

SACRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings at the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Fulforth Centre on Wednesday 4 April 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors B. Mulvey, H. Dixon, Ms. E. Waldock, R. Harrison, G. Ludlow, F. Morrell, K. Wilson, P. McLoughlin, D. Robson, S. Wilson. L. Claughan, Ms. G. Holmes

190. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Mrs B. Smith, Mrs K. Carter

191. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 7 MARCH 2018

RESOLVED. That the minutes of the proceedings at the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 7 March 2018, be confirmed as a correct record.

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

Councillor Morrell commented that this was the first meeting that this Parish had held, other than apologies, without the presence of both County Councillors and felt that although Councillor Liddle had resigned from the Parish Council she should still provide a written report which can be discussed at the relevant Parish meeting.

ACTION: *Temporary Clerk to contact Councillor Liddle informing her of the Parish decision for her to provide a written report for discussion at future Parish meetings.*

In relation to minute 133 re cars parking on grass verges at Findon Hill, Fyndounne and Dunelm areas of the village Councillor S. Wilson informed the meeting that this was not an area designated to be overseen by the Wardens however, if problems still occur there is a designated line which can be contacted enabling action to be taken from a central source rather than on an individual. It was agreed that the problem still exists and will be monitored.

In relation to minute 174 re: Gap Site Project. Gemma O'Brien had re-submitted the Groundwork invoice for £6,251:04 to Stephen Reed at DCC.

ACTION: *The Parish have now received £5,302:08 (ex VAT) for the Gap Site Project from DCC. The Temporary Clerk to send a cheque to Groundworks for completion of S106 money and to ask when the seating area for the Gap site is to be completed.*

In relation to minute 178 re: Growing Sacriston Together – In Bloom. Councillor Robson stated that a meeting had taken place with representatives of the Parish and Graham Cozens from DCC. He was aware that we had not entered the “In Bloom” competition this year however he did not realise that we were not involved in the promotion of the village which he thought, was being led by Councillor Liddle. We have a 5 year contract with DCC which was set up in 2015 and still has 2 years to run.

There was an extra provision for hanging baskets to lampposts which started last year, however, that element is not part of the original 5yr plan. If this is to go ahead this year we need to purchase the correct lamppost brackets. We would also require a valid lamppost inspection certificate for the posts that we wish to install on. Graham Cozens believed that the simplest answer and cost efficient one, would be to use the same brackets as last year. The Parish felt we needed more information with regards to lamppost stress factors before a decision could be reached.

Councillor McLoughlin raised concerns with regards to the car wash area in the village. This had been a problematic area for some time and, had been raised by judges during the Northumbria In Bloom competition. He was concerned with regards to the “run off” of water and, the number of potholes within the area which could have a detrimental effect on the drainage system due to sediment and chemicals being discharged. It was felt that we should be aware of how much water is being used by the car wash company and, that answers need to be sought from Northumbrian Water with regards to this.

Councillor Mulvey also raised concerns about the amount of standing water behind the pet shop and wondered if there was any blockage to the drains in this area.

ACTION: *With regards to the Lampost issue, Councillor Robson to contact Graham Cozens at DCC and arrange a further meeting with Councillors.*

ACTION: *With regards to the two water issues, Councillor S. Wilson to contact Northumbria Water and DCC and provide answers at the next meeting.*

In relation to minute 179 re: Easter Eggstravaganza. Councillor Robson reported that the event had been a resounding success. The event was organised for the Good Friday to link in with the organised procession from the Methodist Church to the Cenotaph where a service was performed by the Salvation Army. There was a good turn out by the general public to support the event and entertainment was provided by John Lee O'Brien's shows. The Fulforth Centre in conjunction with the Development Group and the Parish then buried the time capsule in the remembrance garden for future posterity.

In relation to minute 180 re: allotment event at Shotton Hall.

RESOLVED: *Temporary Clerk submitted names to Steve Ragg and places on course booked.*

In relation to "npower" account.

RESOLVED: *Temporary Clerk contacted Oliver Marshall at npower and has significantly reduced the Parish electricity account.*

In relation to minute 187 re: Catherine Jones.

RESOLVED: *Temporary Clerk sent a letter of congratulation to Catherine on her success in becoming the Ladies European eight ball pool singles champion.*

In relation to lack of attendance at Parish Council meetings by certain Councillors.

RESOLVED: *Temporary Clerk had sent letters to Councillors reminding them of their responsibilities.*

192. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS.

There were no planning applications to consider.

193. POLICE MATTERS.

There were no Police matters raised.

194. ISSUES / QUESTIONS – GENERAL PUBLIC

There were no issues / questions raised from the general public

195. GROWING SACRISTON TOGETHER / IN BLOOM

Already raised and discussed in matters arising.

196. EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA – FULFORTH CENTRE

Already raised and discussed in matters arising.

197. MAZARS.

The Temporary Clerk explained the new procedures which have come into effect with regards to the Annual Auditing procedures of which Mazars are the auditing company.

All councils are required to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

AGAR Part 3 is to be completed by all smaller authorities where either the higher or gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.6 million.

Sacriston Parish Council falls within this remit and therefore we will complete AGAR Part 3.

The form comprises of:-

- (i) The Annual Internal Audit Report;
- (ii) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement;
- (iii) Section 2 – Accounting Statements;
- (iv) Section 3 – External Auditor Report & Certificate.

We must ensure that all AGAR returns are shown on our council website and, in conspicuous places around our parish to inform this to the electorate.

The three main assertions that Mazars are looking at this year is that we, as a council, are compliant with:-

- (a) Financial management – bank statement at 31 March 2018;
- (b) Risk management – evidence of risk management in 2017 / 2018;
- (c) Financial planning – budget setting report for 2018 / 2019;

Some areas of concern were raised with regards to previous internal / external audits and procedures and what impact this has or could have had on the council and, it was felt necessary for these concerns to be raised at DCC level.

ACTIONS: *The Temporary Clerk in conjunction with the Human & Financial Resource Panel to ensure the above areas are met and achieved.*

Councillor S. Wilson to ensure DCC are aware of our concerns regarding previous internal / external audit procedures and to arrange a meeting with Steve Ragg for members of the Human & Financial Resources to attend.

198. BUDGET REQUIREMENTS - 2017 / 2018 & 2018 / 2019

It was agreed by all that this area would be monitored and evaluated by the Human & Financial Resource Panel and a report given at the next Parish Council meeting in May.

ACTION: *Report to be given by the Temporary Clerk at the Parish Council meeting in May 2018.*

199. CORRESPONDENCE.

Information received from the office of the Durham Police & Crime Commissioner who are looking for volunteers who may be interested in becoming an Independent Custody Visitor. Custody visitors make unannounced visits to police stations in Durham and Darlington in order to speak with people detained in custody, inspect cells and ensure they are being fairly treated.

Litter heroes urged to take part in this years big Spring Clean.

Sponsorship opportunities available for environment awards.

200. DEVELOPMENT GROUP.

Majority of meeting was to discuss the Easter Eggstravaganza event. A representative from St. Cuthbert's Hospice was present to discuss the Sunflower project which she hoped would not only bring colour to the village but would ensure the general public became involved in a worthy project.

On the day there would be an easter egg hunt for the children, an easter bonnet competition and, a painted egg competition.

Volunteers would be on hand throughout the event to ensure it went smoothly.

The burying of the time capsule would be in conjunction with the Fulforth Centre, Parish Council and Development group.

There is still no news with regards to the siting of the miner at the crossroads, Councillor S. Wilson to liaise with Steve France at DCC to seek answers.

ACTION: ***Councillor S. Wilson to liaise with Steve France with regards to the siting of the miner.***

201. FULFORTH CENTRE.

Andrea Meek has now taken over the role of the development worker and will do this role in conjunction with her running the Jubilee Tea Rooms.

There is concern with regards to finance as the Centre is running at a loss each month, this is due to the number of programmes / courses leaving the centre.

Andrea is to be given the task of looking at other funding streams to enable the centre to go forward. The question was raised if we as a parish council, contributed to the room hire for meetings.

It was also mentioned that the clock is not illuminated and has been like this for some time

ACTION: ***Temporary Clerk to liaise with Linda Surtees to ascertain what we donate towards room hire for meetings.***

Councillor S. Wilson to provide Temporary Clerk with contact point for village clock repairs.

202. ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS.

New Hill Allotments. - Rat poison has now been bought from Paxtons for all allotment areas.

Cross Lanes Allotments -

Balance in the bank: £3307.49

Looking for two or three new additional members for the committee to broaden the gender balance

A new padlock has been bought for the large gate.

There are 11 on the waiting list. After the Rents have been collected in May the allotments will be allocated in list order.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 25th April in the Lounge of the Sacriston Working Men's Club at 7:00pm. Notices will be posted 3 weeks in advance of the meeting

Rent collection dates Wednesday 10th and Wednesday 24th at 6:00pm to 7:00 pm in the Lounge of the Sacriston Working Men's Club – If no rent has been paid by 31st May there will be a presumption that the tenant has withdrawn their membership of the association.

Daisy Hill Allotments - There have been instances of inappropriate behaviour by members at Daisy Hill – these are currently under investigation. Taps will be installed in gardens.

There are no plans to keep anything in the container other than items belonging to the Association ie a gas burner and the stores of rat poison.

203. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT.

Grass Verges – As previously stated in matters arising, the wardens do not have the powers to take action, their main task is to specialise in untidy gardens. Any other issues must be reported centrally for someone to pick up.

Fyndoune School – There are grave concerns that pupils from the school will have to relocate to Deerness to achieve their academic qualifications. All academic courses will be going to Deerness whilst other courses will be taught at Fyndoune.

Councillor S. Wilson has had no notification that Fyndoune is to close however, all felt there was a lack of communication to parents of children who attend Fyndoune. Many felt that there was a lack of continuity in the teaching practices at Fyndoune and pupils often had different teachers within their main subjects. We are aware that there are two new buildings to be built at Deerness at a cost of £500K whilst Sacriston get nothing. Councillor S. Wilson stated that money had been earmarked for that site however, he would seek further clarification. Councillor McLoughlin informed the meeting that DCBC were mentioned in the Echo paper on the 21 March 2018 with regards to a report seven years ago that stated that a new two storey education block was to be built at Deerness and surely the most important thing is to ensure students are happy in the environment they learn in.

Graham Court – There appeared to be conflicting interests surrounding this site. Karbon Homes have looked at the condition of Graham Court and this had been discussed at their board level however, this has not yet gone to Planning section.

If this project is passed, the intention is to demolish Graham Court and build 2 & 3 bedroom houses and bungalows on the site which could possibly incur bedroom tax on new residents.

Current occupants of Graham Court will have to be re-housed / re-located to other areas and will be subsidised via a relocation grant of up to £6,100.

Many felt that Karbon Homes were dictating what was happening and, if Graham Court is in disrepair, why is it just coming to light now. Councillor S. Wilson stated there is no time limit on this application.

The meeting felt that this was a lot of information to digest from the County Councillors report, and felt it would be beneficial for the report to be submitted prior to the meeting to allow the temporary clerk to forward this information on to Councillors prior to the meeting taking place. This would also include Councillor H. Liddle who is our other County Councillor.

ACTION: *County Councillors to submit their monthly report to the Temporary Clerk to enable this information to be forwarded on to Councillors prior to our monthly Parish Council meeting.*

204. HUMAN & FINANCIAL RESOURCES PANEL / QUALITY STATUS GROUP.

Councillor McLoughlin in conjunction with HR section at County Hall has produced a job description and person specification for a Parish Clerk.

It is intended that the hours will be reduced from 16 to 12 hours per week with a salary increase between £12 and £12:50 per hour, this wage fits with the salary band for a council of our size.

The overall responsibility of management of the clerk remains the same.

Councillor McLoughlin then went through the paperwork identifying areas which he has included to the benefit of our council. It was questioned whether the new clerk would be entitled to an enhanced rate of pay if he/she worked bank holidays or weekend periods.

Councillor McLoughlin to contact HR section at County Hall to clarify this, once this has been confirmed the final decision for the advert will be made by the Human & Financial Resource Panel.

ACTION: *Councillor McLoughlin to contact HR section at County Hall to clarify rates of pay for the new clerk.*

205. OTHER REPORTS.

There were no other reports.

206. PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

There were two applications received, these being:-

- (i) Two storey extension at Iveson Terrace;
- (ii) Single storey extension at 10 Valley View

207. ACCOUNTS & GRANT APPLICATIONS

	(a) Payments	
	Resolved: That the following payments be agreed:	
	(1)	That the sum of £625:55 be paid to Paxtons (Purchase of Rat Poison)
	(2)	That the sum of £6,251:04 be paid to Groundworks North East & Cumbria (S106 money Gap site project)
	(3)	That the sum of £817:94 be paid to DCC (Hire & maintenance of planters)
	(b) Receipts:	
		Resolved: That the following receipts be noted.
	(1)	Nil receipts received
	Date of Next Meeting: 2 May 2018 to commence at 6:30pm The meeting terminated at 8:15pm Signed: _____ (Chairman) Date: _____	