

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Parish Council held at Hurworth Grange on Thursday 30th March 2017 starting at 7:00pm.

1. Those present: Margaret Williams (Chair), David Wood, Graham Wylie, Carol Paylor, Paul Walters, Peter Foster, Janine Forster, Elaine Hedley, Jean Peacock. Richard Lawley, Dorothy Oughton.

Also attending: Peter Allan (Parish Clerk),

2. Apologies for absence

Wilma Campbell,

3. Declaration of Interests

Not applicable

4. Chairman's Address

The Chair welcomed the councillors and explained that the meeting was being held to review the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, and to offer assistance if required.

5. Review of the Parish Plan 2010

The Clerk made a presentation reviewing the progress of the present Parish Plan, highlighting each of the Action Items, and detailing the progress made over the last 6 years.

This also highlighted Actions which had not yet been completed, and which may need to be considered for incorporation into the new Neighbourhood Plan.

This is likely to be the last review of the Parish Plan, as most of it will have been either achieved, or will become objectives within the new Plan.

The council are to be congratulated on the progress which has been made in the six years up to the financial year end on 31st March 2017.

6. The 'Vision' of the future of Hurworth Parish

Carol Paylor made a presentation addressing the requirements of the Localisation Bill 2011, and the recommendations therein. The area selected for the Neighbourhood Plan is the whole area within the new boundaries of Hurworth Parish.

Carol stressed that the Vision will be identified after in- depth engagement with the residents and other stakeholders within Hurworth Parish and other parties with whom the Parish interacts.

A survey will be carried out, and public meetings held, culminating into a draft Plan, which after an external review, will go to a Referendum. The result of the Referendum will require a majority of more than fifty percent of the total votes recorded.

The Hurworth Plan will be drawn up in conjunction with Darlington Borough Council, thereby obtaining their active participation, and agreement. The 'Vision' will be the vision of the majority of the community.

Carol informed the meeting that a working team is in place, and preparatory work has now begun.

7. Hurworth Neighbourhood Plan

David Wood made a presentation covering, in detail, the process which is to be followed in the preparation of the Plan.

The Plan is to cover fifteen years starting in 2018. DBC has been contacted and final agreement of their participation will be finalised within two weeks. A DBC representative has been assigned to this project.

David talked the meeting through the Project Planner, and amplified upon the importance of several aspects of the process. The Plan embraces nine Phases, and 35 Activities. It is hoped to 'kick off' the engagement process at the Annual Assembly on 19th May 2017.

A number of leaflets will be used to interact with residents, both prior to the Questionnaire distribution, and afterwards. Businesses, farms and landowners will be asked to participate and be given opportunities to comment and share their views.

A major aspect of the process is the collection and presentation of 'Evidence'. This was highlighted in a video which David showed within his presentation. For the Neighbourhood to become creditable, sound, accurate evidence is essential. The Parish Plan was, in essence, a Wish List, whereas the Neighbourhood Plan is a commitment to the future, in conjunction with our Borough Council.

The team hope to complete a draft questionnaire by early May, and present the outline and national to the public at the Annual assembly.

David suggested that the team may require specialist assistance with the Planning evidence, which is a paramount part of the Plan.

8. Funding for the Plan

The Clerk advised the meeting that a grant has been obtained for £5,600, which is to assist with funding for the phases up to 30th September 2017. Thereafter, it should be possible to get a further grant, up to a total of £9,000.

9. Local Services

The Chair opened up the meeting for general comment, and also raised the possible future cutbacks within DBC, which could lead to HPC having to take on duties and services within the Parish. These could include grass cutting and gritting as examples, plus the cost of litter picking. There was concern shown by some councillors about controlling planning applications, which spring up on the outskirts of the villages, such as Neasham Road and Roundhill Road. It is hoped that when the new Plan is in operation, more strength can be leveraged to ensure that developments are in keeping with the future Vision.

10. Year End Financial Report and Variance details

The Clerk presented the Year End financial report to 31st March 2017.

The council has been stringent in their expenditure, and most budget headings, including Treework and Open spaces have finished under budget.

DBC did pay a final grant in April 2016, and continued to reimburse the Litter Picker costs; this resulted in a windfall of almost £8,000.

The overall savings reached £15,000. The council has already committed this surplus to the extension of Hurworth Grange, which should take place in September 2017.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:45pm

