



Chair: Cllr S Mercer

Clerk: Mrs G Powell - wheldrakepc@gmail.com

Minutes of Wheldrake Parish Council Meeting held at 7pm in the Village Hall on Wednesday 26th September, 2018

Part 1:

18136: Welcome:

The Vice Chair welcomed all Cllrs, Clerk and public to the meeting

18137: Apologies/Attendance:

a. Attendees:

Cllrs Arnold, Southern, Gilks, Surtees, Goode, Myers, Jordan, Bell, Urwin, Nelson, eleven members of the public, one PCSO and Clerk.

b. Apologies:

Apologies were received by Cllrs Mercer and Buckle

c. Attendance Book:

This was passed around and signed in accordance with Parish Council guidelines

18138: Interests:

The Vice Chair reminded members to make any declarations of interest in any agenda item(s). None

18139: Minutes:

- a.** All members accepted the minutes from the previous meeting held on Wednesday 25th July 2018.
- b.** Approval was granted and the Vice Chair signed the minutes as a true record.

18140: Council:

A member of the public raised the following issues;

1. Financial procedures of the Parish Council
2. Request for explanation to keep the precept at the higher level
3. Annual return procedure and the ability of the internal auditor
4. Request for financial information (already been dealt with)
5. Request for more policies to be included on the PC website
6. Request for clarification to residents regarding the tribunal
7. A request for these items to be discussed in full at the next PC meeting (31st October)

Another member of the public raised the issue of safe driving when drivers see horse riders on the road and reiterated the importance of awareness and mindfulness around safe driving in these situations.

A further member of the public raised three questions;

1. Does the PC have a surplus with the new higher precept rate and if so, is the precept going to reduce?
2. Details requested with regards to the tribunal
3. Question surrounding the political allegiance of The Chair

Another member of the public wished to thank the Cllrs for volunteering their time in an effort to make the village a better place.

The Vice Chairman took the decision to comment as follows:

During the course of last year, the PC had an acting clerk in place, who the PC were led to believe was a very experienced clerk. One of the largest difficulties the PC had was obtaining any financial information from the then clerk. In the end, the PC had to remove the responsibility for finance from her. When she joined the PC, she took the responsibility of RFO from Cllr Jordan however no information was ever forthcoming. We did try to put some pressure on the clerk to gain the required information, but in the end, whilst preparing for the 2018/19 budget, the PC had to ask Cllr Jordan to

resume this responsibility as it is paramount for this task to be completed correctly. At that particular point in time, the PC knew that their costs had escalated significantly e.g the budget for the clerk was £4,000 and the final amount was just over £10,000. The PC was very concerned with regards the amount of time claimed for. She was a very willing person however at times, too willing and happy to take on extra responsibility which in turn cost the PC dearly. When the permanent post of clerk was advertised, the PC received a number of applications including one from the acting clerk. She was offered the position on specific terms, which were designed to tie her down, so that there would be no stretch of monies i.e. within the budget costs. She contacted the PC stating that the terms offered were unacceptable, therefore the offer was withdrawn and subsequently an application was made by her to a tribunal. The PC then appointed the current clerk.

The settlement is confidential and the document relating to this confidentiality was requested by the previous acting clerk therefore nothing can be disclosed.

The PC was quoted somewhere in the region of £5-6,k as the cost for defending this at an employment tribunal. When the June PC meeting took place, the consensus amongst the Cllrs was that figure gave an incentive to settle somewhere below that figure, as it was a 'win or lose' fee. The indication was that the PC had a very sound case, but there is never a guarantee. A decision was made that if we could settle through ACAS for something less than this amount that would be acceptable, even though in principle we had a very sound case. In reality we (the PC) settled for a fraction of that amount.

The Vice Chair expressed his concern about comments on the Wheldrakians Facebook group. There have been a number of negative behaviours, centred around one individual who was out to discredit the PC in general and certain individuals specifically, of which we have heard a little this evening. I do notice that in the main, the feedback is very positive in what the PC is doing. We as a council, cannot and will not engage on social media, this is the purpose of a meeting like this. There are limitations in terms of procedures we are allowed to follow. We are not supposed to discuss anything that is not on the agenda, not the rules of the PC, but rules imposed upon us. When people don't understand that, they may feel they are wasting their time, and I can understand that.

This all culminates back to the precept. The precept has been £40,000 for 16/17, 17/18 and 18/19. When the PC was putting the budget together in December 2017, we were actually operating slightly blind and therefore only able to guarantee £15,000 out of the £25,000 for the WRA and we made provisions for the shortfall of £10,000 to be paid in the following year. Again, people are welcome to attend the budget meeting which usually takes place within the first two weeks of December, and we are more than happy to have members of the village present to hear what is discussed. One of the key concerns was that the PC had completely depleted their reserves/contingencies, and these needed to be built up. We took a view that it ought to be in the region of £30,000. Bearing in mind we also had £10,000 balance to pay to the WRA in this financial year.

Following the November '17 meeting, one Cllr said "back me or I will resign". During the December budget meeting, this matter was raised and the PC unanimously rejected his position and as a consequence he resigned. The individual was unhappy with the outcome so he reported both the Chair and the Vice Chair to the monitoring officer at York City Council. The monitoring officer carried out an investigation and said there was no case to answer. The monitoring officer had looked at the detail/position (which related to the WRA and the charities commission). The PC took the view at the budget meeting in December, that the decision about awarding grants, is not an issue for the charities commission, it is an issue for Wheldrake Parish Council. Since then, there has been a one-man campaign to discredit the council, certainly the Chair and Vice Chair who have both been exonerated by the City of York Council.

With regards to the precept again, we are trying to head towards a minimum £30,000 reserve, however there are situations that arise that are not budgeted for, e.g. subsidy towards the bus service through the village and funds towards to the new playpark equipment, and due to these unbudgeted items, the PC will probably be short of the ideal reserve amount.

For example, in a Band E property, the parish precept is just over £1 a week. This amount ranges from just over 50p a week to just under £2 a week. When the PC increased it in the first period, it increased by 147%, the previous year it went down by 3.5% and this year, with the same £40,000 precept it went up by 0.8%.

We as a council have a responsibility to run, not at a profit, but within a budget, and therefore we need to have a reserve. The normal guidance is that a PC such as Wheldrake should normally run with a surplus of between 50 and 150% of its annual expenditure and we are nowhere near that.

18141: Reports:

a. Ward Councillor

No report, however The Vice Chair responded to above comments stating that one Cllr was elected as a Ward Cllr, she then chose to join the PC. The PC is an apolitical body and therefore whichever political body she wishes to join, it is of no business of the PC.

b. Police

On 25th September there was a break in attempt on Benjy Lane, Wheldrake

Between 24th and 28th August there was a theft of tractor from Wheldrake

c. Other

Nothing reported

18142: Welcome to PCSO Corrine Grundon

The PCSO team work between 8am and midnight. Between those hours if there are any low level crimes/concerns, anti-social behaviour or welfare concerns that you feel need reporting, please call 101. If you have any events where you would like police to attend please contact the team and they will be happy to attend.

Whist PCSO Grundon was in attendance, she addressed the concerns of the member of the public with regards to horse riding in and around the village. She advised the rider to obtain the number plate of the car(s) in question and report it. She mentioned the possibility of the PC erecting warning signs to go in the village and putting information sheets on social media on how to safely pass a horse and rider. On the North Yorkshire police website there is a place to report anti-social drivers.

18143: Planning:

a. Applications:

18/01936/FUL: Sycamore House, Church Lane, Wheldrake. Erection of single storey side extension (retrospective). **Objected**

18/02052/TCA: The Brambles, 14 North Lane, Wheldrake. Prune 3 Hawthorn Trees in conservation area. **No objections**

b. Decisions:

18/01619/TCA: Midsummer House, North Lane, Wheldrake. **Approved**. No tree preservation needed following site visit.

18/01678/FUL: 15 Church Lane, Wheldrake. **Approval** of householder planning permission

18/01764/TCA: 3 Kitty Garth, Wheldrake. **Approved**. No tree preservation needed following site visit.

18/01051/FUL: Mount Pleasant Farm, Church Lane, Wheldrake. **Approval** of householder planning permission.

18/01021/FUL: Haggwood Farm, Broad Highway, Wheldrake. **Refused** planning permission.

c. Consultations/Other:

None

18144: RFO report on closing balances and recent payments

Currently £24,500 in the bank with anticipated expenditure including substantial monies for the play park. The PC is awaiting an invoice for the subsidy of the bus service (due).

Expecting the second half of precept in October.

Budget meeting to take place in December and it may be that the precept could be reduced but only minimally.

a. Payments to be made under delegated powers:

None

b. Payments to be made:

Autela Group Limited	£48.26
Toby Jobson	£816.00
Playscheme	£5,465.40

c. Receipts:

Precept (second instalment)	£20,000.00 (expected)
-----------------------------	-----------------------

d. Other:

Awaiting invoice for the subsidy of the bus service through the village
Clerk's salary at rate already confirmed and clerk's receipted expenses

18145: Reports from Committees and Working Groups:

No reports

18146: Communication policy:

Cllr Goode to liaise with clerk

18147: Ward Committee Meeting:

This will take place on Friday 7th December 2018 – more details to follow

18148: Lengthsman job:

Advert approved by all Cllrs – to be advertised on village noticeboard and website

18149: Litter pick date and leaflet:

Deferred until next meeting

18150: Correspondence received:

1. Email from resident with requests and questions (outlined and responded to in item 18140)
2. Email from resident requesting accounts information – currently being dealt with
3. Correspondence received with regards to confidentiality – this has been reiterated to all Cllrs as noted in Vice Chair's comment within item 18140
4. Email received regarding precept; the rise and the effect to residents – response also included in item 18140

18151: Memorial stone:

A Cllr has agreed to speak with the vicar of the church regarding placement of the memorial stone. If it is going in the church yard, it will have to be laid flat however if placed on parish land it can be erected upright. A vote took place and it was 9:1 in favour of the stone being placed on PC land.

18152: Items for next agenda:

To discuss security of email account for the clerk – proposal to change back to a .gov account
Minutes and the length – to be discussed within the Communications working group and report back to the PC at the next meeting

Beware of Horseriders signs

Speed sign to be included in budget

Cllrs to inform the clerk of any additional items

18153: Ongoing issues:

Audit of assets

Village maintenance

Closure of Part 1

Part 2:

18154: Confidential business:

Closure of Part 2

Meeting closed at 8.20pm