

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
HUTTON HENRY PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs J Thomas, K Knight, Mrs M Farry, Mrs J Grieves, Mrs B Drake, F Drake, Mrs N Wood, J Manchester and P Marsh

Also Present: 4 members of the public

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor K Lawson.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**4. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on **9 NOVEMBER 2020**, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member were approved and signed by the Chair.

**Matters Arising**

**MUGA**

The Clerk gave details of the cost of the MUGA at Hesleden which amounted in total to £50,661. Funding was received from the Hesleden Restoration Fund and the National Lottery in the sum of £35,000, the remainder was funded by the Parish Council.

**Litter Bins**

The Clerk advised that the Clean and Green Team had given locations of existing bins and felt that there was sufficient in the area, however had provided three locations which they felt would be suitable if the parish council wished to install additional bins.

**RESOLVED** that the 3 additional bins be requested and would be funded by the parish council.

**Signs for Litter**

DCC had confirmed that they did not have any signage to prevent littering. Signage was available for dog fouling if more were required. Mr Devine advised that find and fix was a new scheme from DCC which concentrated on clearing shrub land. They had been to Station Town and had done a good job. Councillor Knight explained that he had attended the Smaller Council's meeting where the find and fix scheme was discussed. They were a small team which had to cover the whole of the County. Mr Devine advised that he would send the link for residents to contact if they had any areas that needed attention.

**Maintenance Schedule**

The Clean and Green Team had advised that Station Town was litter picked and the bins emptied twice per week on a Tuesday and Friday. The bin outside Gills fish shop was emptied every day as it was filling up with household waste.

### **Skate Park**

Councillor Mrs Farry advised that she was still working on this project and would provide an update at a future meeting.

### **Flower Tubs**

The Clerk advised that permissions were still awaited from the highway locations.

### **Christmas Lights Station Town**

The Clerk advised that the lights had broken on the tree so had been replaced at a cost of £27.99. The Chair queried where the tree had been purchased from as she had expected a much larger one for £150. Residents were disappointed with the size this year. Councillor Mrs Drake advised that the tree was from Whelly Hill Farm at a cost of £10 per foot.

## **5. POLICIES FOR ADOPTION**

Consideration was given to the following policies, a copy of which had been circulated to Members.

- a) Social Media Policy
- b) Public Participation Policy

**RESOLVED** that the policies be adopted.

## **6. CORRESPONDENCE**

### **a) Its your Neighbourhood Grant Scheme**

Mr Devine advised that DCC had funding available to improve the area. If the Parish was willing to contribute £500, DCC would match that funding. The monies would be used to plant mixed native bulbs and would be planted in green spaces near Dormand Court, edges of the former football field and surrounding areas. There were a number of volunteers who would carry out the planting.

**RESOLVED** that the parish council apply for the £500 funding and if successful match fund with £500.

### **b) Centralised Custody Suite**

Durham Constabulary was hoping to build a 48 cell custody facility at Durhamgate near Spennymoor. The new centre would provide a safe and modern custody suite which was urgently needed to replace the four ageing custody suites currently in use in Durham, Bishop Auckland, Darlington and Peterlee, one of which dates back to 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

**RESOLVED** that the information given be noted.

### **c) Station Town Broadband**

The Clerk advised that she had attended a meeting with Digital Durham who advised that a company called Youfibre were rolling out a pilot to use the gigabit broadband voucher scheme which provided funding towards the cost of installing gigabit capable broadband when part of a group. They were currently in the process of submitting paperwork to DCMS for the project to be signed off in January 2021. Once the project had been approved, Youfibre would begin to market the area using their resources.

**RESOLVED** that the information given be noted.

### **d) Double Taxation for Parish Councils**

The issue of double taxation was discussed at the Larger and Smaller Councils Forum in November. This was an issue that had been raised by some of the larger councils. A motion was

put to the meeting by Great Aycliffe Town Council. CDALC were seeking councils views on whether they agreed with the motion for DCC to look into the issue further.

**RESOLVED** that the Council supported the proposal.

## 7. **PLANNING PROPOSALS**

Consideration was given to the following planning application:

- a) DM/20/03080/FPA Detached garage to side at Valley House, Station Town

**RESOLVED** that no objection be made.

- b) DM/20/03219/FPA Construction of private detached garage at The Barn, Claypool Farm, Front Street, Hutton Henry

**RESOLVED** that no objection be made.

- c) DM/20/03278/FP Detached Private Garage comprising Ground Floor Gym and First Floor Office at Zelston Front Street Hutton Henry

**RESOLVED** that no objection be made.

- d) DM/20/03494/FPA Erection of 1 no. bungalow within curtilage of Sapphire Cottage (revised and resubmitted) at Sapphire Cottage 5 West View, Station Town

**RESOLVED** that no objection be made.

## 8. **CEMETERY REPORT**

The cemetery was clean and tidy. The Clerk suggested that the previous groundsman be approached to enquire if he would be available to provide any annual leave cover.

**RESOLVED** that the previous groundsman be approached.

## 9. **PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

A consultation was held in March 2020 to gather the views of residents regarding a change of the name of the parish council to make it more representative of the villages it represented. The response was very low with only 23 residents expressing their views. The consultation end date was in the lockdown period. It was felt that residents had much more on their minds due to the Covid 19 pandemic. It was suggested that the consultation be re-done when the country had returned to some normality. The Chair thanked those residents who had taken the time to respond.

**RESOLVED** that a further consultation take place in 2021 at a time when some normality had resumed in the country.

## 10. FINANCE

### Invoices for Endorsement of Payment

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	Amount	CHEQUE NO
N Power	Utilities	£98.61	104136
J Dent	Skip hire	£264.00	104137
Whelly Hill Farm	Christmas Tree	£150.00	104138
Clerk	Expenses	£83.68	104139

### Bank Balances as at 13 November 2020

Bank Statements were viewed by the Chair

Bank Balances were as follows:

Tracker Account £34,793.88

Current Account £153,793.88

## 11. PARISH ISSUES

### a) Financial Report from Councillor Mrs B Drake

The report be deferred to the next meeting as the Clerk and some Councillors had not received the email copy sent by Councillor Mrs Drake.

### b) Casual Vacancy

Councillor Mrs Drake explained that she was unhappy with a previous decision made in September by the council not to proceed with co-option. This was directly opposed to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government publication on 3 April 2020. The Chair explained that the Clerk had sought advice from CDALC regarding the decision not to co-opt. Advice received was that COVID 19 had created unprecedented circumstances and some councils had determined that co-option was not practicable and had justified their position.

Councillor Mr Drake explained that normality should be maintained as per the publication on 3 April and felt the advice given was incorrect.

The Chair advised that in response to Councillor Drake's enquiry she had asked the Clerk to circulate the Council's position that no co-option would take place until meetings resumed in person or the elections in May 2021.

**RESOLVED** that the information given be noted.

### c) Covid Grant

Councillor Mrs Drake requested that the terms and conditions of what the grant could be used for be circulated. The Clerk advised that there were no conditions to the grant. The Council was invited to submit an application in August as they had a rateable property. Initially, precepting authorities had not been eligible for the grant as the Clerk had made enquiries to the Head of Finance at DCC when the initial letter regarding grant applications was received in April.

**RESOLVED** that the information given be noted.

### d) Land on corner of Millbank Terrace/Front Street

Councillor Mr Drake referred to the land at the former Corner House public house and requested that DCC attempt to contact the owner to have the land tidied up.

**RESOLVED** that the issue be raised with DCC.

e) **Chicanes between Wingate and Station Town**

Councillor Manchester referred to the chicane and commented how dangerous and dark it was and suggested that DCC be contacted to enquire if a new road layout could be installed.

**RESOLVED** that DCC be contacted regarding problems experienced at the chicane.

f) **Facebook**

Councillor Mrs Farry advised that following the adoption of the social media policy the facebook page would go live that evening.

g) **Minutes on the Noticeboard**

Councillor Mrs Farry queried if the minutes were in the noticeboard as a member of the public had raised the issue. The Clerk advised that the minutes were put on the noticeboard once they were agreed at the meeting.

h) **Christmas packs for children**

Councillor Mrs Farry suggested that Christmas activity packs be made up for children of both villages. All receipts would be kept and re-imbursed in the new year. She would advertise on facebook with a closing date for requests for 20 December. If any Councillor wished to help then they were more than welcome.

**RESOLVED** that the expenditure for the packs be authorised.

i) **Clerk's workload**

Councillor Mrs Wood explained that the Clerk was dealing with a large proportion of emails recently and felt everyone should be more considerate and aware of the workload she had. A recent email had 59 attachments in response to a request from a Councillor. The Chair advised that she had explained to the Clerk that she should have overtime but the Clerk had refused the offer. It was felt that the Clerk should record the actual number of hours she was working.

12. **ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

a) **Noticeboard**

The Clerk advised that the noticeboard in Station Town was broken and was difficult to put notices in. Both villages could benefit from a new noticeboard.

**RESOLVED** that the purchase of new noticeboards in Station Town and Hutton Henry be agreed.

b) **Date and time of next meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the next meeting be moved back one week and held on 18 January 2021.

The Chair wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year