

URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 20 February 2018 in the Communal Room, West Pelton at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor B Anderson (Chairman), Councillors A Batey, J W Barrett, I Stewart-Fergusson, B Scott, F Wilkinson and M Wilkinson

County Councillors D Wood, Mr R Hogg, Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner and Beat Officer D Beardmore (Durham Constabulary).

152. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor C Carr, R Cook (Persimmon Homes) and D Battensby (Durham County Council).

153. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

154. PERSIMMON HOMES - UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT AT URPETH GRANGE

The Clerk advised that R Cook was unable to attend the meeting and noted that no update had been provided in advance of the meeting.

155. POLICE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT

The Chair welcomed Ron Hogg, Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner to the meeting who was in attendance to discuss policing priorities and issues of specific concern to the parish area.

R Hogg provided details of the proposed budget for 2018/19 and noted that ongoing austerity had resulted in the requirement for a rise in council tax. He further noted that owing to the fact that 85% of properties in County Durham were Band D or below, the force had the worst return on council tax than any other police force in the country. Further details were reported in respect of the proposed pay award for 2018/19 and other budget pressures including; inflation on services and utilities, police pensions and reductions in government grants.

Discussion then ensued regarding the attendance of PCSO's at parish meetings. R Hogg advised that the police were aware that community engagement was vital to their work however due to strains on resources and the increase of more complex crimes it was not possible to guarantee attendance at meetings. He further noted that 170 PACT meetings were held across the force area and members of the public and representatives of community groups / organisations were encouraged to attend where possible. He advised that following careful consideration of the matter it had been agreed that should the council have a specific issue that required police attention then a request should be made for an officer to attend the meeting. Attendance could not be guaranteed because threat, harm and risk must always be considered a priority, however every effort would be made to ensure that an officer was present should a specific request be made. Should the council have any other issues which were of concern contact could be made through the PCVC's office.

Councillor Batey commented that PACT reports were not always forwarded or up to date and it would be of great benefit if comprehensive reports could be prepared divided in to the various area within the division. She further added that it would be useful if the report could also contain Neighbourhood Warden data.

Further discussion took place regarding levels of crime in the county and it was noted that County Durham was one of the safest places to live in the country, however this often meant that people weren't as vigilant as perhaps they should or could be. Examples were provided of vehicles which had been left unlocked and had consequently been stolen. R Hogg acknowledged that resources had been focused on certain areas because of various issues with crime, however noted that every community deserved to have a minimum service level.

Discussion then ensued regarding the perception of crime and in particular speeding was raised as a topic which was often considered to be worse than data proved it to be. Councillor Scott noted that in June 2017 speed checks had been undertaken at Beamish village, whereby 45% of vehicles had found to be travelling at over 35mph. At this time residents had been notified that a speed camera would be deployed however this had not yet happened. R Hogg advised that he would follow this query up and report back to the Clerk. In addition, he advised that he would personally chase up on speeding activity across the entire parish area as other roads within the parish were perceived to be a problem.

Moving on, R Hogg addressed the issue of consultation and how the police were consulted on local matters for example, planning and highway issues. It was reported that in some instances local councillors were having to raise specific issues with the Neighbourhood Policing Team as they were not aware of certain consultations and proposals being made by Durham County Council.

Councillor Scott also noted that he and many other residents had been appalled at the congestion which had been caused in Beamish due to events being held at the Museum. R Hogg advised that this could be fed back to the Safety Advisory Group.

In conclusion members discussed cross border police liaison and flytipping issues.

The Chairman thanked R Hogg and D Beardmore for their attendance.

156. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Councillors A Batey and D Wood provided an update on matters relating to the County Council and parish area including:

- Budget Meeting of Durham County Council to be held 21 February
- Update on North East Combined Authority and funding
- Update on proposals for CCG relocation and office space
- Big Spring Clean Up – should any member wish to take part details should be provided to the Clerk as soon as possible.

157. MONTHLY ACCOUNTS

Resolved: that the circulated monthly schedule be approved for payment and the balance of the council's accounts be noted.

- (i) Request for Donation – Heel and Toe Charity
Resolved: that a donation of £100 be granted.

158. CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk advised that there were no issues to raise under this item.

159. ALLOTMENTS

(i) Plantation View - Footpath

The Clerk advised that work which had been promised to be completed by the County Council late summer 2017, to improve the pathways around the flood defence area of the site, had not yet been completed. It was reported that the County Council were unable to obtain the planings required to surface the footpath until summer 2018 due to a supplier issue and this delay had caused issues on the site. Following discussions with the Allotment Association Secretary it was deemed unacceptable to leave repairs until this time in case of further delays. It was therefore suggested that the parish council explore alternative options and that the Clerk liaise with the Association to rectify the issue as soon as practicable.

Resolved: that the Association be granted authority to purchase the appropriate materials to repair the footpaths in consultation with the Clerk.

(ii) Plantation View - Request from tenant to move plot

The Clerk advised that a request had been received from a tenant to move plot however due to previous issues with the tenant the Allotment Committee were reluctant to agree to the request. Following careful consideration Members agreed that the request be denied.

Resolved: That the Clerk write to the tenant to advise of the decision.

160. WEST PELTON

Councillor B Anderson noted the issues raised at the previous meeting remained outstanding as follows:-

- Brash from cut back willow trees alongside field drain behind Plantation View
- requires clearing away
- Continued complaints of dog fouling on the footpath at Plantation View
- Continued complaints of speeding cars through village
- Tree near roadside immediately behind the Church wall was still overhanging and Dangerous
- Bins at corner shop and bakery

161. URPETH GRANGE

Councillor Barrett noted that problems persisted with flytipping and general untidiness around Middleham Close. Councillor Batey noted that the Neighbourhood Wardens did have this matter in hand. She further noted that she had been in discussions with the wardens regarding the grassing over of an informal layby on the one way lane and others which were hot spots for fly tipping.

Councillor Batey further noted resident concerns regarding work undertaken to a property at Bradley Close, however planning officers had confirmed that work was being undertaken under permitted development rights. She further noted ongoing issues with speeding traffic at Bradley Close, entering and existing the new estate and suggested that the topic should be raised with the Highways Officer and R Cook at the next meeting.

She also asked that further confirmation be sought regarding when work would commence on the play area. The matter would be raised with R Cook at the next meeting.

162. BEAMISH

Councillor Scott reported a noticeable improvement in fly tipping at popular zones. Councillor Batey advised that there had been two recent convictions as a direct result of covert CCTV surveillance which was excellent news for the parish.

Councillor Scott further reported the following issues:

- Some improvement at Pepe's car regarding litter – to follow up with Neighbourhood Warden
- Issues with cars parking in village where double yellow lines existed but had been worn off
- Dog walkers using woods and car park in village for professional dog walking services which was causing an issue with dog fouling and disposal of waste.

163. HIGH HANDENHOLD

Councillor Anderson advised that he sent a letter of thanks to the Clean and Green team following a report he had made for some clearance at High Handenhold.

164. PELTON LANE ENDS

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson noted that further information was awaited regarding the street lighting issue and further discussion regarding issues on the A693 could be discussed with the Highways Officer at the next meeting.