

HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 22nd APRIL 2021 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

Cllr G Blenkinsopp (Chairman)	Cllr M Woodward
Cllr A Holmes	Cllr S Bremner
Cllr G Lee	Cllr M French
Cllr E Thompson	Cllr L Garner

IN ATTENDANCE

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001.2021 APOLOGIES

Cllr C Teare	
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002.2021 RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

None

003.2021 APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 25th MARCH 2021

The minutes of the meeting on 25th March 2021 were proposed by Cllr French and seconded by Cllr Woodward and so approved and signed by the Chairman accordingly.

004.2021 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

As Cllr Teare was not in attendance Cllr Blenkinsopp will contact him to discuss the position of the repairs to the basketball facilities.

ACTION: Cllr Blenkinsopp

Cllr Lee informed the meeting that Groundwork was still looking for available funding for the play area at St Michaels Crescent. He suggested that the Council look at borrowing money from PWLB in order to purchase some replacement play equipment for the park but Cllr Blenkinsopp stated that as the Parish Council do not own the play area, he did not think that they should meet any cost of equipment. He noted that DBC do not provide any play facilities for children in the Parish.

The Parish Council asked Cllr Lee to go back to DBC and state that they do not provide play facilities for the Parish and suggest to them that they should adopt this play area.

ACTION: Cllr Lee

Following a site visit to look at the locations for new parking bays at Hopelands three locations have been identified. Cllr Blenkinsopp suggested that residents be surveyed in order to get their opinions on the three options. This was PROPOSED by Cllr Thompson, SECONDED by Cllr Garner and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED. It

HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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was agreed that Cllrs Blenkinsopp, Thompson and Lee would devise a survey to distribute to residents. Contractors would also be approached to give quotes for all locations. DBC had been approached in March and had responded to say that a quote would be prepared after the Easter holidays.

ACTION: Cllr Blenkinsopp / Cllr Thompson / Cllr Lee

Quotes are to be obtained from the same contractors for the repairs to the footpath at Redworth.

ACTION: Cllr Lee / Cllr Teare

Cllr Blenkinsopp referred to the decision at the last meeting to purchase a new laptop for the Clerk. Recommendations have been received and the optimum laptop has been identified at a higher cost than agreed last month. Following discussion Cllr Holmes proposed that the budget be increased to enable to higher specification recommended laptop to be purchased. This was seconded by Cllr Bremner and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

005.2021 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Repairs to the climbing frame were ordered on 29th March 2021 with the work scheduled to be done within 8 weeks. Cllr Lee asked if a claim could be made on the insurance for the damage caused and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the insurers.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

A list of approved contractors for the Council is to be maintained and discussions were had on suppliers and contractors to include. Any additions are to be emailed to the Clerk.

ACTION: All

The Clerk informed the meeting that the annual inspection of the play equipment has been booked for June.

006.2021 SPORTSFIELD

Cllr Blenkinsopp informed the meeting that Heighington FC want to erect 2 x 20-foot portacabins behind the changing rooms for storage of goals and equipment following a number of vandalism incidents. Enquiries have been made with DBC and planning permission is required. The planning application fee would be £462 for Heighington FC to submit the application and £234 if the Council were to submit. Heighington FC have said that they would reimburse the Council if they were to submit the application.

Cllr Blenkinsopp put two questions to the Council:

1. Are the Council happy for planning permission to be applied for? – Cllr Lee proposed that planning permission be applied for. This was seconded by Cllr French and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.
2. Are the Council happy to submit the application and pay the fee and then seek reimbursement from Heighington FC? This was proposed by Cllr Lee, seconded by Cllr French and UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

Heighington Primary School are unlocking the gates to the sports field at 8am each morning and locking them at 5pm each evening. The earlier locking time is in view of recent local incidents involving travelers. The lock on the gate has been deliberately cut earlier this week and so a replacement has had to be purchased. Following discussion, it was agreed that two Councillors telephone numbers would be added to the sign at the entrance to the field in case someone were to be locked in.

007.2021 FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING

None

HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

008.2021 REDWORTH & HEIGHINGTON

The purchase of bedding plants for the various planters around the parish was discussed. Cllr Holmes suggested that they be bought from a local supplier such as Porterfields or Highside Nursery. A total of 250 plants were ordered last year but this was not sufficient so it is estimated that approximately 330 is required, with a mix of 60-70 hanging plants and 260 – 300 general bedding plants. It was agreed that the purchase was not required until the end of May.

Discussion was had on the current one-way system in place around Heighington School. Cllr Lee informed the meeting that as a minimum it will remain in place until the end of the summer term. Cllr Holmes stated that as a result of the restrictions cars are speeding up Mill Lane. It was also acknowledged that some cars are simply ignoring the signs. Cllr Blenkinsopp asked Cllr Lee that before any decisions are made on whether the restrictions be made permanent that both residents and the Parish Council be consulted. It was agreed to put the matter on the agenda for the September meeting in order to discuss further.

It was also noted that the traffic cones on West Green were also as a result of the one-way system to prevent cars from parking and disrupting the flow of traffic.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

It was noted that DBC had been in Redworth and filled various pot holes this week.

009.2021 THE CHESTNUTS / OAKLANDS

Following the complaint from a resident at the Chestnuts regarding trees and the contact made with Greenbelt the Parish Clerk informed the meeting that they had been chased up for a response as despite assurances of a reply within 20 working days this had not been forthcoming. Cllr Blenkinsopp suggested that a search be made for the name of a Director and they be contacted directly.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

010.2021 PLANNING

Planning Ref: 21/00290/FUL – Removal of existing conservatory and erection of single story rear extension – 41 Pinewood Crescent, Heighington

It was agreed that a “No comment due to insufficient information” response be submitted.

Cllr Garner asked if copies of decision notices on planning were received and the Clerk informed him that receipt of the said items was infrequent. It was agreed that contact be made with DBC to request that the Parish Council receive copies of all decision notices.

Discussion was had on the development at the Dog Inn and it was determined that the Council required the answers to two questions from DBC Planning Department:

1. The homes were originally being advertised as holiday lets but now residential. Has this permission changed?
2. It was understood that initially the development was for the over 50's but this doesn't seem to be the case. How are DBC going to enforce this?

Cllr Lee enquired about the extending of the changing rooms and Cllr Blenkinsopp explained that there was some S106 monies which were available for the sports field which could be used. A meeting had previously been organized with the Head of Planning at DBC to discuss this but it failed to go ahead.

HEIGHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

It was therefore agreed to ask for a meeting with the Head of Planning to discuss S106 monies as well as the Dog Inn development.

Cllr Lee suggested that a PWLB loan be investigated in order to provide the funds required to extend the changing rooms but Cllr Garner asked why the Council should look to have debt if portacabins were to be installed, were sufficient and were well maintained once erected. Cllr Bremner also asked about whose responsibility the upkeep of the portacabins would fall to and Cllr Blenkinsopp explained that it would be the responsibility of the Council.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

011.2021 FINANCE

The bank reconciliation for March had been circulated and balanced along with the cashbook for the financial year and budget monitor showing the year end position.

The accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021 had been prepared and the Council reported an in-year surplus of £3,615 made up of a general fund surplus of £4,597 and a small in-year deficit on the Community Fund of £982, however a balance of Approximately £1,000 still remained in the Community Fund. The Council maintained reserves of approximately £13,000.

All information has been forwarded to the internal auditor. Depending on how long the internal audit work takes, the full accounts will be brought to either the May or June meeting. The confirmed cost of the internal audit is £250.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

012.2021 REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

ACTION: Cllr Holmes

The Parish Clerk informed the meeting that a complaint had been received from a Heighington resident regarding quad bikes being driven on the grassed area outside the former Cumby. Unfortunately, as this is private land the Parish Council are unable to do anything but the resident was advised to contact DBC.

013.2021 ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED ON NEXT AGENDA

Church View, Heighington and wheelie bins

There being no further items, the meeting concluded at 8.50pm