

# Hurworth Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held at Hurworth Grange, Hurworth – on-Tees, on Thursday 5th December 2013 starting at 7.00pm.

**Those present:** Tony Winnett, Tony Needham, Peter Foster, Jean Peacock, Chris Pratt, Margaret Williams, Val Hughes, John Howard), Jeff Kemp

Also attending: Cllr Joe Kelley, Cllr M. Swainston, and Peter Allan (Parish Clerk)

### 105. Apologies for Absence

Norma Kyle - (Leave of absence) Ken Pattison (Personal arrangements) , Ian Holme (Work commitment),

### 106. Declarations of Interest

Tony Winnett – HCA

Tony Needham - EPICH

Val Hughes - HCA & allotments

### 107. Chairman's Address

The Chairman welcomed all councillors and members of the public, thanking them for their attendance.

The Chairman then introduced Cllr Bill Dixon, Chairman of DBC, and thanked him for making time to visit Hurworth Parish Council.

### 108. Councillor Bill Dixon

Cllr Dixon addressed the meeting and covered a variety of topics, which included:- DBC austerity policy, explaining that the council still requires to make more savings, quantifying the need to make a further £17 million in the next two years; potential savings of £15 million have been identified, but more savings are still required. It is expected that Westminster will finalise their figures on 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

DBC has 24 months to impose their 'discretionary spending', and this will include a further £1.3 million in cuts. These actions likely to be taken could impact parishes, with the removal of subsidies for litter picking, and other DBC services which are currently provided to the rural areas. **(A clear warning that HPC needs to brace itself for adverse funding, and the likelihood of having to take on more villages services, or lessen the quality of well-being in the parish).**

The Darlington for Culture policy is proving a great success, and is an improvement on the Art Centre facility, with greater public support at a lower cost.

Darlington is attraction external financing from a variety of businesses and agencies, who are realising the potential on the Borough. This is mainly due to the reshaping of the DBC Economic Strategy.

The new Medical Laboratory has preserved jobs in Darlington, and is expected to attract more job opportunities.

Cllr Dixon answered questions about the new Planning Department policy. A long debate ensued, which embraced reassurances that parish councils will still be heard, but mainly through their Ward Councillors. HPC can still attend Planning meetings, and raise objections. However the Planning department has greater powers, and will be

able to speed through applications, with little consultation, unless appropriate objections are raised. The Government policy is designed to accelerate building and construction and remove unsubstantiated delays.

The change of location of the education Centre was done to preserve 350 jobs in the Silicon Centre, which would have been lost if the facility had been moved to Tyneside. More job opportunities are now expected.

Parking issues are a hot topic in Darlington, with £2.9 million being raised through parking fees and fines. Cllr Dixon assured that any surplus goes directly to the Highways budget. The total revenue this year is £2.9 million.

Finally Cllr Dixon raised the issues surrounding the Traveller Community and their impact on Hurworth and other parishes. The new development on Neasham Road is now going forward and should be started immediately and finished in early 2015. This will provide 20 new sites, which will largely fill the DBC outstanding quota. However infill sites will still receive consideration. Cllr Dixon said that the main problem is that it is Travellers who are buying available land, and farmers and other landowners who are willing to sell their land. This cannot be prevented. HPC's objections are considered, and in many cases DBC has rejected applications, only for them to be overturned by the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol.

The Chairmen thanked Cllr Dixon for attending the meeting and his frank interaction with on all subjects.

- 109. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013.** The Minutes having been distributed were accepted, Proposed by Jean Peacock, Seconded by Margaret Williams.

**110. Matters Arising,**

- a. The objection to the rescindment of Pathway 11 has been registered with Malcolm Thompson, DBC.
  - b. The quotations for the allotment toilet have been circulated to the councillors.
  - c. The tree in Goblin's Wood – Friars Pardon will be felled on 4<sup>th</sup> December.
  - d. The concerns over the large willow tree opposite the Otter and Fish have been reported, and Brian Graham (Streetscene) will ask Phil Haynes to inspect this on his return from holiday on 14<sup>th</sup> December.
  - e. The red van at Linden Court has been identified and John Angus has arranged for it to be parked correctly and not on the grass verge.
  - f. The width of the bollards near Manorfields has been reported to DBC.
  - g. We are still having difficulty in making progress with the brown sign for the Grange. Durham County Council has rules, but these may not apply to DBC.
  - h. The toilet at Hurworth Place have been cleaned out by Cllr Needham, the fire brigade has inspected the facility and a new lock has been fitted. Keys have been circulated, including to Sue Wilson at Hurworth Place.
- Tony Winnett recommended that we provide a sack trolley, for the transport of sandbags, and the meeting agreed. **Action Clerk**

## **111. Public Participation**

Mr Geoff Scott, again, raised his concerns about the large oak tree in the Hurworth Grange grounds, which he and his neighbour consider a danger to his property and life.

The Planning application to treat or fell the tree expired on 21<sup>st</sup> November, but no decision has been reached as the DBC arborist is on holiday. The Clerk has urged a fast decision, and contacted both Dave Coates and Brian Graham emphasising the concern.

Joe Kelly suggested that HPC engage an engineer to inspect the roots. Peter Foster informed the meeting that he had been to inspect the site during the gale-force winds on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, and stated that the ground was actually moving where the roots are situated. He suggested that the roots may have partially rotted, and hence do not have full leverage to support the tree. Action: Cllr Foster to send a full report to the Clerk re the root condition.

The Chairman tried to reassure Mr Scott that HPC was doing all it could, but were bound by the outcome of the DBC arborist reports and the outcome of the planning application.

## **112. Planning Matters**

Cllr Jeff Kemp had circulated the Planning Application report for November, as follows:-

### **The following decisions were made at the meeting:-**

Below are the relevant decisions made against the items on my report.

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00899/FUL  
No Objections

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00893/FUL  
No Objections

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00871/FUL  
No Objections

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00902/FUL. (Lygon House)  
Objections as the previous application, plus the following mentioned at the meeting.  
A) bad road access, very close to a blind corner.  
B) industrial, warehouse buildings and businesses attracting traffic next door  
C) not in keeping with the area with a very large house used very little with a proposed Gypsy caravan site in the back garden! Very close to the village.  
D) General traffic speed on Neasham road, and poor visibility on the junction of Strait Lane and Neasham Road.

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00911/FUL  
No objections

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00898/FUL  
No Objections

Plan. Appl. No. 13/00889/FUL  
No Objections as the stables appear to be on Snipe Lane North of the A66 near Newstead Stables.

A number of the above have been granted extensions, only to the 10/12th Dec in view of our council meeting date.

### **113. Tree Report**

Peter Foster reported as follows:-

- a. November Report – Cllr Foster had made an inspection of the trees in the parish, and reported that they were in good condition. However, the following work is required:-

- 1. The tree in Friars Pardon will be felled this week.
- 2. The damaged tree in Hawks Wood will be tidied up and the fence repaired within the next seven days.
- 3. Three small trees have been selected and will be planted as replacements on the Green.
- 4. Replacement trees will be planted in Friars Pardon; one chestnut and one cherry tree.

- b. Lychgate – work will start next week on the section which is not covered by a conservation Order, the remainder will be done as soon as permission is granted by DBC.

- c. A letter has been received from Hurworth Community Association requesting HPC to take over the responsibility of the trees within the Grange property. Jean Peacock read out a request from Ken Pattison for the council to postpone a decision on this subject until he and Ian Holme are present, as they favour this appeal.

John Howard advised the meeting that he opposed to this, and that a new lease agreement would be required. Jeff Kemp agreed with John Howard, and supported the view that an all-repairing lease should include this responsibility.

Chris Pratt recalled that the original lease signed in 1969, was a decision taken by the council based on whether the council should run the Grange, or provide a lease to a group of volunteers who would take on the responsibilities. By reducing these responsibilities, the council could end up having to run the building itself, and this should be discouraged. The terms of the lease appear to be satisfactory as they stand.

It was agreed that the matter be postponed, and that the **Clerk will advise HCA accordingly.**

## 114. Accounts Payable

The schedule having been distributed to all councillors, was approved by the meeting. Details as follows:-

### Hurworth Parish Council

#### Payment of Accounts

Nov-13

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
A.C.Metals	102363	Skip hire	192.00
DALC	102364	Manual	46.81
DAVID Parker	102365	Open spaces work	405.00
Emerson Arms	102366	HMS Hurworth entertaining	599.90
Wendy Robinson	102367	HMS Hurworth entertaining	300.00
Methodist Church	102368	PACT rent	30.00
MARTIN Harrison Eden Landscapes	102369	Open spaces work	50.00
DBC	102370	Election costs	3211.92
Sue Watson	102371	Salary November	260.00
P.D. Allan	102372	Salary November	508.24
Inland Revenue	102373	PAYE	110.20
HCA	102374	Photocopying allotments	27.38
MT Print	102375	Newsletter	533.00
Bank changes			4.60
TalkTalk			13.69
<b>TalkTalk</b>			<b>18.60</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b><u>£6,311.34</u></b>

## 115. Financial Report

- November Report.** The updated Financial Report having been circulated to all councillors was accepted; this Report is an addendum to these Minutes.
- Recommendations of the Finance Committee.** The following schedule summarises the Projects put forward by the various councillors for the year 2014. The meeting's comments and final decisions are inserted in blue.

### Suggested Projects for 2014

Project	Proposer	Details	Budget	Comments
Assistance for All saints Church	Letter from church			Waiting for more details
Allotments	Allotment Committee	Toilet	£500	Contribution only, <b>and provided the toilet is in accordance with the specifications already submitted.</b>

				<b>Approved</b>
Allotments	Clerk	New plots at Priory H.H. School Playing fields	0	Survey to be done, then construction plan. <b>The council decided not to proceed with this project, as it will increase future liabilities for HPC.</b>
Hurworth Grange road resurfacing	Jeff Kemp recommendation, Proposed by Ken Pattison, Seconded by Chris Pratt	Resurface the road	£3,000	May become grant dependent. <b>HCA has been successful in obtaining a grant for £9,500 from the Big Lottery Fund. This means that the council need only make a contribution to the final cost. A contingency figure of £3,000 was agreed.</b>
Hurworth Youth Programme	Ken Pattison	Support for youth leader	£1,000	Also in 2015 <b>Approved</b>
Legal consultancy	John Howard	Defence to FoI and ICO	£5,000	<b>Approved</b> <b>Advice has been taken on the choice of the most appropriate lawyer. The ICO suggests the council waits until it has reviewed the next three cases. At the council's request these are being prioritised. The previous two have favoured the council.</b>
Election Costs	Ken Pattison	Assumes 10 people will again request and election	£3,200	Dependent upon councillor resignations. <b>Approved</b> <b>The council reserve the right to investigate the background of an electoral candidate to ensure that there is nothing in their background that could disqualify them from becoming a councillor, if they were elected. It would then be prudent to allocate funds toward such an investigation. This would ensure we did not have an abortive election.</b>
Trees	Ken Pattison	1. More costs envisaged.	£3,000	Budget increase from £3000 to £6000 in 2014 <b>Approved</b>
Road gritting	John Howard	Gritting on internal roads and	£2,000	<b>Approved</b> <b>But increased to £2,000,</b>

		pathways		due to concerns over bad weather conditions this winter.
Flood contingency	Ken Pattison & Tony Needham	Retain 2013 £3000, and another £3000 in 2014	£3000	Approved
Speed Monitor for Hurworth Place	Jean Peacock	Additional unit		Project withdrawn.
Highways	Tony Needham	Contingency fund to meet emergencies, which DBC cannot address, due to their cuts	£5,000	Approved with an increase to £5,000, to take into consideration Cllr Dixon's cautionary remarks regarding further DBC cuts.
Anniversary of the Great War starting in 2014	Tony Winnett	Hurworth Village Hall are likely to organise an event for the villages	£2,000	Approved
<b>Total for consideration</b>			<b>£27,700</b>	

- c. Having considered the changes to the Projects, and a review of the three year forecast, and taking into considerations Cllr Dixon's input, the council discussed the Precept for 2014. There is considerable concern over the legal cost requirements, which could reach a larger than budgeted figure, and there is no sign of the harassment and council criticism abating. This encouraged the council to reach a conclusion.

Initially, a proposed was placed that the precept should remain unchanged, Proposed by Tony Winnett and Seconded by Jeff Kemp. John Howard placed a amendment to the meeting that the increase agreed at the Finance meeting of £5,000 should be confirmed. Jean Peacock agreed in principle, but by agreement with John Howard the amendment was tabled as an increase of £2,500, in the hope that the council harassment may be stopped quickly.

**A vote was taken on the amendment, and was carried by 6 votes to 2 against, with one abstention. The Precept was accordingly set at an increase of £2,500.**

## 116. Matters of Interest

a. The Chairman read out a letter of thanks and appreciation from the Officers of HMS Hurworth. The hospitality they received was appreciated along with the opportunity to meet residents who give up so much of their time to making Hurworth such an appealing place to live.

b. HPC has been waiting to apply for Quality Parish Council status for almost one year. NALC is still in the process of redefining the conditions and the new application form may not be ready for a few more months.

DALC has suggested that this council passes a motion to take the 'General Power of Competence'. HPC is qualified to do this as more than 70% of the councillors were duly elected to office, and the Parish Clerk has the Appropriate Qualifications (CILCA)

**The Chairman proposed the motion, seconded by Jean Peacock, and it was unanimously passed.** The conditions of this status will apply until the next election, and dependent upon the qualifications of the Clerk, could continue for another period.

- d. The newsletter was completed and has been distributed throughout the parish.
- e. The Chairman commented that an article had been inserted expressing the council's support for the intention of the Citizen's Advice Bureau to hold surgeries in the village at Hurworth Grange,
- f. Val Hughes reported that the dog bin at strait Lane is missing. **Clerk to get replacement.**
- g. DALC held the latest meeting in Hurworth Grange, and were delighted with the surroundings. Our Chairman met and greeted the visiting councillors.
- h. A meeting was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November at Hurworth grange, with Mr Phil Wilson MP, where the following issues were discussed:-
  - 1. The number of FoI requests received by the PC from one resident, and the lack of understanding by the ICO.
  - 2. The current regulation permitting 10 residents to request an election that cost the parish £3,200.
  - 3. The Planning Inspectorate attitude to Traveller/ Gypsy planning appeals, affecting Hurworth parish.

## **117. PACT Meeting**

The meeting was only attended by a small number of residents.

The police were pleased to report that there was very little crime to report, and very little bad behaviour incidents.

An audit of the Youth Club behaviour has been arranged for 4<sup>th</sup> December, as agreed at the previous PACT Meeting.

The Chairman suggested that due to the poor attendance at PACT Meetings, it may be better to return to inviting the police to give their report at the monthly PC Meeting. This would save the hall rent, and attract a larger audience.

## **118. Association Reports**

Peter Foster reported that he had attended the DALC meeting in Hurworth Grange. The main topic discussed was the quantity of unauthorised encampments in the region. Parish and town councils are seeking methods to get a tighter control over these incidents.

## **119. Highways Report** - Tony Needham gave the following report:-

- a. The poles for the speed monitors have now been erected.  
Power to two monitors is immediately available, while the other two will be delayed as the power is coming from an contractor.
- b. Streetscene has taken responsibility for the pathway beside the Primary School, and have already cleaned it up.
- c. DBC Highways have done work in Belgrade Drive and other parts of the village, further work at Belgrade Drive can be expected.



- d. The seat outside the Otter and Fish has become unusable and requires extensive repairs. **Action Clerk to have the seat collected and taken to the Grange. Tony Needham will arrange the repairs.**

**Flood Report – Two meetings have been arranged, Viz:-**

1. With Northumbrian Water, Bill Westland and Ken Pattison and himself. This is to agree and confirm plans for further work.
2. With Tracey Friar from Stockton Council and affected residents area, with Ken Pattison and Tony Needham. A grant has been obtained by Stockton Council for the Hurworth project of £55,000.

Jeff Kemp reported that a tree growing up on the side of the house in Appletree Close is causing problems and that the owner has not responded to neighbours overtures. **Clerk to write requesting the tree be cut back to allow traffic to pass without damage.**

**120. Allotments**

**Margaret Williams making her maiden speech, reported as follows:-**

The AGM was held on 21<sup>st</sup> November, chaired by Cllr Ian Holmes, and was attended by 21 allotment holders.

The following representatives were elected:-

**HPC**

Ian Holme  
Norma Kyle  
Margaret Williams

**Strait Lane**

George Lawman  
Graham Wylie  
Henry Doran

**Hurworth Grange**

Tony Sayer

**Office of Chairperson**

It was agreed that the new committee would select their own chairperson, or elect to rotate the chairmanship.

There are 48 allotments at Strait lane and 9 at Hurworth Grange.

All the allotments are occupied at present, and there is a Waiting List of 9 for Strait Lane and 3 for Hurworth Grange.

There will be 4 allotments vacated at the end of the year, and it is probable that several more will become available in January.

The rent for 2014 was confirmed at £15, the same as the current year.

**It was explained to the meeting that any modification to HPC Allotment Rules and Regulations required to go through the following process:-**

The original rules were transcribed in 1932, and were revised by the council in December 2011.

A change to the rules would first require the allotment holders to vote with a two-thirds majority, and then go before the council for consideration. At this point, the council may decide that residents in the near location should be consulted, before a decision is taken. Finally a decision will be taken by the full council, in an open monthly meeting.

A request has been received by the council from the Allotment Committee. Quotations of £1250 and £1750 have been tendered.

At the November PC Meeting, the council agreed to make a contribution to the cost of a toilet, provided the 'need' was substantiated by the allotment holders. The balance of the cost would have to be met by the individual plot holders, and the maintenance, cleaning and upkeep would be the responsibility of the allotment holders.

Mr Lawman was invited to address the meeting, and covered the following points:-

Mr Lawman recapitulated the history of the events to date, embracing the meeting held three years ago to launch the concept, and the referendum that followed. This only attracted a small vote, and many allotment holders did not vote at all.

In the last 12 months more allotment holders have indicated support, and several have joined the National Allotment Association, as has the HPC. A straw vote was held at the meeting, and this indicated that 12 plot holders favoured an Association, two votes against, and the remainder did not vote.

During the Open Forum, the following topics were raised:-

- a. Terry King brought attention to the need to build up the access path from Lychgate. **The Clerk agreed to take appropriate action to remedy this.**
- b. It is recommended that excess supplies of vegetables should be made available to residents, rather than allowing them to rot.
- c. Val Hughes recommended that notices should be put up on the allotment sites giving dates of future meetings, and that the Minutes should be put onto the Parish web site. This was agreed.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Williams for her comprehensive report.

## **121. Any Other Business**

None

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10:25PM

- Addendum: Financial report to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013