

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 28 November 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope

Present

Chair: Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

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

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

County Cllr Marion Wilson, PCSO Paige Hart

2. Declarations of Interest

None to declare.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public present.

4. County Councillors' Reports

A written report from Cllr Marion Wilson had been circulated.

- *Durham Town Hall to close* – DCC will be carrying out essential repairs to Durham Town Hall to restore and preserve the building and artefacts within it. The town hall will be closed from Saturday 23 November and it expected to reopen between spring and summer of 2025.
- *Expansion of Sniperley Park and Ride complete* – DCC have created an extra 261 bays at Sniperley Park and Ride, bringing the total number to 587. The extended car park is open from Tuesday 19 November.
- *Scam alert* – the public are being urged to be aware of Facebook posts claiming a new dentist is opening in Shildon with NHS places. These urge people to contact the surgery or to register online and provide personal information and payment details. Anyone who has been a victim of the post is advised to contact their bank or building society.

5. PCSO briefing

A report from PCSO Hart was received and noted. There has been an increase in poaching activity over the last few weeks and this should continue to be reported to the police.

6. Minutes and recommendations therein agreed from previous meeting on 26 September 2024

Proposed by DW, seconded by SW.

7. **Budget update and banking arrangements**

Balance as of 28 November 2024:

Income: £28,757.57

Expenditure: £25,256.78

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Interior & exterior painting of village hall: £3460

Lloyds Bank would be introducing an account management fee of £4.25 per month and banking charges in January 2025. Alternatives to retain free banking were very limited and the majority of community or business accounts now incurred a higher fee. As a result, it was agreed to remain with Lloyds.

Information regarding interest-bearing easy access savings accounts which could be used by local councils had been circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed to open a business savings account with Unity Trust Bank and to transfer £10,000 of reserves.

8. **2025/26 budget and precept**

Budget calculations for 2025/26 had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that most of the expenditure items continued to relate to the running of the village hall. There would also be an external audit fee to pay in 2025. Current income sources were grant funding and hire of the village hall. Due to rising costs, it was proposed to increase the precept by 5% to £5691.27, with the Council receiving an additional £228 LCTRS grant. All agreed.

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

Village hall interior decoration

SW reported that the decorator planned to paint the interior of the hall during the second week of December and she would follow up to confirm the dates. DW raised the ongoing issue with cluster flies in the hall and asked whether gaps in the panelling could be sealed. It was recognised that this would involve a substantial amount of work and be expensive to carry out. MH suggested contacting DCC pest control about the flies and the Clerk will arrange a survey and quote.

Play area repairs

The Clerk and MH would continue to follow up with Wharton's and Triple Shield to obtain quotes for the required work.

Exterior lights for village hall

A quote of £900 to install exterior lights had been received from Richard Curtis. Both MH and Richard will be asked to add the cost of installing an external socket to their quotes. The Clerk will seek a third quote and these will be added to the Windfarm Community Benefit Fund application.

Christmas lights

Adding lights to the tree in the bus turning circle was considered, but the battery-powered lighting used previously was not ideal. A request had been received from a resident for a

village Christmas tree and it was agreed that SW would purchase a tree and half barrel base, which would be placed outside the hall.

PAT testing and fire extinguisher servicing

The Clerk will arrange for both services to be carried out.

10. Mud on the road (High Hedley Hope Farm)

PA noted that the mud on the road past High Hedley Hope Farm was becoming an issue again and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact DCC.

11. Members' reports

None to receive.

12. Clerk's report

Financial

Payments made in October and November 2024:

Cotterhill Ltd	£ 2500.00	Village hall flooring
G Bell	£ 427.15	September salary & IT costs
G Bell	£ 15.98	Reimbursement – vacuum cleaner hose
Geowarmth	£ 317.50	Final payment on heat pump contract
S Reeve	£ 34.11	Wool for remembrance day poppies
G Bell	£ 40.75	Reimbursement – village hall keys
Octopus Energy	£ 53.50	Village hall electricity charges
Dunelm	£ 379.00	Curtains and blinds for village hall
Wave	£ 71.34	Village hall water charges
G Bell	£ 427.15	October salary & IT costs
Moorview Windows	£ 1625.00	Final payment for new village hall doors
Total:	£ 5891.48	

Payments received:

Cuppa 'n' Cake	£ 40.00	Village hall hire (September & October)
CAN	£ 2400.83	National Lottery funding for village hall
CAN	£ 4814.17	National Lottery funding for village hall
Total:	£ 7255.00	

Petty cash float: **£5.90**

Wag & Company North East Friendship Dogs – a charity offering a befriending and pet therapy service were requesting support to help with their work. Following discussion, it was agreed not to make a donation.

Art Group – The Art Group had discussed returning to the village hall on an ad hoc basis for the first Wednesday each month from March to November but this was dependent on the hire charge matching the current rate at Woodland Hall. This was agreed but the Group would be required to sign a new hirer's agreement. The Clerk would contact Chris Ruskin to confirm and invite her to visit the hall in the new year to see the improvements.

13. **Proposed dates for 2025 meetings**

30 January, 20 February, 27 March, 24 April, 22 May, 26 June, 24 July, 25 September, 23 October, 27 November.

14. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 30 January 2025 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed

Cllr Sarah Woodroffe
Chair
30 January 2025