

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at
19:00 On Thursday 20th February 2025
at St Mary's Church Meeting Room, West Rainton

Present: Councillors I Diggory (Chairperson), S Corfield, A Langford, M Massey & A Wallage

In Attendance:

Parish Clerk
3 members of the public

NOTE:
The meeting was not audio or video recorded.

1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Boettcher (illness), Cllr Wood (holiday) and Cllr Kellett (appointment). Cllr Morson was not in attendance and no apology had been received.

Parish Council resolved to approve the absence of Cllrs Boettcher, Kellett and Wood and that the other absence would be recorded as unauthorised.

2) Declarations of interest

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

3) Public Participation

It was confirmed that three members of the public were in attendance to hear the discussion regarding Jubilee Hall. This is agenda at Item 9. Cllr Diggory proposed that this item be brought forward to become item 5 and that standing orders should be suspended to allow for members of the public to speak during consideration of the item. **Parish Council resolved** to approve these proposals which were at the discretion of the Chair.

4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

Parish Council resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16th January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

5) Jubilee Hall – Request for funding for part-time Manager

Cllr Diggory advised that at the January meeting of the Parish Council, Parish Council were advised of a letter sent to the Parish Council from Janet Talyer,

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

the Secretary and Treasurer of the Community Association (CA). This letter advised of her decision to withdraw from her numerous roles at the Hall wef 31 July 2025.

In the letter Janet had outlined 2 ways in which to keep the Hall open for use after this date:

- 1) To establish a strong management committee with members prepared to take on the roles she was withdrawing from

or

- 2) Employ a part time manager to perform her roles

The letter outlined that Janet considered option 1 was an impossible task and that option 2 could not be achieved without the certainty of long-term funding. As a result, Janet was requesting that the Parish Council give a commitment to fund the on-going costs of the CA employing a part time manager to take over her roles at the end of July.

It was noted that whilst a 5-year budget forecast had been submitted in support of this request (circulated to members at the meeting) questions remained in relation to; the current financial position of the CA and the business case going forward, the adequacy of the CA's financial management arrangements and the overall effectiveness of the CA's governance arrangements. Parish Council considered these issues needed addressing before the CA could be in a position to recruit and employ staff, irrespective of the funding source.

After some discussion, Parish Council concluded the lack of an effective management team at the CA was the immediate priority that needed to be addressed, to help reduce the risk to the CA having to close the Hall at the end of July.

Parish Council Resolved:

- 1) It was unable to support the funding request as a properly costed business case had not been provided and there was no clear evidence that the employment of a manager would ensure the continued operation of the Hall.
- 2) To set up a working group of interested parties as a matter of urgency (parish council, village partnership, the Community Association) to help address the various issues facing the CA, but in particular to lay the groundwork for establishing a management team.
- 3) Cllr Diggory agreed to take an initial lead in the setting up of the group and was tasked with engaging with CA trustees, to present the role of the working group and its members and seek their views and agreement.

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Signed:.....

Dated:.....

6) Finance Report

PART A: FOR INFORMATION					
1. INCOME	Cemetery - Burial JL (new single)	£778.00			
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 - February 25	BACS	497.82	
2	HM Revenue and Customs Only 465PD00171320	HMRC Liability - February 25	BACS	124.40	
3	Special Branch Tree Services NE Ltd	Cemetery maintenance - Jan 25	BACS	391.81	
4	Gallagher	Annual Insurance Renewal	BACS	790.07	
5	EON	Electric Supply - Jan 25	DD	30.00	
6	Lloyds Bank	Service Charge (Card)	DD	3.00	
7	Narked Ltd.	Annual - parish web hosting package	BACS	225.00	
		TOTAL		2062.10	
B) Expenditure requiring approval					
ITEM	PAYEE	PURPOSE	Payment Method	AMOUNT (£)	BUDGET PROVISION
8	Mazars LLP	External Audit 2023/24	BACS (Paid Jan)	378.00	Y
9	SLCC	Annual membership renewal	BACS	110.00	Y
10	Anglian Water Business (National) Ltd	Cemetery water supply - 2/11/24 - 1/2/25	BACS	21.40	Y
11	Greenbarnes Ltd	Replacement noticeboard	BACS	1332.03	Y
		TOTAL		1841.43	
Total Expenditure A + B				3903.53	

Parish Council resolved to:

- Note income and expenditure reported for information.
- Approve expenditure listed in Part B

7) Grant Application

This item was not considered as the application information had not been received from the prospective applicant.

8) Planning Applications

a) DCC Weekly Planning Applications

There were no comments on the DCC circulated planning applications.

b) DM/24/03332/FPA - 27 Station Road, West Rainton

Parish Council resolved to withdraw the objection to this application after receiving information from the Planning Officer (DCC).

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

9) Cemetery Fees Review

The Parish Clerk referred members to the report regarding the review of cemetery fees for 2025/26. It was noted that the current contractor did not wish to reapply for the contract for 2025/26 and this would incur further increases to the maintenance costs.

After some discussion **Parish Council resolved** to:

- 1) Uplift the fees from 1st April 2025 by 10%
- 2) Apply no uplift to the Mulberry Tree memorial leaves so they will remain at £180.00 for the next year.

10) West Rainton & Leamside & Village Partnership

There was no update from the Village Partnership meeting.

11) Smaller Councils Forum

No update, as Cllr Boettcher not in attendance.

12) General Correspondence

No correspondence received.

13) Date and time of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is Thursday 20th March 2025 at 7.00pm

Parish Council resolved to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2)

14) Cemetery Maintenance Contract 2025/26

The Parish Clerk circulated information and advised that two completed quotations for the Contract had been received. Both bidders met the criteria and had supplied the relevant detail, and two positive references linked to similar work. In line with the published criteria, **Parish Council resolved** to award the contract to the most economically advantageous bid of £7488 (inc. VAT) which was from Makepeace Landscapes Ltd.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....