

West Auckland Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held Monday, 11th January 2021 at 7.00 pm,
Parish Community Room, Monteith Close, West Auckland

Present via Zoom: Cllr G Smith, Chairman
Cllr K Bolton
Cllr J Curl
Cllr E Farrer
Cllr C Mairs
Cllr A Palfreyman
Cllr J Pattison
Cllr L Rielly
Cllr M Roberts
Cllr W Robinson
Cllr N Simpson
Cllr C Smith

21.01 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Parish Councillors were present.

21.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no agenda items expressions of interest received.

21.03 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed accordingly.

21.04 INVITE ANY COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

It was reported that local resident Audrey, who regularly voluntarily collects litter around the village, is in hospital following a fall at home. The Parish Council send their best wishes and it was resolved that they will send flowers as soon as she is home.

A local resident attended to advise she is planning to introduce a Neighbourhood Watch scheme within the village centre. This suggestion was welcomed by all.

The Clerk advised that a concerned resident had complained over the weekend about cars for sale being parked near the APTEC site on Darlington Road. Cllr Rob Yorke has been asked to raise the concern with the relevant department or advise the Clerk on how to progress.

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21.05 TO RECEIVE CHAIRPERSON/COUNCILLORS REPORT

- A query was raised as to whether the cleaning of the bus shelters should continue in view of the pandemic and restrictions. It was resolved that this service should continue.
- It was advised that the West Auckland & St Helens (WASH) group planned railway route walk was cancelled due to Covid restrictions. This group is working to support progressing the Stockton to Darlington Railway initiative to create a walk/cycle route along the old railway line. Future meetings will be arranged with the restrictions are lifted.

21.06 CLERK'S TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE/ENDORISING OF INVOICE CHEQUES

Correspondence received was tabled and payments endorsed as follows:

	Receipt	Payment
Mazars - External Audit		£288.00
G Smith - supply and install media TV & cables		£936.00
npower - electric		£21.09
BT - Monteith 4G internet		£36.00
Telephones and Broadband		£30.00
Clerk's Salary		£850.00
npower gas		£50.96

The December quarter ending bank reconciliation was reviewed and approved.

The Clerk advised that she had been approached by DCC requesting a further £5,000 in addition to the £15,000 already pledged, to improve the play area. The Parish Council requested further information on what equipment is being provided and the item will be considered fully at the next meeting.

The Parish Councillors attending the meeting with Barrie Alderson, DCC recall the following being discussed and recorded by Barrie Alderson:

- Install a Skinny Lizzie (similar to one at Escomb)
- Replace swings
- Spinning top inner to be replaced.
- Replace 5-a-side goals posts
- Additional equipment for older youths outside the toddler play area

21.07 RECEIVE ENVIRONMENT/PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE

i. To receive an update on Street Games youth initiative

Cllr Rielly advised that she has sent an email to Parish Councillors to explain the Street Games initiative. A Street Games funding application is going to the Gaunless Gateway and Cllr Rielly proposed that the Parish Council consider supporting the initiative. Any equipment bought would be for use in West Auckland only and a potato oven and mobile football nets and balls are being considered. A green paved outdoor space would be required to facilitate some of the games. The intention is to meet the kids on the street and encourage engagement with them from there. This is a partnership project including

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support from The Vineyard, a semi-professional footballer is involved, local AAPs, YMCA and the Gaunless Gateway. Funding support for this will be considered at the next meeting.

ii. To update on East Green car park anti-social behaviour

A list of 17 issues and actions were discussed with all Parish Councillors given the opportunity to comment on the current anti-social behaviour.

There have been investigations into additional street lighting on the car park. One resident reports receiving a letter from Jeff Stephenson stating that street lighting is being upgraded. Cllr Smith advised that following discussion with DCC it is unlikely that they will agree to additional car park lighting and any street lighting upgrade will be to reduce light pollution and save energy by using more efficient lights.

The Parish Councillors agreed with the majority of concerns listed and recognise that something needs to be done to improve the anti-social behaviour around the village. It was advised that quad bikes have been reported on a number of occasions. It was suggested that more PCSOs are required to police the village ‘hot spots’. It was emphasised that the only way to stop this behaviour is to report all incidents to the police.

It was suggested that the majority of these items are police or DCC matters with the Parish Council having limited powers and no authority on criminal matters. The Parish Council however, do empathise with the residents’ concerns and are willing to support where they can.

Derogatory comments about the village within emails and on Facebook were not well received as the Parish Council believe that the problems are created by a minority and need to be addressed but that is not a complete reflection of the whole area.

iii. To receive update on litter bins opposite the Manor House and near the Pizza shop

The Clerk advised that case FS-Case-285795623 was raised with DCC on 19th December 2020 as follow up to previous request made in the summer 2020. The call has since been closed with DCC advising that their system is not the way to request bins and the Clerk will ring DCC to follow up via their approved route.

iv. To receive update on the poor state of the closed Queen’s Head public house

It was reported that action is being taken about the poor state of the Queen’s Head. Susan Robinson. Regeneration Department, DCC is pursuing the builders to commence renovation at the earliest possible time. It was confirmed that current planning permission for the property is in place.

v. To consider options for a remembrance wall at the Cemetery

Photographs of a cemetery in Ferryhill were previously circulated for ideas for a remembrance wall. Following discussion, it was resolved to re-engage with Tony Johnson, DCC and discuss the various options including having a remembrance wall, a cremation garden or plaque only system introduced near the entrance to the cemetery.

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vi. To receive an update on the Stockton & Darlington Railway initiative

A brief update was provided on progress and potential funding available for the SDR initiative. This initiative will be in operation for a number of years with completion expected 2025.

21.08 TO RECEIVE FINANCE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

i. To receive update on PTZ camera for West Auckland

The possibilities and options for a CCTV camera were provided by Cllr Smith who advised that the purchasing of CCTV is in the final stage with a suitable camera identified and funding secured. Approval of a suitable site for the camera is being sought from DCC prior to the camera being installed.

ii. To consider refurbishing the Pant name plaque

It was resolved that the Pant plaque can be cleaned by Décor Signs and Cllr Farrer will follow up on this.

21.09 TO CONSIDER LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES

There are no plans in West Auckland for consideration.

21.10 To receive any items for Monday, 8th February 2021 meeting

- To receive update on CCTV installation
- To consider approval of additional £5,000 towards New Street play area
- To consider supporting the Gaunless Gateway application for Street Games 4K funding
- To investigate possibilities for recruiting a litter picker/handyman
- To receive update on options for cemetery remembrance wall/cremation garden
- To consider location for the 4th defibrillator
- To receive update on Leaflet 1
- To consider a Green village policy
- To consider kissing gates/barriers at strategic locations to prevent quad bike access

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