

**WOLSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD**  
**TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> January 2025**  
**7.00 PM**  
**Town Hall, Wolsingham**

**PRESENT:** I Rodgers, A Bonar, D Sugden, A Savory, Y Bell, J Bartram, J Bell  
S Bittlestone, H Yeulet, A Hirst, Sarah-Ann Baxter(Clerk)

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** 6 Members of the public attended

**1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None

**2) TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:** Mr Gordon Dobson questioned the precept rise, expressing that comparing Wolsingham to other Parish Council's was not correct. In his opinion the Clerk is incompetent, their position at the Council untenable, they are not a responsible finance officer and that the Parish Council will be bankrupt by March 2026. Mr Dobson then questioned individual Councillor's as to whether they knew about the current financial position, Councillors and the Chair pointed out that yes, they were aware as the Clerk provides monthly accounts at each meeting and that decisions on spending were made by them. Mr Dobson then asked why hadn't a grant been used for the building of the recreation toilets, the Chair pointed out that the Council had been in receipt of several grants over the years but due to time constraints set by the Planning Authority the project had to be started and the AAP team cannot issue grant monies if the project has started. The toilets have been funded from the Council's reserves, which in the past have been criticised by the external auditor, for being excessively large. Mr Dobson then criticised the new parking meters, calling them a white elephant, and that the parking charges were dangerous to children. Cllr Bonar explained that the parking meters have already paid for themselves and that the free half hour was to allow parents to use the car parks and safely walk their children to school, therefore removing cars from outside or near schools. Mr Dobson then asked what concern is it of the Parish Council's how children get to school, it was pointed out that most of them are residents of Wolsingham and therefore included in the Parish. Mr Dobson concluded by stating in July 2025 he will want access to all financial documents, including the internal & external auditors report, so that they can be scrutinised by himself.

Mr Ian Watson asked if any update could be given on the felling of the tress on the steelworks site adjacent to the riverside footpath. Cllr Savory explained she had spoken to the Planning Dept and that they and the Tree Officer had tried to minimise the number of trees felled, however there will be a tree planting programme carried out on the site.

**3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr Savory – Planning Matters

**4) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024:** Minutes were agreed as a true record

**5) MATTERS ARISING:**

- i) New Toilets – The Clerk explained that the footpath to the new toilets had not been included in the project due to additional works being required on site and that the original estimate costs had been reached. Cllr J Bell thought this was due to the original specifications not being detailed enough and was not comfortable with S106 monies being used for the project. Cllr Yeulet pointed out that the project needed

finishing and the toilets opened sooner rather than later.

- ii) Website – Cllr Sugden will transfer the files concerning the website onto a memory stick, this will allow the work of going through the documents to be done by 3-4 people rather than one person. **Action DS**

- iii) Christmas – Councillors agreed that a date should be set for all the Christmas events which would allow better planning. Cllr Yeulet suggested a Christmas committee could be set-up which would involve community groups as well as the Parish Council. Cllr Savory asked could we defer setting a date until the February meeting as she would be able to bring more detail of a plan for St Anne's Centre, this was agreed.

**Action AS**

- iv) Flagpole – still awaiting a quote to lower the existing pole.
- v) Seating Demesne Mill – Cllr Savory explained that one seat had been re-sited by DCC, but others could not due to being in-situ for many years and the likelihood of being damaged if moved.

**6) CORRESPONDENCE:**

- i) Mr Perry Gardner – a lengthy correspondence has been received and the Council noted its content.
- ii) Gillian Craig – a request has been received to allow a pop-up café to operate from one of the Parish Council halls once a week for two hours. It was agreed that this would only be agreed if it was to open on a Sunday at the Town Hall, as this would have the least impact on local catering businesses.

**Action SAB**

**7) MAINTENANCE WORKS:**

- a) St Anne's Hall – Councillors asked for thanks to be given to Robert Hopkinson for clearing the paths around St Anne's and for all the voluntary work he does for the Parish Council.
- b) Recreation Ground – Further trees will be carried out when the weather improves.
- c) Town Hall – The library heating has been fixed, there is a broken toilet seat in the men's lavatories and the boilers will be serviced soon.
- d) Demesne Mill – Nothing to report
- e) Thornley Woods – Clerk to chase up estimate for fencing works. **Action SAB**
- f) Allotments – all plots are let and there is a waiting list.
- g) Angate Street Toilets – No further vandalism has occurred.  
Cllr J Bell asked whether risk assessments will be required for both Angate Street and the new Recreation Toilets, the Clerk confirmed that these should be done.

- 8) Parish Council Policy Statement – Cllr J Bell pointed out that this document is on the website, dated March 2020 and would appear to be out of date and could it be reviewed. Cllr Rodgers agreed that it doesn't now reflect the Council's policies and that it would be reviewed for the new website and the new Council in May 2025.
- 9) Fitness Business in Recreation Ground – Cllr A Hirst asked if fitness businesses who use the recreation ground & fitness equipment needed to pay the Parish Council. The Chair confirmed that businesses could use the area for free as it was in place to encourage residents to exercise.

**10) Finance**

- i) Payments & Reports for December 2024 – Agreed.

**11) PLANNING** – No comments were made.

Date of next meeting – February 11<sup>th</sup> 2025 to held at the Town Hall, Wolsingham at 7pm