

# Hurworth Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held at Hurworth Grange, Hurworth –on-Tees, on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 starting at 7.00pm.**

**Those present:** Peter Foster, Jean Peacock, Ken Pattison., Tony Needham. Val Hughes, John Howard, Chris Pratt, Norma Kyle.

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

## **39. Apologies for Absence**

Tony Winnett (Holiday) Jeff Kemp (Medical), Ian Holme (Business), Margaret Williams (Social engagement)

In the absence of the Chairman, Jean Peacock, Vice Chair took the Chair and presided.

## **40. Declarations of Interest**

Jean Peacock – HCA  
Val Hughes – HCA

## **41. PACT Meeting –Jean Peacock took the Chair**

### **Police Report for the month of June:-**

John Angus gave the Police Report;-

**Crimes – 3 Crimes**

**1 burglary Other**

**1 Fraud – theft**

**1 Criminal damage**

**No vehicle related thefts**

**Anti-social** – 3 incidents, one at Blackwell Golf Club, and one involving a dog.

Ken Pattison requested that the contact for the speed monitor data needs to be identified, so that the analysis can be sent to the police.

The council has received a response to the letter to Ron Hogg. The situation of speeding on Neasham Road will be reviewed, and we will be contacted.

A revision of the proposed yellow lines around the Spar corner has been received. Ken Pattison stated that the revision is still not acceptable and the lines need to be extended.

**Action: Clerk** to arrange a meeting for Ken Pattison and Tony Needham to meet Brenda Bowles, and John Angus will attend if available.

## **42. Mr John Mushan of the Tees River Trust – Dangerous Species Division, addressed the meeting.**

The subject was hogweed in Hurworth and the River Tees banks.

He stressed that it will take between 15 and 20 years to clear the hogweed from Hurworth, and a long-term strategy will be required.

The main processes are:

- a. Cut off the flower head, which can contain upto 50,000 seeds.
- b. Spray the plants with Weedol. Weedol has been certified as a safe spray remedy.

The seeds are coming downstream from as high up the river as Winston. At present TRT is working on the sector from Winston to Ovington.

The hogweed is the responsibility of the landowner.

DBC cannot spray within 3 meters of the river bank, as this could cause pollution (Peter, This is not the case although Chris P & John H said it was. John M very strongly said the spray is ok even if it goes in the river. The reason given for not working within 3 meters of the river was H & S based on somebody falling in). TRT has a separate code to work to. Funds to get rid of hogweed are very limited; some land owners make a contribution, a fine example is Rockliffe Golf Club., others decline to contribute. At present there is only funds to meet one third of the cost.

TRT would welcome the parish council become involved and making a financial contribution. A figure of £3000 per year was voiced but not substantiated.

It was proposed by Ken Pattison and Seconded by Tony Needham that a working group be established to meet TRT, this was carried. The Group will be Ken Pattison, Tony Needham and Margaret Williams.

**Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting with Ben Lamb and John Musham.**

The Chair thanked John for his participation.

#### **43. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

The Minutes having been distributed were accepted, Proposed by Val Hughes, Seconded by Jean Peacock,

#### **44. Matters Arising,**

##### **a. Polling Station.**

The Primary School has confirmed that they wish the polling station to be relocated away from the school.

Parents of the school children have prepared a petition requesting the Polling Station be relocated; letters from the chairman of the school governors and the parent governor organising the petition have been copied to the council.

The Clerk has already requested a meeting with Lynn Wood, DBC, and she is going to arrange the date and time, and to involve her Departmental Head in the meeting.

**Action: Clerk to follow up.**

#### **45. Public Participation** There were no members of the public present.

#### **46. Accounts for Payment**

The schedule of payments with details had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. The council agreed the schedule and the cheques were approved and signed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Peter Foster	102442	Assoc meeting expenses	53.68
M.Harrison	102443	Work on open spaces, and style	91.00
BDO	102444	Audit Fee	396.00
CDALC	102445	Seminar fee	27.00
HCA	102446	Annual rent for room & utilities	620.00
P.D.Allan	102447	June salary	502.54
John Edwards	102448	Allotment work	58.89
Northumbrian Water	102449	Water for Strait Lane	40.11
Eden Landscapes	102450	Varnishing all village benches	375.00

P.D.Allan	102451	Lawn mower, petrol can and oil - Allotments	200.66
P.D.Allan	102452	Printer cartridges and mileage expenses	<b>85.94</b>
Bob Iles	102453	June salary	306.90
Inland Revenue	102454	PAYE	192.20
			<b>2949.92</b>
<b>Direct Debits</b>			
Bank charges	DD	Charges	4.60
TalkTalk	DD	Communications	10.61
TalkTalk	DD	Communications	18.60
BT	DD	Communications	68.40
CDALC	102455	Annual subscription	<b>448.37</b>

## 47. Financial Report

The Financial Report for June 2014, having been previously distributed to all councillors, was agreed and accepted.

- a. The Clerk reported that the external auditors BDO has completed the audit for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, and that the council has a clean bill of health.
- b. In accordance with legislation the council were asked to approve and adopt the audited accounts. The proposal was made by Peter Foster and Seconded by Chris Pratt, and carried unanimously.
- c. Chris Pratt asked that thanks be recorded to the Clerk for his work in satisfactorily handling the year end procedures.

Val Hughes suggested that two new items of exercise equipment should be considered to add to the successful project now installed at Hurworth Grange. She requested that this item be included in the September Agenda, when she will provide more details and associated costs.

## 48. Lease with HCA

The new lease has been drawn up by DBC Legal Department, under the instructions provided by HPC. The draft had been circulated to all councillors for their perusal and comment. Two small errors were reported.

However, the Clerk found two paragraphs, which in his opinion required modification, viz:-

**Paragraph 4.5** The wording implied that the landlord was responsible for the property insurance, jointly with the tenant. This is incorrect as the tenant has the responsibility for the insurance cover. This modification has been done.

**Paragraph 4.15** The draft lease stated 'not to display or affix on the premises any bill placard notice or like device'. There are already several bill board on the premises, and these are a requirement of the various activities which take place at Hurworth Grange.

The lease was modified to read:-

4.15 Not to display or affix on the Premises any bill placard notice or like device without prior written consent of the Landlord (such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed)

John Howard stated that these amendments had not been distributed to the councillors and hence he would not accept the lease content at this time.

Ken Pattison said that he was concerned about the possible impact of allowing bill boards to be erected as it could affect the rate dispensation from DBC.

It was pointed out that there are already several bill boards including the Grange Bar signs. Also, without signage several of the tenants could quit their leases and leave the Grange. This would seriously jeopardise the sustainability of the HCA and the long term future of the Grange itself.

John Howard repeated his determination not to approve the lease at this time.

**Action: Clerk to write to Stephen Allison** (Lawyer) requesting his opinion in writing as to the possible consequences of this paragraph.

Based on the answer received from Stephen Allison, the Clerk was instructed to proceed with the signing of the lease

#### **49. Matters of Interest**

- a. Jean Peacock reported that she along with Tony Winnett and the Clerk had attended a 'Community Buildings Conference' at Chester-le-Street which addressed the challenges of owning and operating community premises.  
The conference laid emphasis on the value of volunteers and better ways of recruiting them, and the value and necessity of establishing and adhering to a formal Business Plan.
- b. Joe Kelley reported on the meeting held with Priory Hurworth House School. The two principle topics were the continued stress on security and the actions being taken to ensure diligence, and the problems of traffic on Westfield Drive.  
The school will be extending their car park at the front of the school and will be doubling the parkin from 12 to 24 cars; this should help to reduce static parking on Westfield Drive.
- c. The Chair read out a letter detailing the changes which are going to take place in the Hurworth Post Office. The current post office counter will be discontinued and an additional till will be used at the main shop counter.
- d. A letter has been received by the new Mayor of Darlington requesting articles and photographs of significant features or activities which take place in rural parts of Darlington Borough. After discussion it was agreed that the letter be circulated to all councillors, and that they will pass on the request to the various clubs and associations in the parish.  
Peter Foster suggested that Hurworth Grange should be featured.
- e) Ken Pattison agreed reluctantly to attend the next LEADER meeting, on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **50. Planning Report – Jean Peacock**

Jean Peacock reported that all applications had been reviewed and details distributed to all councillors. One additional application has been received, for 35a The Wayside.

The council agreed that they had no objections or comments on any of the applications.

#### **50. Procedures**

Ken Pattison reported:-

- a. The Tree policy
- b. has been drafted and circulated to all Councillors. The Council agreed that this should be adopted.
- c. A codicil to the Procedure for Freedom of Information and Data Protection has been drafted and will be circulated to all Councillors. This will be adopted unless any councillors request a modification within 14 days of the circulation.
- d. There are several additional procedures to the drafted in accordance with the instruction and guidance notes sent from NALC. These will be developed during the council recess and circulated to Councillors.

One requirement is a schedule of maintenance inspections of the Exercise Equipment. John Howard, referring to his experience in this field, recommended that the equipment be gifted to the HCA. Hence passing over any future responsibility and insurance cover. Ken Pattison commented that it would be imprudent for HCA to accept the responsibility thereby divesting the council from their responsibilities.

A vote was taken, Proposed by John Howard and Seconded by Norma Kyle, that the equipment should be gifted to HCA, subject to their acceptance. Result 6 in favour, none against, with 2 abstentions.

**Action clerk to write to HCA offering them this gift.**

## **51. Allotments.**

In the absence of Margaret Williams, the Clerk reported as follows:-

- All allotments are taken
- We have a healthy Waiting List
- A new lawn mower has been provided for Strait Lane. At this point Ken Pattison requested that a new mower be supplied to the Grange allotments; this fell on deaf ears, as it was not supported by the Grange Allotment representative.
- The two new notice boards have been installed.
- The allotment representatives reported that the plots 'are in the best condition for a long time', all plots are being well maintained.
- The Allotment Committee request the following items, which fall within the Allotment Budget of £1100 this year.
  - a. Combination locks on the gate leading from Lych Gate. The public are using the entrance to walk across the allotment area with children and dogs. This is private property and not a public footpath. The situation is being aggravated by the hedge growing on the public footpath and DBC not cutting back until after the nesting season. The Clerk is pressing DBC to take action  
The gate is deemed to be in poor condition and it will be difficult to make it secure with combination locking devices. Hence the Committee request that a new gate and posts be fitted. The total cost of this may be circa £130.
  - b. A new strimmer is required so that the pathways between plots can be better defined and kept in smart condition. An allotment holder has offered to do the strimming.

John Howard expressed the view that the allotments do not need these items and that they are just asking for them because they know money is available. He quoted the request for the on-site toilet as another example of them trying to obtain money for things, which in his opinion, are not needed and that the council should not provide. The Clerk stressed that the council has a duty to provide and maintain allotments in the parish; it is one of the very few duties which a council has to conform to. John Howard continued to oppose any expenditure saying that the gate was quite sound, and did not warrant a new one.

It was noted that Ian White, at his own expense, has repaired the gate from Strait Lane and fitted a new wheel. Thanks go to him for his assistance.

Val Hughes, who had attended the Allotment Meeting, as an observer, stated that she did not support the request for a new gate. She feels that there is no harm being done by members of the public going through the allotment premises; she quoted that she knows parents who take their children to school by cutting through the allotments.

Following a discussion the council took a decision not to accept the Allotment Committee requests, and the items requested should not be purchased. The Clerk, again, stressed the council's duty, but the council reaffirmed their decision to refuse the requests.

## **51. Tree report**

Peter Foster reported that the survey of all the trees within the Hurworth Grange property was in progress.

Nothing more to report.

## **52. Highways report**

Tony Needham reported:-

### **1. Report - Highways and Paths**

- a. DBC has confirmed they will be repairing the footpaths at Hurworth Place.
- b. The road at Baxby Terrace will be reinstated
- c. The hogweed at the Otter and Fish will be removed.
- d. Pathway 1 has been inspected by Malcolm Thompson (DBC Countryside), and he has agreed that the condition is unacceptable, and has undertaken to talk to the landowner.
- e. Tony Winnett has requested that the stiles along the riverside pathways do not allow large dogs to pass through. Suggestions have been made that HPC could modify the stiles at a small cost. However, DBC conform to a standard stile and a discussion with them will be required.
- f. Footpath 7, from Timmys Lane to Spring Cottage requires attention, and again the stiles are in poor condition.

### **2. Groundwork North East**

Norma Kyle, Joe Kelley and Tony Needham had accompanied the Ground Work team on a walk around inspection of several areas of the parish. An audit is being performed which should result in a report and suggestions for work and improvements. At present there is no money available, but a large grant is expected.

A representative of this organisation has agreed to address the council, and this will be arranged for the October PC Meeting. **Action clerk to arrange**

## **53. Flood Issues**

Tony Needham, Joe Kelley and Ken Pattison are in discussion with residents and DBC. Residents of West End are preparing a response to the Complaints Manager of DBC regarding his rebuttals. A meeting is being requested by Joe Kelley for him and reps of HPC to meet Bill Westland to discuss the Glebe flooding area.

## **54. Association Reports**

Peter Foster had nothing to report.

The next meeting of the Small Town and Parish Councils will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> July.

The Chair read a letter from the Darlington Association of Parish Councils, which suggested that HPC should remain in the association, and rescind their resignation. Jean Peacock offered to attend the next meeting, and the decision can then be reviewed.

## **55. Any Other Business (Non-financial)**

The Clerk reported that the Durham Foundation, who had provide the grant to pay for the refurbishment of the Skateboard Recreational area at the Grange, have been carrying out a survey of the project. They have visited the site and inspected the work carried out, and a report can be expected.

The inspector was impressed by the Community Centre and the grounds, as well as the general upkeep of the premises.

Val Hughes informed the meeting of the birth of a child to Cllr and Mrs Swainston; it was agreed that Jean Peacock will send a card of congratulations

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:38pm