

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held

at 19:00 on 21st March 2024

At St Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton

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

In Attendance: M Ramshaw (Parish Clerk)
8 x Members of the Public

NOTE The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Wood (DAY Event), Cllr Boettcher (Illness) and Cllr Kellett (Meeting). **Parish Council resolved** to approve these absences.

2) Declarations of interest

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

3) Public Participation

The members of the public confirmed that they had attended the meeting to discuss their concerns with regards to the Parish Council's management of the Cemetery, particularly around the recent grave topping up exercise and the council's policy relating to the lawn area where different rules apply than in other areas of the cemetery.

One of the members of the public read out a lengthy statement which detailed the concerns which were shared by others in attendance. In response, a request was made to submit the statement in writing so that all issues raised could be properly considered and a written response provided in due course. Questions raised by others in attendance were noted and will also be answered in the Parish Council's written response. Those in attendance were asked to leave contact details so they could be sent a copy of the council's response.

4) Minutes

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

Signature.....

Date.....

5) Parish Councillor Vacancies

The Parish Clerk advised members that there had been no interest in the two vacancies. **Parish Council resolved** to approve re-advertising the co-option process for the vacancies with a deadline of 8th May 2024.

6) Finance Report

PART A: FOR INFORMATION			£		
1. INCOME	VAT		£8,045.84		
2. EXPENDITURE					
A) Expenditure previously agreed by Parish Council due this month					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	
1	M Ramshaw	Parish Clerk Net Salary - March	BACS	482.55	
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - March	BACS	120.60	
3	Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd	Cemetery maintenance - February 2024	BACS	373.16	
4	Gallagher	Annual Insurance Renewal	BACS (March)	780.69	
5	WR&LVP	Grant - Big Lunch	BACS (1/4/24)	590.00	
6	WR&LVP	Grant - Village Show	BACS (1/4/24)	250.00	
7	Brownies	Grant - Pantomine & Room Hire Support	BACS (1/4/24)	630.00	
8	DAY	Grant - Youth Service Provision Room Hire	BACS (1/4/24)	3000.00	
9	Narked Design Ltd	Calendar Addition to Website	BACS (March)	100.00	
		TOTAL		6327.00	
B) Expenditure requiring approval - Expected Invoice Pending					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION
10	M Ramshaw	Reimbursement - Screwdriver set and pins	BACS	15.30	Y
11	M Ramshaw	Reimbursement - 16 x 1st class stamps	BACS	20.00	Y
12	G Coates	Cemetery Maintenance (Grave top-Ups) - Top Soil £152 & Labour £187.50	BACS	339.50	Y
13	Odlings Ltd	Memorial Leaf (RT)	BACS	97.80	Y
		TOTAL		472.60	
Total Expenditure A + B				6799.60	

Parish Council resolved to:

Signature.....

Date.....

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

7) Planning Applications

One planning application had been received for the Parish Council area from Durham County Council in the weekly planning data. Parish Council noted the application and had no comment.

8) Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Parish Clerk advised that Parish Council needed to appoint an internal auditor for the 2023/24 year end accounts. **Parish Council resolved** to approve A S Accountancy Services who had audited the Councils accounts for a number of years.

9) Annual Plan 2024/25

Cllr Wallage referred members to the circulated draft Annual Plan. Cllr Wallage advised members on some of the updates and the fact that some of the areas are awaiting progress from Durham County Council. It was decided to bring the Plan back on a quarterly basis for progress updates.

10) Asset Register

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated Asset Register. No updates for the year were required. Parish Councillors noted the content.

11) Risk Management Strategy

a) Review of Strategy

The Parish Clerk referred members to the previously circulated document highlighting some minor proposed amendments. **Parish Council resolved** to approve the document. The Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

b) Consideration of Risk Assessment

The Parish Clerk referred members to the Parish Risk Assessment. This had been previously circulated and some additional risks added and some revised. Particular attention was drawn to an area of Village Green adjacent to St Mary's Church where the access to the Church is via a gravel type road which is failing with some large pot holes developing which could damage vehicles as well as some edging coming away near the Church gate which could cause a trip hazard. Reference was also made to updating of the risk assessment around the Cemetery. The Parish Clerk agreed to give some consideration to this. The **Parish Council resolved** to approve the Risk Assessment and noted that the next review was due in 6 months time.

Signature.....

Date.....

12) Village Green Strimming

Parish Council resolved to approve the continuation of strimming around village green, by Special Branch Tree Services Ltd at last years rate of £280 + VAT per visit.

13) Durham Area Youth – Revised Grant Application

The Parish Clerk advised members that Emily Burns from DAY had requested an additional £750.00 on top of the £3000 agreed grant due to increased room hire costs at Jubilee Hall. **Parish Council resolved** to refuse the request.

14) West Rainton & Leamside Village Partnership – Feedback

Cllr Wallage informed members that a representative from Banks group was in attendance to give an update on the Banks Group Community Fund. The Fund is aimed at small grassroots community activities. Funding is available over the next 3 years. £5000 of funding this year has been allocated for the Village Partnership to distribute to its community group members. The school is also interested in applying. Maximum £1000 to each group/activity.

There are also funding opportunities to apply for grant funding from the balance of the Community Chest Funding administered by DCC (£108K still available). This was initially earmarked to support Jubilee Hall but has been opened up to allow all community groups/organisations that provide services or activities in West Rainton to apply. A number of applications submitted were in the process of being considered.

15) Smaller Councils Forum

The Parish Clerk referred members to the report that had been circulated. Members noted the content.

16) General Correspondence

The Parish Clerk advised members that a member of the public had emailed regarding the Cemetery however she was present at the meeting and the issues were shared in person.

The Parish Clerk referred members to the email from DCC regarding an application to upgrade footpath 21 West Rainton to a public Bridleway. The application was noted and there were no comments.

17) Date and Time of Next Meeting

Parish Council noted the date and time of next meeting: Thursday 18th April 2024, 19:00 in St Marys Church Meeting Room.

Signature.....

Date.....