

Gainford & Langton

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2021

COUNCILLORS: C. Jackson, A. Buckley, A. Wilkinson, M. Kennan
McCall, Hannan, Walker & Platten. Clerk – Martin Clark
Visitors: 6 members of the public

Public Participation:

Questions were raised from the public in connection with the sports programme carried out throughout the summer school holidays. The contractor Mr Swankie raised the issue over 'rumours' that had circulated in the village on social media about another provider being sought to run future sports.

Cllr Wilkinson, as Chair, referred to the positive responses to the work carried out by Swankie Sports in the running of the events. No one from the council had questioned the excellent work that was done. Apologies were offered for any misgivings. Grant awards have administration elements which needed to be done and it was accepted that this needed to be improved going forward.

Further engagement with the community on how the council take things forward in the future would be looked in too.

A question was raised about permission being given for feral cats being used to catch the rats on the allotments. This had been noted from comments on social media sites.

The Clerk confirmed that no permission to use feral cats for that purpose had been given and would not.

It was proposed by the Chair and agreed that items 6 and 10 be heard following statutory items 1 to 3. They will be recorded in the minutes as per the published agenda.

AGENDA

1. Acceptance, or otherwise of apologies

None

2. Declarations of Interest:

Members are asked to consider whether they might have a personal or a pecuniary interest in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting. If so, it is requested that any such interest be declared now. If subsequently during the consideration of any matter, it becomes apparent to any member that he/she does, indeed, have an interest, it should then be declared immediately. **Resolved** – No declarations were made.

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Signed.....

Dated.....

3. Minutes

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 1 September 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the 1 September be accepted as a true record.

4. Personnel Sub-Committee

It was agreed the parish council should establish a Personnel Sub-Committee to deal with all matters of employment.

Resolved - (a) That the council establish a personnel sub-committee with 3 members – Cllr’s Wilkinson, Jackson, and McCall; and (b) that the terms of reference and schemes of delegation be established

5. Finance

5.1 October reconciliation and invoices for payment.

The Clerk referred to additional invoices requiring approval:

CE Walker (grass cuts September) - £736.80

Village Hall (hire of room) - £25.00 (A)

Northumbrian Water (allotments) - £98.07

M. Clark (reimburse poppy wreath) - £17.00

S. Hannan (Reimburse spend of food) £17.00 & £41.00

Resolved – That the October Financial Report and invoices requiring payment be approved.

5.2 Completion of 2020/21 external audit.

The Clerk informed members of the completed external audit with no advisories.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

6. Allotments (St Peters)

Cllr’s Kennan & Buckley gave a verbal report on their recent allotment activity and submitted questionnaire.

Questionnaire was issued to allotment holders to give them options on a management committee.

2 options were given –

Option 1 was any management would take control of all the administration of the allotments including Tenancy Agreements (yearly), rents and maintenance, and communication. The council would do is pay the Ruttle rent and water bills and send out twice yearly invoices to the committee.

Option 2 the council continue to do the financial administration, hold the waiting list, send out leases, and keep committee informed on finance. The committee would take

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responsibility for maintenance and be responsible for all activities of tenants, carry out regular inspections, and inform the council if action is needed.

Results were – 13 people responded. 11 preferred option 2.

A further contact will be made with the tenants and the 10 people who said they would be happy to be on any committee.

The issue of vermin (rats) on the site needs to be addressed. It was reiterated that no permission to use feral cat(s) to reduce the rat population had been given.

The issue of people shooting the rats was discussed and agreed it should cease. It was also agreed that professional exterminators would be asked to quote to remove them and advise the tenants accordingly.

Resolved - It was proposed and agreed the costs would be funded by the parish council.

Further to that a strategy going forward would be discussed with the management committee.

The bank account options were discussed.

7. Local maintenance/village issues

7.1 To receive verbal reports from councillors' village walk abouts. It was agreed the Chair would email the Clerk with any issues that were found.

7.2 Christmas tree ordered for island – delivery 25th November

7.3 Remembrance Sunday – Wreath ordered for laying at service. It was agreed that Cllr Jackson would lay the wreath on behalf of the council.

7.4 The path was reinstated on the far side of the allotments

7.5 Footpath number 7 has large fallen branches. Issue has been referred to Public Rights of Way (DCC)

7.6 Beech hedge along the rec field – Raby offered to trim

7.7 The oak tree on the island requires a specialist tree surgeon

7.8 The hedge at Balmer Hill is to be trimmed

7.9 The damage on the island – still sourcing a contractor to carry out of the work

7.10 Concerns raised about pavement parking affecting pedestrian egress

It was agreed Cllr Kennan would talk to the toddler group about the playground and future provision.

8. Correspondence

Submitted – Details of correspondence received

Correspondence in month –

UTASS	First Aid Courses
DCC	COVID Hero nominations
DCC	Winter Maintenance

Charities Buying Group	Health Checker
Durham Employment and Skills	Training opportunities
DCC	Hedge laying competition
DCC	Covid Heroes

Resolved – That the information be noted.

9. Planning

DM/21/03290/FPA – 9 The Paddocks, Gainford. Log burner with extended flue. Noted.

Comments were made about the length of time it was taking for Durham to decide on the submission to demolish the remaining St Peter’s buildings.

10. Community Sports

Cllr Hannan reported on the success of the funded summer sports programme:

- Swankie Sports to carry out to run 12 sessions of sports for junior age children
- 81 children attended, with the minimum number attending was 30 and maximum was 46
- The engagement with the village was exceptional.
- 4 sessions of 5 a side football was also run for 12 to 16 year olds. Started off with 6 then finished with 18 attending.
- It would be something to look at to engage girls in the 12 to 16 year old bracket in future.
- Healthy food was provided for junior age children by Oliver Twists in Barnard Castle. The food was fantastic.
- A forest school (Embers) was put in place but not quite as successful as hoped. Uptake wasn’t ideal and only one session was run. The children that attended gave good positive feedback.
- Going forward thoughts are to engage more children of the 12 to 16 year old age group.
- Some administrative issues that took time to resolve will need to be addresses going forward.
- The Gainford Trust application to supplement that awarded from the Action Partnership was turned down because they felt there weren’t enough children in the village.
- The grant awarded was age stipulated.
- For October half term the scouts have offered toilet facilities which would reduce the costs.

Cllr Hannan was thanked for all her work done on this successful programme.

It was agreed the council set up a working group to look at taking engagement with young people forward in the future.

Resolved – (a) A working group be established to look at community engagement activities (Sports/Arts), (b) the council fund the junior sports programme for the October half term for up to a maximum of 30 children at £10 per child for 5 sessions (max £1500)

11. Raby Stakeholder Meetings

A verbal update was given by Cllr Walker

- Gainford Hall is being repointed, the windows are going in and the roof replaced. Most of the original timber has been preserved.
- About to start advertising the property for residential purposes – long term let
- Yard at the back might be used as offices
- Hall being looked at for ‘unwrapping’ in December
- Housing proposals not been put out for tender at present
- 30 mph sign being moved to allow a line of site and potentially enable a speed visor to be installed

12. Statement of Community Engagement

The item was deferred until the November meeting.

Meeting Closed

Signed.....

Dated.....

