

# HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

## MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2019 AT 7.00 PM

### PRESENT

Cllr G Blenkinsopp (Chairman)	Cllr A Holmes
Cllr L Teare	
Cllr M French	

### IN ATTENDANCE

L Dunn	E Thompson
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### 001.2019 APOLOGIES

Cllr M Woodward	
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Ms. Jane Simpson attended the meeting to speak about the planning permission which has been granted for the over 50's at the Dog, Walworth. She stated that the lodges are already in situ and there is a show home in the car park. The planning permission was granted by DBC on Friday. Someone has been informed that they can move into a lodge in 4-6 weeks.

Cllr Teare stated that unfortunately there is not much the Parish Council can do.

Ms. Simpson stated that there would be an impact on local resources such as the school and doctor's surgery and that there is no proper sewerage system in place.

At the last Parish Council meeting Cllr Lee informed everyone that he was aware that some of the specifications of the application had changed and he was to investigate with Dave Coates from DBC. The Parish Clerk contacted Dave Coates on 23<sup>rd</sup> May asking for information but to date nothing has been received despite Mr. Coates assuring that he would speak to the Case Officer for a response.

Cllr Blenkinsopp stated that the best thing the Parish Council could do is to request an urgent meeting (within the week) with the Planning Officer at DBC to discuss the matter and allow residents with views on the matter to attend.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

**Cllr Lee joined the meeting**

### 039.2019 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

None

### 040.2019 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 29<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019

The minutes of the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

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## **041.2019      MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Comments on planning applications were sent to DBC on planning applications on 23<sup>rd</sup> May

The Parish Clerk emailed Dave Coates on 23<sup>rd</sup> May regarding the concerns over the planning for the caravan park on the land adjacent to the Dog Inn and he was to contact the case worker for them to send a response but nothing received despite chasing up Mr. Coates on two occasions. Cllr Lee has been trying to get some answers as to how the planning changed over the last two years but he is not getting anywhere. He has emailed but has had no response. It has been passed on a "Certificate of Lawfulness", which is something Cllr Lee has never heard of. This meant that normal planning process did not need to be followed. Cllr Thompson asked whether the matter should be taken to the Ombudsman and Cllr Lee suggested to wait until after discussion was had with DBC. Cllr Holmes asked whether an appeal could be made but Cllr Lee advised that only an applicant can appeal, not an objector.

Cllr Teare has measured the area of fencing which is required adjacent to Hall Lane to prevent access from the sports field onto Hall Lane. Cllr Lee suggested also erecting a sign stating no exit.

Zurich were informed that would like to go ahead with 5 year LTA for insurance and payment has been sent.

The Fun Fair informed of decision 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

WI asked for representative to attend meeting but since then questions asked by Cllr Lee have been answered so Chair advised no need for them to attend. Discussion was had on the WI proposal. Cllr Blenkinsopp will contact Brian Anderson and WI and arrange a Saturday morning meeting to discuss what flower tubs should be replaced and where new tubs should be situated. Cllr Thompson suggested digging out an area at the edge of the green to stop cars from driving on it. However, concerns were expressed about the ongoing maintenance of this suggestion so it was dismissed.

**ACTION: Cllr Blenkinsopp**

SCOPE were informed of decision on 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

Letters were sent to previous Councillors on 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

Facebook Page has been discussed between Cllr Holmes and the Parish Clerk and is in hand.

Contact has been received from two potential Councillors and an application from one has been received late last night. This will be circulated and included on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Thompson had submitted an application and Cllr French PROPOSED that he be accepted into Office. Cllr Blenkinsopp SECONDED the proposal and a vote was taken in which it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED. Mr. Thompson completed a Declaration of acceptance of office form and Declaration of Interests Form and was then invited to join the meeting by the Chairman.

### **Cllr Thompson joined the meeting**

## **042.2019      HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Following the safety checks completed by Cllr Blenkinsopp Heighington FC were contacted regarding blocked fire exits. They responded and confirmed that they would be cleared.

Cllr Blenkinsopp reported that:

- Electrical Safety Check on the changing rooms were last done in 2015. Should be done every three years as it is a wet environment. (Electrical Safety Testing)
- There are a number of portable appliances which hadn't been PAT tested.

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- The Fire Risk Assessment makes reference to Fire Extinguishers but there are none in the building. However, it would be good practice to purchase some.

Cllr Blenkinsopp will discuss obtaining fire extinguishers with Cllr Woodward and Cllr Teare will pass details onto electricians who could be contacted for the Electrical Safety Testing and PAT Testing.

**ACTION: Cllr Blenkinsopp, Cllr Teare**

## **043.2019      SPORTSFIELD**

Vandalism and suspected drug taking was reported to the Police via email on 29<sup>th</sup> May. As yet no response has been received.

Repairs to the guttering will be completed this weekend.

There are broken picnic tables, one of which looked like a portable bbq had been used on it and set alight. Cllr Teare suggested replacing the tables with ones which would be fixed to the floor. Cllr Blenkinsopp will investigate some new benches and bring quotes to the next meeting.

Repairs to fencing will be done very soon.

Discussion was had on locking the gates first thing on a morning and on an evening. Cllr Lee has asked the School if it was something the Caretaker could do but they have said that they could not due to insurance matters.

**ACTION: Cllr Blenkinsopp**

## **044.2019      FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING**

None

## **045.2019      REDWORTH & HEIGHINGTON**

Cleaning tubs and re-filling with compost – Existing tubs need clearing and then filled with new compost. Flowers can then be purchased from DBC in order to replant and Brian Anderson will help with this in conjunction with the WI.

Jubilee Wild Flower Area – Environmental Warden was asked to trim the area last year but he has noticed that it has already been maintained this year and he is enquiring whether he is still required to maintain the area. Following discussion, it was agreed to request the Environmental Warden to trim the area in September.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

## **046.2019      THE CHESTNUTS / OAKLANDS**

Cllr Blenkinsopp has spoken to DBC about erecting a dog waste bin and noticeboard at Oaklands.

An abandoned vehicle was in the field near the Chestnuts. Before it could be removed it was set alight. It has now been removed.

## **047.2019      PLANNING**

Application Ref: 19/00503/FUL - addition of external render to front side and rear elevations, 6 Highside Road

Agreed a No objections reply to be given.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

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Neighbourhood Plan – the Parish Clerk asked CDALC to circulate an email around other Parish Councils for advice on consultants they may have used. Received responses from Middridge, Hurworth and Newton Aycliffe. Shaun Hanson of Planning Advice Plus has also contacted the Parish Clerk directly and is willing to come to a meeting to explain the process and how he could help. Following discussion, it was agreed that contact should be made with Mr Hanson to ask if he could attend the next meeting and also what he would need from the Parish Council.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

## **048.2019 FINANCE**

The bank reconciliation for May had been circulated prior to the meeting and balanced.

The Internal Audit has now been completed and the Auditors findings / recommendations had been circulated.

The Parish Clerk explained that there had been issues encountered in receiving the report in a timely manner. The auditor had assured that they audit would be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> April but it seems that their original return was lost in the post. This included the original bank statements for the year April 2018 to March 2019. Copies of the report and the bank statements were then received when duplicates were requested to be sent by signed for mail.

There were also a number of inconsistencies with the first report received and impressions are that the work done is not to a particularly high standard. The Clerk therefore requested permission to look around for an alternative auditor ready for the 2019/20 audit work and this was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

The invoice for the internal audit work has been received and is for £100 and it was agreed that this could be paid.

### Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The annual internal audit report was reviewed, considered and approved.

The annual governance statement was considered, completed and approved.

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 and the accounting statements in the audit pack had been circulated and were reviewed at the meeting and approved.

The Clerk was authorised to submit the audited statements to Mazars.

### Bank Signatories

The bank had been contacted on 24<sup>th</sup> May for a form in order to change the signatories on the bank account following the change of Chairman. Nothing was sent and so they were chased today for the Clerk to be informed that before a form could be sent she had to be authorized for telephone banking and a form was required to be completed to this effect. The form had been completed and was signed by Cllr French who is an existing bank signatory.

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

Cllr Blenkinsopp informed the meeting that there is Community Funds of £1,600 which can be used to support community projects. Cllr Lee talked about the defibrillator project which he is involved in and indicated that an application may be submitted for consideration.

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## **049.2019      REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk received contact requesting that a link be inserted on the Parish Council website which would direct users to their nearest Job Centre Office. It was agreed that this would be allowed.

Cllr Lee has been contacted by a parishioner asking for permission to erect a bouncy castle for a child's birthday party on the Village Green adjacent to the George and Dragon pub. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be approved with the following conditions:

1. No vehicles must be driven onto the Green
2. The supplier of the bouncy castle must be checked that they have adequate public liability insurance
3. A litter pick must be carried out following the party to ensure that the Green is left in the same condition
4. All persons using the bouncy castle are under supervision and responsibility of the party organiser
5. The bouncy castle must be removed by 8pm on the day of the party

**ACTION: Parish Clerk**

A Parishioner had asked whether public transport links to Tindale could be looked at. Despite this not being a Parish Council responsibility Cllr Holmes agreed to contact Arriva Darlington to see if they would be interested. Cllr Lee was to pass contact details of the Manager of the Darlington branch of Arriva onto Cllr Holmes. Cllr Holmes informed the meeting that the Darlington magazine which had just been posted to all homes included a transport survey which is being done by DBC and encouraged everyone to complete it in order to help towards improving transport links for the village.

**ACTION: Cllr Lee & Cllr Holmes**

The Parish Council usually have a representative on Heighington Village Hall Committee. Unfortunately, all current members of the Parish Council have prior commitments on a Tuesday evening so would not be able to attend. It was agreed to see if any new Councillors would like to take the responsibility.

Cllr Lee reported that:

1. The Conservative Group are looking at the housing numbers in the Local Plan which are down as 9,000 – 10,000 but there is no evidence of where these figures have come from. Ultimately DBC are looking for 16,000 houses. One of the big possible developments is Skertingham (4,300 houses). Two recent applications have been withdrawn from planning until a definitive answer on the number is gained. Cllr Teare asked whether the Neighbourhood Plan was useful in view of this. Discussion then followed on such documentation and its influence if any it can have on planning decisions made by the Borough Council.
2. He had been in contact with the site manager of the Heighington Meadows site and they said that the trees and bushes had to be cut to allow a new footpath to be installed.

## **050.2019 ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED ON NEXT AGENDA**

Councillor vacancy applications

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There being no further items, the meeting concluded at 9:05pm