

URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Remote Meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom.

Councillor W Barrett (Chair)

Present:

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

184. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Anderson and County Councillor C Carr.

185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

186. REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair welcomed Zoe Day to the meeting who was in attendance from Voneus to discuss some of the concerns which had been raised regarding the proposed telecommunications pole to be installed at Penhill Close.

Ms Day provided an overview of the project and outlined the improvements that would be gained from the work undertaken to improve connectivity and increase broadband speeds across the area. Whilst she acknowledged that there had been some concerns raised via Facebook regarding the proposed siting within Penhill Close, she noted that residents had been consulted and no feedback had been received at that time.

It was noted that the structure was intended to be temporary only until services were up and running and this would be done in the shortest time possible. A timescale on this was requested.

Councillor Batey commented that the way in which the planning application had been articulated had given cause for concern for some residents, and conflicting information over the location had further exacerbated the issue. In response Ms Day advised that originally the application was for 3 poles, however this had been reduced to 2 leading to the relocation from the outside edge of St Bennets to Penhill Close.

Councillor Barrett added that as a resident himself of Penhill he knew that letters had not been received by all residents.

Councillor Woods referred to the Design and Access Statement appended to the planning application and noted that it stated within that document that permission was sought for a period of 3 years. He therefore queries whether permission would need to be granted again should the work take longer than the specified period.

Members agreed that given the proposed location of the pole, they would not support the planning application. The Clerk therefore agreed to forward the objections once full responses had been received from Ms Day in relation to some of the queries raised.

187. UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT AT MOSS CLOSE FARM

The Clerk advised that Mr E Burton, Miller Homes had been invited to attend the meeting however unfortunately he was not in attendance to provide an update.

It was reported that there had been some early issues regarding highway matters and Councillor Wood had taken this up with the contractors and DCC directly. It was hoped that given issues were now starting to arise it would be important for a representative from Miller Homes to attend the next meeting and continue to do so on a frequent basis.

188. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

189. POLICE & NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS REPORT

Further to the usual police report which had been circulated. Councillor Batey reminded members of the additional safety measures that residents should take now that darker nights were approaching, including ensuring that car doors were locked at night as this was a known area of crime for opportunists. Residents should also remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police on the non-emergency telephone number.

190. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

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

- Public consultation on Leisure Improvements including Chester-le-Street Leisure Centre.
- Pick & Collect Library service to be reintroduced
- Lumiere confirmed to return in 2021
- Picnics to Go scheme to be undertaken during the school holidays similar to the holiday hunger schemes previously undertaken.
- Durham County Council Community Hub – advice and support for those affected by Coronavirus www.durham.gov.uk/covid19-help
- Thanks to those retailers who helped contribute to the free packed lunch scheme which was run and helped 125 families.
- Issues in the area with fireworks this month, especially concerning given that the region is in Tier 4 lockdown.
- Remembrance Day – Operation Poppy Drop was very successful, with 15 poppy curtains displayed across the division this year.
- Toy Appeal ongoing (Christmas in a box)
- Operation Spruce UP to be rolled out to help find and fix up areas which required environmental works to be undertaken or where issues with fly tipping are experienced.

191. MONTHLY ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED: that the following amounts be approved for payment.

Clerk (Wages and Expenses)	765.81
HMRC PAYE 8	175.00
Litter picker (Wages)	433.64
HMRC PAYE 8	19.80
Litterpicker (Wages)	334.76
HMRC PAYE 8	83.80
Poppy Appeal Donation	150.00
Royal British Legion – Wreaths	51.00

192. EXTERNAL AUDITOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Clerk advised that Mazars the External Auditor had now completed their audit of the Council's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 and had found no matters arising from which, which required action by the Parish Council.

Resolved:

That the certified Annual Governance, Accountability Return and Report of the External Auditor be received and that it be noted that there were no matters which had arisen during the audit which required action by the Parish Council.

And that the statement of conclusion of the audit would be published on the council's website along with the Return for the year ended 31 March 2020.

193. CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk advised she would pick up any issues that required attention in the following items.

194. ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk advised that there were no current issues to report.

195. URPETH GRANGE

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

- Urpeth Grange Play Area – E-Petition had now received 102 signatures and would continue to run until 1 January 2021. The Parish council would be in a position to determine their position on the matter once a response from DCC had been received.
- Urpeth Grange walkabout undertaken with numerous issues to be reported to DCC for action or for the council to review and seek to undertaken work on during the next financial year.
- Post Box at Penhill requires attention – base rotten and could become unstable. To report via Royal Mail.

196. WEST PELTON

There were no issues to report under this item.

197. BEAMISH

Councillor Scott extended his thanks to Councillor Batey for her working in providing such a successful service at Beamish on Remembrance Sunday which had been attended by a number of residents who had paid their respects at a safe distance.

He further raised the following issues for information / action:

- Request from resident for acoustic screening to shield resident's property from noise disturbance.
- Eden Place Car Park – increase in usage suggesting that an extension to the car park would be beneficial. In addition, flytipping continued to be an issue at this site and therefore suggested that securing CCTV at this site would also be beneficial.
- Hedge cutting still required at Ill Cancelllo and yellow lines to be repainted

It was noted that money secured for additional tree planting or similar screening would have to be of community benefit and not to provide acoustic benefits for one household. It may be possible however that Durham County Council would agree to placing further trees in the existing tree line to improve ecology. The Clerk agreed to look into this further and provide an update to the resident when possible.

With regard to ongoing issues at Eden Place, Councillor Wood suggested that as this was DCC land it would be an ideal location for the placement of a camera. It was also suggested that by lowering the hedge, improved visibility could be gained into the site. It was agreed that both suggestions should be forwarded to the Clean and Green Team for action.

198. HIGH HANDENHOLD

Councillor Mullaney reported that there were no new issues to report, however still hoped that a new sign could be obtained to replace the worn and unwelcoming one currently in place.

Furthermore, she offered her help, if it would be of use to Councillor Batey and the preparations for the Remembrance Day poppy curtains.

199. PELTON LANE ENDS

Issues picked up under minute number 187.

200. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

19 January at 7.00 p.m. (meeting to be held via Zoom).