

## URPETH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Urpeth Parish Council held on Tuesday 15 October 2024 at Edenfield Communal Room, West Pelton at 6.30 p.m.

### **B Barrett (Chair)**

#### **Present:**

Councillors B Barrett, G Holmes-Wood, R Johnson and I Stewart-Fergusson and B Scott.

#### **48. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Batey, D Wood, and County Councillor P Pringle.

#### **49. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **50. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 July and 17 September 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **51. Public Questions / Representations**

There were no public questions or representations.

Councillor Johnson noted that she had been expecting some residents in attendance to discuss the speed of traffic on Twizell Lane, however they would be informed to contact the Clerk directly should they wish to report any issues ahead of the next meeting.

#### **52. County Councillor Report**

There were no County Councillors in attendance during this item.

#### **53. Finance Matters**

(i) Monthly accounts

**Resolved:** That the following amounts be approved for payment and that the monthly reconciliation of accounts be noted:

Clerk (Wages and Expenses)	1003.89
HMRC Paye 2	339.60
Street Cleansing Operative	439.32
Street Cleansing Operative	411.84

DCC - Highways Scheme	8000.00
RBL – Lamp post Poppies	875.00

#### **54. External Audit Annual review of the Return for the year ended 31 March 2024.**

The Clerk advised that the external audit had now been completed by Mazars, noting that there were no areas of significant weakness identified and that no minor areas for improvement in 2023/24 had been found.

The Clerk went on to refer members to the Completion Letter (circulated) and information provided around the use of gov.uk email addresses for both the Council and its' Councillors. The Clerk explained that whilst the website and Clerk both now had gov.uk addresses, it was recommended by Mazars that this should be extended to Councillors. Failure to do so this financial year could result in either a qualification or other matter on the 2024/25 AGAR.

The Clerk had raised this with CDALC, and the Executive Officer was to discuss this directly with Mazars as other councils had also raised this as a concern. An update would be provided when possible.

**Resolved:** That the audited accounts for 2023/24 be noted and received and that the council had displayed the audited AGAR and completion notice on the council's website by the deadline of 30 September 2024.

#### **55. Allotments**

- i) Update regarding garden clearance.

The Chair advised that he had had a further discussion with the Association Secretary who had suggested that given the conditions of the gardens at this time of year it would seem sensible to leave any plans for clearance until the new year. Further options and quotes for the clearance would be sought at that time.

- ii) To consider the draft Tenancy Agreement and consultation feedback.

The Clerk advised that the draft agreement had been shared with the Allotment Associations, however feedback was awaited from one of the two Associations.

Members discussed the feedback received relating to emergency services access and agreed that a key safe should be purchased for installation on site at High Handenhold, with a code for access provided to emergency services.

**Resolved:** That the draft agreement be presented for approval at the next meeting.

#### **56. Clerks Report / Correspondence**

- i) To receive feedback in relation to consultation on replacement noticeboards and agree next steps.

The Clerk advised that following a notice which had been displayed in each noticeboard, two responses from residents had been received to advise that they use and read the noticeboard at the bus stop at Leyburn Close, Urpeth Grange. No other responses had been received from residents within the parish area.

It was suggested that on that basis the council consider which noticeboards be replaced. Those which would not be replaced could be left in position with details of how to find the council website and the location of the nearest noticeboard.

**Resolved:** to review the location plans at the next meeting and determine which boards should be replaced.

ii) Newsletter

**Resolved:** That the council look to produce a newsletter for the Spring, providing at that time updates on some of the bigger projects which were likely to have then been completed.

Councillor Stewart-Fergusson at this point asked whether there would be merit in inviting the newly elected MP Luke Akehurst to a future meeting. The Clerk agreed to speak with the MP's office with a view to requesting his attendance during a period of government recess.

## 57. Ward / Area Matters

i) Grounds Maintenance issues at Urpeth Grange and Beamish

The following issues were raised:

- Path between Ouston and Urpeth overgrown and impacting upon ease of access.
- Shrub bed at Penhill Close – requiring removal due its poor condition, to be reported to DCC.
- Bus stop at Penhill missing glazing and required reporting to DCC.
- Trees overhanging highway at Beamish causing continuing issues for buses.
- Various issues with condition of footpaths around the Beamish High Handenhold area all previously reported to DCC but no follow up.

ii) A693 Roundabout – maintenance and upkeep

Request for correspondence to be sent to Cllr Elizabeth Scott regarding the condition and maintenance of the roundabout on the entrance to the Museum from the A693.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk contact Councillor Elizabeth Scott.

At this point Councillor D Wood entered the meeting and with the consent of the Chair provided general updates in relation to County Council business along with an update on the Highways Improvement Scheme. A further update on progress would be provided at the next meeting.