

# Whessoe Parish Council

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## MINUTES of the Meeting of Whessoe Parish Council held at Whessoe Parish Hall on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021, at 7.00 pm.

**Present:**

|                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Councillor S Goldfinch (Chair) | Councillor D Woodley (Vice Chair) |
| Councillor S Dawson            | Councillor Musson                 |
| Councillor F Minay             | Councillor Bennett                |
| Borough Councillor G Lee       | One member of the public          |
| Lewis Stokes – Banks Group     | James Seabury – Banks Group       |
| Parish Clerk – B Goldfinch     |                                   |

| MINUTE NO. | ITEM  | ACTION |
|------------|---|--------|
| 57.21      | <u>Apologies for Absence</u><br><br>None.   |        |
| 58.21      | <u>Public Participation</u><br><br>No issues were raised.   |        |
| 59.21      | <u>Declarations of Interest</u><br><br>There were no declarations of interest.  |        |
| 60.21      | <p><u>Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021</u></p> <p>The draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September were presented.</p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 be approved.</p> <p><u>Action Points</u></p> <p>46.21. Finance – the asset register has been updated to show that Dave Woodley has the old laptop and is using it on behalf of the hall committee.</p> <p>46.21. VAT - the “lost” VAT from last year will be added to the next claim in December.</p> <p>46.21. Budget Virements –the known budget overspends have been used to cover as many underspends as possible. This is shown on the budget statement to the end of October.</p> |        |

Signed..... Date.....  
**Chair of the Parish Council**

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|       | All other actions are covered in the Agenda.   |   |
| 61.21 | <p><b><u>Planning</u></b></p> <p><b>Development at Beaumont Hill by the Banks Group.</b></p> <p>Lewis and James outlined the plans for this development. The Banks Group had originally consulted on development of part of the site in June 2019. The pandemic had delayed further progress until now.</p> <p>They now plan to apply for outline planning permission early next year for the whole site with up to 600 houses. They held a number of “design” sessions with interested parties including two sessions at the Parish Hall in November. They will, over the next few weeks, be distributing a newsletter to around 1,600 homes in and around the site setting out the plans in more detail.</p> <p>Both the Council and Borough Councillor questioned the development particularly in respect of access and how they plan to address the new climate initiatives being proposed by the government.</p> <p>The Council noted that there may be an opportunity to influence the use of Section 106 money and that annual grant applications under the Banks community fund would be welcome.</p> <p>Contact details for the Banks Group - Lewis Stokes, The Banks Group, Inkerman House, St John’s Road, Meadowfield, Durham DH7 8XL. Telephone: 0191 378 6100.</p> <p><b>Planning Applications</b></p> <p>The Chair reminded Councillors of their responsibilities to address applications that are passed to them, and to ensure that comments are based on planning issues.</p> <p><b>Darlington Borough Council Local Plan Proposed Modifications</b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to raise no objections to the modifications and noted that the changes seemed completely sensible. <b>POST MEETING NOTE:</b> I looked for an appropriate place on the planning portal to make our general comments, but it was clear that DBC are looking for specific comments on changes within paragraphs in the document.</p> <p><b>Planning Applications Log</b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the planning applications log.</p> <p><b>Land acquisition at the Green</b></p> <p>The Clerk will write to Councillor Clarke to ask whether there is any progress at all.</p> <p><b>Traffic Issues on Burtree Lane and Noise on A167</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council feels that, in the long term, these issues will be resolved by the new developments at Berrymead Farm/Burtree Lane and Beaumont Hill respectively. In the short term the Council will investigate the acquisition and installation of speed signs at suitable locations. Borough Councillor Lee</li> </ul> | <p>ALL</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>BC<br/>Lee/Clerk</p> |

Signed..... Date.....  
Chair of the Parish Council

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|              | <p>will provide the Clerk with details of a supplier and the Clerk will contact Sadberge Parish Council who use one that might also be suitable for us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The residents who made the initial complaints are being kept informed of developments.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Solar Farm at Burtree Lane</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aura Power plan to apply to DBC for planning permission to build a Solar Farm at the north end of Burtree Lane. The proposal can be found on their website <a href="http://www.aurapower.co.uk">www.aurapower.co.uk</a>. There has been no further developments since the last meeting.</li> </ul>  | Clerk<br>Clerk |
| <b>62.21</b> | <p><b><u>Parish Councillor Vacancy</u></b></p> <p>Following the official notice of the vacancy there was no request for an election. Councillor Minay proposed, and Councillor Woodley seconded the appointment of Sharon Patterson to the vacant position. The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to appoint Sharon Patterson as the Parish Councillor for the Whessoe Ward. Keys to the hall and Committee Room were provided.</p> <p>The Clerk will provide Councillor Patterson with the necessary forms that need to be completed and returned to Darlington Borough Council.</p>   | Clerk          |
| <b>63.21</b> | <p><b><u>Clerk &amp; Responsible Finance Officer</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk has completed 5 of the 6 webinar modules and submitted and passed one paper (Law). He hopes to complete all the papers and have them assessed by the mentors before Christmas.</p>  | Clerk          |
| <b>64.21</b> | <p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p><b>Quarterly Audit</b></p> <p>The second quarterly audit was completed on 2 November by Councillor Musson.</p> <p><b>Bank Reconciliation to end of September and October 2021</b></p> <p>The bank account was reconciled on 18 October and 8 November respectively. There is a one penny discrepancy because we had an Amazon credit note for £84.90 but only £84.89 was paid into the bank. The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to write off the discrepancy rather than pursue a reconciliation.</p> <p><b>Financial/Budget Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021</b></p> <p>The Clerk has transferred funds between budget headings to account for the TV screen installation and the planned painting of the hall in January.</p> |                |

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The Clerk presented the Financial Statement for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

Receipts totalled **£12,108** of which £5,650 came from the precept with the rest coming from hall hires. Hall income will exceed budget expectations.

The Council spent **£11,460**.

Payments more than £100 are as follow.

| <b>Date Paid</b> | <b>Transaction Detail</b>        | <b>Total</b> | <b>Payee Name</b>          |
|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 01/04/2021       | 2020-21 Q4 Pay                   | £ 1,268.80   | Clerks Salary              |
| 01/04/2021       | PAYE 2020-21 Q4                  | £ 317.20     | HMRC                       |
| 08/04/2021       | Screens and Installation         | £ 1,878.59   | Phase One                  |
| 10/05/2021       | Cleaning April                   | £ 165.00     | Jo Relton                  |
| 21/05/2021       | Internal Audit                   | £ 100.00     | Kevin Pearce               |
| 01/06/2021       | CDALC/NALC Subscription          | £ 195.98     | CDALC                      |
| 02/06/2021       | Insurance 2020-21                | £ 631.34     | Norris and Fisher          |
| 02/06/2021       | Cleaning May                     | £ 180.00     | Jo Relton                  |
| 02/06/2021       | Accounting Software Subscription | £ 148.80     | Rialtas Business Solutions |
| 04/06/2021       | Hall Booking system subscription | £ 224.40     | Hallmaster                 |
| 14/06/2021       | 2021-22 Q1 Pay                   | £ 1,268.80   | Clerks Salary              |
| 06/07/2021       | PAYE 2021-22 Q1                  | £ 317.20     | HMRC                       |
| 06/07/2021       | Cleaning June                    | £ 180.00     | Jo Relton                  |
| 23/07/2021       | Clerk Training ILCA to CILCA     | £ 144.00     | SLCC                       |
| 11/08/2021       | Cleaning July                    | £ 180.00     | Jo Relton                  |
| 11/08/2021       | Advertising Banner               | £ 166.80     | Newton Press               |
| 20/08/2021       | T V License Annual               | £ 159.00     | T V Licensing              |
| 09/09/2021       | Cleaning                         | £180.00      | Jo Relton                  |
| 30/09/2021       | Pre-lit indoor Christmas Tree    | £ 329.99     | Amazon                     |
| 01/10/2021       | 2021-22 Q2 Pay                   | £ 1,268.80   | Clerks Salary              |
| 01/10/2021       | PAYE 2021-22 Q4                  | £ 317.20     | HMRC                       |
| 12/10/2021       | Cleaning                         | £165.00      | Jo Relton                  |

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the financial/budget report to the end of October 2021.

**Budget Setting and Precept**

The Council considered the budget for the Parish Council for the next year and **RESOLVED** to increase the precept by 2% (from £5,650 to £5,760) to cover increases in costs. The Clerk will notify DBC accordingly.

Signed..... Date.....  
**Chair of the Parish Council**

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|       | The Council discussed the outline proposals for both the Hall and Social Committees for the upcoming financial year and agreed that these would be finalised at the January meeting.   | Clerk |
| 65.21 | <p><b><u>Annual Governance &amp; Accountability Return 2020-21</u></b></p> <p><b>AGAR</b></p> <p>The relevant documents were sent to Mazars, the Council's external auditors, on 1 June 2021. Mazars acknowledged receipt the same day.</p> <p>The notice of appointment of date for the exercise of public rights commenced on 2 June 2021 and ended on 14 July 2021. There were no requests to view the Council's books.</p> <p>The result of the Audit was expected before this meeting, but we understand there are delays with the process due to the pandemic.</p>   |       |
| 66.21 | <p><b><u>Policies</u></b></p> <p><b>Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>Darlington Borough Council plan to adopt the latest model Code of Conduct with some amendments in January. The Council agreed to adopt the amended DBC version at their meeting in January.</p>   | Clerk |
| 67.21 | <p><b><u>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</u></b></p> <p>The awareness session was deferred until all Councillors are available and the meeting can take place in the main hall.</p>   | Clerk |
| 68.21 | <p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b></p> <p>The latest edition of Clerks and Councils Direct was passed to the Councillor Patterson.</p>  |       |
| 69.21 | <p><b><u>Council Matters</u></b></p> <p><b>Local Council Award Scheme:</b> An application for the foundation award has been made through CDALC and was passed to the National Association of Local Councils on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The triage, by them, was completed on 2 August. There were several issues which could not be resolved by their deadline of 13 August. In the Council's opinion some of these were petty and inconsistent with other Parish Councils who had attained the foundation award.</p> <p>Most of these have now been resolved but the links and application form are out of date. The County Durham Association of Local Councils has asked NALC to provide dates for a resubmission and have taken up the Council's concerns. However, they have confirmed that only way forward is to reapply and incur further expenditure.</p> |       |

Signed..... Date.....  
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|              | <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to stop further work on the application.</p> <p><b>Equal Opportunities Policy</b> – Councillor Minay will carry out a presentation at the next Council meeting where all Councillors are available, and the meeting can take place in the main hall.</p>  |                        |
| <b>70.21</b> | <p><b><u>Forward and Backward Look</u></b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the training log.</p>  |                        |
| <b>71.21</b> | <p><b><u>Marketing and social media</u></b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to take up the offer of a free social media health check being offered by Microshade VSM. The Clerk will arrange.</p>   | Clerk                  |
| <b>72.21</b> | <p><b><u>Whessoe Parish Hall Committee</u></b></p> <p><b>Meetings on 20 October and 18 November</b></p> <p>The Committee agreed a budget plan of £10,000 for the forthcoming year. The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to agree the budget plan. The Clerk would update the RBS accounting system.</p> <p>For Hall Improvements the Committee suggested these options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending the whole building to the rear, to add a dedicated storeroom and widen the Hall so the whole building is uniform in size and shape, or</li> <li>• Provide an external store for tables and chairs to remove trolleys and clothes rail from the Hall, or</li> <li>• Replace 3 windows overlooking the garden with bi-fold doors and provide a conservatory type covered area outside with conservatory furniture, or</li> <li>• Hard landscaping of the garden area including lighting, or</li> <li>• A mixture of the options above.</li> </ul> <p>The Council agreed to fund a feasibility study to see which option or mixture of options would be possible and how much they might cost.</p> <p><b>Contracts</b></p> <p><b>Gas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our existing contract expires in December. The Clerk has spoken to EDF who have offered the following:</li> </ul> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>HC</p> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing Charge 35p per day (was 25p) and a unit rate of 7.44p (was 3.3). Based on estimated usage this would increase our annual cost from £321 to £645.</li> <li>• They say that most of their customers have taken this deal on the basis that EDF are offering it as a fixed price but rolling contract that can be switched with 30 days' notice. If prices begin to get back to normal during the next year it means either they can offer a better deal, or we could go elsewhere with no penalty.</li> <li>• The Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to accept this deal for the time being and review it when prices stabilize or fall.</li> </ul> <p><b>Electric</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are on a rolling contract with a relatively low standing charge. Although the standing charge is remaining the same the unit cost increases from 1 October 2021 from 21p to 24.375p.</li> <li>• At this time, we are still on the best contract and can switch at any time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Water</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are with Wave which is Anglian Water Business National. A comparison with other suppliers will be made during the next year.</li> </ul> <p><b>Grounds Maintenance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On all the occasions we have tendered for the contract this is the only company that has applied. However, the Clerk will tender for the work with as many other companies as can be found in January 2022.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cleaning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cleaner cleans the hall for around an hour three times a week at a cost of £15 per hour. We are still trying to arrange a meeting with her to discuss several cleaning issues and a more detailed specification for the work she does.</li> <li>• The Committee recommended a bonus payment for all the extra effort that she had put in during the year. The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve a £100 bonus payment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Broadband</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £22 per month with Plusnet. It's still the cheapest fibre network for business users. We are on a two-year fixed term contract that ends in November 2022.</li> </ul> <p><b>Insurance</b></p> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> |
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Signed..... Date.....  
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|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norris and Fisher. We have a 3-year fixed price contract with them that expires in June 2024.</li> <li>It is likely that when this contract ends in 2024, we may need to find a new supplier as Norris and Fisher are no longer providing insurance to new councils and may not do existing ones either.</li> </ul> <p><b>Painting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We sought three quotes for painting the walls in the hall, kitchen and toilet area and received two. The Committee <b>RESOLVED</b> to accept the quote from Kenny Gibson Painting and Decorating. The price is £995 (they are not registered for VAT), and the start date is 3 January 2022.</li> </ul> <p><b>Signage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee is purchasing a sign, saying Whessoe Parish Hall, to be installed on the back of the hall.</li> <li>The Committee will seek a solution to the signage at the front of the hall to replace the existing banner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hall bookings</b></p> <p>The hall is currently well used, and the Committee has drawn up a rota of all current Councillors to open and close the hall for one-off users. Councillor Patterson has been added to the rota.</p> |    |
| 73.21 | <p><b><u>Whessoe Parish Social Committee</u></b></p> <p><b>Meetings on 25 October and 22 November</b></p> <p>The quiz night on 29 October was well attended and raised £147 for our nominated charity. Another has been arranged for Friday 10 December.</p> <p>The Christmas lights switch on takes place on 4 December.</p> <p>There have been some issues with deploying the banner. The Hall Committee will look at options.</p> <p>The Committee plans to run the following activities during the year:<br/> Quiz nights x 4 – dates suggested are May/June, October, December/January and February/March,<br/> Christmas Party – with children’s entertainer, Christmas tree and new more sustainable and reusable lights, and<br/> Queen’s Platinum Jubilee – an event at the Hall to celebrate the event.<br/> Expenditure will be needed to renew the music licence and for publicity.</p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to agree to set the Social Committee budget at £2,000.</p>   | HC |

Signed..... Date.....  
Chair of the Parish Council



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| 74.21 | <p><b><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Dates for future meetings were agreed as follows:</p> <p><b>Meetings of Whessoe Parish Council:</b><br/>         Parish Council Meeting – Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – 7.00 pm<br/>         Parish Council Meeting – Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – 7.00 pm<br/>         Annual Meeting – Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 – 7.00 pm</p> <p><b>Annual Parish Meeting:</b><br/>         Annual Parish Meeting – Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 – 6.30 pm to 7.00 pm</p> |  |

Signed..... Date.....  
 Chair of the Parish Council