

URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Remote Meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 16 February 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom.

Councillor W Barrett (Chair)

Present:

Councillor W Barrett (Chair), B Anderson, A Batey, I Stewart-Fergusson, I Mullaney, and W Scott

217. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor W Trimble and County Councillor C Carr.

218. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

219. REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair welcomed a resident of Beamish Village to the meeting who was in attendance to put forward their concerns and hopes that the Parish Council may be able to assist with achieving a solution to the increased noise pollution from the A693, which was affecting residents on Station Road. In addition, the resident voiced their concerns regarding the state of the grass verges due to visitors attending Eden Place and noted their frustration at the inability to get a response from DCC regarding the issue.

Councillor Batey noted that Councillor Wood had been responsible for acquiring the cones which had provided some relief to residents who were finding cars parked outside their properties and in some cases blocking access, however it was acknowledged that this had not entirely resolved the issue. She noted that the issue of the ownership and maintenance of Eden Place was a much larger problem and something which the parish council and County Councillors were keen to resolve with the interested parties.

Councillor Wood further noted that he had made some initial enquiries regarding additional planting of trees or shrubs at Station Road to minimize traffic noise, however this would be too challenging given the space available. Councillor Stewart-Fergusson advised that he had knowledge of a similar issue in another area which had been resolved by installing willow screening, the impact of which being instantaneous and requiring little space to install. He was however unaware of the costs associated but would look to obtain some further information.

The Clerk advised that she would maintain contact with the resident and provide updates where possible. She further advised that she would be happy to provide the resident with the details on how to start a petition with DCC if this was considered to be an appropriate course of action.

220. UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT AT MOSS CLOSE FARM

The Clerk advised that a representative from Miller Homes was not in attendance this evening however Councillor Wood was able to provide an update in light of some further complaints which had been received regarding incidents with wagons and mud on the road. Both of which had been reported and assurances had been given by the site manager that this would be remedied.

There had also been an issue with vermin following groundworks on site and 50 properties had been sent a letter with advice.

221. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

222. POLICE & NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS REPORT

There were no issues to raise under this item however it noted that police would continue to monitor the situation at Eden Place following complaints of large numbers of vehicles parking on the grass verges.

223. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

County Councillor D Wood provided an update on County Council matters and those relating to the parish area including:

- COVID-19 – Number of infections starting to reduce; however, numbers were still high in some parts of the county and this was being monitored closely.
- Grant schemes for Hackney and Private Hire Drivers to be offered by DCC.
- County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service consultation on their Community Risk Management Plan ongoing. This would be circulated.
- Free School Meals scheme paused during half term
- Potholes – following the period of inclement weather DCC would be working to repair any potholes

Councillor Batey reminded Members that should salt bins be empty this can easily be reported via 'Do It Online' as could a request for a new salt bin location. She further added that despite the poor weather, bin collections had remained largely unchanged which was a testament to the crew's operating those collections.

In addition, following a plea for food bank donations, she was pleased to report that stocks were much improved, and it was now planned to launch an appeal for Easter eggs.

It was further noted that the government had announced that local elections would proceed on May 6th, however given the current circumstances postal votes would be encouraged where possible.

224. MONTHLY ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED: that the following amounts be approved for payment.

Clerk (Wages and Expenses) 762.21

HMRC PAYE 8	175.00
Litter picker (Wages)	322.12
Litter picker (Wages)	139.60
HMRC PAYE 8	34.80

225. CLERKS REPORT

i) Advertisement and Appointment of x 2 Litterpicker / Shrub bed maintenance operative

The Clerk reported that there were now two Litter picker / Shrub bed maintenance operative positions vacant and arrangements would be made to advertise these posts with a view to filling as soon as practicable.

The council asked that their best wishes be passed on to both Mr Blackburn and Mr McMath for all their hard work and dedication during their employment.

ii) 2021 Parish Elections

The Clerk advised that following the announcement that local elections would proceed as planned on 6 May 2021, nomination forms would be available in due course.

226. ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk advised that further to issues regarding the pest control contract reported at the previous meeting, she was pleased to advise that this had now been resolved with the help of Councillor Wood. DCC had offered to undertake an additional visit at the start of the contract at no additional charge. The contract renewal for 2021/22 had therefore now been signed.

The Clerk further advised that a request had been made from a tenant of High Handenhold allotments to keep bees on his plot. It was agreed that further information would be required from the Beekeeping Association before a determination could be made in line with the Beekeeping Policy agreed by the council. In addition a request from an existing beekeeper at West Pelton had been received to increase the number of hives on his plot, however the Clerk advised that before a decision could be made, she would need to seek the views of the Beekeeping Association and would endeavor to have this site reviewed at the same time as the plot at High Handenhold and when lockdown restrictions permitted.

227. URPETH GRANGE

The following issues were reported for information and/or action:-

- Urpeth Grange Play Area – E-Petition had been now closed with close to 300 signatures. It was agreed that once the response had been received a meeting should be held with residents to provide an update on the current situation and discuss next steps.
- Dog fouling continued to be an issue around the estate

228. PELTON LANE ENDS

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson advised that he endorsed previous comments made relating to the wheel washing of vehicles accessing and exiting the Miller Homes site and whilst he acknowledged that it was being carried out, at times this was not efficient.

Councillor Wood noted that it was disappointing that Miller Homes were not in attendance this evening, however he would continue to invite them to attend a week prior to the meeting going forward as did the Clerk.

229. WEST PELTON

Councillor Anderson noted that dog fouling continued to be an issue in the area and this had been exacerbated by the bad weather. Litter also continued to be an issue and he was now reporting this directly to DCC for action in the absence of a operative in this area.

230. BEAMISH

Councillor Scott raised the following issues for information / action:

- Ongoing issues regarding the car park at Eden Place being locked, however DCC were currently emptying bins which went some way to reducing thrown litter. The cones which had been placed along the road had served a purpose, however many had been purposely damaged. In addition, the NHS signs had now been removed as intended. Unfortunately, he reported that the cones moved the problems elsewhere in the village and he felt the only solution was for DCC to take back ownership of the car park and extend it to provide additional parking.
- Double yellow lines still awaited at Ill Canello
- Hedge cutting still to be undertaken by DCC – causing visibility issues on the highway.

231. HIGH HANDENHOLD

Councillor Mullaney advised that she had no new items to raise.

In relation to the previous discussions regarding the knee-height fencing opposite Baytree Terrace, it was reported that due to some unexpected underground services identified when a ground survey had been completed the DCC team were investigating further and an update would be provided in due course.

232. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no further items of business to consider.