

Lartington Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held on January 11th 2014

Present

Mr. Champion, Mr Hammond, Mrs Cross, Mrs Parsons Munn, Mrs Stephenson, Mr Whetstone and Mr Jerred (Clerk).
An apology had been received from Mr Wilkes.

01. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on November 12th were read and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

It was agreed that the note regarding the presentation by Stuart Timmiss should have made reference to:

- a. An agreement that we would forward copies of our correspondence regarding the Caravan Club application in order that it could be reviewed. The clerk confirmed that this had been done.
- b. Mr Timmiss's evident willingness to work with us should have been properly recognized.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on November 28th to consider the application for a premises licence at Lartington Hall were also read and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

02. Matters Arising

- a. Litter bin at the bus stop adjacent to the noticeboard – the clerk confirmed that he had requested that this be repaired/replaced.
- b. Problems of drainage in the Pecknall area – again, this had been reported.

03. Items of Urgent Business

- a. Parking in Barnard Castle
- b. Broadband in Teesdale

04. Principal Correspondence

- a. Co. Durham Schools Benevolent Fund - received
- b. Steve Ragg, CDALC – numerous, including loss of funding
- c. CDALC Training Course, March – FOI and Data Protection Training Course. Agreed that the clerk could attend, with an approximate cost of £30
- d. Licensing Sub-Committee Meeting dealing with the application for a Premises Licence for Lartington Hall. It was noted that this had now been approved.
- e. DCC Precept information – see below.

05. Accounts and Precept

The clerk reported that £535.68 was held in the current account and £1367.31 in the Deposit Account and that these were likely be the “carry forward” figures at the end of the financial year.

He suggested that although these figures were healthy, the council did face a number of financial threats, the principal being the costs associated with finding a new clerk and a new venue when current arrangements came to an end. He also reported that there was a suggestion that future increases to the precept could be capped in the same manner as that now applying to larger authorities – a maximum increase of 2% without resort to referendum. He argued, with regret, that a significantly increased precept be raised.

A long discussion followed and it was agreed that both the clerk's salary and hours of work did need to be more realistic. The national minimum hourly rate recommended by the NALC for part-time clerks was £8.34 and it was agreed that this be adopted whilst hours of work should be raised to 1hour per week with 7 further hours being made available for each of 6 meetings – a total of 74 hours pa and an annual salary of £783.96.

It was further agreed that the precept be raised to £1230. Whilst this represented an annual increase of 39%, its impact on the council tax of a Band D house was likely to be approximately £6pa.

06. Accounts to be paid

Cotherstone Village Hall - £27 (Cheque issued on Nov. 28th)

07. Public Footpaths

The clerk reported on correspondence with Elaine Crowe (Footpaths Officer). She had waymarked the footpath to Cat castle and confirmed that Mr Mayhew had done some work on the stiles.

It was agreed that a PP3 application be made for work at Cat Castle and that Mrs Parsons Munn would obtain a quote from Craig Gibson. Subject to this being satisfactory, it was agreed that the clerk and Mrs Parsons Munn would then complete the appropriate application forms and submit it to Elaine Crowe.

08. Village Green

Mr Hammond reported that an application for a grant had now been made to Heart of Teesdale.

09. Possible adoption of BT Kiosk and defibrillator purchase

The clerk reported on discussions with Justine Wilson (NEAS), David Hutchinson (Mickleton Village Hall) and BT. The cost of a defibrillator was likely to be c £1300 whilst the BT kiosk was available for adoption at a cost of £1, although approval for this was a 90 day process.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that, in the first instance, an application be made to adopt the kiosk since this was the only suitable location for a defibrillator.

The funding of the cost of the defibrillator was also considered. It was agreed that the council's financial reserves could sensibly be used to meet 50% of the cost but that alternative sources of funding be sought to meet the remainder. It was agreed that informal approaches be made to Glaxo and other possible funders in the first instance and information be brought back to the next meeting.

10. Planning Applications

Battle Hill Range – the clerk reported that an application had been made install a new shooting platform. It was agreed that no detailed consideration of this was needed nor objection be raised.

11. Items of Urgent Business

- a. Mr Hammond gave information about a meeting to be held at the Witham Hall in Barnard castle to discuss issues of car parking.
- b. Mr Whetstone queried whether there was further information regarding the introduction of high speed broadband in the area. It was agreed that this be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.