

## **URPETH PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 21 November 2017 in the Communal Room, West Pelton at 7.00 p.m.

### **Present:**

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

County Councillor D Wood and D Brown, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service.

### **122. BUDGET CONSULTATION – COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

The Chairman welcomed Dominic Brown, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, to the meeting who was in attendance to provide details of the services ongoing consultation, in respect of the 2018/19 budget and how the service were intending to allocate resources going forward.

It was acknowledged that many members of the public were unaware of the way in which resources were allocated and there was a general lack of understanding of this. It was therefore hoped that by reaching out to community groups information would be disseminated to the public.

D Brown provided an overview of the current service priorities and challenges.

Councillor F Wilkinson asked what proportion of the budget was allocated to prevention of fire. In response D Brown advised that 75% of the budget was allocated to wages across the 15 stations in the area. All firefighters undertook prevention work as part of their day to day job. Further discussion took place regarding staffing numbers, noting that as a result of cutting back office services to protect the front-line service, all staff had seen a vast increase in their daily workload.

Councillor Batey noted that it was disappointing to learn that the Pelton division had such a high rate of deliberate fires. D Brown added that deliberate fires were a real challenge, with approximately 75% of all fires being deliberate. Therefore the service did regard this as a priority and had a real focus in this regard.

Further discussion took place regarding savings which had already been made as a result of funding cuts following a question from Councillor Stewart-Fergusson. D Brown noted that savings were becoming increasingly difficult to achieve and would continue to do so. It was important to note however that through the hard work of staff, service levels had been maintained. Good news was also reported in respect of apprenticeships and job opportunities.

D Brown advised that the consultation questions were available online and encouraged members to complete the form. Copies were also circulated for information.

### **123. PERSIMMON HOMES – UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT AT URPETH GRANGE**

The Clerk advised that R Cook was not in attendance and an update had not been forwarded.

#### **124. BANKS GROUP – UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT AT MOSS CLOSE FARM**

The Chairman welcomed L Stokes to the meeting who was in attendance to provide an update on the development at Moss Close Farm.

L Stokes advised that site investigation works had now been completed and nothing unexpected had been found. In addition trial trenches in respect of archaeology had resulted in no further investigation being required. Now that this phase had been completed, the team were working on pulling together full information for prospective house builders. It was hoped that engagement with those builders, would take place towards the end of this year into early 2018. Once a builder had been chosen for the site they would then be responsible for submitting a reserved matters application. Banks agreed to notify the parish council at this time who the selected builder was.

In reference to a query regarding drainage, L Stokes advised that options for drainage were still being explored and a further update on the progress of this and the overall project could be given to members around February 2018.

Further discussion then ensued regarding highway issues. L Stokes reminded Members that highway arrangements were the responsibility of the highways department of Durham County Council and with such the developer would take instruction from them, as to what, if any, mitigating measures were required to deal with increased traffic flow. It was agreed that it would be useful for a highways officer to attend a future meeting in order to discuss these technical matters in more depth. It was agreed that the Clerk should invite an officer to attend the next meeting in January 2018.

#### **125. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor C Carr.

#### **126. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **127. POLICE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT**

The Clerk circulated a copy of the PACT report detailing the previous month's police activity and current policing priorities for the area. She further advised that P Rutherford, Neighbourhood Warden had intended on attending the meeting to discuss fly tipping issues and to provide a demo of the covert CCTV purchased. Unfortunately he was unable to attend, however had agreed to attend the next meeting in January.

#### **128. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

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

- Issues reported on A693 regarding lane closure and incorrect display of signage to advise motorists of closure.
- Lumiere had attracted approximately 240,000 visitors and had been well received.
- Universal Credit to be rolled out early next year and this could impact upon the most vulnerable residents within the parish area. It was noted that not all residents had

access to the internet and those affected were encouraged to visit the Hub at Chester-le-Street for assistance to avoid any sanctions being placed on them.

Following further discussion regarding the revised County Durham Plans timetable, it was agreed that the Clerk should invite an officer of the Spatial Policy Team to attend the next meeting to advise further on matters relating to the parish.

#### **129. MONTHLY ACCOUNTS**

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

The Clerk further advised that members should start to give consideration to projects and initiatives that they may wish to incorporate into the 2018/19 budget which would be considered at the meeting in January.

#### **130. CORRESPONDENCE AND CLERKS REPORT**

The Clerk reported that initial indications showed that the website was being well received and had during the month, received 52 visitors. 62.5% of those were new users and 37.5% were return visitors all from the Durham / Newcastle area.

She further advised that as requested by Members, Ron Hogg, PCVC had been invited to attend a future meeting and once a date had been agreed members would be notified accordingly.

#### **131. TERMS OF REFERENCE – ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE**

The Clerk referred to the terms of reference document circulated at the previous meeting and asked members for their feedback on the draft.

**Resolved:** That the decision on the proposed terms of reference be deferred to allow for further revision.

#### **132. WEST PELTON**

Councillor Anderson raised the following issues from the West Pelton area for consideration and/or action:

- Litter left by workmen on A693 following roadworks.
- Brash from cut back willow trees alongside field drain behind Plantation View requires clearing away.
- Complaints of dog fouling on the footpath at the front of Plantation View
- Complaints of cars speeding through village
- Tree near roadside immediately behind the church wall is lying over at a precarious angle
- 2 gully drains alongside the corner shop are full of leaves and subsequently not draining as they should.

#### **133. URPETH GRANGE**

Councillors M Wilkinson, A Batey and B Barrett provided an update on their ward. Councillor M Wilkinson advised that the thorn bush previously reported to be dangerous, near St Benets School had now been cut back. It was reported that it would be beneficial for

Members to undertake a walkabout on the estate to determine where issues currently were, with specific attention to overhanging trees and bushes. It was noted that there was a particular issue in this regard at Middleham Close. It was agreed that this be arranged in the New Year.

Councillor Batey further noted that speeding vehicles continued to be an issue on Bradley Close following the occupation of dwellings on the new estate. It was agreed that the Planning Case Officer be contacted for further advice,

#### **134. BEAMISH**

Councillor Scott noted massive traffic problems in the village as a result of visitors attending Beamish Museum. He reported that some residents had experienced delays of up to 30 minutes trying to get back to their properties at weekends. Councillor Batey was aware of the issue and would raise directly with the Museum.

Councillor Scott further noted continuing issues with fly tipping and it was noted that this could be discussed further with the neighbourhood warden at the next meeting in January.

Discussion then took place regarding the remembrance service which was held on 12 November 2017. It was noted that Councillor Batey had taken her own time the day prior to the service to thoroughly clean the area including the hardstanding. She acknowledged that although the memorial stone had been professionally cleaned, the surrounding area was in an untidy state and a number of residents had indicated that they would like to see some work undertaken here to spruce the site up. It was therefore proposed that this should be considered as a special project to be undertaken in the 2018/19 budget period.

Councillor Anderson further reported issues with some signage in the area, in particular 2 signs opposite the Shepherd and Shepherdess and 2 between the same location and the A693 roundabout which had no signage displayed on the posts.

In addition he raised the issue which had been discussed at a previous meeting regarding the possible introduction of a 30mph speed limit between Hammer Square House and the Gateshead boundary. It was agreed that should a highways officer be able to attend the next meeting that this matter be raised at this point.

#### **135. HIGH HANDENHOLD**

It was reported that the car wash business had been notified that signage displayed was not legal and enforcement would be undertaken by DCC to remove the signs.

#### **136. PELTON LANE ENDS**

Councillor Fergusson reported that there were no further issues to report other than those already discussed under item 124.