

Minutes of the Meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 9th November 2023
in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall

11.1 Present –Marge Rastall (Chair), John Austin, Nicola Matthews, Greg Finch, Davy Short, Roger Rutherford, Gill Whatmough, Ed Parker; Jonny White (Clerk)

Apologies for Absence – Lauren Porteus, Hilary Kristensen; Colin Horncastle (County Councillor).

11.2 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 12th October 2023

Clerk noticed an error in last month's account summary and has since amended the minutes. It was agreed the minutes were a true record of the meeting.

11.3 Declarations of Interest

11.4 Matters Arising

- Further to last month's note regarding the overgrown Willow trees on the Wetland, the Chair will inquire with Monica Hague about possible uses or solutions to the issue.
- Work has begun on placing the generator for the Resilience Hub. For security reasons, a cage will also need to be installed. The council will look into this. It is understood that the generator may affect the Hall's insurance. The Clerk will investigate how the council's insurance will also be affected. The county council and Northern Powergrid will also be contacted to see if they can assist with maintenance costs. The Precept may need to be increased to accommodate this too.
- Northern Powergrid will be cutting off power to the hall and some houses on the 19th for important maintenance work. Gill will contact them to see if they can change the date, or help supply power, as there are events on in the hall.
- PC received information about an Environment grant that they are interested to apply for: up to £5000 for projects to enhance the environment of the area. If we are successful, the money would be used primarily for maintenance – dredging etc – of the Wetlands, and the Bird Hide. Clerk will apply.

11.5 Resilience Hub

As mentioned above, Tom Kristensen is installing the generator this week. A cage will then be sought and installed.

11.6 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

11.7 Matters for discussion with the Unitary Councillor

Colin was not present this month.

11.8 Correspondence

PC received an email from Christopher Porter regarding the Bird Hide steps and foundation. He mentioned that John Dent is unable to do the work but has done a great job painting it. He requested that the steps/foundation be looked at along with the fencing. Should the grant application be successful (as mentioned above), funds will be allocated from that. Otherwise, the council will look at alternative funding.

Marge had a phone call and email from Sheila Beniams, regarding a complaint over planning procedure. However, we believe this is not a matter for the parish council, but rather one for the county council's planning department.

11.9.1 Finance

- Clerk's Expenses: £59.99 for Microsoft subscription.
Precept: a decision needs to be made by January, so the accounts will be looked at in the meantime. However, it is believed that the precept value will need to go up, partly to account for the maintenance costs of the resilience hub.

11.9.2 Balances as of 4th November 2023

Treasurer's Account	£19,082.23
Sportsfield Account	£2,086.25
Dukesfield Account	£5,038.64
Wetlands Account	£670.00
Resilience Account	£6,974.47

11.10 Planning

- 23/01105/ENDEVT - Extension without permission at Raw Green, Hexhamshire – Enforcement case closed as it is seen to be under permitted development.
- 23/02813/FUL Solar Panels for Whitley Chapel Village Hall; GRANTED.
- Clerk will chase Alex Campbell about the enforcement case against Guard's Lane caravan site.

11.11 Highways, footpaths and BOATS

Footpaths/BOATS:

Roads:

- Spoilage lorries have been reported to the Environment Agency: The incident has been logged as NIRS 2201184. Towards is the company taking the spoilage, from Consett. The road is effectively unpassable. Clerk will follow up on the issue.
- Dipton mill road has been reported again.
- The 20mph Speed limit sign at Whitley Chapel is not working. Clerk will report to council.

11.12 Reports

Wetlands: Mentioned above.

Dukesfield Arches: The fence around the Mill race needs repairing. Roger Rutherford has looked at it, and thinks it just needs two posts. He will do the work and bill the cost of the materials.

Hall: The Christmas Fair will take place Sunday 3rd December.

Sportsfield: No reports.

School: It has been brought to our attention that Whitley Chapel C of E First School are trying to raise funds to modernise the playground facilities, due to much of the current equipment being condemned for use. The school are asking local businesses if they would be able to support in donating any prizes for the annual Christmas Raffle, which will be drawn on the 20th of December.

11.13 Any Other Business:

Davy Short requests that we ask the county council for road signs to warn drivers of the potential for horse riders on our roads, so that they slow down. The law states that drivers must pass horses at 10mph with 2m spacing. If members of the public are also concerned about this, we would invite them to also raise such concerns with the county council.

John Austin also requests new signs saying 'passing places', as the old ones have rotted, and people have been known to use such spots as parking instead.

Meeting closed at 8:50pm.