

HURWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of Hurworth Parish Council, held at Hurworth Grange, Hurworth-on-Tees, on **Tuesday 11th November 2008** at 7pm.

Present: Cllr I Holme (Chairman), Cllr P Allan, Cllr A Gibson, Cllr G Hepplewhite, Cllr P Foster, Cllr V Hughes, Cllr G Lawman, Cllr K Pattison, Cllr C Pratt, Cllr D Parr, Cllr B Shukla and Cllr I White

In attendance: Borough Councillors Swainston and Dunstone and J Angus (Police Community Services Officer)

77. REMEMBRANCE SILENCE

The Chairman asked all those in attendance to stand for 2 minutes silence commemorate Remembrance Day.

78. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Chairman stated that he had received comments on the Council's handling of those who declare P&P interest. Therefore as of 11 November 2008 all councillors declaring prejudicial interest would be asked to leave the meeting room at that point in the agenda (rule does not apply to personal interests).

Cllr Ian White : Personal and Prejudicial – Item 14 (The Grange Fencing) and any others relating to Hurworth Grange;

Cllr G Lawman : Personal and Prejudicial – Item 14 (The Grange Fencing)

Cllr P Allan : Personal and Prejudicial – Item 14 (The Grange Fencing)

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 14th October 2008 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be amended as follows:

1. That Councillor White's declaration of interest be amended to include all matters relating to Hurworth Grange;
2. That para. 69 be amended to read "Awards for All" and not "Grants for All".

80. MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Hepplewhite reported that the parish notice board located at the village green in letting in water.

RESOLVED: Cllr White volunteered to look at this and make good a repair if possible.

Cllr Hepplewhite also suggested that the village green notice board be repositioned so that the back of the board can be used by members of the public to put up their own notices. This suggestion was rejected by Council.

81. POLICE REPORT

- (i) There were a total of 8 crimes in Hurworth and surrounding areas during October 2008:
 - 4 Thefts – 1 cycle and 3 offences of theft of car number plates;
 - 3 complaints of criminal damage to cars; and
 - 1 Burglary
- (ii) PC Angus reported that there had been no reports of anti-social behaviour during the month and that Guy Fawkes nights has not caused any problems in the village;
- (iii) PC Angus asked the Parish Council to consider having a compound for used Xmas trees as previous years has shown that vandals have used these to obstruct traffic along Hurworth Road;
- (iv) Mr S Holme congratulated the police on their response time of the police helicopter during a recent incident involving a missing child.

82. NORTH EAST AIR SUPPORT

Mr P Thompson, the chairman of Durham Police Authority, attended the meeting to give a presentation on the North East Police Air Support. He gave a brief resume of the current position of the joint consortium of air support between Northumberland/Durham/Cleveland and explained that there had been a recent value for money exercise that had determined that the helicopters were on the ground for around 85% of their time.

At present Durham/ Northumberland have one helicopter which will be based at either Durham Tees Valley airport or Newcastle airport, and Cleveland have one helicopter that is based at Durham Tees Valley airport. Due to changes in legislation that come into effect on 1 April 2009 the Cleveland helicopter will not longer be allowed to fly at night unless modified to comply with the new regulations.

Concerns were raised by councillors of the potential increase in response time if there is a reduction of police helicopters at night.

(Cllr C Pratt arrived at the meeting at this point)

Mrs Thompson gave assurances that during busy periods the consortium would work together to provide full cover, i.e. when the Northumberland/Durham helicopter is in use the Cleveland helicopter will be asked to assist should a 2nd call for assistance be received. This is a reciprocal arrangement and Northumberland/ Durham will assist Cleveland when required.

The group discussed the issue of night flying capabilities of both helicopters with Mr Thompson giving assurances to Cllrs. Foster, White and Dunstone, all of whom spoke on this issue, that there would be no reduction in cover at night.

RESOLVED : The Clerk to invite Mr Thompson back to another Parish Meeting in April/May 2009 so he can provide a review of the situation after the introduction of the new night flying regulations.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to write to Mr Thompson to thank him for his attendance at this meeting but reiterating the continued concerns of councillors.

83. PUBLIC FORUM

- (i) Mr S Holme thanked the Parish Council for their recent donation to the Hurworth Community Centre to pay for a roof repair. He also thanked them for their continued support over the past years.

- (ii) Miss M Edwards read out the following:

“I would like to read out a brief statement in relation to the ongoing issue of the fence.

Following months of asking the Parish Council for the promised public meeting and not getting it, the Hurworth Residents Action Group then started a petition.

This petition despite the Parish Council knowing full well what it stood for, dismissed it by tactical use of semantics and syntax.

We as a group find this to be undemocratic.

It has therefore been necessary today to go and file for an injunction at the County Court, proceedings have successfully been issued.

We therefore request a halt to any further construction work until this matter is legally resolved”

- (iii) Mr H Knight commented that any further work on the fence will have ramifications.

The Chairman asked for a copy of the injunction and evidence that it had been successfully issued. Neither Miss Edwards nor Mr Knight had a copy of the injunction or evidence that it had been served.

The Chairman stated that until this evidence is received the Parish Council had no comment to make.

- (iv) A member of the public commented that the Council had been democratically elected to represent the public of Hurworth therefore he felt

that any decisions made in Council are democratic – this was endorsed by Cllr Shukla.

- (v) Another member of the public stated that she has attended all parish meetings for several months where she has noted that only 6-12 other members of the public have attended. She asked Miss Edwards where were the 100 or more people who have signed the petition as each Parish Meeting allows anyone to attend.
- (vi) Cllr Allan asked for a united front from all the Council but Cllr Gibson felt this comment to be unnecessary.

84. PLANNING MATTERS

- (i) Attendance at the Parish Meeting by a representative from Yuill Homes was cancelled at the last minute – this item to be added to next month's or January 2009's agenda.
- (ii) **RESOLVED:** That the following application be approved without comment:

08/00825/TF	Works to 3 No. trees protected under Group Tree Preservation Order (RDC3) 1968 – Remove crossing branches and crown lift 7 feet above footpath, 1 Chase End, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2JH.
08/00714	Erection of warehouse extension, Sovereign House, Neasham Road, Hurworth Moor, Darlington DL2 1QH.
08/00892	Erection of first floor bedroom extension, 14a Church Row, Hurworth, Darlington, DL2 2AQ.
08/00888	Erection of fodder store. Stable Block, Snipe Lane, Hurworth
08/00873	Alterations to access to highway erection of boundary walling, Lygon House, Neasham Road, Hurworth Moor, Darlington, DL2 1QH.

- (iii) That correspondence received in respect of planning decisions by Darlington Borough Council be noted.

85 PARISH PLAN

- (i) **Parish Plan** – Cllr Allan gave a brief update on the progress work completed by the Parish Plan Group. The timetable has been agreed in principal; work on establishing the topics to be included in the parish questionnaire and how these are to be worded is continuing. A 2 page mock-up Parish Newsletter has been produced and Cllr Allan showed this to the meeting.

Cllr Allan asked for approval for the following:

- a. Approval to send the Parish Newsletter to all households in the village in December 2008;
- b. Approval to fund the costs of the production of the newsletter – approx. £164-£200;
- c. Approval to hold a public meeting in January 2009 to let the public know of the benefits to the village of having a Parish Plan;
- d. Approval to meet with representations of Rockcliffe Hotel Complex to see if they will be willing to give a donation towards the Parish Plan;

Cllr. Allan agreed to provide the Council with a draft budget plan by the next Parish Meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Newsletter be distributed with the HCA Newsletter to all village households, including those outside of the core village, during December 2008;

RESOLVED: That funding of the £164-£200 be made available for the production of the Parish Newsletter;

RESOLVED: That the 28th January be set for a public meeting to present the Parish Plan to the public;

RESOLVED: That Cllr Allan meet with representative from Rockcliffe Hotel Complex to discuss a possible donation.

- (ii) **Nature Reserve** – Cllr Allan reported that the “Awards for All” grant application is in abeyance as several seats have been donated to the HPC by DBC and tables can be bought at a low cost therefore the application is not required at this stage of the project.

Cllr Allan asked permission to submit a new grant application for £3,600 to “Grass Roots” for the FOTC to establish a Heritage Orchard as part of the Nature Reserve Project.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Allan go ahead and make a Grass Roots grant application for £3,600 for the establishment of a Heritage Orchard as part of the Nature Reserve Project.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to provide the FOTC with a letter from HPC approving the establishment and maintenance of a Heritage Orchard.

Cllr Gibson asked for confirmation that additional insurance is in place for the work on the Nature Reserve. The Clerk gave assurances that this had dealt with and additional sums have been paid to Zurich Insurance.

(DBC Councillors lefts the meeting at this point)

- (iii) **Tree Pruning** – Mr J Buxton had asked for 2 documents to be circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The 1st was an update on progress of the Nature Reserve Project. No comment was made on this. The 2nd was an application for approval to submit a Planning Application for pruning of TPO trees in The Grange.

RESOLVED: Mr Buxton to produce a planning application for the pruning of trees as part of the Nature Reserve Project.

86. STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

(i) Financial Standing Orders

RESOLVED : That the accounting arrangement to amended to state that VAT will be reclaimed on a quarterly basis;

RESOLVED: That the Budgetary Control be amended to state that monthly cash flow statements be presented to the Council showing the balance of funds at the end of each month;

RESOLVED: That there be a change in the collection date of Allotment Rents from April each year to January each year.

(ii) Regular Standing Orders

Cllr Pattison suggested that Council allow proxy voting at monthly Parish Meetings to absentee councillors. This suggestion was rejected by Council until the legality of a proxy voting process be established by the Parish Clerk. If proxy voting is legal then this to be discussed further at the next Parish Meeting and vote be taken. Until such time as this is established then the regular standing orders should remain the same.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to establish whether proxy voting is legal during parish meetings.

RESOLVED: The regular standing orders to remain the same.

(iii) Code of Conduct Consultation Paper

RESOLVED: That The Clerk respond to DBC in support of the changes outlined in the Code of Conduct Consultation Paper. The Clerk to let DBC know that the working used in the consultation paper was found to be confusing by councillors.

87. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

- (i) **RESOLVED:** That the following accounts be approved for payment :

L Groves	Salary (October 2008)	446.96
L Groves	Expenses (October 08 Post, Paper, Toners)	48.80
T Murray	Salary (October 2008)	365.32
I Murphy	Arrears of Pay (April 2008)	10.40
Inland Revenue	Tax / NI (October 2008)	279.71

BDO	Audit Fees	499.38
M S Verrill	Wall Repair (Roundhill Road)	3,230.00
Newsquest	Clerk Advertisement x 2	441.86
FOTC	Funds Transfer (from Nature Reserve)	400.00
Hurworth Comm Assoc.	Photocopying	5.90

Note - both the salary figures include the 08-09 pay rise arrears. The arrears of pay to I Murphy cover the increase in pay for April 08 whilst he was still Parish Clerk.

- (ii) The Clerk provided the meeting with an update on the current financial position;
- (iii) The Clerk reported that the 07-08 Hurworth Parish Accounts have passed audit.

88. COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED : That Hurworth parish Council adopt the model Freedom of Information publication Scheme as advised by the CDALC.

89. BUS SHELTERS

- (i) **Hurworth Road** – Cllr White reported to the meeting of his recent meeting with DBC to determine the location of the new bus shelter on Hurworth Road. DBC have confirmed that this will be relocated close to the doctor's surgery. A consultation of bus travellers will take place until 13 November 1008 after which final confirmation of the new location will be given by DBC.
- (ii) **Opposite to Spa** – An additional option of the style of bus shelter and positions of said bus shelter was given to HPC.

RESOLVED : That the first option and position as approved by Council remain. The Clerk to inform DBC.

90. HURWORTH GRANGE FENCING

(Following their earlier declarations of P&P Interest Cllrs Allan, White and Lawman left the meeting at the point – councillors leaving did not express a wish to make comment, chairman did not ask if they wished to do so.)

(i) Dickinson Dees Letter

Cllr Holme noted the letter sent to HPC from Dickinson Dees stating that no further action will be taken following the erection of the fence nor in the future whilst the fence remains in place.

(ii) Threat of Injunction

Cllr Holme referred to a recent email from Mr C Close on behalf of Mr H Knight, threatening a court injunction unless the work on The Grange fencing is stopped.

The injunction is based on common land but it has been established and confirmed by DBC that The Grange is not common land.

Cllr Holme stated that once it has been established that an injunction has been submitted and accepted a Special Meeting of Council will be called but until then work will continue as agreed by council previously.

Cllr Holme confirmed that he had been notified that the steel for the fence had arrived on 6th November. A meeting with the Right of Way Officer, the Arborist and Westwood Timber was arranged for the 11th November when work to erect the fence began. Estimated time to complete the work is 3 days dependant on the weather conditions.

Cllr Holme reaffirmed that work on the fence will continue until such time as any injunction arrives. All councillors agreed, no vote was necessary.

(The public or press did not comment during this agenda item)

(Cllrs Lawman and Allan returned to the meeting at this point).

91. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

- (i) Westwood Timber are parking inconsiderately outside The Grange – Cllr Pattison agreed to let them know of this problem.
- (ii) Cllr Foster raised a previous highways issue i.e. the issue of speeding on Roundhill Road – The Clerk confirmed that she has still to take up this item with DBC.
- (iii) Cllr. Lawman informed the meeting that the bridge over the river at Fordham Cross has been closed by the farmer who owns it. The Clerk to ask DBC to investigate if this is a RoW.
- (iv) Cllr Allan asked if the 'Residents Only' parking sign at Blind Lane, outside Church House, is an official sign. The Clerk to ask DBC to investigate.
- (v) The Clerk reported that Cllr David Lyonnette has agreed to attend the December Parish Meeting to discuss with Councillors traffic and parking issues in the village. He has requested that if Councillors know of any questions they would like answering they let him know these in advance of the meeting so that he can respond accordingly.

92. VILLAGE XMAS TREE

The Clerk reported that an anonymous resident has agreed to provide and fund the village Xmas tree. She asked for approval to arrange this.

RESOLVED : The Clerk to write to the anonymous donor to accept his generous offer and to arrange the appropriate electricity supply for the tree lights.

93. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- (i) LCR Journal November 2008
- (ii) Communities & Local Government : Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees – “A Consultation”
- (iii) Tees Valley Rural Community council notification of a free course on “Writing Successful Funding Applications”
- (iv) Thank you letter from Hurworth Community Association
- (v) Community Care Guide
- (vi) LDF Core Strategy: Preferred Option 2008 – Community and Stakeholder Consultation
- (vii) NHS – Seizing the Future – public consultation running from 6 October to 12 January 2008
- (viii) Durham Association News – September 2008 Issue
- (ix) NALX – September 2008 Issue
- (x) CPRE Overview – Autumn 2008 issue
- (xi) Paper copy of “The making and enforcement of byelaws – A consultation”
- (xii) Town and Parish Standard – September 2008 Issue
- (xiii) The Litter Picker to be on holiday in January 2008.

94. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) Cllr Hepplewhite confirmed that, despite rumours to the contrary, she will be taking up the post of Chairperson of Hurworth Parish Council from May 2009.
- (ii) The closing date for applications for the Parish Clerk post has passed, several applications have been received. A sift panel will sit on Monday 17th November to select those to be asked for interview. The panel will be:
 - Cllr Holme
 - Cllr Hughes
 - Cllr Hepplewhite
 - Cllr Foster
 - The Clerk