

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Annual General Meeting held on 23 May 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope

Present

Cllrs: Peter Ayling (PA), Martin Hurton (MH), Deb Warde (DW), Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

County Cllr: Dan Nicholls

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

1. Election of Chair

SW was elected Chair of the Council for the next year.

2. Election of Vice Chair

DW was elected Vice Chair of the Council for the next year.

3. Apologies for Absence

County Cllr Marion Wilson

4. Declarations of Interest

MH – item 16 (village hall railings).

5. Public Participation

No members of the public present.

6. County Councillor's Report

Report received and noted. Three current DCC public consultations were highlighted:

- *Community water fluoridation expansion in the north east of England* - The government are consulting on a proposal to request the relevant water companies to enter into new fluoridation arrangements, and to vary existing agreements, in order to expand community water fluoridation schemes across the north east of England. To view the full information and take part go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-water-fluoridation-expansion-in-the-north-east-of-england> The closing date for comments is 11.59pm on 17 June 2024.
- *Durham County News* - The remaining issues for 2024 will be available to read as digital magazines online, with a limited number of printed copies delivered to libraries, leisure centres and other venues across the county for people who cannot access the internet. DCC will also continue to provide the magazine in alternative formats for blind and visually impaired people. These arrangements will continue in 2025, with just the summer edition delivered to households as a printed magazine. To view the full information and take part go to: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/31319/Changes-to-Durham-County-News-magazine> The closing date for comments is Monday 17 June 2024.
- *Proposed changes to face to face customer services* - At present, 90 per cent of the enquiries DCC receive are made by phone, email or online and demand for face-to-face customer services remains low. The aim is to develop a more responsive offer

which delivers customer service support to the places it is most needed, in more locations across the county. This will, however, require a reduction in the opening times of the current CAPs to avoid increasing costs to deliver the service. To view the full information and take part go to: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/31373/Proposed-changes-to-face-to-face-customer-services> The closing date for comments is Sunday 28 July 2024.

7. **PCSO briefing**

No report was received.

8. **Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 25 April 2024**

Proposed by SW, seconded by MH.

9. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24**

- a) The internal auditor's report was received.
- b) The Annual Governance Statement was approved.
- c) The Accounting Statements were approved.
- d) The Certificate of Exemption was approved.

10. **Appointment of internal auditor 2024-25**

It was agreed to appoint Ann Barnshaw as the internal auditor for 2024-25.

11. **Bank mandate and current direct debits**

It was agreed to remove former councillors Charlene Huntley and Tony Reeve from the bank mandate and for DW and MH to be added. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements with Lloyds Bank.

The village hall water (Wave) and electricity (Octopus Energy) charges are currently paid by direct debit. These were approved to continue.

12. **Code of Conduct**

Agreed to approve.

13. **Election of representatives to outside bodies**

DW agreed to attend the Smaller Councils Forum meetings.

14. **Budget Update**

Balance as of 23 May 2024:

Income: £6221.93
Expenditure: £1101.15

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Northern Powergrid Funding for Community Emergency Plan: £758.77

15. Progression of on-going projects

Community Emergency Plan: items for purchase and storage options

The storage shed had been installed. SW agreed to bring the costs of the additional items identified to purchase to the next meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Northern Powergrid to arrange a date for the cheque presentation.

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

Village hall replacement doors and heating system

SW reported that the offer letter for the National Lottery grant had now been received. A date to begin work on the heating system would be agreed with Geowarmth. MH offered to take photographs of the work as it progressed, which could be included in the next newsletter.

Village hall railings

MH had submitted a quote of £432.47 for the work on the railings. It was agreed to obtain a second quote if possible.

Additional benches/seating

In further discussion it was noted that if benches were to be a permanent feature, they should be sited in front of the village hall and not on the village green. DW raised some concerns over who would use the benches and a possible issue of litter. She noted that Suzanne Reeve has a grant to purchase foldable tables and chairs as part of Cuppa 'n' Cake, which could be used at other events. MH indicated that his proposal was to provide seating for residents to use at any time, and not be limited to events. It was agreed that MH would provide brochures/costs at the next meeting.

Nature Reserve

A response had been received from DCC regarding the nature reserve. It confirmed that there was currently no budget allocated to the site but that the Council was looking at opportunities to make improvements through the Biodiversity Net Gain funding. In the meantime, the Parish Council were unable to undertake maintenance but could submit an expression of interest form to take out a further lease. DN reported that it was likely that the upper Deerness valley would benefit from the Biodiversity Net Gain funding but at this stage it wasn't known how much money would be available or the timescale involved. He suggested contacting Stuart Priestley, Principal Ecologist, and Cllr Mark Wilkes, whose portfolio included environment policy. It was agreed that the Clerk would follow up. If the timescale is likely to be too long, then the Parish Council would need to consider taking on the lease.

Play area inspections

The Clerk had obtained three quotes for an annual inspection of the play area and the cheapest was from RoSPA, at a cost of £78 + VAT for up to five items of equipment if the inspection was undertaken in June/July. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact RoSPA to arrange.

17. Planning applications

DM/24/00493/FPA – *Demolition of existing first floor conservatory and construction of new*

first floor extension, garage conversion and canopy to porch – School House, Hedley Hill, Durham DH7 9EU

No objections raised.

DM/24/00911/FPA - Change of use of residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to children's home (Use Class C2) for one child aged between 8 – 17 - A Wilderness Way Ltd, Fell Cottage, Hedley Hill, Durham DH7 9EU

It was noted that residents at Hedley Hill had already made comments on the application and no further objections were raised.

18. **Members' reports**

None to receive.

19. **Clerk's report**

Financial

Payments made in May 2024:

G Bell	£ 427.15	Clerk's April salary & IT costs
DCC	£ 20.02	Remaining payment on play area inspection SLA
CDALC	£ 28.71	Annual subscription
G Bell	£ 24.22	Printer cartridge
D Warde	£ 9.00	Paint samples for village hall
Wave	£ 62.16	Village hall water charges
Octopus Energy	£ 55.61	Village hall electricity charges
Total:	£ 626.87	

Payments received:

HMRC	£ 564.53	VAT reclaim
Cuppa 'n' Cake	£ 20.00	Village hall hire
Total:	£ 584.53	

Petty cash float: **£5.90**

- NALC had produced new financial regulations for parish councils. These would be considered at the next meeting.
- The village hall will be used as a polling station on 4 July 2024.
- Notification had been received from DCC of the public footpath diversion at Low Hedleyhope Hall Farm and Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order. No objections were raised to the diversion.

20. **Date for next meeting:** Thursday 27 June 2024 at 7.30 pm in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe
Chair
27 June 2024