr B Anderson (Chairman)

Cllr C Teare

Cllr E Thompson

Cllr L Bedocs

Cllr L Garner

Cllr G Blenkinsopp

Cllr G Lee

L Dunn

### **089.2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr M Woodward, Cllr M French

### **090.2017 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

None

### **091.2017 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 15TH JUNE 2017**

The minutes of the meeting on 15th June 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman following the request by Cllr Garner for the removal of the word “contractor” in minute 088/2017.

### **092.2017 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Responses to all planning application notifications had been sent to Darlington Borough Council on 20th June.

A letter regarding Right of Access across the Village Greens has been received from Mr and Mrs Moss of 22 East Green. This is in addition to the response previously received from Mr & Mrs Harrop of 18 East Green. Cllr Thompson stressed that the issue was more of the residents parking vehicles on the Greens and it was agreed that residents from 18, 20 and 22 East Green and also 43 Church View would be written to requesting them not to park on the Green.

#### **ACTION: Parish Clerk**

The Litter Pickers are now included on the insurance policy at no extra cost. The condition of this is that they wear appropriate PPE and have both a risk assessment and written records. Cllr Bedocs has passed this information onto the Chairman of HPLG, Mr Smyth. He also asked whether HPLG should therefore be added as a sub group to HPC but the general consensus was that this was not necessary.

Cllr Anderson met with Steve Brannan from DBC on 21st June regarding the drainage issue and was informed by Mr Brannan that when Highways put the drain in, they had the right to do it as long as it went to a watercourse. Now that HPC have connected to the drain it is now its responsibility. Cllr Anderson informed the meeting that where the drain came out at the bottom of the sports field, he has had the area dug down by three metres and filled with hardcore, chipping and soil on top.

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A letter of thanks was sent to Mrs Garner regarding the flowers on 20th June

Letters were sent to both the George and Dragon and Enterprise Inns regarding the moving of the benches to allow the grass to be cut. To date no response has been received from either party. It was agreed that a further letter be sent to Enterprise Inns requesting a response.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

Darlington Borough Council has written to all tenants in Homelands in relation to parking and driving across the grass areas.

## **093.2017 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

None

## **094.2017 SPORTSFIELD**

Cllr Garner has been approached by Mr Woodward regarding the thistles at the bottom of the sports field. Cllr Anderson informed the meeting that the Environmental Warden has already cut them down and is in the process of cutting the whole area.

Cllr Anderson informed the Clerk that the replacement spring has not yet been received from Playdale.

**ACTION Parish Clerk**

## **095.2017 FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING**

None

## **096.2017 REDWORTH**

None

## **097.2017 THE CHESTNUTS**

None

## **098.2017 PLANNING**

Information regarding DBC's consideration of Application Ref: 17/00283/FUL for the proposed residential development of 101 dwellings on Wednesday 26th July 2017 had been emailed to all Councillors when received.

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that a decision on the application had been deferred by issues around sustainability. Apparently there is sufficient space in schools in Newton Aycliffe to accommodate the additional pupils the development would generate and DBC have said that they would pay for buses to transport these pupils for two years. They couldn't comment on what would happen after that.

At the Heighington Development meeting earlier in the month DBC had highlighted areas where developers or their agents had put forward land for potential development. There is another meeting scheduled for Tuesday 1st August. Cllr Lee had asked that it be held in the village but his request was refused.

Cllr Bedocs informed the meeting that DBC had said they would be interested in the land adjacent to the Chestnuts (as suggested in HPC proposals on future development) but that nothing will come of the suggestion unless a developer or the land owner approached them about it. They do not have any plans to do compulsory purchases.

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Application Ref 17/00581/FUL related to the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with balcony above, conversion of existing garage into habitable room and alterations to front porch at 17 Westwood Avenue. The Clerk was instructed to give a no comment response as inadequate information was available to access the proposal.

**ACTION Parish Clerk**

## **099.2017 FINANCE**

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliation for June before the meeting and all balanced.

A direct debit form required a second signature to set up the facility for payment of water bills.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the operation of Thirsk Payroll Service, who calculate the payroll for HPC, had been transferred to TP Jones & Co at the end of June. TP Jones & Co had acknowledged that Thirsk Payroll had operated a fully inclusive fixed price service with any changes to processing costs being notified before the start of the financial year, and confirmed that they would continue with the existing charging and invoicing arrangement. Cllr Garner questioned what notice the new service provider would have to give to increase costs and it was agreed that the exact notice period was not known but it would not be until into the new year, before the start of the new financial year. The Clerk informed the meeting that she had already made unofficial enquiries into other providers to compare the cost and service that could be provided and explained that the current situation where salary payments were made by standing order was not ideal. If a more fully inclusive service could be found, encompassing payment of salaries and of PAYE to HMRC this would be preferable. Cllr Teare suggested he make some enquiries with his accountant as to what service he could offer and the associated costs. Cllr Thompson proposed that the Clerk investigate other payroll providers and Cllr Bedocs seconded this proposal.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk / Cllr Teare**

Following the Clerks report on the Transparency Code which was circulated with the meeting agenda discussion was had on the next steps. The Clerk explained that the first thing was to appoint a website designer and purchase the equipment necessary for scanning and uploading documents to it (the costs of which can be claimed back through the Transparency Fund). After consideration of the three quotations obtained for website development Cllr Thompson proposed that LJ Digital Media be appointed to do the work and that the Clerk be authorised to go out and obtain equipment up to the value of the amounts which can be claimed through the Transparency Fund. Cllr Bedocs seconded this and IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to appoint LJ Digital Media as the company to build the Heighington Parish Council website and for the equipment to be purchased.

Cllr Garner noted that one of the things which can be claimed from the Transparency Fund was the extra time needed by the Clerk to firstly set up the website etc (up to 50 hours) and then carry out the additional duties in order to comply with the Code (up to 3 hours per month). The additional ongoing costs could only be claimed from the Fund until February 2018 and that after this date any additional time would be at the cost of HPC. He asked if this was enough time to do so and it was agreed that at this point in time it was not known and may have to be reviewed at a later date.

The Clerk further explained that knowledge of the requirements of the Transparency Code were obtained through a link with the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) and that it would be useful if HPC were to become members in order for the flow of information to continue, as well as a number of other benefits which could be accessed. If membership started from September it could be obtained at half price,

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the cost being £0.1673 per elector. At the last election Heighington Parish had 1,817 electors so the cost to 31st March 2018 would be £152. After discussion Cllr Blenkinsopp proposed that membership of CDALC be taken from 1st September 2017 for an initial period of six months and Cllr Lee seconded this proposal.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

## **100.2017        REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

None

## **101.2017 OTHER MATTERS**

The Clerk informed the meeting that a renewal notification of the membership of Friends of the National Railway Museum had been received. She suggested that rather than renew the subscription, which was £40, the money be used towards the cost of the CDALC membership as discussed under Finance. It was agreed that there was no real benefit to the membership and that therefore it should not be renewed.

**ACTION Parish Clerk**

An email has been received from Mrs Karin Allison on behalf of Heighington WI explaining that 2018 will mark the 100 year anniversary of Heighington WI. She explained that they are planning a series of events over the course of the year and to mark the anniversary, and to provide a legacy to the village, they are planning on planting 1,000 daffodil bulbs on the approaches to the village, that being either side of Redworth Road and either side of Darlington Road,/Coatsay Moor Lane (the planting will not involve the Village Green). In order to assist them in doing this they were enquiring whether any financial assistance may be available from HPC towards the cost of the bulbs (the quote they have received being £350). Cllrs Lee and Garner questioned whether the full amount should be contributed and suggested a contribution lower than the full amount. Cllr Anderson moved that they be allowed to carry out the request and that HPC contribute £350 from the Community Fund towards the cost of the bulbs. Cllr Bedocs seconded the proposal.

**ACTION Parish Clerk**

Cllr Teare informed the meeting that he had observed a person in the Sports Field with a dog who he was allowing to foul on the morning of Wednesday 26th July. He approached the individual and informed him that dogs were not allowed in the area and that he should not be in here with his animal, nor be allowing it to foul.

Cllr Anderson has previously spoken to this individual regarding the same offence and informed him that should it happen again he would contact Darlington Borough Council who had agreed that they would fine him on Cllr Anderson's authority. Following discussion it was agreed that the incident be reported to DBC and that the individual concerned should be written to.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55pm.