#Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th January 2021

Present: Cllrs: E Fairclough (Chair), K Shaw, S Leith, C Wagstaff, P Lee, S Birkby, T Saunders and C Pearson

In attendance: Ward Councillor M Cummings, WMDC's Monitoring Officer, PC Steel, the Clerk to the Council and three members of the public.

110. To receive apologies for absence.
Apologies were received from Cllrs A Manifield, Cllr F Heptinstall WMDC (Ward Councillors).

111. To receive declarations of interest.
None.

The Chair made a brief announcement that she would not allow any disruptions or discourteous behaviour during the meeting.

112. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 1st December 2020.

Cllr Lee noted a statement could be added to the minutes to reflect the financial balances were not available for general expenditure. The Clerk noted this motion was not itemised for today's meeting and could be itemised at a subsequent meeting.

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2020 without amendment as a correct record.

113. To be notified of matters accomplished or arisen since the last meeting not included elsewhere on the agenda.
None.

114. Public forum session – To permit members of the public to make representations, answer questions, and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda.
A member of the public asked if any progress had been made regarding the bench that was removed from the War Memorial. The Clerk informed him the Council still awaited a quote for its refurbishment.

115. To receive a report on the SAFE scheme and Police matters.
PC Steel shared the SAFE report for December 2020 and noted speeding patrols had been conducted following ongoing complaints of speeding at various locations around the village. Patrols will also be made close to zebra crossing on Shay Lane following reports of cars parking on it. Enforcement Officers to be dispatched once schools return with a possibility of visiting the school to undertake road safety discussions. PC Steel also noted several officers were available to undertake patrols during unsociable hours to deal with thefts and burglaries.

The Chair thanked PC Steel for all the police's efforts during this time.

Resolved to note the report.

116. To receive reports from WMDC Ward 5 Councillors.
Cllr Cummings wished all members a Happy New Year and provided the following updates:

- The gulley on School Lane had been jetted and required some intervention;
- Awaiting update on cars parking on the grass verge at the Nature reserve
- One-way system on School Lane had been previously considered and Highways do not see it necessary following resident objections raised previously;
- Full consultations will take place on the possibility of reopening the Midland railway if any plans are submitted;
- A request was submitted for the Golden River traffic survey and await an update.

A councillor noted on the issue of parking at the Nature Reserve, it appears possible for WMDC to extend the car park at the Colliery if a tree was removed. A site visit to be arranged to investigate this.

Resolved to note the reports.

117. To receive training from the Monitoring Officer (MO) on Code of Conduct and social media.

The MO introduced herself as the Monitoring Officer at WMDC and the relevant person tasked in dealing with any complaints against District and Parish Councillors. The role is limited to behavioural complaints and not operational decisions.

The Localism Act requires Parish Councils to adopt a Code of Conduct and a process to register pecuniary interests. Failure to disclose pecuniary interests is a criminal offence with investigations undertaken by WMDC. The MO briefly discussed dispensations can be granted when a pecuniary interest is identified and discussed pre-determination.

The MO provided two legal cases whereby parish councillors had conduct complaints submitted against them following disagreements with other members or staff, leading to investigations and long-standing legal proceedings. Ultimately, whilst disagreements and difference of opinions can happen, it is important to remember a decision by a parish council is a collective decision even if a member personally disagrees with it.

The MO updated members on the new Model Councillor Code of Conduct recently adopted by the Local Government Association on 3rd December 2020 and noted this will be recommended to WMDC for adoption.

The Chair thanked the MO for the useful update and noted members' interest to review the Parish Council's own Code of Conduct in light of the new Model Code.

A question was raised to query the difference, if any, in terminology referring to personal and prejudicial interests against disclosable pecuniary and other interests. The MO clarified the correct and up-to-date terminology was pecuniary interests which related to financial or monetary interests. Other interests are advisable to be disclosed for transparency reasons, but members can still vote, and no dispensations are required. These can include bodies and associations which members are attributable to or affiliated with.

118. Finance & Governance

1. To approve accounts to be paid, already paid under delegated powers and income received December 2020.

The Clerk submitted details (copy attached to minutes) of accounts paid totalling £2,759.36 for December 2020, and income received of £3,594.24. This includes a further two tranches of payments following a successful COVID grant application from WMDC. A Councillor wished to thank the Clerk for submitting this application as some Parish Council's had failed to secure the grant.

The account balances at the end of December 2020 are:

Current a/c:	£3,679.80
Barclays Business Res a/c:	£35,631.39
HSBC deposit a/c:	£50,915.01
Total	£90,226.20

Resolved: to approve the financial statements and payments.

2. To consider a budget for 21/22.

The Clerk circulated a breakdown of each budget line explaining the basis on which they were calculated. There is shortfall of £17,000 required based on the Council's priorities which can be drawn from reserves and a precept of £39,000.

Following some initial queries, the Clerk clarified the forecasted balances for year end 2021 and 2022 were just forecasts that are liable to change. The Clerk advised the Council's general reserves at year end 2021 would be higher than expected due to projects being delayed because of the pandemic. It was suggested the level of reserves be reviewed in April 2020 and funds transferred to ear-marked reserves for completion in 2021/2022.

Discussion took place regarding an acceptable level of general reserves. Considering the internal auditor's advice and the Practitioners Guide (2019) for the preparation of accounting and governance statements, the Clerk considered the acceptable level based on last year's expenditure to be in between £13,750 to £27,500. The proposed budget complies with this. The Clerk clarified the external auditor would query high levels of reserves greater than the precept and would expect to see this ring-fenced in

ear-marked reserves. Explanations can be offered regarding the successful recovery of loss and delayed projects if general reserves remained higher even after ring-fencing.

Resolved to approve the circulated budget.

3. To consider the precept for 2021/22.

The Clerk circulated the proposed precept based on the budget. It was noted this was in line the projected income/expenditure. Members noted the tax base was slightly higher and therefore the increase in the precept would not a negligible increase on electors.

Resolved to increase the precept from £38,000 to £39,000.

4. To consider hire charges for 2021/22 and to review the policy for charitable lettings.

Discussion took place surrounding the Parish Council's intentions to align rates and accordingly, a proposal was submitted to increase existing children's and communal groups rates by 50pence per hour for use of the hall. A counterproposal was submitted to increase the children's groups rates by 50pence p/h and communal groups by £1.00 p/h. The counterproposal was carried. A proposal to increase the existing commercial rate by 50pence p/h for the committee room was also carried. It was noted significant refurbishment of the hall had taken place over the last two year and increased charges, whilst they would not cover these costs, they would partially fund them.

Resolved from 1st April 2021

(i) to increase existing children's and communal hirer rates by 50pence and £1 per hour respectively for use of the hall
(ii) to increase existing commercial hirers rate by 50pence p/h for use of the committee room
(iii) all other rates to remain the same.
(iv) to approve the policy for charitable lettings unchanged for 2021.

5. To consider renewal of SLCC membership for 2021

Resolved to approve renewal at a cost of £166 for 2021.

119. To consider correspondence received.

The Clerk summarised the correspondence received this month and listed the invitations. The Clerk noted WMDC's change of policy to pay the full precept upfront in April 2021 rather than two instalments.

Resolved to note all other correspondence.

120. Planning Working Party.

1. To consider planning applications validated and decided December 2020.

There have been 2 applications validated and 1 application decided since the last meeting.

Resolved to note the remaining validated and decided applications.

2. To consider request to support planning application 20/01369/FUL.

The Clerk noted a request had been submitted to support the planning application (20/01369/FUL) for the market stalls following several resident objections. It was noted a resident had contacted the Parish Council to object to this planning application who was referred to WMDC as the planning authority. The Clerk noted as part of the request, the applicant specified the markets would run on a weekly basis from 10am to 2pm for local businesses.

A Councillor had reviewed the documents on the planning portal and noted a Heritage Impact Assessment had not been submitted in compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan. It was also thought WMDC had a policy to limit markets to 4 per annum at a specified location. Finally, it was discussed except for the Waterton Green development, which was an exceptional case, the Parish Council has not supported any planning application in order to remain impartial.

Resolved to respond noting that it is the Parish Council's policy not to support individual applications in order to remain impartial.

121. Village Hall and Coronation Cottage Working Party

1.To agree the date of holiday closures of the Village Hall.

The Clerk confirmed arrangements are made with the caretaker, should any bookings be requested over the Christmas period.

Resolved to close all bank holidays and between 24th to 30st August 2021 and 27th December to 2nd January 2022.

2. To consider request to store Walton's Nordic Walking Group's poles at the Village Hall.

Members noted previous requests for storage were declined on the basis the only available space is in the cellar and this required the caretaker to lift potentially heavy items, open and close specifically for access. It was discussed the Community centre may have availability for storage.

Resolved to decline the request for fairness and to comply with existing risk assessments regarding tasks undertaken by the caretaker.

3. To consider and approve quote for CCTV survey and jet washing of drains at the Village Hall.

The work was recommended by the Working party and £1,000 had been budgeted for this work. The contractor is the same contractor that completed the survey in 2009. The work will be scheduled as soon as possible while the hall was closed.

Resolved to approve the quote at a cost of £995 plus VAT.

4. To consider quotes for the sanding and sealing of the floor at the Village Hall.

The work had been recommended by the working party as the floor was last sanded/sealed in summer 2012 with some water damage evident following the roof leak. A budget of £2,200 has been included in this financial year.
award the contract to the cheapest contractor with an industrial vacuum. It was noted a fourth coat was offered by one contractor and if this is possible, should be pursued as the increased costs is negligible against the benefit. The Clerk noted the cheapest contractor required the payment of a deposit of 30%. It was agreed to also sand and seal the stage within the specification.

Resolved to award the contract to SandIt flooring at a cost of £2,227.30 and authorise the Clerk to release the payment of a 30% deposit.

5. To receive Risk Assessment report on the external of Tennis Club.

Resolved to defer item until Cllr Carlon is in attendance.

122. Recreation Ground & Playgrounds Working Party

The Clerk had been informed by WMDC the ROSPA inspection had been completed following an update from WMDC and just awaiting the report. This will be itemised on the agenda once received.

123. Environmental Improvements Working Party

1. To consider quotes for summer hanging baskets and/or Christmas trees for 2021

The Clerk noted in line with the Council's Financial Regulations, efforts were made to obtain three quotes, but one contractor declined to quote based on workload. Accordingly, it was advised the Parish Council to suspend Financial regulations. Members noted the increased number of new sponsors last year

due to the popularity of the baskets and trees. It was proposed to increase the number of licences from 40 to 50 columns. Members preferred the hanging style baskets and noted these were the most financially viable. The Clerk noted the cost of hanging-style basket with a Christmas tree would be £110 per column. It was proposed to request £110 as the sponsor price.

Resolved

(i) Suspend financial regulation 11(1)(h) and noted the cheapest contractor was the same contractor the Parish Council has used for years.

(ii) To increase licences to 50 columns and increase cost to £110 per sponsor.

(iii) to approve the quote by First Impressions for the hanging-style baskets in the sum of £3,100 plus VAT and £180 plus VAT for the 3 planters

(iv) to approve the quote by First Impressions for the Christmas trees for 2021 up to sum of £2,250 plus VAT.

2. To receive a risk assessment report on the village seats and signs, bus shelter, war memorial and Jubilee Field.

Cllr Saunders has inspected the stone signs, seat, bus shelter and war memorial. Cllr Wagstaff there are no issues with Jubilee Field and the reported sewerage leak was not evident on field.

Resolved

(i) to request WMDC remove bench No 2 due to its state of disrepair.

(ii) Numbers 3, 4, 22 and 23 to be refurbished; number 7 to have bolt repaired and replace number 9.

(iii) To reinstate the black paint on the stone sign on Oakenshaw Lane.

(iv) To request if the School would remove the Holly sapling and the sapling that obscures the view of oncoming buses from the window in the bus shelter.

124. To consider updating Complaints policy.

The Clerk noted the current policy was dated and did not signpost to other adopted updated/policies. The current draft is based on model templates provided by YLCA and SLCC. This sets out a comprehensive procedure, detailing roles, and expectations of all involved. It also lists the areas which the Council are responsible for and subject matters that need to be referred to other parties such as WMDC for highway issues.

Resolved to update the Complaints with the proposed policy and add to the website.

Meeting closed at 10 pm.