

HEDLEYHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 30 January 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, East Hedleyhope

Present

Chair: Sarah Woodroffe (SW)

Cllrs: Peter Ayling (PA), Martin Hurton (MH), Jeff Stobart (JS)

Officer: Gillian Bell (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Deb Warde, 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.

- *Allocation of social housing in County Durham* – DCC have launched a consultation asking for views on key issues around housing as part of a comprehensive review of its housing allocations policy. A housing allocation scheme is a requirement of all authorities, setting out the council's eligibility, qualifying and housing need criteria, as well as how the authority assesses applications to join the housing register, to ensure priority is fairly assigned. In County Durham a choice-based lettings scheme currently operates to allocate social housing to people on the housing register as part of the Durham Key Options partnership, which is made up of DCC and four key housing providers. However, the current policy has been in place since 2017 and, with a greater demand for social housing than supply, as well as a nationwide housing crisis, DCC are reviewing their process to ensure properties are allocated fairly and to those in greatest need.
- *Open Art Exhibition, Bishop Auckland Town Hall* – This free exhibition features 269 piece of work by 125 different artists who live and work in County Durham and includes paintings, textiles, jewellery and sculptures. It includes three works by illustrator, author and publisher of children's picture books, Stuart Trotter, from Ferryhill. He has worked with many of the major UK publishers on well-known projects such as Postman Pat, Wallace and Gromit, Kipper, Noddy and Winnie the Pooh.
- *New tractors to help clear snow* – a new fleet of 12 compact tractors are being used to clear snow and spread salt on paths leading to medical centres and pharmacies, as well as in busy areas such as town centres. The aim is to reduce slips and falls, protect older and vulnerable people, reduce pressure on health and care services, and avoid hospital admissions.

5. PCSO briefing

No report was received.

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

Proposed by SW, seconded by MH.

7. **Budget update and banking arrangements**

Balance as of 30 January 2025:

Income: £29,671.57

Expenditure: £27,833.81

Earmarked project expenditure:

Seat repair and installation: £1000

Interior & exterior painting of village hall: £3460

The application for a savings account with Unity Trust Bank had been made and the Clerk would forward the additional information requested.

8. **Durham County Council Section 106 funding**

Approximately £30,000 of unallocated Section 106 funding was available in Deerness ward, which could be spent on open space, recreation or sports projects. Parish councils in the ward were invited to apply for this money. The repairs to the play area and the fencing around the meadow were identified as possible projects for funding and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact DCC to check eligibility and the application process.

9. **Arrangements for Parish Council elections, May 2025**

Details of the election arrangements had been circulated. All councillors wishing to stand for re-election and any prospective candidates would need to complete a nomination form and return this to County Hall by 4 pm on Friday 2 April. Election day is Thursday 1 May. Following the election, the Parish Council AGM would need to be held between 7 and 22 May. It was agreed that the Clerk would request nomination packs from Electoral Services for current councillors.

10. **Implementing the Community Emergency Plan**

Following a number of recent storms and subsequent power cuts in the village, there was discussion about implementing a community plan in these situations. It was agreed that if a power cut continued overnight and no time had been provided for power to be restored, the village hall would be opened in the morning to give residents the opportunity to charge mobile phones, get a warm drink and bring food to be heated. The Clerk will put a notice on the noticeboard with this information and a WhatsApp group for councillors would be set up to coordinate opening the hall.

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

Village hall interior decoration

The interior painting was now finished and the new curtains could be put up. The original display boards would be replaced with two or three smaller ones and additional energy-efficient wall or spot lights were also suggested. There was discussion about creating a display of the history of the village, adding to the photographs and materials already in the hall through requests to local residents and to those posting in local history groups such as Deerness Valley Memories on Facebook. MH offered to scan and print these photos, which could also be added to the parish council website. There was also interest in creating a

replica of the Hedleyhope Lodge miners' banner. JS suggested obtaining a fire-proof document box to keep original documents and photos. SW agreed to look for suitable display boards and the Clerk would contact Isla Ballard to check if the money remaining in the National Lottery grant could still be accessed.

Upgrading the kitchen

SW had estimated that new units would cost around £1500 and a new cooker around £500, including delivery and disposal of the current one. Funding would need to be sought for the work and Isla Ballard from Durham Community Action may be able to help source this. Additional quotes would be needed and it was agreed that SW would supply a list of units and the Clerk would ask Richard Curtis for an additional quote from Howden's, together with removal and fitting costs.

Village hall WiFi

It had been discussed previously that the new heating could be controlled using an app and this now needed to be set up. The router had been purchased and a 5GB data SIM was required. The amount of data could be increased if the hall became used more regularly and WiFi was offered to hirers. It was agreed that the Clerk would look for a suitable data SIM with Vodafone or Talk Mobile.

Play area repairs

The Clerk had followed up with Wharton's and SW would ask Paul Raine for a quote for the required work on the multi-play unit.

Exterior lights for village hall

The Clerk had sought a third quote for the exterior lighting and socket.

12. Terms and conditions for the village hall hire

Following discussion, it was agreed to set the hire rate at £10 per hour for all users. The Clerk will amend the hire agreement and upload to the website. In addition, a notice that the hall is available for hire will be added to the noticeboard and the Community Association page.

13. Newsletter

A March newsletter was planned. Topics to include were the work on the village hall, a re-opening event to coincide with Cuppa 'n' Cake, a call for any historical photos of the village which could be scanned and returned, and the continued issues with dog fouling. SW agreed to write the main content and the Clerk would ask Tony Reeve if he would be willing to print copies for distribution.

14. Members' reports

None to receive.

15. Clerk's report

Financial

Payments made in December 2024 and January 2025:

G Bell	£ 590.99	November salary, backdated increase from April 2024, & IT costs
G Bell	£ 28.78	Reimbursement – printer cartridge and padlock for heat pump
R Curtis	£ 535.00	Internal cupboard for hot water cylinder
S Woodroffe	£ 98.97	Reimbursement – Xmas tree, lights and container
G Bell	£ 447.63	December salary & IT costs
Octopus Energy	£ 483.56	Village hall electricity charges – June – November 2024 (rebilled charges)
Octopus Energy	£ 247.21	Village hall electricity charges – December 2024
999 Fire & Safety	£ 132.79	PAT testing & fire extinguisher servicing
Espares	£ 12.10	Hoover bags
Total:	£ 2577.03	

Payments received:

CAN	£ 914.00	National Lottery funding for village hall
Total:	£ 914.00	

Petty cash float: **£5.90**

- A memorial card for a young man from the village who had been killed during WW1 had been sent to the village hall. MH agreed to scan the card so that it could be displayed in the hall.
- Richard Curtis was interested in buying the water heater removed during the heat pump installation. A minimum price of £80 was suggested but MH would check the original cost. The Clerk will contact Richard.
- The Clerk had contacted DCC regarding the cluster flies in the village hall. A wall-hung unit that was left switched on permanently had been recommended and the cost to supply and fit was £263.43. It was agreed to wait until next month before making a decision to purchase.

16. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 20 February 2025 at 7.30 pm

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed

Cllr Deb Warde
Vice Chair
20 February 2025