

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held at Hurworth Grange on Thursday 6th April 2017 starting at 7:00pm.

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

Also attending: Cllr Joe Kelley, Cllr Lorraine Tostevin, Peter Allan (Parish Clerk), plus 7 members of the public.

208. Apologies for absence

Elaine Hedley (Away from home)

209. Declaration of Interests

Jean Peacock	HCA
Graham Wylie	Allotment
Wilma Campbell	HCA and EPICH

210. Chairman's Address

The Chair welcomed the councillors and the public.

- The Chair reminded the councillors that the next meeting will be the Annual Meeting. To date there has been one nomination for the position of Chair, and one for Vice Chair. Any further nominations should be advised to the Clerk within the next seven days, please.
- The Annual Assembly will be held at Hurworth Grange on Friday, 19th May. The Agenda has been sent to all councillors; the emphasis this year is on the launch of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The DBC Dog Warden has made a visit to Hurworth, at our request, and made several calls on residents with regard to dog fouling.
- The projector, which the council has been using for the last three years, was a borrowed unit, and this is no longer available. The council agreed that the Clerk purchase a projector before the next meeting. Graham Wylie selected the model.
- The Kissing gate has now been installed at the north entrance to Hurworth Grange; our thanks to DBC who has installed this at their cost. The Chair announced that Malcolm Thompson will be retiring from DBC in two weeks time, and will be replaced by Steve Petch as Head of DBC Countryside.
- The public pathway behind Eurojag is again blocked, and DBC has been informed.
- There was a sewage blockage at the Primary School pathway, which was reported, and has now been cleared by Northumbrian Water.

211. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2017

The Minutes having been distributed, were accepted by the council. Proposed by Jean Peacock and Seconded by Wilma Campbell.

212. The Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 30th March, having been distributed to all councillors, were accepted. Proposed by Paul Walters and Seconded by David Wood.

213. Matters Arising

1. Knell Gate. Cllr Peter Foster reported that the letters had been sent to the two neighbours who have agreed to clear the pathway and erect a fence at the river end for safety reasons, and install an iron gate at the Village Green entrance. They have generously agreed to do this at their expense. The council will prepare and install a plaque giving a brief history of Knell Gate.

However, one of the neighbours has now expressed his disagreement with these arrangements, and has requested a further meeting. It was agreed that Cllr Foster and the Clerk will meet with the people concerned. The council expressed the importance of preserving the village history and ensuring the Knell Gate passageway is kept open.

2. Tees Valley Summit. Paul Walters confirmed that he will be attending this event, collect the information and report back to the council. This may be of interest to small businesses in Hurworth, in which case we can take it further.

3. Neasham Road update. The Chair reported that in addition to the litter clean up, she and the Clerk had visited Eurojag, who are co-operating in keeping the area tidy, and that the council has requested DBC to make good the grass verges and re-install the road signs which have come down. The planning application for the caravan standing ground opposite Lygon House has not yet been heard, and the council's objections have been submitted.

4. Fields in Trust. Wilma Campbell requested a follow-up on the presentation made by Mr Jamie Leeson, representing 'Fields in Trust' who made a presentation of the **Memorial Ground Project.**

The council discussed this matter at some length, but concluded that they were uneasy about making a long-term decision to dedicate Hurworth Grange land, and, as no other land owned by HPC is suitable, then this project should not go any further. A vote was taken and 10 voted to end the process, with 1 against. Wilma agreed to inform Mr Leeson of the council's decision not to proceed. **Action WC and the Clerk.**

5. Open space report

Wilma Campbell reported

OPEN SPACES

HPC has taken duty of care for the Open Space in Lychgate, known as the Orchard.

Tomorrow morning the area will be strimmed. Members of EPICH and hopefully some residents will help to tidy it up so that it becomes more user friendly. It is hoped that a bench be placed in the area for residents to use/ and a plaque giving details of ownership.

EPICH will include this area in their future bulb planting scheme.

214. Public Participation

- A resident asked why the Precept has been raised by 36 percent, and whether this is a one-off, or could become an annual increase.

David Wood replied and explained that a number of projects have been scheduled which include the preparation of the new Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out the Parish's objectives for the next 15 years, and will provide a stronger influence on future housing planning and developments. Also, there is to be an extension to the Hurworth Grange entrance to the Fletcher Hall and additional toilets. Also, there is a serious concern that DBC may reduce their services to rural areas, and this could include mean that HPC would have to fund services such as grass cutting, road include grass cutting, gritting and litter picking. These would be significant expenditure items. David emphasized that all the funds were used for the betterment of the Parish, with the only other costs being the council's administration.

The Clerk was asked to comment, and he explained that DBC has withdrawn has withdrawn their rural grant of almost £4,000 per year, and hinted that the reclaiming of Litter Picker costs may end, this being a further £4,000. DBC encouraged Parish Councils to increase their Precepts this year to replace these shortfalls, but also warned that in future years the increase to the Precept will probably be capped at between one and two percent, in line with Government policy.

The Chair informed the meeting that this percent increase is much lower than any other local Parish Councils, and, that in real terms, it equates to less than £1 per month.

It was agreed that the council will provide details of expenditure variances in the quarterly newsletter.

- Questions were raised about the activities of BT, Open Reach and Virgin Telecom regarding providing hi-speed broadband in Hurworth.

Cllr Joe Kelley related his frustration at the lack of positive progress, and explained that Hurworth is not BT priority, and Darlington is getting superior help. Both BT and Virgin are doing online surveys to measure the potential uptake, and residents are encouraged to register their support.

David Wood stated that progress in Croft, which comes under Richmondshire is far ahead of Hurworth.

Cllr Kelley agreed to make a further report at the next PC meeting.

- Cllr Tostevin informed the meeting that there has been an accident on Neasham Road. Residents are very upset, and again this has highlighted the high speeds and dangers of traffic accidents and injuries on this road.

Cllr Foster recalled that there has been 5 deaths on Neasham Road over a number of years, yet the police will not implement a 40mph speed limit. **Action Cllr Tostevin to reopen this issue.**

- Mrs Judith Ashton pointed out that there is an event scheduled at the Village Hall on the same night as the Annual Assembly. The problem here, is that there needs to be a Village Diary held on the council's web site, displaying all events within the Parish.

Information is provided by some organisations, but not all, and often events are not publicised. All agreed that this should be improved, and it was agreed that a councillor should be designated to the task of Village Event recorder, and ensure information is received and the web site and notice boards updated. **Action at Annual Meeting.**

215 Planning Applications

Jean Peacock made the following report:-

Planning Report –6th APRIL 2017

Re- submission after refusal
Construction of pitched roof over existing flat roof
of hall, kitchen and bathroom to front and a sun room to the
rear.
No Comment.

17/00165/FUL The Old Kennels Strait Lane
Change of use of Agric. Land to form domestic residential
curtilage, demolition of an existing outbuilding and erection of
a residential annex.
No Comment.

17/00205/FUL Rockliffe Hall
Approval of details reserved by condition 7,8,9,10 and 11.
No Comment.

17/00205/FUL 36 Grange Avenue
2 storey extension to front elevation incl. Internal and external
refurbishment.
No Comment.

17/00243/FUL 3 Eden Close
Erection of single storey extension side/rear and removal of
existing detached garage.
No Comment.

216. Tree Report

Cllr Peter Foster reported that all the trees are in good health, and no significant work is required at this time.

A tree has been cut back at the rear of Mowbray Drive, this was at the request of the house owned, and who also bore the cost of the work.

There is a tree on the corner of Emerson Road which will be felled by DBC next time they are working in that area.

There is a tree near 65 Strait Lane which is obstructing pedestrians, and we have asked DBC to cut this back.

217 Highways

• Highways

Carol Paylor reported as follows: - **Highways Report March 2017**

- Fly tipping on Roundhill Road – Street Scene informed and rubbish removed;

- Yellow bus-stop markings near the Fish and Chip shop have been queried with DBC due to residents' complaints of them being over-long. DBC will not alter.

- **Again request to DBC that road markings need repainting – Bus stops on Strait Lane and at Hurworth Place and white chevrons near Mustard Tree Methodist Café on the bend. Action Clerk.**
- White lines to demarcate lanes and improve lane discipline in drivers on the first corner of Westfield Drive (near Hornby Close) are being investigated by DBC in next budget (April 2017) by DBC
- **Signage/Advice from DBC re BLIND LANE road users please keep to the correct side of the road. Request again to DBC. Action Clerk.**
- On site visit (DBC & HPC) to Village Green re road/potholes. Feedback from Chair.
- Overhanging bushes/shrubbery that is impeding access to the footpath for pedestrians – HPC has spoken to householders and estate agents regarding unoccupied premises, politely requesting hedges are trimmed/cut back. PLEASE CAN RESIDENTS BE MINDFUL OF PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO FOOTPATHS AND TRIM ACCORDINGLY. This is greatly appreciated.
- Strait Lane – Site visit organised with DBC for advice/ideas. HPC has brought this situation to the attention of the owners of the Otter and Fish also. They are now requesting that clients use car park and keep Strait Lane free.
- **Wall near Iron bridge – Punch Taverns to be contacted re state of repair. Action Clerk.**
- Wheelie Bin stickers have received lots of positive feedback. Second wave of stickers are being distributed this month.
- Community Speedwatch. Twelve Hurworth resident volunteers have now been vetted, three sites in the village have undergone Police Assessments and we are now awaiting our formal training. Hurworth will be the first place in the whole of County Durham to deploy Community Speedwatch without Police presence in attendance. We will have body cameras and the full support, knowledge and weight of Durham Police behind us thanks to Sergeant Cat Iley.
- Speed Monitors rotated again at the end of this month for April 2017.

Actions Clerk

- Road markings outside the Mustard Tree Café.
- It was agreed not to request new lines at the bus stops until be lines on Church Row are reduced.
- It was agreed that although the marking opposite the Spar shop, on Blind Lane are correct, several motorists disobey them.
- Write to Punch Taverns about the wall opposite the Otter and Fish.
- Roundhill Road potholes

• Traffic

Graham Wylie reported as follows

March's Traffic Figures

At the Green

85th Percentile speed = 32.3 mph

Maximum speed was 65mph on 01/03/2017 at 07.45

Total vehicle count = 44,314

Worst days for speeding are Saturdays and Sundays with an average speed of 33.3mph

Steel Bridge entering the village

85th Percentile Speed = 32.8mph

Maximum speed was 65mph on 30/03/2017 at 23.00

Total vehicle count = 30,252

Worst day for speeding is Sunday with an average speed of 33.5mph

Hurworth Road Outgoing

85th Percentile Speed = 34.6mph

Maximum speed was 75mph on 10/03/2017 at 13.00

Total vehicle count = 79,617

Worst day for speeding is Sunday with an average speed of 34.0m

218. Matters of Interest

1. Strait Lane parking issues

Graham Wylie reported that he has delivered a council's letter to the Otter and Fish requesting their staff to use their own car park, and to outline the problem that the residents are suffering from parking congestion. The situation has slightly improved since.

The residents are eager that a permanent solution is found, and again recommend the under-grass meshing. The Chair reported that there are mixed feeling in the Parish, with comments received that laying mess will effectively create a Car Park, and disfigure the green area, which forms an entrance to the village (the residents have already objected to a community notice board being erected on the opposite side of the road, referring it as an eyesore). A car park could attract additional vehicles and could expand the problem. The residents said that this solution would not attract extra vehicles as it is within a confined area.

The Chair reported that she and the Clerk have talked to DBC and their stance on laying mesh engendered hesitation as they are concerned about pedestrian accidents and insurance claim risks. In the event that a mesh base is installed, HPC would have to arrange the insurance cover and also commit to the ongoing maintenance of the area.

The cost of purchasing and installing this solution, based on the residents' estimates, is circa £4500.

At this point Cllr Wood declared a pecuniary interest, and temporarily left the meeting.

A motion was tabled by Graham Wylie, Seconded by Richard Lawley

‘ HPC should investigate the laying of suitable mesh, through which the grass will grow, on an area of the green outside the houses from the Otter and Fish to the allotment entrance. DBC should be asked to undertake this work, but, in the event of their refusal, then HPC should be prepared to undertake the project’.

A vote was taken, and the result was In favour 7, against 1, abstentions 2, Cllr Wood did not vote. **Action Clerk and Council to make contact with DBC**

- **Village Clean up.**

Dorothy Oughton reported:-

There has been a ‘Litter Pick’ on Neasham Road, which has been excellent and our thanks go to all who participated.

- Dorothy has prepared a poster which is ready for the next Litter Pick, as soon as a new date has been arranged. **Action Clerk Follow up on village clean up and agree a future date**

- **Easter activities**

Carol read out the plans which are in place for younger people entertainment during the Easter period at Hurworth Grange. This is a very full and varied programme, and should attract many children from the villages.

Dates and details will be put onto the web site and the Parish and community notice boards.

- **Village Green internal roads.**

The Chair reported that, following requests from residents, she and the Clerk inspected the site, and subsequently arranged a meeting on-site with DBC.

DBC has now submitted a quotation to repair the internal road, which will be the HPC expense.

We have requested two further quotations.

Cllr Foster stated that the only way to ensure that the repair remains solid would be to rotavate the area, re-use the materials and re-lay the topping; this will, of course, be more expensive, but will provide a long-term solution.

The council agreed, in principle, to undertake this work, and a decision on the solution and contractor will be decided later. **Action: obtain quotations.**

Cllr foster enquired what has happened to the sign which stated ‘No Parking- By Law fine of £200 enforceable’ Nobody knew what has happened to this sign, and it was suggested that we replace it.

- **Banks Group Meeting.**

The Chair read out the Report to the meeting. There were no comments, and the Report will now be sent to all councillors.

219. Police Report

Paul Walters reported as follows:-

Paul informed the meeting that PCSO John Angus has retired. The council expressed their gratitude to John, who has been a fantastic ‘local bobby’ to the P-Parish for many years.

Also, at present, PC Foley has been assigned to Darlington urban area.

PC Becky has informed us that a new officer will be assigned to the villages shortly, and also provided the following police report:-

1 Theft from vehicle - items stolen from insecure car, while owner dining

4 Anti-social incidents – Hoax call to police

- Person found sleeping in vehicle
- Cross sprayed on Village Green
- Youth on roof near Priory School

220. Accounts for Payment

The schedule, having been previously distributed to all councillors, was passed by the meeting. There were no questions raised.

<u>Accounts for Payment as at 31st March 2017</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
HCA	102839	Photocopying	30.30
DBC	102840	Tarmac outside Spar shop	97.90
MT Print	102841	Newsletters	690.00
P Foster	102842	Trav Expenses	36.60
N Water	102843	Allotment water	10.23
B Iles	102844	Salary	516.95
Hurworth Country Fair	102845	Community event sponsor	2000.00
P D Allan	102846	Salary	522.48
Inland Revenue	102847	PAYE	196.60
HCA	102848	Allotment water	60.00
Boyd Sports	102849	Goal posts and line machine	1008.00
B Lawrence	102850	Sect 137 Armed Forced event	300.00
Hurworth Village Hall	102851	Community event award	2000.00
EPICH	102852	Jean's Meadow project	800.00
P D Allan	102853	Stickers, keys, Sect 137 award	190.71
Leisure Benches	102854	3 outdoor benches	986.96
TalkTalk	DD	Communications	25.20
TalkTalk	DD	Communications	14.27
Barclays Bank	DD	Bank charges	4.60
BT Comms	DD	Communications	82.32
Total Payments for March 2017			9573.12

221. Financial Report to 31st March 2017

The Financial report having been previously distributed to all councillors was presented at the meeting. The Clerk informed the council that this is the final report for the year 2016-17, as the year end is 31st March. Hence the report shows the actual revenue and expenditure for the 12 months, the budget and the variances for each heading. There were no questions and the accounts were accepted.

The council has been most diligent throughout the year, and the accounts show a surplus over budget, almost every expense head having come in under budget.

BLUE=Allocated	Financial Report to 31st March 2017												Total	Budget	Variance
	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17			
Balance Forward	66279	104443	101272	99359	95585	92232	90811	84489	73854	71550	69269	62146	66279	2016-17	2017
Revenue															
Precept	38245												38245	38245	0
Other Income / Grants	8500	52											8552	8500	52
Rent & Interest			9					100	9			212	330	500	-170
Grants & VAT	3560			1092									4652	1090	3602
Litter Picker Refund						2204						2204	4008	0	4408
Allocation rent		10				10		15		345	500		920	1300	-380
Total Revenue for m	50305	62	9	1092	0	2214	0	115	9	345	540	2416	57107	49995	7512
Total Revenue	116584	104505	101281	100451	95585	94446	90811	84604	73863	71895	69809	64562	123386		
Expenditure															
Salaries & MH	967	967	1044	967	967	1044	967	980	1075	967	967	1264	12176	13200	-1024
Gen. Admin Expenses	87	1987	467	101	654	329	379	131	194	235	234	198	4996	6000	-1004
Trees	0			0	550	0	648	1520	765	0	1570	0	5053	7000	-1947
Open Spaces	60		88	937		180	40	679		0		0	1984	3000	-1016
Section 137	450	125	62	1000		100		25	40	0		350	2152	3000	-848
Projects & Hogweed	700			0			3623	5313		0	3410	1662	14708	19000	-4292
Training			148				27					0	175	200	-25
Flood reserve Fund												1000	1000	1000	0
Newsletters				765				630		0	200	630	2345	2600	-255
EPCH Support (S137)						1600						800	2400	2500	-100
Pollis/ GNF Heritage Trail				330		210							540	1500	-960
Allocations	50		40	440		132		310	58	320		79	1429	1300	129
Highways					40		223			45	103	198	609	1000	-391
Handyman										175	229	0	404	1200	-796
Countryside Fair & Concert												4000	4000	4000	0
Capital				259	850					761			1870	1018	852
Neighbourhood Plan				67								0	67	0	67
VAT	140	154	73		292	40	415	1102	181	123	950	332	3802	3802	0
Total Disbursements	2454	3233	1922	4866	3353	3635	6322	10750	2313	2626	7663	10573	59710	71320	-11610
Burial Fund – Ring f	9687											10687	1000		
Funds in Hand	104,443	101272	99359	95585	92232	90811	84489	73854	71590	69269	62146	64676	64676	-21725	19122

222 HPC Guestbook

David Wood reported that there was one item posted. Viz:-

Resident of Sanderson Road reported anti- social behavior with youths; abusing residents and generally causing trouble. The resident was advised to report this to the police.

223. Planning Development Working Group

David Wood reported that a Special Meeting of the council had taken place on 30th March, and a full review of the status of the Neighbourhood Plan was presented. Minutes of this meeting have been circulated.

Progress is very good. DBC have been formally informed of the Hurworth Plan, and have assigned their representative, who has agreed to fully co-operate.

The Questionnaire is in draft form, and it is hoped to finalise the document in time for it to be reviewed at the Annual Assembly, and distributed to every household in June.

An independent Housing Consultant will be appointed to assist the team, and ensure the future planning recommendation section is practical and accurate.

Funding has been obtained to cover essential expenses up to 30th September 2017.

Leaflets will be distributed to all houses and businesses in the Parish at the end of April, advertising the Annual Assembly on 19th May, inviting all residents to attend, and the importance of their input. A free buffet and refreshments will be provided.

224. Parish Walks

Janine Forster reported that the first walk on the season was held on Saturday 25th March, from Blackwell Golf Club, via Hell's Kettles, to the Village Green.

A full calendar of forthcoming walks will be published shortly, and the content will indicate the length of the walk and the 'severity' of the trail, stiles, etc.

225. Allotment Report

Richard Lawley stated that all the allotments are assigned, with tenancy agreements in place. All rents for 2017 have been received.

Graham Wylie, Chairman of the Allotment Committee informed the meeting that a letter has been received from an allotment holder at Strait Lane requesting permission to construct a summerhouse on their plot. This summerhouse is considerably larger than the size permitted in the Allotment Rules.

The allotment holder was invited to speak, and stated that the purpose of the summerhouse is to provide a sheltered area for two disabled members of the community to be able to sit at the allotment while work was being carried out, this being in keeping with the community spirit of the village.

The summerhouse construction will have a partially concrete base and is close to the perimeter fence of residences in Emerson Road; the residents next to the construction had not been advised of this proposal.

The Chair read extracts from the HPC Allotment rules and referred to extracts from other allotment associations. The nub of the issue is that allotments are designed for people to grow plants and produce, and that greenhouses, tool sheds and poly-tunnels, within the size regulations are permitted and the norm.

Allotments are not recreation grounds, and should not be used for leisure or entertainment purposes.

Several councillors gave their views, and the Chair called for a hidden vote. The result of the vote, witnessed by Cllr Kelley, was unanimous with 10 votes against giving permission.

Graham Wylie was not allowed to vote, due to his declaration of interest.

The chair informed the applicant that permission is denied, and, as the unit is partially constructed, this must be removed and the allotment cleared and made good for growing purposes. **Action; Clerk to send appropriate letter.**

The applicant asked if it possible to raise an objection to the council's decision, and the Chair said that a letter could be sent to the council, but as the decision was unanimous, it is unlikely to be overturned.

226. Association Report

There were no association reports.

227 Any Other Business (non-financial)

David Wood reported that two residents have complained that when they attend the organised Boot Camp, twice a week at Hurworth Grange, they are moved from place to place, and the class is disrupted. Carol Paylor stated that she has received similar complaints. It was agreed that this would be investigated and a response passed to David and Carol, so that this compliant can be addressed. **Action Jean Peacock.**

The Chair closed the meeting at 10:30pm