

WITTON – LE – WEAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Witton le Wear Parish Council held on Monday
13th March 2023 at Witton le Wear Community Centre commencing at **18.15**.

Present: Councillors P. Cowan (Chair, mins), L. Docherty, C. Cook, H. Murray-Leslie
P Parsons, S. Morehead

Also Present: Liz Charles

Apologies: Councillors O. Wilson, S Brabban

Declaration of interest: None

80/22 Minutes of the Ordinary meeting held 9th January 2023.

Agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.

Cllr. Morehead questioned the point relating to which meeting room the Parish Council meets in. It was felt that the current room provides more visibility. No decision was made in relation to this matter.

81/22 Electronic Decisions made since the last meeting

Fly tipping at the bottom of Clemmy Bank was reported to Durham County Council. Parish Council to continue to monitor to ensure removal.

82/22 Action Log

The Parish Council was approached by a resident asking for a donation towards a fundraiser for support for Ukrainian families. Unfortunately, following advice from CDALC, this is not something that the Parish Council can support.

Lack of provision of salt bins has been reported to DCC.

Cllr Parsons has completed an article for the Witton Word on dog fouling.

Insurance renewal has been completed.

Believe Housing have visited St. James Gardens and understand the issue relating to maintenance of the grass plots. Repairs are on their list to do, but it is not high priority.

Work to trees on Village Green has not been completed following the tree survey.

83/22 Matters arising from the previous minutes.

1. Traffic Working Group

The damaged sign to the west of the village near the A68 has now been replaced.

We have still had no response from DCC on various improvements that have been requested.

Various potholes have been repaired following reporting using DCC's online reporting facility.

2. Witton Word

Cllr. Brabban provided a email update prior to the meeting. The deadline for submissions is approaching. It appears that a good number of articles have been submitted so far. A report from the chair will be produced following this meeting.

3. Climate and Nature Group

Group has met to consider a proposal from the Clean and Green Team for a pilot to use less glyphosate in the village and other environmentally friendly measures.

There are a number of other villages in the pilot.

Cllr Parsons was conscious that getting the messaging right was important and requested confirmation about whether Cllrs. are insured under the Parish Council policy if they undertake voluntary work to maintain parts of the village.

Cllr. Cowan to circulate insurance renewal.

Cllrs unanimously agreed that they would support the pilot, subject to review when we see how it will work.

Cllrs. also discussed No Mow May and decided to do more social media coverage on this to promote the initiative.

The group discussed the village hanging baskets. Cllrs agreed to ask the Youth club to plant the baskets again for 2023. Cllrs Murray-Leslie, Cook and Docherty to arrange purchase of plants. A resident has offered to help the Youth Club with planting.

4. Emergency Response Group

No update for this meeting

5. Bench at West End

Cllr Cook to arrange a plaque as a memorial to Queen Elizabeth II and also obtain some prices for plants to improve the appearance of the area. Plants such as heather or lavender were considered. Cllr. Cook to look into pricing.

Bench installation has been completed and Cllrs agreed that it looks very good.

6. Dropped Curbs

The project has now been completed. Cllrs have received some positive feedback on the project. A couple of the dropped curbs have been put in different places to where Cllrs agreed, Cllr Cook to pick this up with DCC.

7. Public Footpaths

- Procurement of Contractor ongoing. There is no P3 claim for the 2022/23 financial year.
- DCC has confirmed that the notice at Witton Castle wishing to bring an end to unauthorised rights is in relation to preventing 'Village Green' status being established. It does not change any Public Rights of Way that are in existence.

Cllr Cowan to include in report from chair in Witton Word.

8. Christmas Lights

Cllr. Wilson provided an e-mail update prior to the meeting. Seeking confirmation to understand how many trees could be lit up. Cllrs agreed to wait until the next meeting to discuss.

Cllr Parsons suggested that there are other areas of the village, for example to the north of Beech Grove that could be lit up with the baubles that are used on the Village Green.

In relation to baubles, Cllrs discussed using longer life and re-chargeable batteries. Cllr Docherty to speak to Derek Bradley about pricing.

9. Coronation Event / Memorial to Queen Elizabeth II

Cllrs discussed getting a new ariel at the Community Centre to enable event to be televised and projected onto a screen. Cllrs also discussed streaming the event to avoid the need for buying an ariel but there were concerns about Wi-Fi availability.

Cllr Parsons did a test stream during the meeting, which was positive.
Cllr Parsons to arrange to carry out a trial run with Derek Bradley initially to ensure that the Wi-Fi connection is sufficient to stream and project the event.
Cllr Cook and Cllr Docherty to arrange volunteers to assist and place an article in the Witton Word.
Cllrs agreed to set aside a budget to fund the event.

84/22 Representation by Residents
None

85/22 Financial Statement and Report
Balance of Current Account and Cash £5,196.01 as of 28th February 2023. An additional £40 is held in the Yorkshire Bank Account which needs to be closed and transferred to the current account.

Councillors ratified the payment of invoices as follows up to 28th February 2023:

E-On Next – Electricity	£52.11
Zurich Insurance	£391.06
Derek Bradley – Christmas Baubles	£119.96
E-On Next – Electricity	£26.51
Total	£589.64

New bank account is working well.

VAT return to be completed at the end of the financial year.

It was resolved:
All financial matters agreed as being correct.

86/22 Planning Matters
No planning applications on the online system.
There is a discharge of conditions relating to a previously approved planning application, however, there is no opportunity to comment on this.

87/22 Neighbourhood and Parish Plan.
No update

88/22 Correspondence

Chairman’s Report
Notice Board at Engineman’s Terrace has been damaged. Cllrs agreed to fund the repair providing it is less than £100.

Recent Clerk interview has not resulted in appointment. Vacancy to continue to be advertised. There are a lot of Clerk vacancies within the County at the minute.

Mazars has been appointed as the external auditor for Parish Councils.

Steve Ragg has confirmed his retirement from CDALC with effect from end March 2023.

89/22

Members Reports

Cllr Parsons confirmed that the Heritage Group has received approval to install the History Information Board. As the Heritage Group is a non-constituted organisation, it has asked if the Parish Council will take ownership of the board once installed. Cllrs were happy, given the process that has been undertaken, to accept the donation of the History Information Board once installed.

The maintenance of the village benches was discussed. Cllr Cook has received a quote for shot blasting, however, there are some logistical issues. A mobile shot blasting service would be a better option.

90/22

Date and Time of the next Meeting

15th May 2023

This will comprise the AGM and the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting finished at 19:35.