

Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of 27th April 2015 held at Gayle Institute at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs J Blackie (Chairman), Mrs S Alderson, Ms D Allen, Ms A Caygill, G DiDuca, A Fawcett, Ms CM Grainger, W Head, S Hunter, A Sunter, I Woolley.

In Attendance: I King (Clerk), and 12 members of the public

Apologies:

1. **The Minutes of the Meeting of 23rd February 2015 were accepted as a true record, and signed by the Chairman. There were no Matters Arising.**
2. **Membership of the Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council May 2015-May 2019**

The Chairman confirmed that all candidates for the Council had been elected unopposed. He welcomed the election of two new members who would be joining the Council – Mrs A Rhodes and Mr B Fawcett.

The Chairman then announced that he would move two items of business up the Agendas so that interested parties did not have to stay for the rest of the meeting.

3. **St Margaret's Graveyard**

The Clerk read out a letter from Ms Geraldine Sumner which requested Parish Council help in maintaining the Graveyard at St Margaret's Church. She had approached the Vicar, and had been advised that the Church had no money to pay for maintenance, and was suggesting that local volunteers could trim it regularly if the Council could fund 2 or 3 major cuts a year.

Geraldine felt that local opinion was against the idea of using sheep or ponies to keep the grass down, as this could lead to unpleasant mess and damage to the graves and head stones.

The Chairman thanked her for the letter and agreed with her views on the use of animals. He had approached the Council's contractor, who had quoted a price of £120 per cut.

Cllr Di Duca said that he was a member of the congregation and that the Church has to be self-financing by its membership. The congregation averages around 30 people, and they are mostly elderly. There are maybe 2 to 3 burials a year, paying around £250 each. Looking back at the figures the Church had been paying over £1000 *per annum* to maintain the Churchyard up to 2010, but it could no longer afford this. It would be grateful for any offer of help from the Parish Council.

Cllr Blackie said that if the Parish Council helped out, it would be essential that volunteers would keep cutting the grass between the 2 or 3 cuts that the Council might fund.

Cllr Sunter suggested that the Church of England is probably the richest landlord in the country and wondered why it could not afford to maintain small country churches. Cllr Head added that if a small business was not sufficiently used it would be difficult to justify expenditure if it. Cllr Woolley felt that the Church should make at least a token contribution to the costs. He added that the Methodist Cemetery has adequate funds. The Church and the Cemetery had operated separate accounts.

A member of the public, Rodney Bell, suggested that the church might seek sponsorship, or discreet advertising on the church railings. Another member of the public, Liz Lawson, wondered about the position of the Council's other Parish Church at Hardraw.

Concerned about setting a precedent, Cllr Blackie proposed an informal arrangement offering £300 for three cuts of the graveyard in the current year. **Resolved in favour unanimously.** A Councillor added that the footpath through the graveyard was often used by employees of the Wensleydale Creamery, and wondered about the possibility of a donation from that source. The Chairman said he would follow this up with the Creamery. (This Minute amended at the meeting of 6 July.)

4. **Parking in Gayle**

Dale Punchard had been in contact with the Clerk concerning parking on the Gaits. He had supplied photographs of three problem areas – access to his drive, keeping his fire escape window clear and the property's stop cock. It was noted that the drive is already indicated by a painted white line, and the Council felt that there was nothing else to be done about that. The problem with the fire escape window was recognised, and it was felt that a notice by it might be helpful.

Cllr Blackie added that it is right for people experiencing such problems should approach the Parish Council, but he felt that parking has been a contentious issue in The Gaits for a long time and is not easily resolved.

5. **Chairman's Items**

a. **Richmondshire District Council Communities Opportunities Fund (COF)**

The Chairman reported a successful conclusion for his bids on behalf of the Council and the local community for grants. Funding is available from the COF for the new defibrillator (to go on the front of the Market House), 6 new laptop computers for the Community Office for training and local use, improving the condition and security of the hut on the Community Field, and major improvements to the Play Park.

He added his gratitude to Hazel Thwaite who had organised a group of local mums to repaint the apparatus on the Gayle Play Park. He noted that the Parish Council is to take over responsibility for the Gayle Play Park and the small football area on Bealah Bank from Richmondshire District Council, and will be consulting local people on their future development.

b. **Home to School Transport**

After the Council's discussions on this topic at the February meeting Cllr Blackie had raised it at the Area Committee. He was happy to report that the County Council had done a "u-turn" on the issue immediately before the Committee had met, and the cost was kept to £480 instead of going up to £550 – though he added that this is still an unwarranted tax on living in the countryside.

Cllr Caygill asked what had happened to the proposal to charge an annual fare to primary school children who live within 2-3 miles of their schools. The Chairman reported that a Consultation had recorded 75% opposition, with no-one supporting the proposal. However, it was still under discussion, and no decision had yet been made.

c. NYCC Highways Salt Store at Hawes Auction Mart

An alert had sounded in a period of heavy rain when it became apparent that salt was washing from the store into the River Ure. It was felt that the major cause is that the new store is not roofed, and that the canvas covers do not fit well and are very difficult for a man on his own to operate, and it was an unreasonable expectation for this operation to take place when the gritter drivers and mates who serve us so well start at 4.00 am. Money is being wasted because there was no roof.

Local anglers are concerned that they are about to restock the river. A gritter driver, Steve Richardson, said that this was a little over the top as all the salt that is applied to the roads will eventually finish up in the river.

Councillors were concerned that the trees by Haylands Bridge are getting very dangerous. The Highways Department denies any responsibility for the area, but it was felt that something needs to be done before someone gets hurt or the road gets blocked. The Clerk was asked to write again to the NYCC Highways Department, and copy the letter to the YD National Park Authority and the Environment Agency.

d. Little White Bus

Cllr Head, Operations Manager of The Little White Bus, reported that the Swaledale Shuttle is doing very well and generating positive feedback. A new service covering both sides of Wensleydale will begin shortly, and will operate 6 days a week, with 3 journeys each side of the Dale. Three new vehicles have been supplied, all with low floors and ticket machines.

There is still a real need for more volunteers – without them the services could not run and Cllr Head expressed his thanks on behalf of the Community to all the LWB volunteers.

e. National / Local Housing Policy

The Parish Council needs to respond to the latest Policy Document from the YD National Park Authority. The Chairman asked for two volunteers to join him in a small Working Group to formulate the Council's response, and Cllrs Tony Fawcett and Ms Debbie Allen agreed.

Cllr Blackie is very concerned about the Conservative Party's proposals to force the sale of Council Houses and Housing Association dwellings, believing that if they are implemented, there will be no affordable rented housing left in the Parish and beyond in the Upper Dales within the next 10 years. This can only spread doom and gloom for local young people and families seeking to stay living and working in the Upper Dales, and to bring their families up here.

f. Cemetery Policy

Deferred to the new Council.

g. Tour de France Legacy Projects

The Council is awaiting ideas from the TdF Working Group.

h. Marker Posts

The Chairman confirmed that 3 of the Marker Posts have been removed from the public verge outside The Shetty in Gayle.

i. NYCC Library Consultation

The Chairman had replied to the Consultation on behalf of the Council and continued to fight as a County Councillor for a fairer share of the reduced resources across all libraries in North Yorkshire. However, he advised that the current proposals being imposed by the Conservative political administration would mean a loss of a total of £19000 of funding to the Community Office.

j. War Memorial

Jim Spensely has agreed to undertake the work, and has sourced the necessary stone. Cllr Fawcett and Cllr Hunter are to co-ordinate and supervise the work. Cllr Woolley asked that a final design should be circulated to the Council prior to the work being started.

k. Police Issues

Rodney Bell, a member of the public, praised the Officer who had recently chastised a local mum for parking on the zigzag lines outside the school. He argued that the road outside the school needs more monitoring. Cllr Head is due to meet Sgt Stuart Grainger shortly, and agreed to raise the matter with him.

l. Highways Issues

Several unfinished items were raised. The Chairman and the Clerk are to look at the latest list of responses from the Highways Department, and see which of them have not been completed.

The Herriots Hotel sign which continues to generate friction between would-be parkers and the hotelier was again discussed. This area was dedicated a short term parking area for the shops in the Cobbles by Highways some years ago, and the Clerk was asked to write reminding the hotelier of this and requesting a less aggressive approach.

6. YDNPA Planning Applications

- a. R/48/155B/LB Stone House Hotel: listed building consent for erection of single storey extension to existing dining room.** Council resolved to support this as the hotel is a valued local business and employer. It was felt that the extension would only be visible as you drive up to the hotel.
- b. R/56/161H HSBC, Market Place, Hawes: full planning permission for replacement of the external self service machine.** Council resolved to strongly support this application as it is very keen that the Bank should be encouraged to stay in the town.
- c. R/56/422A Kale Bank, Burtersett: full planning permission for conversion of barn to create two bedroomed dwelling.** Council agreed to strongly support this application.

- d. R/48/78P/LP The Old School House, Hardraw: listed building consent for internal works.** Council resolved to strongly support this application.
- e. R/56/86P/AA Dales Countryside Museum: consent to display 8 fascia signs and 2 free standing signs.** This application was described as “overkill”. While not objecting to more signage for the museum, or to most of the signs applied for, members of the Council took strong exception to the large white lettering across the long wall of the Museum. It felt that this was not in keeping with the building. Council resolved by 8 votes to 1 (Cllr Ms D Allen), with 2 abstentions (including Cllr. Blackie), to oppose this application.

7. Correspondence

- a. Carol Tyler** – Letter re local Taxi Service. The Clerk read this letter out to the Council at the request of the writer.
- b. Hawes & District Gala Committee** – Letter appealing for financial help. The Council was sympathetic to this appeal, as it was a new Committee with several young people now involved. **The Chairman proposed a one-off grant of £500 which was unanimously approved.** Cllr Di Duca and the Clerk also agreed to volunteer their assistance for the day of the Gala.
- c. Resident request** - For marker posts to prevent turning on the green at Turfy Top. A member of the public, Brenda Peacock, suggested that part of the problem is caused by parking for the Youth Hostel. The Council is reluctant to ask for more marker posts in the town, but the Chairman agreed to discuss the matter with the Youth Hostel after the General Election.
- d. Anne Smithies** – Letter received re the team which made the bunting for the Tour de France. The Clerk read out this letter, which praised the small team of people who made the bunting which greatly added to the atmosphere of Hawes and High Abbotside at the time of the Tour de France in July 2014. The Council warmly endorsed the views expressed in this letter.

8. Financial Matters

- a. Agreed to pay the following Accounts:**
 - i. Provision of Services by the Upper Wensleydale Community Office to the Parish Council** for the two years from May 2014 – April 2016 - **£1000**
 - ii. Salt Bin for The Holme** - Under £200 (Exact amount TBA)
 - iii. Contribution to servicing costs (@£50.00)** of sewing machines used for the Tour de France Bunting (Linda Reynolds, Jane Barratt, Fiona Gill, Ruth Lindsey and Anne Smithies (3 machines) – **£350**
 - iv. Andrew Fagg** - grant towards the conversion of the National School into a Community Meeting Room - **£1000**
- b. Account already paid**

Parish Council Insurance 2015-16 – Zurich Municipal (down from £1068.11 last year) - £553.35

c. Accounts – Other issues - Confirmation of receipt of VAT reclaim payment - £7537.87

9. Any Other Business

- a. Cllr Grainger reported that the clearing-up of dog dirt is deteriorating, and wondered what had happened to the plans to swap the bins between the Museum and The Holme. The Chairman said we could discuss this with a YDNPA officer who is coming to the July meeting.
- b. Cllr Grainger reported that streetlight no. 37 is still not working.
- c. Cllr Grainger said that the problem with noisy and dangerous car racing at night is on the increase again. Cllr Head agreed to discuss this at his forthcoming meeting with Sgt Stewart Grainger.
- d. Rodney Bell, a member of the public, apologised fulsomely to the Council for having upset the staff in the Community Office. At his request Mrs Peacock read out a letter explaining the situation, which had involved the removal of his taxi business cards from the Little White Buses.

Cllr Blackie announced that these had now been replaced on the buses and in the Community Office. Cllr Head suggested that this was not a matter for the Parish Council, as he had made the original decision as manager of the Little White Bus service. He agreed a meeting between Mr. Bell and Cllr Blackie was a way forward but he would not be prepared to attend this meeting.

10. **Conclusion** – The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking Cllrs Walter Head and Cllr Mary Grainger for their years of loyal service to the Council. He also praised those members who are staying on for another term of office, and ended with an acknowledgement of the members of the public who are regular attenders at the Parish Council meetings who have also lasted the course of the past four years.

Meeting closed at 9.29pm