



**Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 in the Parish Council Meeting Room**

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

**In attendance:** Derek Dodwell, Chairman of the Darlington Association of Parish Councils and Parish Meetings, 6 Members of the Public and a reporter from the Northern Echo/Darlington and Stockton Times.

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.

**282. Chairman's Opening Address.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Parish Council.

**283. Declaration of Interests.**

No declaration of interests were made.

**284. Minutes of the last Parish Council on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2017**

The minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 were presented.

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan pointed out that the amendments which she had suggested had not been included in the minutes of the meeting. She expressed concern about the co-option which had taken place at the Parish Council meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that the minutes be approved, subject to Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan's amendments being included in the minutes.

**285. Requests to Address the Parish Council Meeting**

The Chairman reported that two requests to address the Parish Council had been received.

The Parish Council agreed to a member of the public, Mr. A. Sinski, addressing the Parish Council but that the second request from another member of the public could not be approved because a complaint had been made

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against the Parish Council which was subject to an investigation by the Darlington Borough Council and any discussions at the meeting may prejudice the investigation of the complaint.

Mr Sinski questioned the recent cooption at September 11th Meeting and the Parish Council's involvement in it. This is still being looked into by Darlington Borough Council.

Councillor Mrs. Gilson requested that the issues from the co-option at the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 be discussed at the meeting. Following a discussion, it was **proposed and agreed** that the Parish Council will seek legal advice from the Monitoring Officer of Darlington Borough Council on the co-option procedures which had been followed.

## **286. Matters Arising.**

### **a. Election of Two Parish Councillors and the Purdah Period**

The Clerk reported that the notices for the election of two Parish Councillors were displayed in the Parish Council's three noticeboards, the website and the Facebook page on the 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2017. The election will be held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.

The advice from the Elections Officer at Darlington Borough Council was that the Parish Council's normal business can continue in the purdah period (from the date when the election was called i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 to the declaration of the result i.e. 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) including considering planning applications. The Elections Team at Darlington Borough Council will conduct the election and the Parish Council will have no involvement whatsoever in this period.

### **b. Village Emblem**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 had requested sight of the proposed village emblem. The Clerk presented the emblem to the meeting. The Parish Council requested that a drawing of St. Laurence's Church be inserted into the emblem.

### **c. Parish Council Facebook Administrator**

The Chairman reported that arrangements were being made for him to have a user ID and password to be a joint administrator for the website with the Clerk but he requested that he also have administrator rights for the Facebook page. Councillor Mrs. Gilson was the current administrator. Councillor Mrs. Gilson was asked to arrange for the Chairman to be given administrator rights for the Facebook page.

### **d. Staff Pensions**

The Clerk reported that this arrangements to enroll the Litter Picker with the NEST Pension Scheme was on-going.

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

## **287. Northumbria in Bloom 2017.**

The Chairman reported that the following organisations and persons had received awards in this year's Northumbria in Bloom. The Parish Council had sent letters of congratulations to each of the award recipient.

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Gold Award. Special thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Porter and their team for their work to achieve this award.

Gold Award. Middleton St. George Allotment Association. Mr. L. Foggett and the Allotment Association were thanked for their efforts to achieve this award.

Best Private Garden. Mr. and Mrs. Short.

Best Residential Premises. Middleton Hall Retirement Village.

Silver Award. The Havelock Arms.

**288. Story/Miller Homes, Sadberge Road, Middleton St. George - On going Problems.**

Councillor M. Robertson reported on the on-going problems with the Story/Miller Homes Site in Sadberge Road. The initial complaints had resulted in Darlington Borough Council issuing a warning notice to the builders but there were still problems with Sunday working, early morning working, heavy equipment arriving early in the morning, late working, mud on the roads, early deliveries and litter. He passed the site and noticed these problems. These on going problems had been reported to the Borough Council's Enforcement Officer who had contacted Councillor Robertson. The littering problem in the verges had not yet been dealt with and no action on this had been taken by Miller/Story Homes.

Councillor Robertson reported that the Ward Councillors were monitoring the situation at Sadberge Road and suggested that the Enforcement Officer be given two weeks to come back with the action which he would be taking to ensure that the builders complied with the planning conditions which had been attached to the development.

The issue is continually being addressed at the Planning Committee meetings where it will be followed up.

Councillor Mrs. Gilsean expressed concern that the developers and builders had not signed up to the considerate employer's scheme and the builders should erect a sign to indicate that no deliveries must take place before 8 a.m.

The Parish Council **agreed** that Councillor M. Robertson will monitor the working practices on the site for the next three weeks until the end of October, 2017.

**289. Dropped Kerb, Haxby Road, Middleton St. George.**

Councillor M. Robertson reported that the dropped kerb at Haxby Road had not been replaced and that this was an on going issue since July 2017.

The Clerk reported that the issue had been raised and was being pursued at the Planning Committee. He had raised the inconvenience and hazards which had been caused by the removal of the original dropped kerb to disabled residents and residents with children in pushchairs and prams with the Highways Officer at Darlington Borough Council. The Highways Officer had asked Miller/Story Homes to replace the dropped kerb. He had written again to the Highways Officer who had reminded Miller/Story Homes that the dropped kerb needed to be reinstalled.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Clerk will write again to the Highways Officer to request that the dropped kerb be installed at Haxby Road as soon as possible.

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**290. Planning Matters.**

**a. Planning applications for determination by the Parish Council**

The following planning applications were presented.

**17/00810/FUL. Erection of single storey extension to the rear. 21, Acorn Close, Middleton St. George.**

The Parish Council agreed that no comments be made on this planning application.

**17/00811/CU. Change of use from open land to private residential garden ancillary to a dwelling house. 45, St. George's Gate, Middleton St. George.**

The Parish Council agreed to object to this planning application on the grounds that open, public land (such as bridleways, etc.) should not be appropriated for private use.

**17/00847/FUL. Residential development consisting of 44 dwellings, garages and associated infrastructure. Field at OSGR E434813 N513507, Yarm Road, Middleton St. George.**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan had prepared a draft response which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She read this out for the benefit of members and members of the public.

The Parish Council **agreed:**

- i. That Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan's draft response be approved.
- ii. To object to this planning application on the grounds of the site planning history, transport and road safety, noise, draining and flood risk, cumulative impact on infrastructure and facilities and on going infringement of planning conditions from existing developments.
- iii. The response be sent to the Borough Council with the Parish Council's cumulative development letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2016.

**17/00892/FUL. Erection of rear single storey extension, Pine Tree Grove, Middleton St. George**

The Parish Council agreed that no comments be made on this planning application.

**b. 16/00578/OUT. Residential development for up to 350 dwellings and local services centre (class a1 to a5, d2, d1, c2 and sui generis (vehicle showroom)), together with associated access, car parking, open space and landscaping with all matters reserved. Land to the east of Oak Tree Farm Durham Tees Valley Airport, Yarm Road, Oak Tree, Middleton St. George.**

Councillor Robertson was the Parish Council Representative on the DTVA Consultative Committee and provided a report from the latest meeting. The Airport Business Director was keen to learn about the problems which the Parish Council had experienced with other developments and how the development of the 350 houses at Durham Tees Valley Airport could minimise the impact of the development on the community.

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan suggested that a representative from Durham Tees Valley Airport Consultative Committee be invited to attend the Planning Committee to discuss this issue.

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The Parish Council **agreed** that the Business Development Manager of Durham Tees Valley Airport be invited to attend the next Planning Committee meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2017.

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

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that a meeting for Parish Councillors with the developer and Pilgrim PR had been held on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 which was followed by a drop in session for members of the public to give their views to the developer and Pilgrim PR. The Parish Council was informed by Pilgrim PR that a planning application for the development was being submitted to Darlington Borough Council. The Parish Council's initial comments were that there was a need to install a controlled crossing near the development, the footpath along Yarm Road needed to be extended and a 30 MPH speed limit imposed on the road.

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

**d. Middleton St. George Master Plan – Update.**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that an email had been received from Darlington Borough Council asking for the Parish Council's views on the venue and format for the public consultation event. The Borough Council suggested that the public consultation be in the form of a drop in event.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that the Borough Council be informed that the public consultation event should take the form of a public meeting, it should be held on a Saturday morning and held in Middleton St. George Community Centre.

**e. Proposed Church Centre**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that no further progress had been made with the proposed Church Centre since the last meeting.

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

**f. DCLG Consultation. Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places.**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan presented a draft response to the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation.

The Parish Council **agreed** that that the response be sent to the Department.

**291. Financial Matters.**

The Clerk gave the Financial Report in the absence of Councillor Mrs. Beadle.

**a. Financial Statement, Progress against the Budget, Bank Reconciliation and Bank Statement as at the 3rd October, 2017.**

**i. Financial Statement**

The Financial Statement gave the income, expenditure and balances in the Parish Council's accounts as at the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017 were:

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**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 = £57,863.17**

**Barclaycard: £500 limit. Expenditure August 2017 £71.55** (2 lever arch files and dividers £2.35, annual card fee £32.00 and 200 heavy duty wheelie bin bags £37.20). **Expenditure September 2017 £79.99** (Norton 360 Laptop Protection Annual Subscription £79.99).

**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 £26,718.06.

**iii. Bank Reconciliation**

The bank reconciliation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017 showed that the that the Community Account spreadsheet balance held by the Parish Council was £57,863.17 and the Community Account balance held by the bank was £57,863.17.

**i. Bank Statement**

The bank statement showed that the balance of the Parish Council's Community Account on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017 was £57,863.17.

**b. Payments received and outstanding and Payments for Approval.**

**i. Payments received.**

Nil.

**ii. Payments outstanding.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Amount</b>
13.09.2017	Middleton St. George Community Centre. Room Hire. Meeting with Yarm Road Developers	£6.00
19.09.2017	Councillor C. Everett. Reimbursement for purchasing grease for the swings	£3.19
22.09.2017	Barclaycard Commercial. 200 heavy duty Wheelie Bin Bags £37.20 and Norton 360 Laptop Protection Annual Subscription £79.99.	£117.19
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£126.36</b>

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iii. **Payments for approval.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Amount</b>
02.10.2017	Southern Electric. Electricity Supply	£228.59
09.10.2017	Middleton St. George Community Centre	£6.00
09.10.2017	Councillor C. Everett	£3.19
09.10.2017	M. Palfreman. Grounds Maintenance September, 2017	£666.41
09.10.2017	Elliott Consultancy Limited. Tree Survey on the roadside at The Front, Middleton One Row	£216.00
14.10.2017	Scottish Power - Gas Monthly	£58.00
17.10.2017	Barclaycard Commercial. Payment made	£117.19
23.10.2017	BT Hub Monthly	£35.99
31.10.2017	Cleaner - C. I. Wood Pay	£70.00
31.10.2017	Litter Picker - J. D. Lynn	£510.00
31.10.2017	Clerk - A. W. Macnab	£559.80

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan asked if the Grounds Maintenance Contractor was still submitting his invoices, if the work was being checked, and the Parish Council would only pay once this was the case. The Clerk confirmed that invoices were being received, the work carried out was being checked and payment was then made.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the payments in the above table be approved.

**c. Timetable of Controls – October, 2017**

The Timetable of Controls Report for October 2017 was presented which had been considered by the Finance Committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017. The actions in the report comply with Financial Regulations

**i. Two Parish Councillors who are appointed as auditors to check the Parish Council’s finances including the bank reconciliation in relation to the bank statements.**

The Finance Committee agreed that the second Parish Councillor auditor be approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

**ii. Three Year budget forecast**

**iii. The Clerk/RFO to prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Finance Committee and the Council.**

**iv. The Clerk/RFO to prepare the annual budget proposals in relation to the council’s three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding.**

The Finance Committee had received the two year budget forecasts for 2018-19 and 2019-20 which included detailed estimates of receipts and payments including the use of reserves and sources of funding. There were no capital receipts and payments and the reserves and sources of funding were detailed and maintained. A report on the budgets for 2018-19 and 2019-20 would be considered later in the meeting.

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**v. Review the Salary budget**

The Finance Committee agreed that a report be made to the Parish Council meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2017. The monthly salary payments are as follows:

Cleaner - £70.  
Litter Picker - £510.  
Clerk - £559.80.

There were no proposals to increase the salary payments

**vi. The Clerk/ RFO shall regularly provide the Parish Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget.**

The Clerk reported that the statements of receipts and payments against budget headings to date which compared actual expenditure against planning expenditure in the budget was provided to each Finance Committee and Parish Council meeting in the form of the Progress against the Budget Statement.

**vii. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the Clerk/RFO and approved by the Council.**

The Clerk reported that the banking arrangements including the bank mandate were reviewed by the Parish Council at its meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 and it will be reviewed at the Parish Council meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

**viii. The Clerk/RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the council. The Council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a minuted resolution.**

The Clerk reported that he prepares a schedule of payments which required authorisation as part of the agenda and the supporting invoices were presented to each Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council reviews the schedule for compliance and authorises payment having satisfied itself and the payments are detailed and minuted.

**ix. The Parish Council will receive lists of regular payments which arise.**

The Clerk reported that each Parish Council meeting receives a list of regular payments in the schedule of payments which require authorisation as part of the agenda for each meeting.

**x. Counterfoils of cheques to be signed by the signatories of the cheques.**

The Clerk reported that counterfoils of all cheques were signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council at each meeting or the Chair of the Finance Committee in his absence.

**xi. The Parish Council to be notified of any losses, liabilities or damage which could lead to claims.**

The Clerk reported that no losses, liabilities or damage which could lead to claims had been made since the

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last report to the Parish Council on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

**xii. Review the Asset Register.**

The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee had asked him to write to Durham Association of Local Councils for guidance on the values in the Assets Register.

**d. Risk Management Policy and Risk Register.**

The Clerk reported that the drafting of the Risk Management Policy and Risk Register was on going.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- i. Councillor R. Goodchild be appointed as the second Parish Councillor auditor and the audit be carried out as soon as possible.
- ii. There will be no changes to the salaries paid to the Cleaner, Litter Picker and Clerk.
- iii. The measures taken to comply with the Timetable of Controls for October 2017 be approved.
- iv. The report on the Risk Management Policy and Risk Register be noted.

**292. Budget for 2018-19 and 2019-20.**

The second draft of the budget for 2018-19 and 2019-20 was presented for the Parish Council's consideration. The Clerk reported that the second draft had been considered by the Finance Committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017.

The Finance Committee agreed that the Miscellaneous budget heading be not deleted and should be put back into the budget with an allocation of £1,000 and the budget be then sent to the Parish Council meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 with this amendment. As a result the budget for 2018-19 and 2019-20 had been recalculated and it was anticipated that there would be budget surpluses of £24,689.60 at the end of the 2018-19 financial year and £23,197.11 at the end of the 2019-20 financial year.

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

**293. Parks and Grounds**

**a. Water Park**

The Clerk reported that he had sent an invoice for the first month's rent of £100 to the fishing club. There were no other matters to report.

**b. Playground and Playing Field**

**i. Health and Safety**

The Clerk reported that the health and safety inspection was carried out on a weekly basis. The Parish Council asked the Clerk to send the report to the Parish Council.

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**ii. RoSPA Inspection**

The Clerk reported that the former Chairman had contacted a playground repair company to carry out the minor repairs as recommended by the RosPA inspection report but he had not received a response. Councillor Mrs. Greenwell agreed to take responsibility for contacting the company again and to ensure that the repairs were carried out.

**iii. Football Pitch and Goalposts**

There were no issues to report.

**iv. Maintenance Issues**

There were no issues to report.

**c. The Front**

The Clerk reported in the absence of Councillor Mrs. Beadle that the Friends of The Front were working on a project to reduce the height of the trees to restore the view over the river and that this would require a Stage 2 grant aid. The permission of Darlington Borough Council was required for a grant aid application to be made because it was in a conservation area. The request for permission had been sent to Darlington Borough Council.

A response was received from Darlington Borough Council that planning permission would be required for work on the trees and the application for grant aid would be considered by its Senior Arboriculturalist.

**d. Possible Project – Small area of land to the rear of the bus shelter near the Station Bridge**

The Clerk reported that the village Northumbria in Bloom Group had asked if they could tidying up and install planters and paving stones on the small area of land to the rear of the bus shelter and St. George’s Academy fence opposite Dinsdale Station.

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by the Estates Department at Darlington Borough Council that the land was owned by the Borough Council and he would write to the Borough Council for permission for the Group to tidy up and care for the area. It was pointed out that the land may be owned by St. George’s Academy and used as a fire escape.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. Councillor Mrs. Greenwell to take responsibility for contacting the company again and to ensure that the repairs were carried out.
- b. To allocate £300 towards tidying up the area behind the bus shelter opposite Dinsdale Station bridge but that permission be sought from the Borough Council to carry out this work.
- c. The report be noted.

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**294. The Whinnies Nature Reserve.**

The Clerk reported that Durham Wildlife Trust had taken on the management of The Whinnies under a licence from Darlington Borough Council. The agreement was in the form of an annual licence which rolls over from year to year. Durham Wildlife Trust would be responsible for management of the site, with Darlington Borough Council responsible for emptying bins and clearing away fly tipping.

The Trust were keen to involve local people in management of the site where possible and the Trust had made contact with people who have expressed an interest in organising a 'Friends Of' type group and to involve the Parish Council in any future meetings on that subject and they asked for a contact person.

The Clerk reported that Councillor Mrs. Beadle had offered to be the contact person for the Parish Council.

The Clerk also reported that a meeting will be held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 at 6.30 p.m. in the Parish Council Meeting Room with Network Rail and the Borough Council's Rights of Way Officer to discuss a proposal for the closure of the public footpath into the eastern end of The Whinnies, where its access is over steep steps on the railway embankment and a level crossing and replacing it with a public footpath from the western end.

The Parish Council **agreed** that Councillor Mrs. Beadle be the Parish Council's contact person for The Whinnies Nature Reserve and the report on the meeting with Network Rail be noted.

**295. Community Liaison**

Councillor Mrs. Gilson reported that a meeting of the Community Liaison Committee had been held on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 which had considered the following matters.

**a. Terms of Reference.**

Councillor Mrs. Gilson clarified that this did not relate to the voting rights of co-opted members, but those who were not on the Parish Council. This would be looked at at the Standards Committee meeting on 23rd October.

**b. Honorary Freemanship**

The Committee had considered and had agreed that the Honorary Freeman award which had been awarded by the former Low Dinsdale Parish Council to Frank Richardson be transferred to Middleton St. George Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that all local councils (Town and Parish Councils) may exercise their powers to confer honorary freeman or honorary freewoman to persons of distinction and those who, in the council's opinion, have rendered eminent services to the council's area (section 249(5) and (6) of the 1972 Act). The admission of an honorary freeman or honorary freewoman must be by resolution made at a meeting of the full council specially convened for such purpose and passed by no than less than two-thirds of the members of the council (Section 249(8) of the 1972 Act). That section also requires "notice of the object of the meeting" to be given.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that the specially convened meeting be held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 before the meeting of the Parish Council commences on that evening.

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**c. Christmas Tree**

The Clerk reported that he had written to Middleton St. George Community Centre concerning the use of the Parish Council’s lights on the Christmas Tree in the grounds of the Community Centre and to ask that the mains unit be checked to ensure that it met health and safety standards.

Mr. Sinski reported that the Community Centre that he will ensure that the health and safety concerns are addressed and will report back to the Parish Council on these matters.

The Parish Council were anxious to make a contribution towards the Christmas Fayre when the Christmas Tree will be switched on and suggested that small cakes and mince pies be provided by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. The Community Centre will report back when the health and safety concerns about the mains unit to the Christmas Tree have been addressed.
- b. A financial contribution be made towards providing small cakes and mice pies for the Christmas Fayre.

**d. Website and Facebook Page**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that the website had 12,338 views between 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2017. The Facebook page which was set up in November 2016 had 177 likes since it was created on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2017 an increase of 14 since September 2017.

**e. Newsletter**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that the Community Liaison Committee had considered the introduction of a Parish Council newsletter which would be delivered to every household. There was a need for further consideration to be given to funding, the people to produce the newsletter, distribution and the number of editions.

It was pointed out that a large number of residents had the internet and there may be marginal gains by having a newsletter compared with the work and cost of producing it.

The Parish Council **agreed** that no action be taken on the newsletter for the time being.

**f. Annual Parish Meeting 2018**

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that the Parish Council did not hold an Annual Parish Meeting in 2017. The Annual Parish Meeting was a social meeting for residents to ask the Parish Council questions.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Annual Parish Meeting be considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017.

**296. Standards.**

Councillor Crowther reported that the Health and Safety Procedures were acceptable but that further amendments were needed to the Employee Welfare Procedures.

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

### **297. Proposal for introducing a Public Participation Session into Parish Council Meetings**

The Clerk circulated a report before the Parish Council meeting proposing that a public participation session be introduced to the agenda of Parish Council meetings.

Guidance from the National Association of Local Councils was that it is good practice for councils to set aside time (e.g. 15 or 20 minutes) at meetings for the public to make statements and ask questions. It was advisable for councils to permit public participation at full council (and meetings of committees) that are likely to be of most interest to the public e.g. a planning committee. Councils were recommended to adopt Standing Orders to structure public participation sessions.

The National Association gave guidance where a council permits the public to participate at a meeting this session:

- is included as an item in the agenda;
- forms part of the council meeting in law;
- is managed by the Chairman of the meeting;
- is documented in the minutes of the meeting;
- may permit a councillor to speak on a matter in which he has an interest that is not a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) which he is otherwise not permitted to speak about at the meeting.

Evidence from other Parish Councils in Darlington was that public participation sessions varied between having a public participation session on the agenda, an arrangement for the public to speak if they wish to make a point to and giving two days' notice to speak at a meeting.

If the Parish Council agreed to have a public participation session on the agenda of Parish Council meetings it would have to consider where the session should be placed on the agenda, the duration and public participation rules.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that a Public Participation Session at the beginning of Parish Council meetings and the public participation rules be drawn up a put on laminated paper to be placed where the public sit at Parish Council meetings.

### **298. General Data Protection Regulations.**

The Clerk circulated a report before the Parish Council meeting giving details of the General Data Protection Regulations which will come into effect on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 and will affect the Parish Council.

A training course on the Regulations had been organised by County Durham Association of Parish Councils which would be held on the afternoon or evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2017 at Spennymoor Town Hall and he asked for the delegates who should attend the training course.

The Parish Council **agreed** that Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan and the Clerk be the Parish Council's delegates to the training course on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2017

### **299. Website Training by Inspirar.**

The Clerk reported that Inspirar, the website hosts, had offered to carry out training for Parish Councillors on  
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the website at the Parish Council offices and the charge would be £250 + VAT. The Clerk asked for suitable dates when the training course can be held.

The Parish Council agreed that the training course be held on either Monday or Wednesday evenings.

**300. Date of next meeting.**

The Parish Council **agreed** that the next meeting of the Parish Council be held on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 at 6.30 p.m. in the Parish Council Meeting Room.**

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