

SHADFORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish Council held at St Cuthbert's, Shadforth on Tuesday 1st May 2018 at 7.15 p.m.

Members Present	Cllr D Woods	Cllr J Mace	Cllr B Bell	Cllr R Woods
Apologies	Cllr R Abbot, Cllr B Sim & Cllr D Bell			
Members of The Public	County Cllr Hovvels, Mr Engelbrecht, Mr Hunt, Mrs Hunt, Ms Martin, Ms Baldwin, Mr Flude, Mr Baldwin, Ms Beattie, Mr Kell, Ms Lyon, Mr Turner, Ms McColl, Mrs Turner, Mrs Nelson, Mr Banks, Mrs Wallace, Mrs Priest & Mr Bentham			
Minutes	The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2017 were approved.			
Chair's Report	<p>Read out by Cllr Woods - I would like to thank our clerk Julia for the exemplary work she does sometimes under ridiculous circumstances. I would also like to thank County Councillors Bill Kellett and Lucy Hovvels for the support they give the Parish Council and the local community. Last but not least I would like to thank my fellow councillors for the work they do, although it is not always appreciated.</p> <p>This year we had 2 large projects; Ludworth skate park has now got the funding to go ahead, I expect it to be installed by the end of the year. It would never have happened without the commitment of David Woods and Lucy Hovvels. Sherburn Hill cross-roads is now finished and a commemorative seat for Anne Peachey, a well-respected parish councillor has been installed. With the help of Bill Kellett the original churchyard wall has been repaired. Stage 1 of the new cemetery extension has been finished with the removal of offending trees to gain access. The potholed road to the side of Churchill Terrace is to be re-surfaced later this year. We gave the Salvation Army Brownie pack a donation towards the Summer camp. We gave a donation to the Save Our School campaign and had a member at all meetings. We gave numerous donations to deserving causes. I would like to thank the Salvation Army for sending Mr Rain to play The Last Post on Remembrance Day. As always we will help our community to the best of our ability. County Cllr Hovvels added 'I think it is important that we recognise David Bell for the work he has done as well, I think it needs to be recorded because of him being a public servant and that he gave a lot of time and made sure that jobs got done and I would like to make sure that this Parish Council recognise that'.</p>			
Financial Report 2017/18	Resolved to accept the statement of accounts and summary of balances as at 31 st March 2018.			
	<u>Bank accounts:</u>			
	14 day account		£18,596.19	
	<u>Current accounts</u>			
	Account no.1		£12,613.85	
	Account no.2		<u>£173.27</u>	
			<u>£31,383.31</u>	
	<u>Receipts and Payments book:</u>			
	Balance b/fwd @ 1 April 2017		£33,550.47	
	add receipts		<u>£17,331.16</u>	
			<u>£50,881.63</u>	
	less payments		<u>£19,498.32</u>	
	balance @ 31st March 2018		<u>£31,383.31</u>	
	<u>Finance Report 2017/18</u>			
	Projects identified for the financial year			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £5,000 towards work in the cemetery.• £500 for a hedge around the fence in the cemetery.• £1,500 for replacement seats (to be identified) and a memorial seat for Mrs Anne Peachey.• £4,000 towards a new skate park in Ludworth.• £1,000 towards the Parish Paths Scheme should there be a shortfall and additional cuts.• £5,000 for land work at Sherburn Hill cross-roads.• £1,500 for bollards at Churchill Terrace.• £1,000 for the engraving of the large stone in Ludworth• £500 for a new fence at the park at Sherburn Hill			
	The work in the cemetery has moved forward, we have signed the lease with a solicitor at a cost of £20.00, held a site meeting and had the trees mapped costing £216.00 as part of the planning application costing £385.00 to accompany the survey already completed. Planning has been			

approved so the tree work will commence. The Hedge around the new cemetery extension has been planted costing £500. A new seat was purchased for Ludworth and a memorial seat for Sherburn Hill cross-roads costing £760.48. The work at the skate park has moved forward, we have a plan, part funding in place with hopefully the rest to follow imminently, our £4,000 donation will carry over until the project is done. We did not need extra cuts on the parish paths but did pay for clearance on Sherburn Hill bank costing £40.00. We have purchased more top soil for the grass area at Sherburn Hill Cross-roads costing £396.00. We have also turfed and fenced the cross-roads area costing £2,350.00, Mr Oliver has kindly built the wall and laid the concrete for the seat working with the Parish Council. The money for the bollards was not used as some residents didn't want them but they have agreed not to park blocking the site line for vehicles leaving George Street, we will monitor the situation. We looked into engraving the stone in Ludworth, but because of the surface on the stone this is not possible. We have extended the fence to make the area safer for people using Sherburn Hill park, hopefully it will reduce the amount of traffic crossing the field at a cost of £180.00.

Donations

Citizens Advice £50; Brownies £200; Ludworth Summer Fair £300; Mayors Appeal (Air Ambulance) £100; Shadforth Village Show £300; Air Ambulance £200; Shadforth Christmas Tree £100; Ludworth Christmas Tree £100; Durham Miners Association Pitmans Parliament £100.

We have provided local people with a network of well-kept footpaths and bridleways, working with a local contractor and the Parish Paths Partnership. We managed to cover the cost with the grant. We have funded summer planting and spring bulbs and also reported highway issues. We are monitoring the speeding on the Haswell to Thornley road, this is ongoing. We pay for caretakers to maintain the two cenotaphs at Ludworth and Sherburn Hill and also a caretaker to maintain and manage the cemetery, the current caretaker is now employed on an annual contract. We buy two poppy wreaths for Remembrance Day every year.

Precept The precept for the 2017/2018 financial year is to stay at £14,000.

Any Other Business

A resident stood up and thanked the Parish Council for holding the meeting.

1. What are the procedures and eligibility criteria for joining the Parish Council?

The clerk read out the criteria - A candidate must be a British citizen of the commonwealth or European Union, be 18 years old or over, must be a local government elector for the area, live there for 12 months, live within 3 miles of the parish or own or occupy land in the parish. The decision at co-option is then for Councillors to make on their suitability and what they can bring to the parish council.

2. What is the Parish Council's procedure for dealing with complaints?

The clerk read out the process - Complaints about an employee would be dealt with as an employment issue through an internal disciplinary procedure. Complaints about a Councillor should be made to Durham County Councils Monitoring Officer. Other complaints about financial irregularity should be made at the time of the audit to the auditor of accounts pursuant to Section 16 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. Against policy decisions made by the Council they shall be referred back to the Council for review but will ultimately be the Councils decision. Criminal activity should be referred to the police. A resident complained that her emails aren't always acknowledged.

3. What is the Parish Council's appeal procedure?

Appeals are made to the parish council in writing but will ultimately be the decision of the parish council as a body. The appeals process will be reviewed.

4. Should all Parish Councillors provide an email address for Parish Council correspondence?

No due to data protection personal email addresses are not to be used. The Parish Council email address should be used. A resident queries that the previous Chair did have an email address but stated he didn't causing the clerk to use too much printer ink.

5. What is the Parish Councils policy on responding to correspondence?

As the clerk works very part time hours, she replies when working. Sometimes replies need forwarding on to Councillors to handle. The clerk agreed she would answer asap and acknowledge all emails forwarded on.

6. Does the Parish Council have a code of conduct for Councillors?

Yes but it needs updating. A resident read out the Nolan report to everyone. The resident proposed a 'No Confidence' poll against the absent Ex Chairman Cllr D Bell, the vote was 12 out of 22 (18 members of the public plus 4 councillors able to vote). Councillors can be reported to the Standards Board. The three casual vacancies need filling, residents said they needed advertising on the website. The clerk agreed.

7. Will the Parish Council undertake a review of its legal responsibilities?

Residents stated that the clerk had issued current rules and regulations without the required legal parts. All current tenancies are legally correct. There was discussion over a resident's allotment fence. All allotments were inspected. The tenancy agreements will be reviewed.

8. How can we improve communications between the Parish Council and its parishioners? Councillors are very approachable; a resident mentioned that the car park at the allotment had had the communal area hedge cut right back to tidy the area up by the parish council's contractor. Residents like the hedge and have agreed that they will now maintain and cut it in line with allotment rules. The parish council suggested holding surgeries in the villages for residents to communicate their wishes. The parish council asked who the Sherburn Hill Hub are, a residents spoke to say they were set up to develop a scheme for a new community centre, but unfortunately they didn't get all of the required funds. The project is on hold while the future of the primary school is decided on. The Hub committee consists of half a dozen residents and is a community group.

9. What are the Parish Council's intentions for the £2,000 allocated for the car park and allotments at the November special meeting?

The money was set aside in case the car park needed further work. If the money is not used it will go back into the funds for next year.

10. How does the Parish Council ensure the accuracy and reliability of its minutes?

A resident felt that the minutes from March were inaccurate, but were then agreed by councillors. A resident said that as the clerk interacts during the meetings, she needs to be writing and that she should stay quiet. We do not video our meetings. Cllr Robson-Witt left the meeting due to a previously arranged commitment and the meeting overrunning the usual meeting time.

11. What measures does the Parish Council take to ensure that work is carried out as economically as possible and that contractors have clear specifications?

The parish council try to give contractors as much guidance as possible, but we also have a lot of volunteers who help us out. The new fence at the cross-roads was mentioned as not being straight, but as the area has a concrete base it was very difficult to get the posts in. A resident stated that we had paid the contractor twice for cutting the hedge, which was refuted.

12. Could the Parish announce the number of people on the allotment waiting list at each meeting (or even just send a letter to those on the list)?

The clerk is happy to inform residents of their position but as the allotments don't change hands very often, it was not necessary to state this at each meeting. Names cannot be read out due to data protection laws. A resident asked if we had legal cover for disputes, the parish council has legal cover. The residents asked about arbitration with a third party over allotment disputes. The resident has offered to drop legal proceedings but without erecting the fence.

13. It was mentioned in the last meeting that £1500 allocated for bollards at Churchill Terrace is still earmarked from the budget despite a letter from Michelle Shearer at Durham County Council writing 'We would not wish to move this forward if residents are not in agreement with the proposals'?

The money was set aside at the finance meeting last year. We had meetings with Highways and assessed the difficulty and safety pulling out of the junction when cars are parked there. The money is there for any option to make it safer, there are no current plans for bollards. We are trying to make the area safer for everyone.

14. Given that Parish Council meetings are public meetings, how does the Parish Council propose to ensure that its meetings are audible, and inclusive to the parishioners who attend?

Councillors agreed to try where possible to face forward to any residents attending, room permitting. A horse shoe shape was suggested.

15. Churchill Terrace/George Street resident's car park (hadn't specified a question)?

A letter was sent out stating no vans or caravans on the car park, this was suspended on further discussion as it was not minuted as an action. We were informed that a resident of Churchill Terrace had complained, the residents deny this and want an apology. An allotment user was unfortunately blocked in. We will review the car park and look into the complaint. There was concern that vehicles could be stored there off the road.

16. Cemetery trees – woodpile.

I resident stated that when the trees were being cut down the contractor said he could have the wood. Unfortunately the wood had been sold by the parish council. The resident came to take the wood and said the previous chair was rude to him. The clerk apologised if this was the case.

17. Parish council's procedures on obtaining views/feedback from parishioners?

Residents want better dialogue and to work together, the Chair would like more community led projects. Residents seemed happy to work with us. There is a lot of work that goes into these projects all done voluntarily by councillors. Better communication and updated policies are needed.

18. Parish Council engagement with external organisations?

The issue of the allotment complaint was mentioned again, using other professional bodies for guidance.

19. Anonymous complaints?

Any complaint is followed up following our complaints procedure. There may be a valid reason why someone doesn't want their name put forward. The complaint will be judged on the outcome of the investigation.