

**WOLSINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES FOR MEETING HELD**  
**TUESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> December 2024**  
**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, Sarah-Ann Baxter(Clerk)

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

The Chair asked for a minute's silence to remember Maureen Epsley, a former Chair of the Parish Council.

**1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** A Hirst

**2) TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:** Ian Watson highlighted the large number of trees that had been felled on the Steelworks site adjacent to the riverside footway and queried whether it was necessary. Cllr Savory is going to raise this with DCC's Planning Officer and will feedback details. **Action AS**

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

**4) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024:** Minutes were agreed as a true record

**5) MATTERS ARISING:**

i) Weardale Flower Club – the dates requested have now been agreed.

ii) New Toilets – Cllr J Bell queried the link footway and costs, Clerk will speak to the Contractor. Cllr Savory has submitted the S106 application for funding for the footway. **Action SAB**

iii) Website – working group has met and made some progress. This will need to be a priority in the new year. **Action Website Working Group**

iv) Christmas Lights – Cllr J Bell raised concerns that the proposed lights in the trees at St Anne's had taken a back seat. Cllr Rodgers explained that the contractors had not come back to the Clerk with regards to a contract & cost. A decision had been made to provide lights around the building to have some form of lights and that he is still committed to providing lights in the trees.

v) Flagpole – still awaiting a quote to lower the existing pole.

vi) Seating Demesne Mill – Cllr Savory had met with the resident and agreed for DCC's Clean & Green team to move one seat.

**6) CORRESPONDENCE:**

i) Mr Perry Gardner – Responses to the questions raised. 1 - It is difficult to judge but the Council do not agree that HGV drivers are driving irresponsibly between Uppertown & the Market Place. 2 – The Council do not agree that HGV drivers have been encouraged to drive with more complacency and a lack of respect to other road users due to the comments made by Cllr Shuttleworth, Cllr Savory & Cllr Sugden in the public meeting in September 2023. Cllr Bartram thought it was rude to even have suggested this and both Cllr Y Bell & Cllr Yeulet both commented that other road users other than HGV drivers had been informed of the meeting and that other road users were represented at the meeting. 3 – The Council agree that the 20mph speed limit on Lydgate Lane was appropriate due to the close proximity of the School. 4 – Cllr Savory has already highlighted residents concerns regarding pedestrian safety and other road users to DCC Highways.

The new Bellway development does have a planning condition, within the Haulier Plan, to restrict construction traffic using the Uppertown route and this will be

enforced by DCC Planners. The Council agreed that Mr Gardner should contact DCC's Highways with his concerns regarding traffic as this is within the Authority's remit.

- ii) Wag & Company North East Friendship Dogs – Due to the current financial climate the Parish Council will be unable to provide a donation.
- iii) Mr Gordon Dobson – Mr Dobson questioned the need for the large rise in the Precept for 2025/26 and asked the Council to reconsider. Cllr Rodgers explained that the running costs of the Council have increased considerably over the last two years and that the agreed Precept increase was the equivalent of £2.95 per month for a Band D property. Cllr J Bell questioned the money spent on the new toilets in the Recreation Ground, however it was pointed out that the funding had come from the reserves, that in the past the Council had been told by the auditor were too high. Cllr Yeulet pointed out that Cllr J Bell had attended the budget meeting where the decision on the Precept had been made. Cllr Bartram also pointed out that costs for improvements of the buildings and ongoing maintenance is costly.

#### **7) MAINTENANCE WORKS:**

- a) St Anne's Hall–AAP application has been submitted for funding of the new door.
- b) Recreation Ground – Tree works have been requested along the boundary of Mill Race
- c) Town Hall – The library heating has been off and a plumber has been arranged to look at it.
- d) Demesne Mill – Nothing to report
- e) Thornley Woods – Nothing to report
- f) Allotments – Nothing to report
- g) Angate Street Toilets – Both toilets have been vandalised again, it has been reported to the Police. Cllr Savory will contact the school and it was agreed to close the toilets at 3pm and possibly look in to installing prepayment doors in the future.

**Action AS**

- 8) Parish Council Policy Statement – Cllr J Bell asked that this be deferred until the next meeting.
- 9) Hamsterley Forest Development – The Council agreed to remain neutral on this planning application, although there were some concerns around increased traffic, however individuals could comment if they wished.

#### **10) Finance**

- i) Payments & Reports for November 2024 – Agreed.
- ii) **PLANNING** – No comments were made.

Date of next meeting – January 14<sup>th</sup> 2025 to held at the Town Hall, Wolsingham at 7pm