

# HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY AT 7.00PM

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

Cllr E Thompson

Cllr L Garner

Cllr M French

Cllr G Lee

Cllr G Blenkinsopp

L Dunn

Mr S Allison (Heighington Village Hall Association)

### **154.2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr B Anderson, Cllr M Woodward, Cllr L Bedocs

### **155.2017 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

None

### **156.2017 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018**

The minutes of the meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

### **157.2017 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January:

- Letters of thanks were sent to the residents of Hopelands thanking them for their efforts in maintaining the grass and other areas.
- The WI were informed of the additional area of Green where daffodils could be planted.
- INEOS were written to regarding the loud noise. To date no response has been received and Cllr Lee stated that he would chase up the company as he had a contact there.

**ACTION: Cllr Lee**

- HVHA were thanked for their letter and the Chairman invited to attend the Parish Council meeting, hence his attendance this evening.
- The resident who had expressed concerns over erosion of verges were informed that it was a Highways matter.
- A note of thanks was sent to DBC regarding the operative who cleared gutters.
- DBC were informed of the peeling paint in the bush shelter. They have passed the matter onto Highways to look into.
- The CEO of DBC was written to requesting for details of Section 106 monies – this is being treated as a Freedom of Information request and as yet no reply has been received. DBC have until 16<sup>th</sup> February to reply under their Freedom of Information Policy. Discussion then followed on the S106 monies and it was rumored that those from the current Chestnuts development was to be used to transport children moving into the new houses on the site to schools outside of the Darlington Borough for a period of two years. Cllr Blenkinsopp expressed concern at this stating that if this were the case then the other proposed developments around the village were more likely to be given the go ahead. He said that S106 monies were designed to be for the benefit of the Parish and transporting children to schools outside Darlington Borough were not doing this and that after the two years the problem will come back. Further discussion took place regarding the proposed expansion of Heighington School and its possible

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merger with Dove Academy. Cllr Lee informed the meeting that he was trying to find out where S106 monies from the Beech Crescent development were to be spent but to date had not received any information from DBC. Cllr Garner asked Cllr Lee when the Walworth Road application was due to be considered by the DBC Planning Committee but a date had not yet been set.

- DBC were contacted regarding securing the waste bin which has been relocated. They have replied stating that the bin is in need of replacement. An email was sent to all Councilors and Cllr Bedocs had replied stating he thought the bin should be replaced. Cllrs Blenkinsopp and French agreed with this suggestion. Discussion then progressed on the location of the bin and it was eventually proposed by Cllr French that the current bin be removed due to its state of disrepair and that the situation regarding litter be monitored to assess whether it needs to be replaced. If the litter in the area increases then a new bin will be procured. Cllr Garner seconded the proposal and it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that the bin should be removed.

## Car Park

Cllr Lee asked if the Parish Council had agreed that the car park at the sports field would be closed if further planning applications around the village were approved. This was confirmed. He stated that he was not at the meeting when this was decided. He also informed the meeting that some time ago the Parish Council had agreed that the car park would be available for the school to use. Discussion was had on the leverage HPC has with DBC over their granting of planning applications and listening to HPC views, and it was stated that should the car park be closed then DBC have to consider other alternatives as part of the planning application process. Cllr Lee considered that this action was putting children at risk but this was disagreed as it was stated that parents were able to park elsewhere and walk their children to school or use the unofficial drop off outside the school.

The Chairman introduced Mr Stuart Allison, Chairman of Heighington Village Hall Association. Mr Allison gave a presentation on the history of the Village Hall and the issues and pressures it is currently facing. He explained that the current lease for the hall expires in 10 years and at this point the building will be released to the Church Wardens. It will then be up to the Church to decide what it wants to do. The Village Hall Committee are currently sourcing quotations to replace the windows in the hall as they are in a bad state of repair and are only single glazed but due to the building being listed and in a Conservation Area, this is proving both expensive and difficult. Cllr Blenkinsopp explained to Mr Allison that HPC has three sources of funding; the precept, S106 monies from developments (if passed onto HPC from DBC) and also the Community Fund. He further explained that the Community Fund is income derived from the solar park near the Chestnuts and is solely to be used for community projects. He stated that should HVHA apply to HPC for some additional funding then it would be seriously considered. The Chairman thanked Mr Allison for his time and reiterated that HPC would support HVHA as much as they were able.

## **158.2017 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

None

## **159.2017 SPORTSFIELD**

The hedges to the front of the sports field have now been cut.

Cllr Blenkinsopp informed the meeting that Husqvana will soon be looking for a test site for robotic mowers which are used to cut football pitches and wondered if HPC were approached would they consider such a request for the sports field. The general consensus was that yes this would be considered.

Cllr Teare informed the meeting that the MUGA was in need of attention as soil and earth have encroached onto the perimeter and as a result grass and weeds are growing through the tarmac. It needs a group of people to address the matter with spades. Cllr Teare agreed to speak to Cllr Anderson about the matter and organise a time for it to be addressed.

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**ACTION: Cllr Teare**

## **160.2017 FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING**

None

## **161.2017 REDWORTH**

Cllr Tear has ordered the plaque for the bench and has acquired the timber. Once the weather improves these will be fitted.

**ACTION: Cllr Teare**

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that he recently had a meeting at Oakwood Learning Centre and the subject of minor accidents which have occurred on the country roads was discussed. DBC are not prepared to grit these roads as they are minor roads. Staff at the school are to be asked to consider driving slower and Cllr Lee is also writing to suppliers of the school and local farmers asking them to do the same.

## **162.2017 THE CHESTNUTS**

Cllr Blenkinsopp informed the meeting that the traffic lights to the entrance of the new development have now gone and the entrance has been completed. He stated that the roads around the development were being kept clean. Cllr Lee stated that he was going to pop in to see the Site Manager and would pass on the comments regarding the cleanliness of the roads.

**ACTION: Cllr Lee**

## **163.2017 PLANNING**

Three planning applications were tabled. These were as follows:

Application Ref: 18/000834/FUL – Station Road

Following discussion, it was agreed that there were CONCERNS over the application and therefore and OBJECTION for the following reasons:

1. The proposed access road is narrow and cannot be changed, altered or widened.
2. By adding five dwellings on this site will increase the total number of dwellings to eight, which requires an adoptable road for access. As stated in point 1, the existing road cannot be changed into an adoptable road.
3. Increasing the number of vehicles using this access creates danger for children and pedestrians using East Green as an open space.

Application Ref: 18/000835/FUL – Walworth Road

HPC OBJECT to the application on the following grounds:

1. Existing roads are inadequate (i.e. too narrow and cannot be widened) to accommodate the additional vehicles which will result from the extra dwellings. These existing roads do not meet current width standards and if they had to accommodate additional vehicles they would become dangerous.
2. The access to the proposed new site is near the junction of South View and Snackgate Lane and as such is dangerous. This part of road is already a crossroad on a bend.
3. Lack of footpath in Millbank Lane will compromise the safety of pedestrians in view of extra vehicles driving through the village

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4. Narrow footpath along South View will compromise the safety of pedestrians in view of extra vehicles driving through the village
5. If proposal goes ahead, and as previously informed, there will be the loss of the use of the car park at the Sports Field, currently used by parents taking their children to school.

One compromise for the proposal would be for the road to the north of the site to be blocked off which would force vehicles from the site to travel directly towards the A68 rather than through the village. This would mean there was no access from the village to the A68 and no vehicular access from the new site into the village.

Application Ref: 18/00075/FUL – Royal Oak

No Objection

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

## **164.2017 FINANCE**

### Clerks Report

The bank reconciliation for January had been circulated and balanced.

DBC were informed of HPC precept on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

A VAT claim has been submitted to HMRC to the value of £1,154.83.

## **165.2017 REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

None

## **166.2017 OTHER MATTERS**

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that Mr. Parker of Heighington School would be happy to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss parking issues, expansion of the Academy etc. Following discussion, it was agreed that he should be invited.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

Cllr Teare informed the meeting that a resident from Hopelands which HPC wrote to thanking them for their efforts in maintaining the greens has posted derogatory comments on Facebook. It was agreed that the comments should be ignored.

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that he has written to residents in Hopelands regarding their views on creating more car parking spaces. Not many responses have been received. Cllr Blenkinsopp questioned how any works would be funded and stated that if S106 monies were planned to be used then he disagreed with the proposal. He also stated that children play on the grass and to remove some to change it into car parking would be detrimental to the children. Cllr Garner also expressed concern if it was to create more parking spaces for the school.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.