

URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 16 January 2024 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

G Holmes-Wood (Chair)

Present:

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

91. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

92. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

93. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

94. Public Questions / Representations

There were no public questions or representations.

95. County Councillor Report

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

- Council to end to free parking after 3pm, Councillor Batey to put forward motion to council next week asking for cabinet to review this decision.
- Local Government Finance settlement had been received. DCC were expected to raise Council Tax by 4.99% at their Budget meeting in February equating to around a £1.15 – £1.54 per week per household increase.
- Garden waste collections – residents to sign up before 14 February to get the full cycle of collections.
- Portal registering for postal vote.
- Funding for Traffic Calming Scheme had now been approved in principle. The next stage would be for an informal consultation before the statutory consultation begins.
- Leisure Strategy – delayed Feb 2024

96. Clerks Report and Correspondence

(i) Update on funding application for Play Area Bench

The Clerk advised that the funding application had now been completed and signed off by all three Pelton Division Councillors.

(ii) 2024 Inspection Schedules

Dates were discussed for future parish walkabouts noting that the first would take place on 2 March 2024 to cover the Urpeth Grange area. Further dates would be agreed in due course for all other areas.

In addition, Allotment site inspections would be held during April, July and October. Dates to be agreed in due course.

(ii) Feedback on Christmas Tree at West Pelton

The Clerk advised that whilst there had been no positive or negative feedback received regarding the Christmas tree and issue had been raised regarding the lights and frequency of illumination.

Resolved:

To review 2024 Christmas Tree proposals / arrangements later in the year.

97. Defibrillators

Councillor Wood provide some background regarding community defibrillators, noting that at the present time the division did not benefit from full coverage of accessible devices. Parishes within the division were therefore being asked to consider supporting the cost of purchasing replacement pads on a rolling basis.

The Clerk advised members that an annual reserve within the budget would need to be created for approximately £500.

Resolved: That the parish council agree to support the purchase and installation of defibrillators at the Cherry Tree pub and Ill Cancelllo (subject to owner agreement) and that the council establish and hold a reserve of £500 for the cost of replacement pads.

98. Finance Matters

(i) Council Budget 2023/24 and Precept 2023/24

The Clerk presented a detailed report which set out a proposed budget for the Parish Council for 2024/25 and recommended a budget and precept level to be charged for 2024/25.

Members noted significant increases in costs across various contracted services and noted new and additional areas of expenditure which were forecast for the

coming financial year. Members whilst appreciating that residents continued to face increased financial burden across household bills, the parish council having made very small increases over the past 5 years were unable to continue to meet budget shortfall from reserves.

Following discussion and clarification on a number of points Members agreed that by redistributing earmarked reserves and by issuing a 4.5% increase (£1.12 increase on a Band A property) a balanced budget could be achieved.

Resolved:

- i) That the draft budget for 2024/25 (as amended) be approved.
- ii) That the Council issues a precept of £43,771.33 for the 2024/25 financial year.
- iii) That a decision on Allotment rents be taken in January 2025.
- iv) That the Council has considered its earmarked and general reserves and prioritised any projects or initiatives alongside costed budget implications.

(ii) To consider a contract for the provision of the councils' website

The Clerk advised that full details were not yet available and further information would be provided to the next meeting. For the purposes of budget setting £500 had been allocated for its supply and hosting in Year 1.

(iii) To consider funding for future Remembrance Day Service costs

Further to discussion at the previous meeting quotes had now been obtained for a traffic management company to enforce the road closure required at Beamish for the duration of the Remembrance Sunday service. For the purposes of budget setting £1000 had been allocated for costs associated with the 2024 service.

(iv) Monthly accounts

Resolved: That the following amounts be agreed for payment.

December:

Clerk (Wages & Expenses)	947.77
HMRC PAYE	232.70
HMRC PAYE	78.40
Litter picker (Wages)	313.35
Litter picker (Wages)	334.44
HugoFox Monthly Fee	11.99

January:

Clerk (Wages & Expenses)	947.57
HMRC PAYE	232.90
HMRC PAYE	78.40
Litterpicker (Wages)	267.64
Litter picker (Wages)	334.44
HugoFox Monthly Fee	11.99
Mazars (External Audit Fee)	378.00
DCC Grounds Maintenance	12412.45

99. Allotments

The Clerk provided an update in relation to dirty gardens and non-payment of rents resulting in tenancy termination.

100. Ward / Area Matters

(i) Eden Place Car Park

Despite there being no major updates to report, Councillor Batey commented that she had recently met with the Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism and would be continuing to pursue this avenue of contact with the council to move forward this area of work.

The Clerk confirmed that the Museum had confirmed this was also an action point that they were pushing to take forward to resolution.

(ii) Beamish Museum Update

The Clerk provided a summary of the most recent update received from the Chief Operating Officer at Beamish Museum. She further advised that a representative would be in attendance at the next meeting to further discuss the areas of concern which members had raised following the recent Christmas events.

Members further discussed the offer which the Museum had made for the supply of bedding plants and following previous discussion around grounds maintenance contracts, it was agreed that this would be picked up at the next meeting.