

## **URPETH PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 19 September 2023 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

### **G Holmes-Wood (Chair)**

#### **Present:**

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

#### **Also in attendance:**

K Graham, resident  
E Heslop, resident  
S Shotton, Beamish Museum  
J Wilson, Beamish Museum

#### **52. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor P Pringle

#### **53. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Wood declared an interest in Item 8 on the agenda – Neighbourhood Plan and a further update item relating to a request from Pelton Parish Council regarding a contribution towards a Christmas Tree at West Pelton. Councillor Wood as a Parish councillor on both parishes made it clear that any decisions taken at this meeting were in his capacity as a Urpeth Parish Councillor.

#### **54. Minutes of meeting held on 25 July 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **55. Public Questions / Representations**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Samantha Shotton, Chief Operating Officer and Julie Wilson, Public Relations, Beamish Museum who had agreed to attend to discuss some of the ongoing matters and areas of work that the Museum were undertaking to help improve some of the known issues being faced by residents of Beamish Village as a result of events being held.

S Shotton explained that she was aware there had been a few issues recently following a very busy day at the Museum and she was on behalf of the Museum very sorry for the negative experience. She advised that they were actively pursuing opportunities to alleviate the problems around parking and traffic and were keen to explore other options in an attempt to get to best result for both parties.

In addition to working with the car parking companies, making use of the space and maintaining an ongoing relationship with the police, evaluation of previous events

and feedback received would help inform future decisions. One of the key areas of focus was around communications and how this could be done more effectively.

Further discussion took place regarding the next large event at Christmas and their future events programme looking at ensuring events spaced appropriately and how wide comms / leaflets were spread across the community and timing.

Councillor Batey noted that in previous years events had clashed with Beamish Hall causing further disruption and this should also be considered going forward. She noted that the parish had now lost their link to the Board of the Museum following changes to their governance arrangements and felt that it was important to establish a good working relationship with the three County Councillors and parish council alike, who consequently could also assist with sharing communications. S Shotton, advised that she would be happy to attend meetings with the County Councillors and parish on a quarterly or half-yearly basis and this could be arranged via the Clerk.

Councillor Scott added that the village were supportive of museum and proud of it, however they had been disappointed and let down by issues which had occurred, the first of which being in 2017. He reiterated others concerns that a robust plan was required to avoid such reoccurrences and suggested that signs for no through traffic for anyone other than residents and emergency services should be imposed on these days.

Further suggestions were made around off-site car parking and park and ride services; however, it was explained by S Shotton that external car parks had been explored previously however had been found to have been prohibitive. In addition, staged entrance times were discussed.

Councillor Wood commented that he was disappointed that Rhiannon had not been able to attend the meeting as he wanted to discuss with her in more depth the issues around Eden Place car park.

The council further heard from residents of the village who highlighted their concerns noting that one occasion they had been unable to leave their property for 3.5 hours due to the traffic and that a ten-minute journey had taken them over 2 hours.

In addition, issues were raised regarding woodland maintenance and the impact that this was having upon one resident's property and garden. S Shotton was aware of the issue and agreed to follow this up with the appropriate team who were currently working with the Woodland Revival Trust.

Councillor Barret added that he totally agreed with the comments made, he felt it was disappointing that after six years the issue was still being discussed and suggested that the Museum could do more to acknowledge residents of Beamish Village, whether that be through free one day admission or a token gesture to enhance the environment through donated planting or something similar.

Councillor Batey further suggested that based on the number of vehicle movements per day on the A693, it may be useful for the museum to do some data analysis around where their traffic was coming from.

S Shotton thanked all for their time and suggestions which would be carefully considered. It was suggested that a further update be provided ahead of the Christmas event.

The Chair thanked them for their attendance.

## **56. County Councillors Report**

County Councillor Batey and Wood provided the following update on matters relating to the County and parish area:

- MTFP – consultation underway
- RAAC – one school affected in the area, however still a lot of contingency planning going on with some temporary arrangements now in place. Advised that further arrangements will not be shared until they have been signed off by DFE.
- Highways report – to go to AAP meeting, hoping this will be at the October meeting.
- BMX track currently being installed at Urpeth Grange.

## **57. Communications Working Group**

### **Resolved:**

- i) That the Terms of Reference and Scope of the Working Group be agreed
- ii) That the Notes of Working Group held on 16 August be noted.
- iii) That Draft newsletter be finalised to incorporate discussed changes and circulated to the group for final sign off.

## **58. Neighbourhood Plan Update following meeting held 13 September 2023**

The Clerk circulated a copy of correspondence received regarding the proposed incorporation of Pelton Fell to the Neighbourhood Area which had followed discussion with the Spatial Planning Policy Officer at a recent meeting of the Joint Working Group.

It was explained that it had become apparent that the plan may impact upon parts of Pelton Fell, particularly around the Cong Burn and Twizell Burn areas which may also benefit from protection. Therefore, it was explained that by extending the area to include Pelton Fell it would provide a more complete coverage of rural communities between Stanley and Chester-le-Street and present a clear and positive plan for development over the next fifteen years.

**Resolved:** That the Neighbourhood Area be extended to incorporate Pelton Fell taking into account the reasons as outlined in the update report provided.

A six-week consultation on the revised Neighbourhood Plan area would likely commence in October 2023. A further update would be provided to the next meeting.

## **59. Monthly Accounts**

**Resolved:** That the following monthly payments be agreed for payment (months August and September).

Clerk (Wages and Expenses) 967.73  
HMRC PAYE 5 209.20  
Litter picker (Wages) 447.16  
HMRC PAYE 5 100.00  
Litter picker (Wages) 500.16

Clerk (Wages and Expenses) 961.24  
HMRC PAYE 6 209.40  
Litter picker (Wages) 500.20  
HMRC PAYE 6 125.00  
Litter picker (Wages) 625.20  
Water Rates (Wave Utilities) 61.72

## **60. External Audit Annual Review of the Return for the year ended 31 March 2023**

The Clerk advised that the external audit had now been completed by Mazars, noting that there were no areas of significant weakness identified and that no minor areas for improvement in 2022/23 had been found.

**Resolved:** That the audited accounts for 2022/23 be noted and received and that the council display the audited AGAR and completion notice on the council's website by the deadline of 30 September 2023.

## **61. Allotments**

The Clerk provided updates or issues for information / action as follows:

(i) To consider correspondence received.

A letter had been received from a tenant notifying the council that her garden had been incorrectly identified during the last inspection. The Clerk had apologised on behalf of the council and had advised that the Committee would review this on their next visit.

(ii) To agree a date for the next Allotment Committee site visit.

The Allotment Committee agreed to make arrangements to visit West Pelton allotments in the coming weeks.

(iii) Cutting back of Willow at West Pelton along flood wall.

The Clerk advised that some cutting back was required along the flood wall and sought permission to ask the area litter picker to undertake this task.

## **62. Suspension of Standing Orders**

In accordance with Standing Orders (Suspension of Standing Orders), Councillor Batey moved that Council suspend Standing Orders to allow an extension of the meeting by 15 minutes to consider all items of business. Councillor Barrett seconded the proposal.

### **Resolved:**

That the Standing Orders be suspended to allow for continuation of the meeting and further items of business to be considered.

## **63. Ward Area / Matters**

### **(i) Pelton Lane Ends**

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson referred to previous discussions regarding planting / flower beds and noted that some planting had appeared either side of bench, however it was not known who had undertaken the planting, although it may have been linked to the Miller Homes sites as it was at the entrance to a PROW.

Further discussion took place regarding the planting quote which had been received for both this area and Beamish noting that any decision on longer term funding should be taken when the council reviews its budget in January next year.

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson also raised the issues of community litter picks and whether there were any volunteers who could be contacted with a view to coordinating a response to avoid duplication of areas covered.

### **(ii) West Pelton**

#### Christmas Tree

The Clerk advised that a request had been received from Pelton Parish Council for a contribution towards the shared cost of installing a Christmas Tree at West Pelton. The proposed siting would be on Karbon Homes land which sits within the Urpeth Parish boundary. The costs at this time were estimated however a decision in principle was sought.

**Resolved:** that the Council agree to sharing the costs of the installation of a Christmas Tree at West Pelton in partnership with Pelton Parish Council.

#### Road markings

Councillor Johnson asked whether anything could be done to reinstate road line markings around Edenfield. Cllr D Wood agreed to chase this up.

### **(iii) Urpeth Grange**

Councillor Batey added that she was pleased to report that the asset transfer of the play park had now been completed and arrangement should now be made for a bench to be installed along with an official unveiling. The Clerk advised that she would be in touch with the AAP regarding the funding application for its purchase.

Further updates for the area included:

- Volunteer come forward for litter picking in the park to support their qualification/award.
- Bin at Cherry Tree, on pillar replaced to a large bin. Bins in play park not big enough for volume of rubbish.
- Dog bin on Melbeck and salt bin at Penhill moved.
- Bushes cut back at school.
- Penhill, resurfacing works at entrance inadequate to be reviewed.

#### **(iv) Beamish**

Councillor Scott noted several issues relating to overgrown pathways and pavements in the area, he further noted issues regarding the following:

- Cutting back on A693 required, bushes so overgrown using grassed area to get past.
- Coal wagon – overgrown and gravel bed full of weeds.
- A693 roundabout – continues to be an eyesore and would like to continue to press the council and the museum to improve its condition.

#### **64. Remembrance Sunday Service**

The Clerk advised that a road closure order would be in place from 12.45 p.m. for a 1.00 p.m. start on Sunday 12 November 2023.

A further update was provided regarding the King Charles Roses, noting that the specimen was currently out of stock, however the company had agreed to replace at no charge.

#### **65. Any other business.**

There were no further items of business.