

## **URPETH PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 20 June 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

County Councillor P Pringle

**In attendance:** R Johnson

#### **16. Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **17. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **18. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held 16 May 2023**

**Resolved:** that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Clerk advised that further to discussion at the previous meeting relating to the attendance of a representative of Beamish Museum attending a future meeting, Rhiannon Hiles had agreed to attend the meeting in September.

#### **19. Public Questions / Representations.**

There were no questions from the public.

#### **20. Policing and Neighbourhood Wardens**

It was reported that there had some recent incidents of burglary in the Beamish area. Residents were urged to report any suspicious activity to the police.

In addition, there had been significant issues with the use off-road bikes and members and residents were encouraged to report any known incidences along with registration plate details, if possible, to the police.

#### **21. County Councillor Report**

County Councillors A Batey, P Pringle and D Wood provided an update on County matters relating to the parish and wider area as follows:

- Keep clear markings now installed.

- Grass cutting update, lead times on new grass cutters have led to delays – lead in 60 weeks, has been a big issue, older machines non-serviced. Ordering machines for 2025. Combined with weather does explain however the team are working hard to catch up.
- Work on BMX track to start at Urpeth Grange to start during the summer.
- Planning Application – Stella Gill
- 2 complaints from residents received from residents of Pelton Lane Ends regarding hedges to the side of the Parade which used to be cut by the farmer but had since become overgrown. Councillor Wood advised that he had followed this up and an agreement had been reached to undertake the cutting back if no birds were currently nesting. This would also potentially be an issue that would need revisiting in the future in line with the developers landscape management plan.
- Miners Gala taking place on 8 July 2023. Plea for parish volunteers to come and help out on the day.
- Vehicle fly tips – Lamsley to Urpeth Grange, 4 cars set on fire, clean ups being done however some glass left on the road,
- Urpeth Grange bridge near woods at bottom of Melbeck, metal posts corroded and dangerous. DCC had been notified and necessary safety precautions taken.

## **22. Correspondence and Clerks Report**

### **(i) Parish Newsletter**

The Clerk advised that further to discussion at previous meetings a suggestion had been received that options to produce a parish newsletter be explored. It was agreed that the following members take part in a smaller working group to look to pull together ideas for a first issue, Councillors A Batey, D Wood, G Holmes, B Barrett and the Clerk.

### **(ii) Community Engagement Training**

The Clerk had circulated slides from the Community Engagement training session held by CDALC which offered some good practice examples of parish websites and social media sites which may assist the council when reviewing their own communication strategy. It was agreed that the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

### **(iii) Notice of Vacancy in the West Pelton Ward**

The Clerk advised that there had been no request for an election following the advertisement of the Vacancy in the West Pelton ward. The council could now co-opt to this seat.

## **23. Neighbourhood Plan**

### **(i) Green belt and open space**

Further to discussion at the previous meeting Members were asked to feed back to Clerk on areas which were of value and should be identified and considered as such for inclusion in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- (ii) **Next steps** – Working Group Meeting to be held on 24 July 6.00 p.m. at Pelton. The agenda would be circulated in due course.

## **24. Internal Audit, Annual Governance Statement and Annual Accounts 2022/23**

The Clerk presented a detailed report and which sought approval of the Council Annual Return for Urpeth Parish Council for the year ended 31 March 2023, including its Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements.

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor had reviewed the accounts and practices during May 2023 and had found the Internal Controls within the Parish Council to be satisfactory for the size of the Council and that the documents and procedures viewed to be in good order.

The Clerk advised that the return would be forwarded to Mazars for external audit with their report and any findings to be presented at the meeting in September.

**Resolved:** That the council

- i) Note the Internal Audit Report
- ii) Note the year end position with regards to balances and earmarked reserves
- iii) That Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of Urpeth Parish Councils Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be approved.
- iv) That Section 2 – Accounting Statements of Urpeth Parish Councils Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be approved.
- v) That the Chair and Clerk sign Urpeth Parish Councils Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2023.

## **25. Monthly Accounts**

**Resolved:** That the following monthly payments be agreed

Clerk (Wages and Expenses)	839.85
HMRC PAYE 9	184.80
Litter picker (Wages)	500.20
HMRC PAYE 9	125.00
Litter picker (Wages)	625.20
Wave Utilities Water Rates	115.70
Greenham Refuse Sacks	128.95

## **26. Allotments**

- (i) **Allotment Committee, Site Visits**

Arrangements were made for the Allotment Committee to undertake a site visit on 24 June visiting High Handenhold at 9.00 a.m. and West Pelton at 10.30 a.m. feedback would be provided to the next meeting in July.

**(ii) Complaint regarding Bees**

The Clerk advised that she had received a complaint regarding swarming bees at West Pelton and whilst there had been no other complaints from residents in this area she agreed to speak with the tenant who kept bees to see whether he could update on whether there had been any recent issues.

**(iii) Complaint regarding allotment structure at West Pelton**

The Clerk advised that a complaint had been received regarding a shed structure on the allotment site, which would be reviewed at the site meeting later this week before a response was provided to the complainant.

**27. Beamish**

**(i) DM/21/01633/FPA – Planning Appeal**

The Clerk advised that she had circulated details of the planning appeal which had been submitted in respect of the above planning application, which was refused by the Area Planning Committee (North). Members noted that there was nothing new contained in the appeal submission which would result in the parish or residents changing their views on the application and a response would be provided to the Planning Inspectorate advising that the objections previously submitted and representations made at the committee meeting, remain unchanged.

**(ii) Area Updates**

Councillor B Scott raised the following matters for consideration / action:

- A693 roundabout in a poor condition, following accident with 4 tall signs still down and a post bent over. Grass cutting had taken place around the obstacles.
- Hedges and bushes in the area required cutting back
- Village signs on approach to Beamish from the garage at High Handenhold needed replacing with blue and yellow county signs

**28. Urpeth Grange**

Councillor B Barrett and A Batey reported on the following matters for consideration / action:

- Paths leading to Catholic school very overgrown and it was queried whose responsibility this was. It was noted that other footpaths on the estate were similarly overgrown, including those on walk to school routes. Councillor Batey advised that she would report this in via the Clean and Green team.

- Parking issues at Melbeck. Complaints had been received from some residents regarding the ongoing parking issues in this area, which had been compounded by reduced parking availability for residents.
- Speeding – issues around school area, options being explored for the possible relocation of 30 mph signs.

## **29. Pelton Land Ends**

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson noted that many roundabouts in the area were overgrown and he was concerned that this led to reduced visibility and could result in an accident. It was noted as previously explained there had been an issue with equipment and scheduling which had led to delays in the programme of works.

He further commented that he felt that more could be done to make the noticeboards more noticeable and to increase general awareness of the parish council and its role in supporting the community. It was noted that it had been agreed to place an item of the agenda for the following meeting to discuss an overall communications strategy.

## **30. 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 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.

## **31. High Handenhold**

Councillor D Wood advised that he was hopeful that work would commence on the fence in the next few weeks. He would continue to chase the team for a definite start date.

## **32. West Pelton**

Councillor Batey noted that some patching up work had been undertaken to the roads in the area and bus stop markings and lineage was missing from the road surface which required chasing up.

## **33. Co-option to the West Pelton Ward**

**Resolved:** That following the receipt of a request for co-option from Mrs Ruth Johnson and consideration of her suitability for the role, it was agreed that she be co-opted to the West Pelton Ward of Urpeth Parish Council and that the relevant paperwork including the Acceptance of Office be signed and witnessed by the Clerk.

## **34. Any other Business**

The Chair asked that all Members prepare a short personal statement for the purposes of the council's website along with a suitable photograph which should be provided at the next meeting.