

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the proceedings of the Annual Assembly of Hurworth Parish held at Hurworth Grange, Hurworth –on-Tees, on Thursday, 3rd May 2012 at 7pm.

Present; Ken Pattison, Ian Holme, Val Hughes, Jeff Kemp, John Howard, Chris Pratt, Jean Peacock, Peter Foster, Norma Kyle, Tony Needham, Tony Winnett.

Apologies: No apologies; Cllr Jill Russell was absent.

In Attendance: Borough Councillor Martin Swainston, Borough Councillor Joe Kelley, Parish Clerk, Peter Allan.

Tammy Guy-Jobson representing the Press.

18 members of the public were also present.

1. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations made.

2. Notice of meeting

Notice of meeting had been given in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 9th May 2011 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Last years minutes included a Questionnaire which was to be a guide to the effectiveness of the Parish Council. Members were asked to submit their replies to the Clerk. No replies were returned.

4. Chairman's Annual report

Chairman Ken Pattison had previously distributed his Assembly Report, and this is included in Appendix 1 below. There were no questions/comments.

5. Borough Councillors' Reports

5.1 **Borough Councillor Martin Swainston** addressed the audience, thanking the parishioners for their support in re-electing him.

- He made reference to the DBC cut backs in expenditure and the detrimental effect it would have on road and pavement maintenance.
- He assured the audience that efforts were being made to try to find a remedy to the bus service cuts, and reported that over 300 people were being affected.

- Progress has been made with the Priory Group for the anti-social behaviour at Hurworth House School. Further meetings will be held, and he reported that improved security measures were already in place. Jon Anderson, Head Master of the school is being very co-operative.

5.2 Borough Councillor Joe Kelley addressed the meeting,

He thanked the council for their co-operation during the year, and made the following contribution to the meeting:-

- With regard to the bus service, he emphasised that it is important for residents to support the daytime service, and it is essential that this remains profitable for the service provider. He stated that buses should yield £20 per hour to remain sustainable.
- He was looking at a possible cycle / pathway from Hurworth to Darlington, which needs to be safe, and would provide an alternative to the bus. The cost of this project could be circa £250,000.

6. Public participation

In response to statements on the bus service, Henry Doran pointed out that the daily service may have too many buses, and that they were under utilised. Could there be a trade off for a reduced service in the evening. Joe Kelly clarified that the bus company does not operate in this manner, although it may appear a sensible compromise.

Joe Kelley encouraged all residents to support Phil Wilson, MP, who is leading a campaign to help the bus service dilemma.

On behalf of the Parish Council and its members the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting at 7:15pm.

Appendix 1

Chairman's Report for the Parish Meeting 3rd May '12

It has been a pleasure to work with a hard working, interested and mainly supportive council, with happily few personal issues getting in the way of corporate progress. Of that I think there has been a lot HPC can be pleased with.

We have now established as a matter of course a two-year budget period over which to manage our finances. The position at the moment is well founded, the basic criterion being a surplus at the end of the two-year budget period of at least £12k to ensure a further six months activity even in the most austere of times.

Careful monetary management, whilst undertaking a number of projects and future planning for others, has achieved this.

A major project has been the refurbishing/kerbing of the Village Green with a continuation of the work along Church View.

Also, after numerous complaints from residents regarding the state of the hedge along the first part of Westfield Drive, major cutting and replanting has taken place, with virtually a new embryonic hedge now in position. This

measure was not universally popular but common sense and restraint has hopefully enabled an on-going solution. My thanks go to Councillors Needham and Howard for their active participation in this matter. Their involvement typifies the HPC style of giving councilors specific responsibilities, in this instance Highways and Trees respectively, enabling the Chairman and the Clerk, in particular, to involve designated councillors very promptly, thus aiding efficiency and spreading the administrative load.

A number of new dog dirt bins and salt bins have been installed in Hurworth Parish after many requests from residents. There is also a ring-fenced amount for refurbishing/developing a community recreational area situated at the Grange.

The above projects amounted to circa £15k.

A number of awards have also been made or allocated to various bodies in the community, including the Village Hall to enable Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Hurworth Community Association assistance with upkeep, support for the 2011 (a wonderful success) and 2012 Hurworth Country Fair events, hosting HMS Hurworth crew and officers on their annual visit, and support for local scout groups, Grange Senior citizens, Friends of Rockcliffe Court and Friends of the Community (FOTC). These awards amounted to circa £7.5k.

All monies identified above, plus all items of the HPC two-year budget can be readily seen on the monthly cash flow, which is presented at every HPC monthly meeting.

We now have a well established, quarterly newsletter (The Hurworth Chronicle) which costs about £2k per annum, plus a proactive developed web site which costs almost nothing. As well as being very useful communication tools these are prerequisites in HPC's intention to apply for Quality Parish status. The Parish Clerk, Peter Allan, is in mid CILCA training, a further requirement for Quality status, together with the development of comprehensive procedures (Standing Orders), which are now in place.

Another aspect we are quite pleased about is taking on the responsibility for the upkeep of the monument opposite the VG shop. This is now tended by a village handyman gardener, and, subject to the season, usually very pleasing to the eye, much unlike it's previous unkempt condition.

About four years ago HPC, in conjunction with FOTC, and largely through the efforts of Councillors Pattison and Allan, obtained the first major landmark grant of £10k for the development of a Nature reserve at the Grange. Since then, and using that format as the model, there have been many thousands of pounds of grant money brought into the parish. This has been in the main down to the on-going efforts of Councillor Allan, now acting under the guise of our Parish Clerk. The sum total to date is circa £47k with others in the offing, particularly the possibility of A Big Tree Plant grant upwards of £25k.

In the past twelve months there have been grants for £15k in the Fletcher Hall at the Grange for a new false ceiling and double glazed windows. This has considerably enhanced the Grange as a community centre for a variety of shows and functions. Much the same can also be said for the Village Hall where substantial grants have been obtained for central heating, new windows and new chairs complete with trollies.

The original work for the Nature reserve has now been supplemented by the Heritage Orchard (very much thriving), and the development of a wild garden area in memory of Jean Butterfield, all grant funded.

Within the budget detailed above there is an amount of £27k available for projects up until Mar '14. Approximately £15k of that has been earmarked for speed control measures in Hurworth, which are presently being investigated, part monies for a MUGA (a youth play area), and a top up facility for the community recreational area at the Grange, all of which requirements were highlighted by the findings of the Parish Plan.

There are a number of other schemes under discussion by HPC but how relevant these might be will be determined by demands made on the unallocated balance of £12k between now and Mar '14. A major factor will be decisions later this year centred around the probable loss of the DBC grant, and in that event, whether or not a decision is taken to raise the precept to compensate.

Notable among possible matters, which will demand attention, are the cuts by DBC, particularly the investigations around the community bus services, this being addressed by HPC in tandem with bus companies, other parish councils and our MP Phil Wilson.

HPC is also at the moment investigating the ownership of various pieces of land in Hurworth with a view to establishing a comprehensive record for easy future reference. This has been going on for some months and discussions are continuing with DBC, the Land Registry and other interested bodies.