

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25 April 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope

Present

Chair: Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

Cllrs: Martin Hurton (MH), Tony Reeve (TR)

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Peter Ayling, Cllr Deb Warde, 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 cultural venue and register office for County Durham at Mount Oswald will be open to the public from Friday 14 June.
- *Specialist markets* – DCC have procured specialist social enterprise Bacchanalia to organise bespoke markets at eleven centres across the county. Ranging from craft markets, street food, farmers' markets, vintage fayres and Christmas markets, the events will run across the calendar year and build on previous events held in Bishop Auckland.
- *Bishop Auckland Food Festival* – this year there were more than 150 street stalls with traders from County Durham and beyond, and outdoor cookery demonstrations from well-known chefs. Approximately 30,000 people attended the two-day event.

5. PCSO briefing

No report was received.

6. Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 28 March 2024

Proposed by TR, seconded by SW.

7. Parish Councillor vacancy

David Merryweather had left the council due to non-attendance (*Section 85(1) LGA 1972*) and the Clerk would inform electoral services of the vacancy.

8. Budget Update

A summary of the 2023-24 accounts had been circulated and it was noted that there was a deficit of £751.75 for the year.

Balance as of 25 April 2024:

Income: £5637.40

Expenditure: £ 472.93

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Northern Powergrid Funding for Community Emergency Plan: £758.77

9. Progression of on-going projects

Community Emergency Plan: items for purchase and storage options

The storage shed was due to be delivered on 1 May and the Clerk will contact Richard Curtis to arrange installation. Further suggested items to purchase included a catering size aluminium kettle, fleece or recycled plastic blankets for residents to take home and industrial AA/AAA batteries. SW agreed to obtain prices for the catering pans and thermos food flasks suggested at the last meeting.

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

Village hall replacement doors and heating system

SW reported that all the quotes for the additional work had been received and submitted to Isla Ballard, and the Parish Council should receive a total grant of £23,450. Once the offer letter had been received, Geowarmth could begin work on the heating system and this was likely to be in the second half of May.

Tidying the back room/Storage

It was agreed to revisit storage requirements once the new heating had been installed. The number of chairs was an issue in terms of storage space and it was suggested to keep 30 for the main room, a small number for the back room for meetings and the Clerk could offer the remainder to other parishes through CDALC.

Nature Reserve

The Clerk had contacted Derek Snaith, who had been in touch with the Countryside Rangers but the nature reserve did not fall within their remit. The ranger he had spoken to had agreed to investigate further but no other information had been received. Concerns remained about the broken fence allowing access for off-road vehicles and the lack of general maintenance. The Parish Council could apply for funding to carry out work, but would still need to discuss this with DCC due to liability issues. The Clerk will contact the county councillors for assistance in finding a DCC contact.

Related items

- MH suggested installing a large round bench or two-to-three larger trestle picnic tables on the green near the phone box to provide a social space and additional seating for barbeques/events. It was agreed that MH would obtain prices.
- TR asked about an earlier suggestion to remove the railings opposite the fire door to provide a safer exit route from the hall. The gate could then be removed and replaced with railings. It was unlikely that this could be done with the National Lottery grant but an application could be made to the Windfarm Fund.

11. **Members' reports**

None to receive.

12. **Clerk's report**

Financial

Payments made in April 2024:

G Bell	£ 427.15	Clerk's March salary & IT costs
Octopus Energy	£ 45.78	Village hall electricity charges
Total:	£ 472.93	

Payments received:

DCC	£ 5637.40	Precept
Total:	£ 5637.40	

Petty cash:

Postage	£ 1.35
Total:	£ 1.35

Petty cash float: **£5.90**

- The internal audit of the 2023/24 accounts had been completed. The Clerk will collect the accounts and AGAR internal audit form from Ann Barnshaw.
- The 2023/24 AGAR form would be circulated prior to the next meeting. The proposed dates for the exercise of public rights were 3 June to 12 July 2024.
- The VAT reclaim for 2023/24 had been completed but had not yet been received (£564.53).
- Playground inspections – awaiting a quote from DCC.
- MH raised the issue of the trees at the bottom of the track to Stanley Hall Farm, a number of which were likely to hit power lines or fall across the track. The Clerk will report this to DCC.

13. **Date for next meetings:** Thursday 23 May 2024 in the village hall.

Annual Parish Meeting – 7.15 pm
Parish Council AGM – 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Signed

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe
Chair
23 May 2024