

**Minutes of the meeting of Heddon-on-the-Wall Parish Council held on
Wednesday 12th June 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in Heddon Community Library**

PRESENT: Cllrs. D. Keller [DK]; (in the Chair); K. Dryden [KD]; R. Oatway [RO]; R. Adams [RA]; M. Wilson [MW]; D. Matthews [DM];

IN ATTENDANCE: L. Barton (Clerk); **Members of the public: None present**

**Minute
No.**

Agenda item

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** K. Ince; L. Irving-Munro

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr. Wilson declared an interest in St Andrew’s Church and Heddon Education and Training Trust, Cllr. Keller declared an interest in Karbon Homes and all matters relating to ground care and tree maintenance.

3. **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL:**

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: RESOLVED:** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on May 8th were approved and signed by the Chair. The minutes of the Annual Meeting, which also took place on May 8th, were also approved and signed by the Chair.

5. **MATTERS ARISING AND REVIEW OF ACTIONS:**
Allotments – Cllr. Keller about the current situation regarding allotments and allotment rent.
 - The clerk explained that 3 allotments have become available: 1 full sized plot (which will be split into two half plots) and 2 half plots. This means 4 half sized plots are now available. The clerk will contact people on the waiting list and arrange viewings.
 - All other allotment holders have either paid their rent in full or have paid the first instalment of their rent. Some are owed a refund due to the change in rent; the clerk will organise this.
 - Due to the long waiting list, councillors **agreed** to change the tenancy agreement to Heddon residents only going forwards (not those who live within 1 mile of the parish boundary). Cllr. Keller confirmed that this will not affect any current allotment holders who live outside of Heddon. Cllr. Matthews requested a copy of the allotment tenancy agreement.
 - The clerk informed councillors that the water tank has been ordered and the order is being processed by NEC Composites. Drawings have been approved by the Parish Council and we are now awaiting a date for installation.

6. **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**
 - a) To approve payment of invoices presented at the meeting. **RESOLVED.** The following invoices were approved:

£33 Window cleaning	£75 Carpet cleaning Business Centre
£47.28 Library cleaning	£28.99 Planter expenditure from a volunteer
£414 Grounds Maintenance	£148 SLCC annual subscription
£350 Selman Park lease quarter 1	£3,458.82 Zurich Insurance renewal

- b) To consider any applications for grants or donations received at least 3 days before the meeting:
Calvert Kielder Trust had contacted the Parish Council. Councillors **agreed** that they would not give a donation on this occasion, as they would prefer donations to be made to local causes.

- c) To discuss the external audit for the year 2023 / 2024; in particular to:
- i. Receive and discuss the internal audit report. **RESOLVED.**
Councillors discussed the Internal Audit report from JC Accountants. The points to note raised were that income and expenditure had not been included in the minutes of meetings until December 2023. However, the auditor noted that this has since improved, although some expenditure was missing from the March minutes. The clerk will ensure that all income and expenditure is correctly minuted in future.
The auditor also pointed out that the donations to the Village Show and Culture Festival were not properly minuted in 2023. Cllr. Wilson pointed out that councillors had discussed and approved these donations. However, it was **agreed** that any future donations will be minuted to show the amount given and a Grant / Donation application form will be completed.
- ii. Review and discuss internal controls. **RESOLVED.** Councillors discussed the internal controls currently in place:
- Clerk sends monthly Income and Expenditure spreadsheet to councillors to inform them of the current financial position; this is added to the minutes each month
 - Clerk presents invoices for approval at each meeting (details of these are emailed to councillors prior to the meeting); details of invoices are also included in the minutes each month
 - Budget Monitoring takes place quarterly
 - Banking compliance checks will take place quarterly commencing in July 2024 (conducted by the vice-chair);
 - Clerk has attended training and acted on advice from internal and external auditors to ensure compliance with financial regulations;
 - Councillors have specific roles and responsibilities (as per the Roles and Responsibilities document updated at the May meeting) to ensure oversight and good governance
 - Adherence to the Financial Regulations Guidance and associated policies
 - Assets are monitored by the asset officer report, who reports to councillors monthly on any issues relating to assets; the Knott Hall has its own subcommittee who monitor the building and equipment
 - Asset register and risk assessment are updated each year
 - Since the current clerk was appointed in May 2023, there has been a clear segregation of duties between the clerk/RFO and the Chair
 - The Parish Council has delegated authorities and spending limits
- iii. Review and approve the risk assessment. Cllr. Wilson suggested some changes to wording on the risk assessment, which were **agreed** by councillors. The clerk will make the amendments and the risk assessment will be signed at the July meeting.
- iv. Complete the Annual Governance Statement. **RESOLVED.** The internal audit report showed that the Parish Council had complied in all areas apart from the points of note mentioned above (which form part of Assertion 2). When responding to Assertion 2 on the Annual Governance Statement, councillors considered the internal controls in place and concluded that they were rigorous. Although income and expenditure had not been included on the minutes prior to December 2023, councillors had received a spreadsheet each month detailing the current income and expenditure and invoices had been presented at each meeting and approved. Therefore, councillors **agreed** to answer 'yes' to Assertion 2 on the Annual Governance Statement. However, it was **agreed** to answer 'No' to Assertion 4 (relating to the Public Right of Inspection) on the advice of the external auditor, as the Inspection period did not take place within the correct time frame last year.

- v. Approve the Statement of Accounts prepared by the clerk. **RESOLVED.** Councillors considered, signed and approved the Statement of Accounts prepared by the Clerk. The clerk explained that the 2022/23 figures are restated because the payroll admin charge should have been excluded from Staff costs and included in All Other Payments. The clerk has made this amendment on this year's Statement of Accounts.

7. COUNCILLOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Councillors discussed the sub-committees. It was **agreed** that the Planning and Staffing committee will run; but the Finance, Premises and Strategic Planning sub-committee will not run at present. All councillors will continue to monitor these areas.

8. MAINTAINING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:

Asset Officer Report – The following points raised in the Asset Officer report were discussed:

Overhanging branches on the access to the Welfare Field; councillors **agreed** this needs to be addressed. The clerk will contact Northumberland County Council (NCC) to see if they can assist with this.

Grass and nettles in the Welfare Field near picnic tables and benches; the clerk will contact NCC about this.

The tennis net box has been damaged. A solution to this will be discussed as part of the Welfare Field Project. The tennis nets will be stored at Selman Park in the meantime when not in use.

Cllr. Keller mentioned that the planters on Centurion Way have rotted. It was **agreed** that Cllr. Keller will salvage what can be saved and dispose of anything else, including the planter tubs if necessary. The other planters in the village are in good condition.

Cllr. Adams has carried out a temporary repair on a damaged piece of play equipment reported by a resident. The Asset Officer will replace the missing bolt cover.

IMPROVING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:

9. Cllr. Wilson fed back on the Welfare Field project –2 meetings have been arranged with different playground suppliers.

10. REPORTS:

Selman Park: Cllr. Wilson has spoken to the PE Lead for the Pele Trust about Selman Park. Cllr. Keller reported that the Brownies and Guides are interested in using the space at Selman Park.

Trajan Walk / School Street parking: Cllr Wilson shared some preliminary proposals from NCC Highways regarding the issues raised. Further consultation will take place. Cllr. Wilson will feedback Councillor findings to NCC Highways.

Sustainable Heddon: Cllr. Oatway explained that Sustainable Heddon now has more members and requested that monthly meetings take place at the library on the first Wednesday of each month. Councillors **agreed** to this proposal. Cllr. Oatway updated councillors about the Bioblitz which Sustainable Heddon is organising at the Butterfly Garden on Sunday 30th June.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

Planning consultations:

24/01020/FUL – 53 Military Road – single storey extension. Councillors objected on the grounds that the application is for a self-contained house and not a garden annex as stated on the application. However, if the application were submitted with the correct details, councillors would have no objections.

24/01493/FUL – 324 Hexham Road – single storey extension to garage. No objections or comments.

24/00986/FUL – 15 Campus Martius – proposed side extension and installation of 1.2m pillars to front wall (part retrospective).

Planning decisions:

24/00625/FUL – 92 Trajan Walk – retrospective construction of a residential annex – permission was **GRANTED**.

24/00516/FUL – 12 Killiebrigs – rear extension to ground floor and construction of a basement - permission was **GRANTED**.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

A resident had contacted the Parish Council about their sponsored tree in the Memorial Garden. There are tall nettles behind the tree which need to be cut back. The clerk will contact NCC about this. The dedication post has been knocked over and needs to be resecured – the clerk will organise this. The resident also mentioned overhanging trees from the school which are hindering the tree’s growth. Councillors will discuss what needs to be done regarding the overhanging branches.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr. Adams mentioned that some drains are blocked following recent weedkilling. It was **agreed** that the clerk will contact NCC about this.

14. NEXT MEETING

That the date of the next meeting shall be Wednesday 10th July 2024.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING The meeting closed at 9.04pm.

Income and Expenditure from 8th May to 11th June:

Account 1 (Precept) Expenditure:

Grounds Maintenance	£414	9 th May
NALC Annual Subscription	£336.50	9 th May
Plaques for memorial trees	£50	9 th May
Payroll (including admin charge)	£1217.94	15 th May
NCC Waste disposal (bins)	£16.67	15 th May
Refund to allotment holder (Plot 16)	£21.50	21 st May
Refund to allotment holder (Plot 4)	£21.50	23 rd May
Refund to allotment holder (Plot 14)	£43	23 rd May

Account 1 (Precept) Income: Allotment rent of £619 from 8th May to 11th June

Account 2 (Library) Expenditure:

Window cleaning library	£33	9 th May
Library cleaning	£77.49	9 th May
Electricity Selman Park	£21	10 th May
BT (April)	£75.65	14 th May
BT (May)	£84.68	14 th May
Fire Alarm	£18.43	28 th May
Burglar Alarm	£60.22	28 th May
Gas library	£192.78	31 st May
CCTV	£43.20	31 st May
Electricity library	£135.84	3 rd June
Electricity Selman Park	£21	10 th June

Account 2 (Library) Income: from 8th May to 11th June

Rental income: £ 1200

APPENDIX

MAINTAINING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:

ACTIONS:

LB / LT to contact allotment holders on waiting list to arrange viewings

LB to provide allotment map to MW

LB to provide allotment tenancy agreement to DM

LT to replace missing bolt cover on play equipment

LB to liaise with NCC Neighbourhood team re nettles in the Welfare Field and overhanging branches on the access to the Welfare Field from Taberna Close

LB to liaise with NCC Highways re blocked drains

IMPROVING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:

ACTIONS:

FINANCE AND ASSETS:

ACTIONS:

DK to send out updated Roles and Responsibilities

NCC grass cutting

LB to organise refunds to those allotment holders who are owed a refund

LB to submit all documents relating to audit to the external auditor

LB to upload the unaudited accounts onto the PC website

LB to begin the Public Right inspection period as soon as possible and inform councillors of the dates

LB to upload the Notice of Public Rights Inspection onto the PC website and display a copy on the noticeboards and in the library

OTHER:

ACTIONS: