

WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Waldridge Parish Council held on 13 November 2018 at 7.00pm



Present: Councillors - Bell, Corner, Davies, Foster, Harding, Hollingsworth, Howie, Sexton and Warren

Also in attendance – Sarah Wilson - Parish Clerk, Brian Laidler - Caretaker, Cllr Alan Bainbridge, County Councillor, and 7 members of the public

1. **Welcome** – The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence:**

All members present.

Cllr Cork has submitted his resignation – the Clerk contacted electoral services, and the relevant notices have been received and displayed.

3. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

No members declared an interest.

4. **Questions from members of the public:**

Two members of the public raised the issue of the footpath on the Millennium Green and stated that the repair to the path is poor and has left the path uneven. Cllr Sexton agreed to follow up and will report back.

5. **Police Report:**

PCSO Donnelly did not attend. The bi-monthly Police Report was discussed – 1 incident of graffiti in Chatton Close.

6. **Minutes of Council meeting – 11 September 2018:**

Cllr Sexton requested that an amendment be made to the minutes to reflect his request to the Clerk for clarification on whether payments in Financial Matters were to note, or to approve.

Cllr Harding requested that the resolution of the Council be added – that Cllr Foster suggested going through payments line by line moving forward.

Resolved: Subject to these amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2018 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

7. **Minutes of Council meeting – 9 October 2018**

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2018 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

8. **Minutes of Council budget meeting – 1 November 2018**

Resolved: The minutes of the budget meeting held on 1st November 2018 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

9. Parish matters and ongoing items

It was decided to discuss item 10 – ‘Financial Matters’ first. Councillors were given the opportunity to review the payments listed in item 10.

Resolved: *All payments in item 10 were approved.*

a) **Summer bedding plant order**

This item was placed back on the agenda under Standing Orders rule 7a. Cllr Sexton stated that he was one of the Councillors who had made this request, as he felt uncomfortable with proceeding with the order in light of the fact that the Council’s ordering of bedding plants was picked up in the 2018 audit report. Cllr Bell stated that the audit report was made available in May/June of this year, and that the Council must be obtaining value for money. Cllr Warren stated that no one disagreed that the Council should be obtaining value for money. A discussion followed in which there was disagreement as to whether the Council were aware of the audit report. Cllr Sexton stated that he believed some Councillors were aware of the report and its contents, and Cllr Foster stated that she remembered something being read out but wasn’t sure if this was the full report. The Clerk confirmed that it was minuted in the May meeting minutes that the audit report was received, however, several Councillors stated that they had not received the report at the May meeting. Cllr Bell then reminded the Council that they have a duty to answer the issues raised in the audit report, including the steps that have been taken to address these issues. Cllr Harding then questioned whether it would even be possible to change to a full year order at this stage, given that all that is due to come out of the current budget is a Summer bedding order. The Clerk stated that there was not enough available in the planting budget to pay for a full year order in one go, but that it would likely be the case that a full year order would be invoiced in two stages, and not one full year amount. Cllr Sexton questioned whether the Council should be paying for services up front, and pointed out that if a company went bust, the Council could stand to lose a significant amount of money. Cllr Foster stated that St. Barnabas is a small supplier, who needs to have payment in advance in order to operate. Cllr Davies mentioned that it is common to pay a deposit up front. Cllr Harding asked the Clerk to clarify whether the list of bedding plant quotes distributed to Councillors at the beginning of the meeting were full year quotes or Summer bedding quotes. The Clerk stated that they were full year quotes but were broken down into Summer and Winter, and so could be used accordingly. Cllr Harding suggested that by repeatedly ordering and cancelling, the Council would be damaging their relationship with a small local business. Cllr Sexton stated that sentiment can’t come in to a decision about tax payer money, and Cllr Harding replied that this wasn’t an issue of sentiment, and that St. Barnabas provide other services in addition to plants, such as storage. Cllr Bell then stated that the Council must stick to the rules, and answer the questions raised in the internal audit report. Cllr Hollingsworth asked whether the bedding plants had been flagged up in the audit report previously, and it was explained that the auditor does not complete a full audit, and only tests selected transactions. Cllr Howie stated that quality of plants must be considered. Cllr Sexton then read out the list of quotes. Cllr Foster commented that there was a large difference in the price given by St. Barnabas in relation to the other quotes. Cllr Howie then suggested that St. Barnabas should be given an opportunity to requote. Cllr Sexton questioned whether the other suppliers would be afforded the same opportunity and asked how many years the Council have been obtaining bedding plants without quotes. It was questioned whether the Parish would lose points in Northumbria in Bloom by using DCC for bedding plant services. Cllr Sexton added that he had an email from Northumbria in Bloom stating that this was not the case. Cllr Bell asked whether the Council had addressed all the points raised in the audit report. Cllr Warren read out the related section of the audit report.

Resolved: *It was agreed to defer any decision until St Barnabas were given the opportunity to requote.*

b) **Waldrige in Bloom working group**

It was suggested by Cllr Sexton that a subcommittee be formed, as he stated that continuity of service is needed. Cllr Sexton also stated that as the planting and watering budget is a large sum of money, there should be a committee in place. Cllr Foster stated that there has been a committee. Cllr Bell stated that he believed entry into Northumbria in Bloom to be essential, but it was questioned who would take care of the paperwork. Cllr Harding and Cllr Sexton both stated that they were happy to do this.

Resolved: *It was agreed to form a Waldrige in Bloom subcommittee, to consist of Cllrs Bell, Foster, Howie and Sexton, and one member of the public – Will Gidman. It was further agreed to defer the decision on a bedding plant supplier until St Barnabas were given the opportunity to requote.*

c) **County Councillors report**

Cllr Warren thanked Cllr Bainbridge for stepping in to give a reading at the recent World War One centenary event.

Cllr Bainbridge gave an update on Barratt/Birch View – still ongoing and awaiting reply.

Cllr Sexton gave an update on the white lines – nothing new to report.

Resolved: *Report noted.*

d) **Ecobricks**

Cllr Harding described the Ecobricks concept, and distributed information to the Council. It was suggested that a campaign to get residents involved in creating Ecobricks should be started, and that the Council could either have a drop off point or arrange collection. As a member of the public in attendance is employed at a local school, it was suggested that the school could be involved in some way, given that they generate a high number of non-recyclable plastic bottles. Cllr Harding also pointed out that being involved in such a campaign would help with the Council's Northumbria in Bloom entry. Cllr Howie stated that she was happy to be involved, and Cllr Sexton stated that he had recently attended a single use plastics forum, and that there may be a possibility of wider involvement/support from Durham County Council.

Resolved: *It was agreed that an Ecobricks campaign should be arranged in the Parish.*

e) **Christmas**

A discussion of potential Christmas activities took place. Cllr Hollingsworth stated that she would like to arrange a Carol Concert for elderly residents at the Village Hall, and that a choir was available at no cost other than a donation. Cllr Warren mentioned that Geoff Cork and a local church hold a carol service in the Parish rooms and asked whether the two could possibly be combined. Cllr Warren put forward the idea of a best decorated house competition, with a prize for the winner, and also suggested that the Parish could co-ordinate the making of Christmas cards by children from the Parish, to give to residents of West House Nursing Home. Cllr Harding suggested that the Council could assign those taking part with a name, and that they could make the cards at home, with the Council organising a collection and drop off. Cllr Warren put forward the suggestion of a Christmas movie day at the Parish rooms, with three films being shown – tots, juniors and adults. Cllr Warren also suggested a Christmas Eve drive around in a convertible, with Geoff Cork being dressed as Santa, and Cllrs Harding and Warren dressed as elves. Cllr Foster raised

the possibility of the Puffing Billy Christmas train passing through the village, however, Cllr Harding stated that they would not change the route. Cllr Howie suggested that a Christmas flyer be sent out to residents.

Resolved: *It was agreed that Cllr Hollingsworth should check if the choir would be available on the date of the carol service, and that £15 would be budgeted for refreshments. It was agreed to hold a Christmas 'best decorated house' competition, with a prize to the value of £25. It was agreed that the Council would coordinate Christmas card making for the residents of West House. It was also agreed to hold a Christmas movie day at the Parish rooms on the 9th of December, with a £50 budget for refreshments. The Christmas Eve drive around was also agreed. It was further agreed to send out a flyer informing residents of Christmas activities.*

f) **Working Group**

There were no updates or suggestions other than what had already been covered in the previous agenda item.

g) **Updates from Facebook**

Cllr Harding gave an update on the activity in the Facebook group. Firstly, a resident had raised the issue of fly tipping on Walldridge Fell. Cllr Sexton stated that this was being removed imminently. Another issue raised by residents was that of scrap collectors entering gardens and removing items without permission – Cllr Harding has been given the registration number of the van in question. Lots of positive feedback was received from residents regarding both the Halloween and World War One centenary events.

Resolved: *Cllr Sexton to get registration number from Cllr Harding and follow up. Cllr Sexton to post on Facebook warning about the use of unlicensed scrap collectors.*

h) **Awards Evening**

Councillors judged the photo competition. The winners list for the Best Kept Garden competition was confirmed. As no Citizen of the Year nominations were made, it was agreed to select a winner from the Kindness Campaign nominations after the meeting - Cllr Harding to supply the names to the Council. The purchasing of prizes and refreshments for the evening was discussed, as was having the winning photo printed on canvas, and the trophy engraved.

Resolved: *The winners of the photo competition were chosen, and winners list confirmed. It was agreed to purchase prizes to a total value of £215. A budget of £20 for refreshments was agreed. It was agreed that the Clerk should get the winning photo printed on canvas, and have the trophy engraved.*

i) **Auditor**

Councillors discussed the recent issue with the internal auditor. Quotes for a new internal auditor were distributed by the Clerk and reviewed by the Council. Cllr Bell suggested that a price for a full audit be obtained by the Clerk.

Resolved: *It was agreed that the Council would respond to the letter received from the internal auditor, and that Cllr Harding would draft a response. The Council agreed to hire Gordon Fletcher as the new internal auditor, at a cost of £150. It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain a price for a full audit from the new internal auditor.*

j) **Draft Budget**

Councillors reviewed the draft budget and discussed the setting of the precept. Cllr Sexton suggested that the precept could be increased, but that the Council would have to provide justification, and gave the examples of the Council taking on the cost of the street lights, and the precept having not been raised for many years. Cllr Corner stated that if the Council were to save money on flowers, the precept may not have to be raised as much. The residents present at the meeting were asked if they would have an issue with the precept being raised, and all said that they would not. Cllr Davies proposed an inclusion to the Christmas flyer asking residents if they would agree with the precept being raised. Cllr Bell mentioned the possibility of a 2% increase cap being brought in by the Government and suggested that it may be prudent to raise the precept to the required level now, rather than in several stages. Further renovation of the rooms was discussed, with it being highlighted that the current stairs are difficult to use. Cllr Bell provided estimates for removing the old staircase, installing a new one, refurbishing the kitchen and extending the upstairs room, which totalled approximately £10,000.

Resolved: *It was agreed to defer the setting of the budget and precept until further discussion has taken place. It was agreed that there would not be an inclusion in the Christmas flyer.*

k) **Action Plan**

The Action Plan was discussed in relation to the setting of next year's budget.

Resolved: *It was agreed to defer the updating of the Action Plan until a further discussion of the budget for next year takes place.*

l) **Toilet flooring**

It was noted that there had not been time to obtain three quotes for the toilet flooring.

Resolved: *It was agreed to defer the decision on the toilet flooring until the Clerk has had the chance to obtain three quotes.*

m) **Snow Angels & Community Agreement**

Cllr Sexton described the Snow Angels programme to the Council and explained the level of involvement that would be required from the Parish. Cllr Harding questioned what would happen if the Parish signed up, but there were not enough volunteers.

Resolved: *It was agreed that the Parish would not enter a partnership with DCC to support winter maintenance this year, but that this decision would be reviewed next year.*

n) **Campaign for Rural England membership**

The Council's Campaign for Rural England membership was discussed.

Resolved: *It was agreed to continue with the Campaign for Rural England membership at a cost of £36 per year.*

o) **Voting**

The Council discussed the possibility of recording votes in future meetings.

Resolved: *It was agreed that going forward, votes should be recorded.*

p) **Millennium Green Subcommittee**

The Caretaker gave a verbal report. The footbridge was identified as being in need of repair. The Caretaker reiterated his request to get obtain a maintenance service for the Millennium Green. Cllr Davies enquired about the trimming of the bridle path hedge. Cllr Sexton stated that this was scheduled to be done over Winter.

Resolved: *It was agreed that the Caretaker should obtain a quote for the repair to the footbridge, with the Clerk to obtain two further quotes should the cost be in excess of £100. It was agreed that the Caretaker should meet with three contractors to obtain quotes for a maintenance service for the Millennium Green.*

q) **Children's Play Area**

Cllr Sexton gave an update on funding for the play area, which is expected to be approved this week. Cllr Howie asked whether the fence would be in place in time, however it had been agreed at the budget meeting to delay the installation of the fence until next year.

Resolved: *Update noted.*

r) **Timetable of training events**

The Council discussed the Clerk taking the ILCA course, and the purchasing of the Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration 11th edition book.

Resolved: *It was agreed that the Clerk should take the ILCA course at a cost of £99 + VAT, and to purchase the Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration 11th edition book at a cost of £108.79.*

s) **Policy review**

The Clerk gave an update on the progress of the safeguarding policy.

Resolved: *Update noted.*

t) **Grants / fundraising**

Cllr Warren stated that if the Council decides to proceed with further renovation of the rooms, she is happy to take control of applying for Tesco funding. The Clerk informed the Council that she had signed up to the Durham 4 Communities funding portal and will attempt to identify future funding opportunities.

u) **Timesheets**

The Council discussed the possibility of the Clerk keeping timesheets.

Resolved: *It was agreed that the Clerk should keep timesheets, which will be checked and approved at each meeting.*

v) **Planning Applications**

DM/18/03204/FPA	43 Falstone Drive Chester-le-Street DH2 3ST	Replace existing conservatory with a pitched roof sunroom.
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Resolved: *To recommend approval.*

w) **To consider any planning applications received after the agenda was published**

- None received.

x) **Correspondence received**

1. Letter from If U Care Share Foundation – thanking Council for their donation.
2. Request from Allotment Association requesting funding for pest control course.
3. Room hire request from Tranquil Treatments.
4. Room hire request from resident wishing to run first aid courses.

Resolved:

1. *Cllr Warren read out the letter to the Council.*
2. *Cllr Bell suggested that a course to cover all hazardous chemicals may be a good idea, Clerk to check if there is a course that covers both. It was agreed that the Clerk should take the pest control course, or course that covers both, at a cost of £150.*
3. *Room hire request noted. As blinds will need to be in place before the next meeting, it was agreed that the Clerk should obtain prices for roller blinds, and purchase once the Council has been advised of the price.*
4. *Room hire request noted.*

y) **Correspondence received after agenda published**

The cleaner informed Cllr Warren that the kettle at the Parish rooms is broken. It was agreed that the Clerk should purchase one as soon as possible.

z) **Clerks Report / Action Log –**

The Clerk gave an update on all items on the Action Log from the October meeting.

aa) **Urgent issues for noting (Clerk to use delegated powers if necessary) and any items Councillors wish to agenda for next meeting**

- Nothing received.

10. **Financial Matters**

	(a) <u>Payments</u>	
<u>Resolved:</u> That the following payments be agreed:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the sum of £1,017.69 be paid to Miss S Wilson (October 2018 wage) That the sum of £221.74 be paid to Mr B Laidler (October 2018 wage) That the sum of £79.99 be paid to Miss S Wilson (purchase of printer) That the sum of £59.99 be paid to Miss S Wilson (Office 365 subscription) That the sum of £521.62 be paid to K Warren (Parish Rooms flooring) That the sum of £59.98 be paid to K Warren (A Boards x 2) That the sum of £362.98 be paid to K Warren (PA System) That the sum of £100.00 be paid to A Stirling (Halloween singing and music) That the sum of £50.00 be paid to A Stirling (WW1 singing) That the sum of £65.97 be paid to K Warren (Halloween expenses) That the sum of £22.74 be paid to XLN (Broadband) That the sum of £150.00 be paid to Theatre Space (Halloween Neon Witches) That the sum of £9.99 be paid to K Warren (Halloween expenses) That the sum of £31.97 be paid to K Warren (Halloween expenses) That the sum of £332.40 be paid to Earth Anchors (Notice board) That the sum of £22.02 be paid to Wicksteed Leisure (rower handle) That the sum of £110.40 be paid to St John Ambulance (Fun Day cover) That the sum of £250.00 be paid to Waldrige Junior Football Club (grant) That the sum of £200.00 be paid to Brenda Wright (grant – craft class) That the sum of £50.00 be paid to Great North Air Ambulance Service (grant) 	
	(b) <u>Receipts</u>	<p><u>Resolved:</u> That the following receipts be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) That the sum of £100 was received from Nickynoo (damage deposit return)
<p>11. <u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>11 December to commence at 7.00pm.</p> <p>The meeting terminated at 9.45 pm</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Chairman Date</p>		