



WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL** meeting held at the Parish Rooms on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7:00pm.

Present

Cllrs: Fantarrow, Kinnear, Moffat, Sexton, Taylor, Westgate. Parish Co-ordinator: Harris.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr. Westgate was welcomed to his first meeting and formally declared his acceptance of office.

2. Apologies

Received from Cllrs: Johnson, Moist, and Morrison.

3. Public questions

Beverley and Brian Capeling were in attendance and asked questions as follows:

- 3.1. Change in policy to insource maintenance work and seeking a justification of the ramp up costs. Response: capital spending was increased due to an unacceptably high level of reserves (mostly built up during the pandemic). Investment, mostly in a vehicle, is expected to be recouped over a number of years as a result of cost savings of in-sourcing versus outsourcing work. It was agreed that communications could be improved to disseminate the rationale for such strategy decisions to residents.
- 3.2. Grass cutting on Millennium Green. Response: It is anticipated DCC will continue to do this in the foreseeable future.
- 3.3. Suggestion to add a handrail to the MG bridge. Response: noted and costs to be assessed.
- 3.4. Waldridge Weekend, attendance and publicity. Response: wristbands are given to parish residents with reference to the electoral role. Noted that publicity needs to be widened beyond use of FaceBook.
- 3.5. Location of Hammerhead. Response: explained.
- 3.6. Use of Parish Rooms. Response: acknowledged that greater use can be made of the rooms and increasing level of publicity to be looked at.
- 3.7. Greater visibility of councillors. Response: acknowledged, and to be reviewed but accepting that councillors are not required to publish personal biographies.
- 3.8. Cost of flower tubs and environmental impact assessment of planting strategy. Response: Purchase of an electric vehicle was looked at but rejected on grounds of cost. Overall, the environmental impact is believed to be at very least no deterioration on the previous strategy. Flower tubs are now raised off the ground and drilled to prevent their decay and save the need for constant replacement and reduce environmental impact.

4. Minutes of last meeting

Agreed by all present and signed by the Chair.

5. Disclosable pecuniary interests

None declared.

6. Agenda-motions

6.1. Matters arising

Footpath repair on SE corner of Millennium Green. Quotations to be obtained.

6.2. Correspondence

Land to rear of 62 Fenton Close – email from resident. Maintenance of this area is something the parish council could take on with an option for a memorial seat.

6.3. County Councillor Reports

Still awaiting date from DCC for completion of car park in Waldrige Village

6.4. Financial Matters

6.4.1. February spending. **Unanimously agreed and transaction report signed off.**

6.4.2. Parish Rooms gable end repair. **£540 spending unanimously agreed.**

6.4.3. Play Area spares and repairs parts. **£200 spending unanimously agreed.**

6.4.4. Water tank for plant watering. **£400 spending unanimously agreed.**

6.5. Staffing

Ground Maintenance person recruited and due to start work on 18th March.

6.6. Parish Councillor Vacancies

Appointment of two new co-opted councillors agreed.

6.7. Flowers

Insourcing for Chester-le-Street South Ward planting and maintenance of flower beds and tubs - and amended to include further recent requests.

Unanimously agreed to insource work in principle subject to:

- **Waldrige Parish work takes priority**
- **Fallback position is in place should there be lengthy drought conditions resulting in large amount of watering effort needed**
- **Communications essential to explain the approach to Waldrige Parish residents**

Detailed costings still to be provided and evaluated.

6.8. Events

6.8.1. Saving Waldrige Village 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Plans are progressing for a series of events and installations.

Documentary Film. **Unanimously agreed for Parish Co-ordinator to negotiate and sign contracts with the film makers as follows:**

Non-commercial licencing agreement such that Waldrige Parish Council will retain non-commercial rights to copy and show the film.

Release agreement for all WPC councillors and employees to appear in the film as representatives of the Council with a remit to speak about the history of Waldrige Village and the current project.

6.8.2. Easter

Budget of up to £750 unanimously agreed and steering group to have autonomy to spend this budget.

6.8.3. Summer Fayre

Budget of up to £10,000 unanimously agreed and steering group to have autonomy to spend this budget.

6.8.4. Halloween

Budget of up to £500 unanimously agreed and steering group to have autonomy to spend this budget.

6.9. AOB

None

6.10. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 7pm.