

HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

c/o 7 The Garth, School Aycliffe, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham. DL5 6QL

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2017 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Cllr B Anderson (Chairman)
Cllr C Teare
Cllr E Thompson
Cllr G Blenkinsopp
Cllr M Woodward
Cllr G Lee

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APOLOGIES: Cllr L Garner
Cllr M French
Cllr L Bedocs

001:2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Garner, Cllr French and Cllr Bedocs had given apologies.

002.2017 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

None

003:2017 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 17 NOVEMBER 2016

The minutes of the meeting on 17 November 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

004:2017 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cllr Lee reported that the planning department at DBC was still trying to resolve the dispute with the users of land at Swan House. The Land Registry has now referred the matter to the adjudicator for a decision.

Cllr Anderson had arranged for the hedge to be cut on the sportsfield. Cllr Woodward would provide the Clerk with the bill once it arrives.

ACTION: CLLR WOODWARD

Cllr Anderson reported that DBC had now removed the damaged MUGA gate and taken it away for repair.

With regard to the replacement elephant spring in the playpark, Cllr Anderson reported that he had not placed an order yet as he wondered whether it would be more appropriate to purchase something different for the park rather than to undertake a costly repair. He considered that a seesaw would be a good idea and everyone agreed. Cllr Anderson was to determine the likely cost before a decision was made.

ACTION:

CLLR ANDERSON

005.2017 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Cllr Anderson had carried out the Health and Safety inspections for the month and there was nothing further to report. The Clerk was to provide a year's supply of inspection sheets.

ACTION: PARISH CLERK

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006:2017 SPORTSFIELD

Cllr lee reported that 8 ponies had entered onto the sportsfield today, following their escape from the field behind Snackgate Lane the previous evening. They had spent a number of hours there but fortunately the damage to the grassed area was minimal.

Cllr lee had contacted DBC for help in contacting their owner. After the owner arrived to collect them he met Cllr Anderson and thanked him and gave him his number in case of any further problems. Cllr Anderson was to share this with Cllr Lee who was to lodge it with the 101 service.

ACTION: CLLR

ANDERSON

This occurrence had led to suggestions at yesterday's PACT meeting for the appointment of a rural officer to service a wide area who is trained in handling horses/animals as it can be difficult to get appropriate help in these circumstances as the police themselves are not used to dealing with animals which can be dangerous.

It was noted that the PCSO investigating this case agreed with the owner of the ponies that the wire securing the gate had been cut.

007:2017 FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING

Ongoing – nothing to report.

008:2017 REDWORTH

The Clerk had not heard anything further from the Traffic Committee regarding the purchase of the signs.

The Clerk had written out a cheque for the Redworth Village Hall Association grant but had not yet seen the treasurer to hand it over.

Cllr Lee reported that village green erosion by the road in Redworth village was continuing and it may in time be necessary to put some form of rail in place to prevent further erosion.

009:2017 THE CHESTNUTS

Nothing to report

010:2017 PLANNING

Cllr Blenkinsopp tabled plans that the Clerk had not yet received but which had been posted online regarding proposals to extend 24 West Green, Heighington. The plans were considered and reviewed and it was agreed that the proposal be APPROVED.

ACTION: PARISH CLERK

011:2017 ACCOUNTS AND BUDGET 2017/18

The budget for 2017-18 that was tabled and approved at the last meeting had been finalised by the Clerk and a request for a precept of £16,772 had been made. The Clerk had since been informed that it would be paid in early April.

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The Clerk had prepared a very simple spreadsheet to separately record expenditure of the community fund. The next payment to HPC was due any day now.

The monthly accounts were tabled and all income and expenditure reviewed. It was noted that the clerk was still having difficulties with the reconciliation and if this could not be resolved was to request assistance from an accountant contact of Cllr Teare.

ACTION: PARISH

CLERK

The Clerk reported that the Barnard Castle branch of HSBC had now closed, which would mean that any banking requirements would be slowed down.

012:2017 REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr Lee referred to a letter to John Anderson, Head of Planning DBC, that he had circulated over Christmas regarding planning concerns/parish councils/neighbourhood planning. Mr Anderson's view was that nothing would happen in Heighington until a developer or group of developers agreed to fund an extension to the school.

Mr Anderson had suggested coming to a parish council meeting to discuss these issues with the Parish Councillors and it was agreed that this would be useful. The clerk was to arrange this.

ACTION: PARISH

CLERK

013.2017 OTHER MATTERS

- With regard to the village orchard, Cllr Woodward confirmed that the triangular area of land that had been identified was not available for this purpose. Other possibilities were discussed but it was not possible to identify anywhere suitable to all. The Clerk was to write to Mr Dobinson and ask him for any other ideas.

ACTION: PARISH CLERK

- The Clerk reported that the mandatory requirements of the transparency code may soon apply to Heighington PC. It applies to all councils with an annual turnover of less than £25K. Councils within this threshold must have a website and publish specified accounts information on it. Whilst HPC may be outside of the requirement for the moment, the turnover figure is very close and it would be prudent for both this purpose and in general terms to look at setting up a website.

IT WAS AGREED that the Clerk was to make initial enquiries regarding a simple website, timescales and costs.

ACTION:

PARISH CLERK

- Cllr Anderson reported that the Clerk had reluctantly given her resignation. She would, however, assist in ensuring a smooth transition to her replacement. A draft job advertisement was tabled and approved, subject to adding that it would be strongly desirable for a candidate to have a good knowledge of the parish. The Clerk was to put the advert in the noticeboards and the Newton News.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

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