

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes

of the Meeting held on Thursday, 6th September 2012 in the Hadwin Lounge,
Hurworth Grange, Hurworth on Tees.

Those attending:-

Ian Holme (Chairman), Jean Peacock, Peter Foster, Val Hughes, Tony Winnett,
Tony Needham, Jeff Kemp. Ken Pattison,

63 Apologies for absence:-

Jill Russell (Holiday), John Howard,(Work appointment) Norma Kyle.(Family illness)

Cllr Martin Swainston (Holiday)

Also present, Cllr Joe Kelley and Reporter(Northern Echo)

64. Declarations of Interest:-

Ian Holme – Personal, HPC related matters.

65 Minutes of the Meeting dated 5th July 2012

The minutes of the PC Meeting, having been pre-circulated, were agreed, and signed by the Chairman after confirmation by the council. Proposed by Jean Peacock and seconded by Peter Foster.

66. Matters Arising

The Action Items were re-visited, and most topics are included in the Meeting agenda.

It was noted that:-

1. DBC had trimmed the trees at Croft House.
2. The Primary School has now passed responsibility for the pathway over to DBC, who have cut the grass.
3. The Clerk will follow up again, via letter, to Middlesbrough F.C regarding the cutting of the grass outside Rockliffe Court. **Action Clerk**

67. Public Participation

The Chairman agreed to discuss item 16, Bee Keeping, at this point, as members of the public wished to participate.

The Chairman also alluded to a Freedom of Information request, which has taken time to investigate and a reply has been sent. This has resulted in a second Fol enquiry being received, from the same person. The council contacted the person requesting the information, both by E Mail and in person, and invited him to attend this

meeting, when all his queries could be answered and he could openly discuss his concerns. This person declined **the** invitation.

The Chairman expressed **his** concern at the amount of time this extra work may take, and recommended that the Clerk be paid overtime for any excess hours, as required. This was agreed.

Ken Pattison made a comprehensive report on the progress with individuals showing interest in keeping bees, and the presentation which was made to the public, by the Darlington Association of Beekeepers. This Association has arranged to hold a series of courses for interested persons, which will be held at Hurworth Grange; the first is on 1st October, and twenty people have enrolled. Minutes of the Bee Meeting have already been distributed.

The Chairman made it clear that HPC are not running this project, but that there is nothing in the Allotment Rules or Regulations, preventing individuals from having beehives on their own plots. This is supported by Government information on the DirectGov web site.

It was reported that one local man had been stung recently, and gone into shock, but **in fact this occurred in his kitchen, 6 miles from his hives**; it had nothing to do with beekeeping.

KP reported that Liz **Bunting**, of the National Association of Beekeepers, has recommended that the council does a Risk Assessment, if bees are to be hosted on allotments. KP offered to undertake this task, **It was also generally a good idea to do a RA even without bees as that could help protect HPC in any insurance proceedings.**

Jeff Kemp advanced the concept that residents in the locality should be consulted, prior to hives being established. KP was strongly against this, as he stated that the bees fly upto 4 miles, and therefore the entire parish would need to be consulted.

Val Hughes felt that the council should share whatever information we have, with the residents. It was agreed that the Newsletter could be used to do this.

Chris Pratt restated that it is up to individual allotment holders, whether or not they choose to put bees on their plots, and it is not a council matter.

Mrs Viv Whitaker said that she **has** written an article on the importance of beekeeping, and it will be submitted for inclusion in the next Parish Newsletter.

Mrs Val Smith also handed around an article which addresses the 'fear of bees'.

At this point Ken Pattison recommended that HPC should either apply for a grant to help to encourage beekeepers in the parish, or that the HPC should subsidise individuals who wish to set up an apiary.

Jean Peacock proposed a motion, seconded by Jeff Kemp that **no money public money should be utilised for this project, and that HPC should not apply for grants**, as this is entirely up to individuals. This proposal was carried by five votes to four votes.

68 Financial Report

1. The schedule of accounts for payment had already been circulated to all councillors, viz:

<u>Payment of Accounts</u>			<u>Aug-12</u>
<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Sue Webster	102215	Salary	448.01
P.D Allan	102216	Salary	502.90
Inland Revenue	102217	PAYE	19.80
Cumbria Clocks	102218	Clock maintenance	150.00
P.D Allan	102219	Office Expenses and CILCA	317.49
Nat Society of Allotments	102220	Annual Sub	66.00
BDO	102221	Audit Fees	480.00
Eden Landscapes	102222	Tree trimming - Grange Allotments	120.00
David Parker	102223	Westfield Drive open area	150.00
Tony Winnett	102224	Meeting attendance	34.77
Barclays Bank	DD	Bank Charges	4.60
Talk Talk	DD	Comms	14.18
Talk Talk	DD	Comms	18.60

All the accounts were accepted and the cheques were duly signed by Ian Holme and Ken Pattison.

2. In accordance with the council's practice, the financial accounts had already been distributed, showing the financial position as at 31st August 2012. There were no questions regarding the current figures.
3. The Chairman read a letter from the Audit Commissioners, informing us that BDO have been awarded the contract for the audit for the next year, a table of charges was enclosed. The Council accepted this information.
4. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Audit for the year to 31st March 2012, has now been completed and the accounts accepted. The auditors made special reference to the following items:-
 - a. The Asset register is not adequate and requires more information.
 - b. The Asset Register needs to include the date of purchase of the assets, and the cost price. This may be difficult to obtain, but **the Clerk will address the task.**
 - c. The auditors have drawn our attention to the use of Section 137 for a variety of payments. Some awards should be debited to alternative sections, and items debited to Section 137, should only be used if they do not meet the criteria of other headings. The Clerk has noted this and will address this in future.
 - d. The Chairman recommended that the Accounts for 2012, and the Auditors Report be formally adopted. This was proposed by Chris Pratt and Seconded by Jean Peacock, and the motion carried unanimously.

69 . Matters of Interest

1. Fol request regarding bees had already been discussed.
2. A letter regarding land ownership- discussion deferred until item 12.
3. It is noted that DBC have replaced the broken swing in the playground.
4. FOTC has sent a copy of their annual accounts, for the council's records.
5. The Minutes of the Bee Meeting were accepted.
6. DBC has informed us that the Appeal for the Right of Way at Croft Club has been **forwarded** to the Minister of State in London.
7. Tony Winnett was awarded a certificate for attending the seminar on 'Managing Bullying and Grievance'.

70. Declaring an Interest

Val Hughes drew attention to the various contents of the advice HPC has received about declaring private and prejudicial interest.

She said that as some many **of** our HPC councillors have involvement with Hurworth Community Association, and also Hurworth Village Hall, we should apply for dispensation from declaring an interest, when these items are on the agenda. It is possible that a quorum may not be able to be formed if all those with an interest declared their interest.

The meeting agreed the principle, and a motion tabled by Val Hughes and seconded by Tony Winnett, was passed **using the Grange situation as an example. . Clerk to make the application.**

71.. Hurworth Grange Senior Citizens

Jeff Kemp has visited and discussed the problems at the Hurworth Grange Senior Citizens Club. The Club has operating expenses of £5,000, which they cannot meet. This was recently escalated due to the cessation of the evening bus service. The Club is now spending £80 per month to transport their members to and from their meetings.

The council felt that as many residents of the parish are members, HPC should help, Tony Winnett proposed awarding them a £500 donation, seconded by Jeff Kemp; this was carried. **Clerk to arrange the payment.**

72. Pact Report

No meeting was held in August.

73. Highways

Tony Needham reported as follows:-

Highways Report

Over the last couple of months we have been trying to obtain information from DBC on the resurfacing of Elmfield/Ashfield **Roads** and Friars Pardon/Spar shop footpaths. This Monday **we** received an e-mail from Steve Brannan of DBC Highways **quoting** "We will be having a programme meeting with the contractors for Elmfield/Ashfield next week and will get a better idea of their start date. As we have had a wet summer, it is likely that they are running late, and at this point I would guess at an October start. Friars Pardon is programmed for late Nov/early Dec and we will letter drop the residents one to two weeks

prior to the start. Any works carried **out outside the Spar** shop will be incorporated into the surfacing works in Friars Pardon.”

Water Leaks/Surface Water Drains

TN reported that in the last few weeks we have encountered problems with the surface water drains outside the Emerson Arms and in The Chase. The problem at the Emerson Arms has been resolved by cleaning out the gullies. Unfortunately, the flooding of The Chase drains, even after 3 visits from DBC and Northumbria Water, has not been resolved. Today **he had** been with Neil Campbell (DBC Inspector of Highways) and Northumbria Water sub –contractors who were taking camera footage to try and locate the problem. The camera footage shows considerable amounts of tree roots and silt build up in the pipes. This is now a priority action and Northumbria Water intend to bring in machinery to cut through the tree roots etc. It will be at their discretion whether or not they decide to put a new plastic liner in the pipes. **Neil Campbell has also been asked** to arrange with Darlington Street Scene to bring in a gully cleaning machine as numerous gullies are silted up in Hurworth.

A mains water leak on Roundhill Road/Friars Pardon junction has been repaired. There is also a mains water leak on The Green (main highway). After 3 visits the contractors are unable to trace the fault as it appears to be an intermittent leak. This is under further investigation.

Westfield Drive

A cleaning up operation took place recently which included grass cutting, removal of weeds/elder etc. This was carried out by David Parker (Parish Council gardener), Ken Pattison, Tony Needham and the only volunteer resident of Westfield Drive, Mr. Rod Cooper. (TN requested the Clerk send a thank you letter to Mr. Cooper for his hard work and enthusiasm, **also KP requested a letter of thanks go to Frank Butterfield for lending his trailer in order to shift a lot of cumulative debris**). To keep the costs to a minimum we intend to continue this course of action, which will include using a selective weedkiller/digging out the elder shoots, raking and putting down grass seed. The hedge that was cut back is now taking shape and all the planted saplings have taken hold. At a later date it is intended to trim the existing hedge to keep it in a tidy condition.

KP gave a report **on the presentation given at Bishopton to a number of PCs on the use of Speed Display units. He and TN attended on behalf of HPC.** These can be obtained, with the latest features, which include turn on, turn off **mode, whilst still registering traffic flow**, at circa £2/2.5k each. He recommended that the council install six units, one facing each way at three locations – Comprehensive school area, the Green area, and Roundhill Road.

Jeff Kemp reported that he had attended the Small and Medium Sized Local Council meeting, and that the consensus of opinion was that these units were not effective. The better method was to move them, to break the permanent status, and share them with another village.

The Chairman said that he was reluctant to spend as much as £15,000 on this one project, at this time of austerity.

KP responded, making the point that all other alternative speed controls had been investigated, and this was indeed the most practical, in fact **the** only practical solution.

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that KP would delve deeper into the features of the units, and overall costs, including maintenance and the possibility of moving a smaller number of them around the Parish. **Action Ken Pattison.**

74. Allotments Report

In the absence of the Allotment representatives, the Clerk reported that three allotments had been re-assigned during the recess period.

There are now seven people on the Strait Lane Waiting List.

75. Playgrounds

Val Hughes introduced this topic by saying she had visited several playgrounds recently, and had been **impressed** with the assortment of children's equipment which was now available and was being installed elsewhere. **The surfaces are also custom built** for this purpose.

The playground at Hurworth Grange, which is maintained by DBC is very basic, and needs upgrading.

The council agreed, and the **Clerk was asked to start this process through DBC.**

76. Tree report

KP reported that due to the lack of public involvement, the application for a Big Tree grant **is in abeyance**. Only two residents had come forward. **He suggested that as a last attempt an article should be included in the next Newsletter stating that a public meeting, with the date stated, will be held to discuss the matter. If the attendance was poor then the idea would be scraped. This was agreed. He also tabled a most helpful report in this context from Peter Richardson and would circulate it to members. He had already thanked PR.**

Val Hughes requested to included on this team **of KP/NK/JH**, all agreed.

Peter Foster reported that five residents of the Green have complained about the overgrown state of the trees on the Green; they have grown almost to the ground and are impeding traffic. **John Howard to investigate and take appropriate action.**

77. Bus service

The Chairman expressed his appreciation for the effort made by Jeff Kemp, Joe Kelley and the Clerk for their work on this project, and for preparing and submitting the grant application to DBC.

A comprehensive application has been compiled, and submitted by the closing date. We have already received additional questions, which we are responding to.

The report is available for perusal in the Clerk's office.

78. Newsletter

Tony Winnett requested articles for the next newsletter, which he hoped would be published in November.

79. Airport Report

Peter Foster reported that he had attended the last meeting, and the main topic was planning and planning applications. He reported that David Cameron had simplified the process, and it was expected that application would go through more quickly. There is a big push to expand the complex, as it will create more jobs locally.

80. Small and Medium Local Council Report

Jeff Kemp reported on the meeting of the Small & Medium Local Councils Forum 17th Aug 2012 at Sedgfield

A talk was given by Mike Barton **Deputy** Chief Constable of Durham re the current outlook.

Over the last year substantial cuts have been made. Over **200 support** staff have been made redundant. No cuts to date from beat officers. It is expected in the coming year further cuts to be made could involve some of these officers. Any **cuts made** will be performance related, crime is down 13 percent--ASBO down 30 percent--**performance** against organised crime is best in the country. The county still operates on the basis of no fixed speed cameras installed. An offer was made to have any road safety concerns which a Parish may have to be investigated by member of his team.

A talk on Neighbourhood Wardens by David Butters. DCC Enforcement & Education Manager.

Police education of children just before leaving school is paying dividends by improvement of driving offences including ASBO. Dog fouling is still a major problem. Trying to get public to identify persistent offenders so that a warden can be put in appropriate actions. Attempting to put in a common reporting document for Parish Councils to complete and compare.

Safety advisory Group Debbie Butters

They have suffered badly through cut backs and now have a back log of paper work. They offer a safety review of events but only major ones **i.e.** not duck races. Still looking for ways to publish their existence. They will help with risk assessment and talk with event organisers on site if necessary. It is important that contact is made as it offers protection in the event that something goes wrong.

New Register of Interest Forms.

A lot of controversy has ensued and Legal advice sought by councillors. Section 8 apparently need not be filled in! A number of councillors have resigned rather than complete in present form. Spouse occupation etc and other information could **ultimately** be shown on a **Web** Site and this with other info requested is considered not appropriate. A review is taking place so we may get another modified form.

Localising Support for Council Tax

Councils will be affected badly because of the way precepts will now be assessed and a worry exists as the law **now exists** a precept need not be passed down to a parish council. The proposed basis for calculation as now stands could result in a **20%** cut to current precept levels.

Cheque signatories

Law being changed to allow cheques and direct debits to be used.

Next meeting 16th Nov Spennymoor.

81. Report on the Meeting held at Durham County Hall – Discipline and Grievances.

Tony Winnett attended this seminar which was convened by Country Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership.

Seventeen representatives attended, mainly from Parish and Town councils.

The principle topics were Managing Performance, Capability and Discipline.

A full copy of the presentations and the notes are available in the Clerk's office for anybody to study.

82. Skateboard refurbishment Project

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Hurworth Community Association have been awarded a £4,000 grant from County Durham Community Foundation, towards the cost of refurbishing the skateboard area at the Grange.

The plan which had previously been agreed by all parties is for the skateboard area to be refurbished by replacing sections with concrete and generally making the area safer and clean. Also, if funds permitted, the area in the car park will be increased by installing **mesh** into the area next to the playground, where grass will grow through, but the land will be preserved.

The Chair informed the meeting that Howard International had revisited the site and submitted a revised quotation to HCA, covering a larger area, and installing a drainage system.

The total cost summary is therefore as follows:-

Cost of work on Grange Play Area £7800 incl VAT , Quotation to HCA

Grass mesh area, quotation from DBC £3765 plus VAT Quotation to HPC.

The grant received of £4,000 plus the amount already ring-fenced for this project of £4,000, leaves a shortfall. It is understood that HCA will contribute £1,200 to this.

This will leave a shortfall of circa £2,500.

HPC agreed to make an award to cover this shortfall, on condition that the skateboard area will not be used for parking. Proposed by Val Hughes, Seconded by Tony Needham. **Action Clerk to make the arrangements.**

83. Planning Applications

Jeff Kemp reported as follows:-

1. Planning Applications August 2012

Plan App No 12/00489/FUL

Erection of Single storey extension to north elevation and a pitched roof over existing garage.

4 Malvern Close Hurworth DL2 2EU

No Objection

Plan App No 12/00500/FUL

Erection of two storey extension to side elevation and single extension to the front.

2 Burma Road Hurworth Moor DL2 1FQ

No Objection

Plan App No 12/00504/FUL

Erection of single story extension to side elevation and demolition of existing garage and build new one.

2 Fox Close Hurworth Place DL2 2HG

Objection made by Email on the grounds that the alterations appear to have claimed common land

Plan App No Proposed Barn

Snipe Lane Darlington

No Objection

Plan App No 12/00413/FUL

Erection of a Holiday Chalet

Skipbridge The Potteries Neasham Road Hurworth

*Letter expressing strong objection regarding the materials/appearance of the proposals will be sent. **Action Clerk***

2. Housing Consultancy Forum.

This report needs to be studied, and the meeting agreed that Ian Holme, Jeff Kemp and the Clerk would study the documentation, and report back.

4. Land Ownership

Ken Pattison informed that he is still investigating the ownership status of several areas within the parish, and that he and the Clerk have had meetings with DBC and would be meeting the Land Registry again shortly. **KP also in touch with Shepherds Homes.** Six areas are currently being investigated.

The meeting closed at 9:47pm