

West Rainton& Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held

at 19:00 on 21stSeptember 2023

At St Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton

Present: Councillors I Diggory, M Massey, P Morson, A Wallage (Chairperson) and K Wood

In Attendance: M Ramshaw (Parish Clerk)

NOTE The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Boettcher (operation recovery) and Cllr Kellett (holiday). **Parish Council resolved** to approve these absences.

2)Co-Option to Parish Council Vacancies

The Parish Clerk advised members that there had been no interest in the current vacancies.

Parish Council resolved that a further advert go out for the two vacancies with a closing date 11th October 2023.

3) Declarations of interest

It was agreed that declarations of interest would be dealt with as and when the need arose.

4) Public Participation

There were no members of the public in attendance.

5) Minutes

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

6) The Banks Group – Update on Station Road development

Representatives from the Banks Group were in attendance to update the Parish Council on the Station Road development. Gentoo is the social housing contractor and these will be the first houses built.

Members were advised that at the current time, the owners of the Community Hub Site (Woodside), had no viable options for the Hub. They will continue to liaise with Woodside about any future plans.

Signature.....

Date.....

It is anticipated that following a tender process for the private houses, work should start towards the end of 2023 or early 2024. It is envisaged that properties will be on sale from Spring 2024.

Representatives provided an updated slight plan incorporating some minor amendments agreed with DCC. Following on from previous discussions with the Parish Council regarding parking issues on Station Road, representatives advised these amendments include the addition of 4 parking bays on the grass verge.

Discussion took place regarding resident concerns regarding landscaping along the grass verge on Station Road which is outside the site boundary and the responsibility of DCC; representatives advised that Banks were happy to clear and cut back overgrown weeds/shrubs along the whole length to tidy up the area so that in future it would become a wider green space that DCC could then easily maintain through its grass cutting. When this offer was made to DCC, Highways officers did not approve it. Cllr Wallage, advised she would discuss this further with DCC.

Signature.....

Date.....

7) Finance Report

PART A: FOR INFORMATION					
1. INCOME		29/8/23 Re-Open (PS) (Cheque into Co-op Account)	£185.00		
		23/8/23 Scotts Memorials (KD & CB) (Cheque into Co-Op)	£186.00		
		New bank account test deposit (M Ramshaw)	£5.00		
		4/9/23 Ian Wood Memorials (LW)	£93.00		
		4/9/23 Memorial Leaves x 2 (R & P D)	£334.00		
2. EXPENDITURE					
A) Expenditure previously agreed by Parish Council due this month					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	AMOUNT (£)		
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk Net Salary - September 23	441.19		
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - September 23	110.40		
3	WR & L Community Association	Hire of Jubilee Hall 23/6/23	24.00		
4	Special Branch Tree Services Ltd	Cemetery Grounds Maintenance - August 23	373.16		
5	Special Branch Tree Services Ltd	Grounds Maintenance - Strim Village Green	336.00		
6	Unity Bank	Monthly Service Charge (part month)	3.96		
		TOTAL	£1,288.71		
B) Expenditure requiring approval					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION	
7	Cumbrian Clock Company	Church Clock Service (Cheque no 303417 Paid in July)	222.00	Y	
8	M Ramshaw	Re-Imbursement of initial new bank account test deposit	5.00	Y	
9	G Coates	Village Maintenance	190.00	Y	
10	Mazars LLP	Limited Assurance Review Year ended 31/3/23	378.00	Y	
11	Durham County Council	Christmas - Supply of tree, lighting, assisted switch on and removal of tree	2907.97	Y	
12	Anglian Water (Business National Ltd)	Cemetery Water Supply 2/5 - 1/8/23	20.67	Y	
13	EON	21/7/23 Electricity Supply June (DD Co-Op Account)	25.79	Y	
14	EON	22/8/23 Electricity Supply July (DD Co-op Account)	36.81	Y	
15	Communicorp	Clerks and Council Direct Subscription Renewal (Nov 23)	14.00	Y	
16	Odlings Ltd	2 x Mulberry Leaves (P & R D)	195.60	Y	
17	M Ramshaw	Reimbursement - 1st class stamps x 16 (£17.60) & file & plastic pockets (£3.75) & Paper (£8.30)	29.65	Y	
		TOTAL	£4,025.49		
Total Expenditure A + B			£5,314.20		

Parish Council resolved to:

1. Note income and expenditure reported for information in Part A
2. Approve expenditure listed in Part B

Signature.....

Date.....

8) Planning Applications

Three planning applications were considered however members had no comments.

9) Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated information. No comments were received from Mazars the external auditor, and as a result no actions are necessary. The Parish Clerk advised members that under minor scope for improvement, Box 11A in Section 2 of the documentation had not been completed. This however did not lead to any required actions.

Parish Council resolved to note the outcome.

10) Unity Bank Account – Update

The Parish Clerk advised that the new bank account was now operational and the closing balances on the Coop accounts have been transferred to the new current account. Closing balances have been reconciled to the cash book. The Parish Clerk advised that he could apply for a debit card on the current account for his sole use with a limit of £500 per transaction (Parish Clerk delegated spending limit approval, in consultation with the Chair). This would improve flexibility and efficiency e.g., procurement of urgent or on-line purchases and it would avoid the need for reimbursement claims. All transactions would be reported on finance reports for information, can be monitored on line by authorised signatures, and will be verified and reconciled through the bank reconciliation processes. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the application for such a card.

11) Bank Reconciliation – Co-Operative Bank final reconciliation

The Parish Clerk presented the reconciled balance. Cllr Diggory confirmed the reconciliation figures against the Bank Statement.

12) School Avenue Park Project

Cllr Wallage advised members that the funding application to the AAP was approved subject to S106 grant funding approval. Cllr Wallage to email DCC for an update.

13) Additional Bulb Planting

Cllr Wallage referred members to the previously circulated report. Last year's planting behind the boulders from Priory Court towards Burns Close could not be completed due to insufficient bulbs. In order to finish the area, the estimated cost of the bulbs would be £2000. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the purchase of the additional bulbs and Cllr Wallage agreed to approach DCC regarding the lifting of the turf and possible planting on behalf of the Parish Council.

Signature.....

Date.....

14) Additional/Replacement Waste Bins

Cllr Wallage referred members to the report which detailing proposals for the purchase of new additional black general waste bins and the replacement of existing dog bins with the general waste bins now that DCC had confirmed the cost. Cllr Wallage also advised members that since the report was prepared the need for a further replacement bin had been identified.

Parish Council resolved to approve the purchase of 3 new bins and 6 replacement bins from DCC at a cost of £2570.

15) Cemetery Headstone Stress Testing

The Parish Clerk advised members that another round of stress testing the headstones in the Cemetery is due and actions being taken to progress. The company that had undertaken previous tests is no longer doing them and DCC are unable to carry out the work. A memorial stonemason had advised they could do it for a cost in the region of £880. Whilst the Parish Clerk explores other options, Cllr Diggory advised that he would speak to his neighbour who is a stonemason in a bid to help achieve a solution.

16) Government's Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

Parish Councillors acknowledged the information and noted that West Rainton and Leamside weren't identified as hotspots.

17) West Rainton & Leamside Village Partnership update

Cllr Diggory advised that discussion had taken place around Jubilee Hall with positive news that most of the debts had now been paid. It is still believed £40000 is still owed to an individual.

Members were advised that the Because We Care Group may apply for further funding from the Parish Council as well as applying to a number of other sources. The Partnership have agreed to support the Project for a month or two.

18) Smaller Councils Forum Update

Cllr Wood advised that he attended the Forum where the majority of the discussion surrounded the Local Authorities budget position.

19) General Correspondence

The Parish Clerk advised that correspondence had been received from DCC to advise that they will not be providing a website and support function from April 2024. The Parish Clerk advised that CDALC were looking at future options for Parish Councils.

20) Date and Time of Next Meeting

Parish Council noted the date and time of next meeting: Thursday 19th October 2023 at 19:00 in St Marys Church Meeting Room.

Signature.....

Date.....