

URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 25 July 2023 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

G Holmes (Chair)

Present:

Councillors B Barrett, A Batey, G Holmes, B Scott, I Stewart-Fergusson and D Wood

35. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Johnson and County Councillor P Pringle.

36. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

37. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38. Public Questions / Representation

The Chair welcomed Mr Stuart to the meeting who was in attendance to outline his concerns regarding an allotment building facing his property. It was noted that there had been a recent inspection by the Allotment Committee who had agreed that whilst the overall appearance of the building was poor, the structure was sound and they felt that no further action was required at this stage, however it would be kept under review.

Discussion ensued regarding the condition of the building, proximity to the fence and work undertaken on other gardens to increase the fence height. In order to try and progress the matter the Chair suggested that the tenant be contacted to determine whether the building was being used and further consideration would be given once a clearer picture on its use was made available.

39. Policing & PACT reports

There had been no updates received from the Police or Neighbourhood Wardens.

Councillor Batey commented that she was concerned that there appeared to be more liaison with elected members in other areas covered by the AAP area and she was disappointed with the lack of communication with County Councillors and parish councils alike. She made reference to an incident at West Pelton and noted that she had not been notified in her capacity of local County Councillor by the Police.

A further reminder was given that members of the public should report any non-emergency issues via 101.

40. County Councillor Report

County Councillors D Wood and A Batey provide the following updates relating to Durham County Council:

- Leisure centre consultation to be determined by Cabinet. Petition to call to invest in the Leisure Centre in conjunction with other CLS Councillors. A link to sign the e-petition would be. The Parish Council also agreed to promote the link on the parish website.
- No highway improvement update report to provide at this meeting following some delays at the AAP end of the process.
- Consultation to be undertaken on the Council Houses Strategy
- Decision to increase council tax on empty homes – exemption reduced to 1 year, 10 years 300% charge and additional homes would be increased by 100% - from April 2024.
- Market activity week – 7 – 11 August, Details to be published on the website.
- BMX – Work to commence around 28 August, expect to take around 4 weeks – closest houses were being notified.
- Cabinet to make decision on future DCC HQ.
- Composite list of summer activities – to be provided on our website.
- Free swims for under 18s during summer holidays. (Upload to website)
- 2 dates given to start the fencing work at Baytree Terrace but unfortunately team had been let down short notice by contractors.

41. Correspondence and Clerks Report

The Clerk provided the following updates:

- (i) Ouston Community Association new Chair appointed, Mr Paul McFarthing. In addition, a request for funding had been received for community events, however further details were to follow. It was agreed that the decision should be delegated to the Chair should the full request be made over the August recess.
- (ii) Credit outstanding on Wave Water bill – the Clerk advised that she was still attempting to seek resolution over the credit on the council's account and would provide an update as soon as possible.

42. Development of Communication Strategy

Resolved: That the Communications Working Group will hold its first meeting on Wednesday 16th August at, 6.00 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. The group would consist of the following Members:

Councillors B Barrett, A Batey, G Holmes, and D Wood.

An update on the work of the group would be reported to the next meeting in September 2023.

43. Neighbourhood Plan Update – following meeting held on 24 July 2023.

Councillor D Wood provided an update on discussion at the group noting that a copy of the minutes had been circulated for reference. He advised that the group were working to assess any identified areas of green belt and open space and further discussion on this topic would be undertaken at the next meeting, which was scheduled to be held on 13 September.

He further provided an update on funding noting that as funding was limited as much work would be done as possible before looking to engage a consultant.

Further discussion took place regarding the Neighbourhood area and it was noted that councillors in the Pelton Fell area were being consulted on proposals and would be invited to attend the next meeting of the group.

Resolved: That the update and date of the next meeting be noted.

44. Monthly Accounts

Resolved: That the following monthly payments be agreed for payment.

Clerk (Wages and Expenses)	967.34
HMRC PAYE 9	209.36
Litter picker (Wages)	400.16
HMRC PAYE 9	100.00
Litter picker (Wages)	500.16

45. Allotments

Councillor Scott noted that himself and Councillor Barrett undertook an excellent site inspection on the 24 June and asked that it be put on record that the Association do a wonderful job on the sites of managing day to day issues.

It was noted that a number of letters were being issued to tenants as a result of the visits and updates on any action including any vacated gardens would be provided to the next meeting.

Resolved: That the Allotment Committee update be noted.

46. Beamish

(i) DM/21/01633/FPA – Planning Appeal

The Clerk advised that a response had been sent to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of planning application DM/21/01633/FPA. Once a further update was available details would be provided to all Members.

(ii) Councillor B Scott reported on the following issues for update or action:

- Eden Place Car Park, fly tipping continues to be an issue and further enforces the need to have this area transferred over to DCC.
- A693 roundabout – advertising post still there that was knocked over.
- Roses planted for Coronation in poor condition – photographs to be forwarded to Clerk to seek compensation.
- Warning signs from works require removal.
- Thanks to John Conway who continues to do a fantastic job in maintaining the appearance of Beamish village.

The Clerk advised that the Beamish Museum Director would be in attendance at the next meeting and it would be useful if members could consider what questions they would like to put forward, particularly in relation to Eden Place car park, issues around parking on event days and options for supporting works to enhance environment.

47. Urpeth Grange

Councillors Barrett and Batey reported on the following issues for update or action:

- Walk to school routes – need doing before September term. Undergrowth meeting the trees. The poor weather has delayed much of the work for the Clean and Green team.
- Overgrown shrubs, branches and conifers also growing over on to public paths from private properties.
- Summer Flower beds are excellent and have been well received by the residents.
- Fibre optic being installed around the estate.

48. Pelton Lane Ends

No additional issues to raise, however Councillor Stewart-Fergusson would still like to pursue planting in the area and Councillor Wood suggested that the team could be asked to call out again to review once work at High Handenhold had been completed.

49. High Handenhold

It was noted that a start date was awaited for the fencing at Baytree Terrace and the Clerk advised members would be notified ahead of work starting on site.

In addition, an issue had occurred in the area relating to a blocked drain which had previously been reported in to DCC.

50. West Pelton

- Glamping pods access – concerns additional access created to house.
- Durham Miners Gala – Banner, rope saga borrowed. Bill will pursue replacement and we need a cover. Will UPC support. Agreed in principle.

51. Any other business

The Chair reminded all that a short bio should be provided to the Clerk in order to update the Councillors section of the parish website.

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