



Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 11th September, 2017 in the Parish Council Meeting Room

Present: Councillor M. Wilson (Chairman),
Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. M Beadle
Councillor S. Crowther,
Councillor C. Everett,
Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell,
Alan Macnab, Clerk.

In attendance: Borough Councillor Mrs. D Jones, 3 Candidates for co-option to the vacancy for a Parish Councillor and 2 Members of the Public.

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.

264. Co-option to the vacancy for a Parish Councillor

The Clerk addressed the meeting stating that three Parish Councillor vacancies had arisen. One vacancy was due to the resignation of the former Vice Chairman in May 2017. This vacancy had been advertised for the statutory 14 working days and an election was not requested therefore the Parish Council was free to co-opt to this vacancy. The other two vacancies had occurred in August 2017 and had been advertised for the statutory 14 working days which expired on the 8th September, 2017. Before the expiry of the 14 days 10 electors had asked Darlington Borough Council to hold an election to fill the two Parish Councillor vacancies. Because an election had been called the Parish Council could not co-opt to these two vacancies but could co-opt to the vacancy which had occurred in May 2017 and there were three applicants for this vacancy.

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reminded the Parish Council that its Standing Orders (Point 8 Voting on Appointments) required that where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

The Parish Council **voted unanimously** that it co-opts one candidate from the three applicants.

The procedures were explained to the candidates and the meeting that their applications had been received and they would be asked to leave whilst a secret ballot was conducted.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

At this point, the candidates left the room. The Clerk handed to each Parish Councillor present a ballot paper containing the names of the three candidates and asked them to mark their choice with a cross against the name of the preferred candidate, to fold the ballot paper so that their vote could not be seen and then hand the ballot paper back to the Clerk for counting and the declaration of the result.

The completed ballot papers were then handed back to the Clerk who opened the ballot papers and counted the votes. The voting resulted in a tie of 3 votes each for Candidate 1 and Candidate 2. The Chairman cast his vote for Candidate 2 Mr. R. Goodchild.

Mr. Goodchild was invited and returned to the room and completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Register of Members Interests Form. Councillor Goodchild then took his place on the Parish Council and was welcomed by Members of the Parish Council.

265. Notice of Election

The Clerk reported that Darlington Borough Council had informed him that 10 electors had requested that an election be called to fill the two remaining vacancies on the Parish Council.

The election will be conducted by Darlington Borough Council’s Elections Team. The Parish Council would not be involved except for hanging the election notices in the three noticeboards.

The cost of the election would be between £3,500 and £4,000 which would have to be paid by the Parish Council. The Clerk gave the election services provided by the Borough Council. The Elections Officer also asked if Poll Cards should be provided for the election or not. If poll cards were provided, there would be an extra charge of £1,600 for printing and distribution.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that Poll Cards be provided for the election.

266. Chairman’s Opening Address

Councillor M. Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting which was his first as Chairman.

267. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Robertson.

268. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

269. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10th July, 2017 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on the 14th August, 2017

The minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Parish Council and the Extraordinary Meeting on the 14th August, 2017 were presented.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

The Parish Council **agreed** that the minutes were true records of the proceedings of both meetings. The Chairman signed the minutes of both meetings.

270. Matters Arising

a. Update on the move of the Felix House Surgery

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that the Practice Manager had notified the Parish Council that the move of the surgery from Felix House to Middleton Hall will take place during the weekend of the 16th and 17th September with the new surgery opening for business on the 18th September, 2017.

Borough Councillor Mrs. D. Jones reported that a regular bus service from the village to the surgery was being worked on. However a temporary minibus service for a six month period will leave Dinsdale Court at 2 p.m. for the surgery returning from the surgery at 3 p.m. to Dinsdale Court.

b. Village Emblem

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Mr. Short who was making the two village emblems. Mr. Short stated that the cost of the two emblems will be £600 (excluding VAT) but that he would not be able to finish the emblems for two to three months.

The Parish Council **agreed** the quote of £600 for the two emblems and asked the Clerk to let Parish Councillors have sight of the draft designs.

c. Sadberge Road Allotments

It was reported that no action had been taken on the hedge.

d. Staff Pension

The Clerk reported that all the information for the Litter Picker's pension had been collected and he was endeavouring to find time to input the information onto the NEST Pensions Scheme database to enable the Litter Picker and the Parish Council to start making contributions to his pension.

Councillor Mrs. Greenwell asked if the pension contributions can be backdated. The Clerk stated that this was not possible.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the reports on the matters arising from the last meeting.

271. Planning Matters

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that the Planning Committee had met on the 6th September, 2017 and gave a summary of the matters which had been considered at the meeting.

a. Planning Applications Received

The following planning applications were considered by the Planning Committee:

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Reference No	Location	Proposal
17/00788/FUL	Thorntree Gatehouse, Thorntree Villas, Middleton St. George.	Erection of single storey rear extension and the addition of a ground floor side facing window.
17/00774/FUL	Land Adjoining Technology House, Durham Tees Valley Airport, Middleton St. George	Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) attached to planning permission 17/00049/FUL dated 14 June 2017 for the erection of 5 light industrial/storage units and offices including demolition of existing sub-station and re-routing of cables to main existing sub-station (Additional Phase 1 Desktop Study received 3rd May 2017) - to permit an increase in size of unit 5.

The Planning Committee agreed that no comments be made on both applications.

b. Lancaster House, Durham Tees Valley Airport

Outline planning approval was given to the application by the Borough Council’s Planning Applications Committee on the 23rd August, 2017.

Approval was given with conditions one of which was for a Section 106 agreement to be signed within 6 months of granting planning permission for:

- improving the playing field in close proximity to the development. Borough Councillor Mrs. D. Jones emphasised that the playing field which is owned by Durham Tees Valley Airport remaining as a playing field and to open it up for wider use.
- a financial contribution towards education provision in Middleton St. George,
- creating a safe route to school by improving and widening the existing footpaths on Yarm Road, improving and extending cycle routes
- improving street lighting on Yarm Road
- improvements to existing bus stops and the erection of new bus stops in close proximity to the application site. Borough Councillor Mrs. D. Jones asked at the meeting for this condition to be substituted by a condition to improve the bus service along Yarm Road to the site at the Airport which is being considered.

c. Middleton St. George Master Plan

The Residents’ Meeting was held on 8th July, 2017 which was attended by several Parish Councillors. The then Chairman of the Parish Council had presented the requirements for the village from that meeting in the form of a report to the Planning Workshop on the 20th July, 2017.

A Powerpoint presentation was made by Darlington Borough Council officers which included a series of Spatial Plans and the Parish Council representatives were invited to comment on the six Spatial Plans.

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The Parish Council's representatives preference was for No.1, with some minor amendments, as it was felt that this meant the least disruption to the village in its present form. The next stage will not be any more Workshops with Darlington Borough Council but a village consultation which will be led by Darlington Borough Council which will take place in the Autumn on the basis of the outcome of discussions on 20th July, 2017.

The Committee discussed the preferred Spatial Option, and acknowledged that the possible site for a new school was problematic as far as access was concerned and agreed to wait to see what Darlington Borough Council came up with.

d. Proposed Church Centre

An email had been received from the Secretary of St. Laurence's Church PCC apologising for not being able to attend the Planning Committee meeting. The Secretary reported that she was still gathering the information which had been requested by the Parish Council from the Diocesan Surveyor and she would write again when this information has been received.

e. Proposed new Co-op Convenience Shop, 16 car parking spaces and 10 houses off Yarm Road, Middleton St. George

An email had been received from Pilgrim PR who are acting for Commercial Development Projects (CDP) in relation to a proposed development of a Co-op convenience shop with 16 car parking spaces and up to 10 houses off Yarm Road, Middleton St. George. Pilgrim PR and CDP were currently in pre-application discussions with Darlington Borough Council about the proposed development and they wanted to meet the Parish Council to brief them on their proposals.

A consultation meeting with CDP and Pilgrim PR will take place on Wednesday 13th September, 2017 at 6.30 p.m. in the Community Centre.

f. Sadberge Road Site Out of Hours Working

No further out of hours working had been reported to the Parish Council.

g. Field next to the Oak Tree Inn, Middleton St, George

The CPRE have written to Darlington Borough Council again with regard to application ref. 16/01256/FUL – Field next to Oak Tree Inn, Middleton St. George referring to the Richborough Judgement.

Reference was made to the recent report in the Northern Echo that Section 106 money was going to be allocated to improvements in the village from the development for 350 houses which had been approved at Durham Tees Valley Airport. Borough Councillor Mrs. D. Jones referred to the developments and possible future developments at the Airport and together with Borough Councillors B. Jones and York had urged that there had to be a buffer between the Airport and the village and a new school must be included in the development plans for this area.

h. Question from a member of the public

A member of the public present at the meeting asked if planning applications were available to all Parish Councillors. The answer was that planning applications received were circulated to members of the Planning

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

Committee for their consideration and a report on the decisions taken by the Planning Committee are reported to the following Parish Council meeting.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the Planning Report.

272. Financial Matters

Councillor Mrs. Beadle reported that the Finance Committee had met on the 4th September, 2017 and gave the following financial statement.

a. Financial Statement, Progress against the Budget, Bank Reconciliation and Bank Statement as at the 4th September, 2017

i. Financial Statement

The Financial Statement gave the income, expenditure and balances in the Parish Council's accounts as at the 4th September, 2017.

Contingency - Saver Account 1 – Barclays = £21,313.08

Contingency - Saver Account 2 – Barclays = £16,269.78

Reserves - Account with Darlington Credit Union = £5,081.45

Community Account 2017-18 = £60,904.71

Barclaycard: £500 limit. Expenditure July 2017 £31.00 (Supplies for the Public Meeting, stamps, envelope and two high visibility long sleeve jackets for the Litter Picker). **Expenditure August 2017 £34.35** (2 lever arch files and dividers and annual card fee).

ii. Progress against the Budget

The progress against the budget statement showed that the projected year end carry forward to the 2018-19 financial year would be £22,676.77.

iii. Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation on the 4th September, 2017 showed that the that the Community Account spreadsheet balance held by the Parish Council was £60,904.71 and the Community Account balance held by the bank was £60,904.71.

iv. Bank Statement

The bank statement showed that the balance of the Parish Council's Community Account on the 4th September, 2017 was £60,904.71.

b. Payments Received and Outstanding and Payments for Approval

i. Payments Received

Date	Customer	Amount
07.07.2017	HM Revenue and Customs. VAT Repayment	£2,195.99

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Date	Customer	Amount
21.07.2017	Southern Electricity. Reimbursement of overpayment	£237.64
01.08.2017	Darlington & District Model Boat Club. Electricity Charge	£37.11
	Total	£2,470.74

ii. Payments Outstanding.

Date	Supplier	Amount
02.08.2017	BDO LLP External Audit	£396.00
29.08.2017	County Durham Association of Local Councils. Training	£54.00
	Total	£450.00

iii. Payments for Approval.

Retrospective Approvals:

Date	Supplier	Amount
02.08.2017	M. Palfreman. Grounds Maintenance June and July 2017	£1,332.82
14.08.2017	Scottish Power - Gas Monthly	£55.00

Date	Supplier	Amount
16.08.2017	Barclaycard Commercial. Payment made	£31.00
23.08.2017	BT Hub Monthly	£35.99
31.08.2017	Cleaner - C. I. Wood Pay	£70.00
31.08.2017	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn	£510.00
31.08.2017	Clerk - A. W. Macnab	£559.80
	Total	£2,594.61

September 2017 Payments:

Date	Supplier	Amount
11.09.2017	M. Palfreman. Grounds Maintenance August 2017	£666.41
11.09.2017	County Durham Association of Local Councils	£54.00
11.09.2017	BDO LLP External Audit	£396.00
11.09.2017	Royal British Legion. Remembrance Sunday Wreath	£12.00
11.09.2017	HM Revenue and Customs. Clerk's PAYE May to July 2017	£419.40
14.09.2017	Scottish Power - Gas Monthly	£55.00
16.09.2017	Barclaycard Commercial. Payment made	£34.35
23.09.2017	BT Hub Monthly	£35.99
31.09.2017	Cleaner - C. I. Wood Pay	£70.00
31.09.2017	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn	£510.00
31.09.2017	Clerk - A. W. Macnab	£559.80
	TOTAL	£2,809.60

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c. Outcome of the External Audit of Accounts 2016-17 by BDO LLP

The report of the external audit of the Annual Return for 2016-17 by BDO LLP had been completed. BDO LLP reported that in their opinion the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements were not being met. However BDO LLP were concerned that the annual return had to be returned for amendment.

The annual return had to be amended to include the new play equipment and that it was not clear if the new equipment had been included in the 2015-16 annual return or not. The Assets Register would be reviewed by the Finance Committee at its October 2017 meeting.

d. Timetable of Controls September 2017.

The Timetable of Controls Report for September 2017 was presented which had been considered by the Finance Committee on the 4th September, 2017. The actions in the report comply with Financial Regulations

i. Fees and Charges

The Parish Council’s fees and charges were reviewed by the Finance Committee. The Committee took the view that there may be a need to review the charges levied at some point.

ii. Losses, Liabilities and Damage to Council Property

No losses, liabilities or damage to Council property has occurred since the last meeting.

iii. Review of Financial Regulations

The Finance Committee had reviewed the Financial Regulations and no changes were found to be necessary.

iv. Review of the Finance Committee Terms of Reference

The Finance Committee had reviewed its terms of reference and no changes were found to be necessary.

e. Review of the Assets Register

The Assets Register will be reviewed at the Finance Committee meeting in October 2017 to bring it into line with the value of assets in the Annual Return.

f. Annual Governance Statement 2017-18 – Risk Management Policy and Risk Register

The Annual Governance Statement was prepared for the 2016-17 annual return and showed how the Parish Council was complying with the Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide. The Statement was approved by the Annual Parish Council Meeting on the 22nd May, 2017. Durham Association of Local Councils had urged Town and Parish Councils to start work on the Annual Governance Statement for 2017-18 as soon as possible in order to have everything in place for the internal and external audit in 2018.

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The Clerk reported that he had reviewed the risk assessments which had been provided by the Internal Auditor and which were approved by the Parish Council in 2016. There was a need for the Risk Assessments to be retitled as Risk Management Policy and the Risk Register based on the risk assessments be reassessed to comply with the matrix and guidance on Risk Management in Appendix B to his report for the 2017-18 Annual Return.

g. Finance and Transparency Compliance Report

The Clerk explained that the Transparency Code was introduced by the Government to ensure that public bodies made available information to the people they serve on how they conduct their business.

The Transparency Code applied to Town and Parish Councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 per year and those with a turnover over £200,000 per year. Information must be published on the website. The Parish Council was not required to comply with the Transparency Code because its turnover is between £80,000 and £100,000 but the Clerk considered that it should do so.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. The outstanding payments, the retrospective payments and payments to be made in September 2017 which were given in 271b.iii above be approved.
- b. The outcome of the external audit and the action to be taken on the Assets Register be noted.
- c. The controls given in the Timetable of Controls Report for September 2017 be noted.
- d. The work on preparing the Annual Governance Statement for 2017-18 and the work to review the Risk Assessment Policy be noted and the Risk Assessment Policy be renamed the Risk Management Policy.
- e. The Parish Council complies with Transparency Code and publishes the information given in Minute No. 11 of the Finance Committee on the 4th September, 2017.

273. Draft 2018-19 and 2019-20 Budgets

Councillor Mrs. Beadle gave details of the draft 2018-19 and 2019-20 budgets which had been considered at the Finance Committee on the 4th September, 2017 which included the changes made by the Finance Committee.

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan asked why the Planning/Consultants Fees were different, what they were for i.e. a description of what was paid for,

The Clerk reported that the budgets were still in draft form and if Parish Councillors had any projects which they would like to include in the budgets they should submit their proposals to the Finance Committee in October and November 2017. The budget for 2018-19 will be finalised at the Finance Committee meeting on the 6th November, 2017 and approved, together with the setting of the precept for 2018-19 at the Parish Council Meeting on the 13th November, 2017.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Clerk will review the differences in the Planning/Consultants Fees budget heading and respond to Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan.

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274. Parish Councillor Auditor

It was reported that there was a vacancy for a Parish Councillor to act as Auditor. The role would be to audit the accounts on a quarterly basis and report his or her findings to the Parish Council. This is to ensure that financial controls are in place and are an additional safeguard to that of the Internal Auditor and the External Auditor. The Auditor is not a member of the Finance Committee.

Councillor Mrs. Greenwell volunteered to be the Internal Auditor and the Parish Council **agreed** to appoint Councillor Mrs. Greenwell as the Internal Auditor.

275. Christmas Tree

The Clerk reported that he had obtained a quotation for a 15ft spruce tree costing £210 + VAT. There would be a need for the lights to be put onto the tree and the tree inserted in the ground at its usual place in Mount Pleasant Close. There would also be a need for the lights to be taken off the tree and the tree taken out of the ground and removed at the end of the festive period.

The Community Centre offered its Christmas Tree at no charge to the Parish Council.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that the Parish Council will not purchase a Christmas Tree this year, the Community Centre’s offer of its Christmas Tree be accepted and the Community Centre would borrow the Parish Council’s lights for the tree. There would also be a need to check if any costs would be involved in ensuring that the electrical supply to the tree was safe.

276. Question from a Member of the Public – Speed Monitoring

A member of the public who was present at the meeting asked for the reasons for the Speed Monitoring being concentrated on Middleton Lane? The response was that the speed monitoring equipment was moved around the village by the Chairman of the Parish Council and did not stay in one place.

277. Parks and Grounds

a. Water Park

It was reported that the paths and car parks in the Water Park had been resurfaced, maintenance work had been carried out on the exterior of the Parish Council’s building and the building had been repainted.

b. Playground and Playing Field

The Clerk reported that he had carried out the regular playground and playing field health and safety report and would give the reports to Councillor Crowther.

Councillor Mrs. Gilsean asked that the football club’s fixtures be emailed to all Parish Councillors so that they were aware when matches were taking place, especially as residents had complained once again about rubbish on the field which were not the fault of the players.

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Concern was expressed about the grass cutting and the Clerk was asked to contact the contractor to arrange for the grass to be cut more often during the summer and early Autumn. Councillor Everett will contact the Clerk if the grass is needed to be cut more often than is scheduled and the Clerk will arrange for this to be carried out by the contractor.

The Clerk reported that the former Chairman had contacted a company to carry out the minor repairs in the playground which had been recommended by the RoSPA annual inspection but no response had been received. The Clerk stated that the repairs were of a minor nature and he would try to find another playground company to carry out the repairs.

c. Litter

Concern was also expressed about litter on the playing field and in the Water Park. Litter picking should take place in these areas before the grass is cut. The Parish Council asked the Clerk to send them the Litter Picker's work schedule. Mr. Sinski agreed to help with litter picking in the Water Park.

d. The Front

The Clerk reported that the former Chairman had given him the cost of hiring a pressure washer to wash down the seats on The Front. The volunteer who was prepared to carry out the work of pressure washing the seats and helping with volunteers to repaint the seats which needed repainting was working away from the village.

Councillor Mrs. Beadle reported that the Friends of The Front were drawing up an action plan for a professional tree specialist to lower the trees which had obstructed the view across the river. Councillor Mrs. Beadle was working with the Friends to apply for grant aid for this work.

Councillor Mrs. Greenwell reported that, following the Finance Committee on the 4th September, 2017 she had contacted a contractor to survey the trees on The Front. The cost of the survey was £180 + VAT.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. The Clerk will send the football club's fixture list to each Parish Councillor.
- b. Councillor Everett will contact the Clerk if additional grass cutting is needed to the playing field.
- c. The Clerk will find a company to provide the minor repairs needed to the playground equipment.
- d. Mr. Sinski's offer to help with litter picking be accepted.
- e. The work on the seats on The Front be carried out in the Spring of 2018.
- f. The quotation of £180 + VAT from the contractor to survey the trees on The Front be accepted.

278. The Whinnies Nature Reserve

Councillor Mrs. Beadle reported that Darlington Borough Council were still responsible for The Whinnies which included collecting and removing litter. Councillor Mrs. Beadle had met with Durham Wildlife Trust who were

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waiting for an agreement to be drawn up by Darlington Borough Council which would give the Trusts responsibilities for The Whinnies.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the report.

279. Standards – Health and Safety Procedures

Councillor Crowther reported that he was still reviewing the Health and Safety Procedures.

280. Review of Committees

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had lost three Parish Councillors due to the number of committee meetings each month and emails and there was a need to bring as much work of the committees into the monthly Parish Council meetings.

Councillor Mrs. Gilson opposed very strongly the proposal to abolish Committees which had been put in place in order to ensure that the Parish Council addressed all the issues facing it in such a large Parish. It was completely inadvisable to go back to the system of the previous Parish Council (dealing with business only at the monthly Parish Council meeting) as there were too many matters.

Councillor Crowther agreed with Councillor Mrs. Gilson that there was a need to retain the monthly Planning Committee meetings and Finance Committee meetings at least. Finally, it was agreed that we retain these as well as the other Committee meetings that were already scheduled.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** to leave the Committees where meetings had been scheduled for the remainder of this year, the Finance and Planning Committees be retained and the Committees be reviewed again in January 2018.

281. Date of next meeting

The Parish Council **agreed** that the next meeting will be held **on Monday 9th October, 2017 at 6.30 p.m. in the Parish Council Meeting Room**. Councillor Mrs. Beadle submitted her apologies in advance of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.38 p.m.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....