

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 29 February 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope

Present

Chair: Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

Cllrs: Peter Ayling (PA), Martin Hurton (MH), Tony Reeve (TR), Chrissy Stobart (CS),
Deb Warde (DW)

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Jeff Stobart, County Cllr Dan Nicholls, County Cllr Marion Wilson

2. Declarations of Interest

None to declare.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public present.

4. County Councillors' Report

A written report had been circulated.

- *The Story* – the new register office and cultural venue for Durham, based in Mount Oswald, will be open to the public on Friday 14 June 2024. It will bring together five historic collections for the first time which will be available to access online and in-person.
- *Bishop Auckland Food Festival* – will be returning on Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April 2024.
- *Community Champions* – DCC are looking for people to become County Durham Together Community Champions. The champions will give support around health issues and will be provided with regular updates, resources and free training. Volunteers do not need to have any prior experience in health but do need to be over 18 and live in County Durham. Further information can be found at:
<https://www.durham.gov.uk/cdtcommunitychampions>

The Clerk was asked to raise repairs of the pot holes near Rose Terrace and the damaged kerbstones along the road through the village with the county councillors.

5. PCSO briefing

No report received.

6. Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 25 January 2024

Proposed by MH, seconded by TR.

7. **Budget Update**

Balance as of 28 February 2024:

Income: £17,818.01

Expenditure: £15,222.45

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Northern Powergrid Funding for Community Emergency Plan: £4000

8. **Parish Council Health & Safety Policy**

The revised policy had been circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed to add a note that the Parish Council had a responsibility to check that contractors had appropriate certification and liability insurance before work was agreed. The Clerk will amend the policy and recirculate for approval.

9. **Progression of on-going projects**

Community Emergency Plan: items for purchase and storage options

TR had ordered the items from the equipment spreadsheet at a total cost of £1662.25. Further consideration would be given to whether any other equipment was needed. The Clerk had also ordered a metal storage shed (£938.98).

10. **Matters relating to the village hall, village green and nature reserve**

Village hall replacement doors and heating system

Geowarmth had provided a provisional quote of £13,850 for the air-source heat pump, with the option of underfloor heating or radiators, the latter being cheaper (£6,500). A grant of £7,500 was available through the Ofgem Boiler Upgrade Scheme but required an EPC for the hall, which had been obtained. As no documentation could be found regarding the insulation in the hall, the EPC included a recommendation for cavity insulation, which affected eligibility for the grant. However, an exemption existed for timber-framed buildings but this required a surveyor to complete an exemption form. SW had contacted a surveyor in Durham. It had been confirmed that the cost of the EPC could be covered by the National Lottery funding and it was hoped that this would also extend to the surveyor's fee. Quotes were still needed for the slab for the heat pump and the boxing-in work in the back room once the installation was completed. The Clerk will follow up on these.

Defibrillator mounting and restored seats

The Clerk will chase up quotes for both jobs.

Nature Reserve

CS raised the issue of the work that was needed on the nature reserve, which included repair of the kissing gate and fence, the lower stile and loose fence posts. Concerns were also expressed about the potential for quad/trail bikes to access the meadow through the gap in the fence. Given that DCC have responsibility for maintenance, there was discussion about what work the Parish Council could carry out and whether voluntary groups could be involved eg DCC countryside volunteers, LionMouth Rural Centre or The Skill Mill, who had previously strimmed the paths around the meadow. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Tammy Morris-Hale, DCC senior ecologist, regarding the Parish

Council's concerns and The Skill Mill to see if they would be able to carry out any further work.

11. Village hall, pricing and facilities

With the upgrading work on the village hall, MH asked whether there were plans to increase its use and to reconsider the hire charges. He had used The Hut in Ushaw Moor for the Photography Club, which was able to offer a wider range of facilities and was significantly cheaper to hire (£8/hour for regular users). It was also noted that the Art Group had temporarily moved to Woodland Hall due to issues with the heating and the increased hire cost. The hall has not been widely used in the past and it was recognised that many people outside the local area are not aware that it exists and is available for hire. In addition, there were limits on the number of hire sessions that could be offered due to the shortage of volunteers to help with events, maintenance, cleaning and opening and locking up the hall. There was also the ongoing issue with cluster flies which would need to be addressed.

A number of suggestions were made for additional improvements once the heating had been installed, including clearing the back room to make a smaller meeting space to hire separately and upgrading the kitchen. DW suggested holding a relaunch event once the work had been completed to show the new facilities and encourage more use.

12. Newsletter

SW had updated the Parish Council report and would forward it to TR, who would compile the newsletter. It was agreed to circulate the draft to members by email before printing and delivering to residents.

13. Members' reports

None to receive.

14. Clerk's report

Financial

Payments made in January and February 2024:

G Bell	£ 427.15	Clerk's December salary & IT costs
G Bell	£ 9.00	Key cutting – filing cabinet
S Woodroffe	£ 30.00	Village hall filing cabinet
CDALC	£ 30.00	Training
Neil Adamson	£ 73.75	PAT testing
Expert Fire Solutions	£ 114.00	Village hall fire safety check
G Bell	£ 427.15	Clerk's January salary & IT costs
G Bell	£ 427.15	Clerk's January salary (overpayment)
Wave	£ 56.48	Village hall water charges
K Anderson	£ 170.00	Village hall EPC
Octopus Energy	£ 94.90	Village hall electricity charges
Total:	£1859.58	

Payments received:

G Bell	£427.15	Refund of salary overpayment
Cuppa n Cake (January)	£ 20.00	Village hall hire
Cuppa n Cake (February)	£ 20.00	Village hall hire
Total:	£467.15	

Petty cash: **£7.25**

- The Clerk had contacted PCSO Paige Hart regarding vehicles on the village green and her response had been circulated. These incidents should be reported to the police on 101 or to her via email: paige.hart2@durham.police.uk
- An accident book had been purchased and was located in the kitchen in the village hall. Eye wash had also been replaced in the First Aid kit. The need for a trauma kit had been investigated but it was not felt to be necessary.
- The residents who had used the village hall for a Project Wallacea fundraising event had sent their thanks to the Parish Council.
- There is an election for the Police and Crime Commissioner on 2 May and the village hall will be used as a polling station.
- CDALC were encouraging parish councils to use a gov.uk domain name and there was currently a £100 grant available to help cover the costs of transferring. It was agreed that the overall cost was too high and the present arrangements were satisfactory.
- CDALC had also publicised celebrations for the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6 June 2024, which were based around lighting beacons. It was agreed that this would not be pursued.

15. **Date for next meeting:** Thursday 28 March at 7.30 pm in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Signed

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe
Chair
25 March 2024