

# Whitley Parish Council

1.0 The meeting was opened at 7.00 pm by the Chair Cllr Walton.

## 2.0 Open Public Forum(OPF) 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023

2.1 Two residents of the village were in attendance in response to the invitation made in the recent Parish Council newsletter, encouraging individuals in the village to consider becoming councillors and filling the current vacancies. The Chair extended an invitation to the residents to explain their interest in joining the council. One resident, who has lived in the village for an extended period and has benefited from village activities, expressed a desire to give back and contribute, citing experience as a member of the local WI. Another resident, although residing in the village for a long time, admitted not feeling fully connected and expressed curiosity about the inner workings of the community. Cllr White suggested that after witnessing the proceedings of the meeting, the residents could indicate whether they are keen in further pursuing their interest. Cllr Humphrey sought clarification from the Clerk about the legal requirements and procedures. The Clerk informed the Council that there are currently two vacancies among the seven council positions, and the proper advertising process has been completed. As a result, the Parish Council can now co-opt qualified residents to fill the vacancies, having adhered to all statutory provisions. Cllr White reassured the potential candidates that while councillors have legal responsibilities, the obligations are not overly burdensome. Additionally, there is a training course available to provide guidance on the roles and duties of Parish Council members.

2.2 **Community Policing Update:** PC Sarah Ward, the Community Support Officer for Kellington and Eggborough, attended the meeting to provide an update on policing activities in the area, including the Whitley Ward. PC Ward highlighted the monthly newsletter available for all community members, summarising policing and criminal activity in the patch. She confirmed that the newsletter would be emailed to the Parish Clerk, and Cllr Humphrey affirmed that a copy would be added to the Parish Council's social media pages. PC Ward took the opportunity to advertise a drop-in session scheduled for tomorrow 22<sup>nd</sup> November in the local pub in Whitley. In response to questions from councillors about the specific areas covered by the Whitley Ward, PC Ward clarified that it encompasses Whitley, Kirk Smeaton, Little Smeaton, Heck, Womersley, Stapleton, Stubbs Walden, Balne, and Cridling Stubbs. Notably, PC Ward mentioned that the offenses referred to in the newsletter did not pertain to crimes in Whitley, and there have been no offenses directly reported in Whitley village in the last 20 days.

2.3 The Chair closed the public forum and proceeded to the conduct of the Parish meeting.

## Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School Annex Building – 07/24

3.0 **Present:** Cllr Walton (Chair), Cllr White (Vice Chair, Cllr Thompson, Cllr Humphrey, Cllr Cole, and Clerk to the Council J Hunter.

**4.0 Apologies for absence:**

4.1 All Councillors were present at the meeting.

**5.0 Disclosure of interest:**

5.1 There were no other interests registered.

**6.0 Minutes of the Whitley Parish Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023:**

6.1 Cllr White suggest some minor amendments. Subject to these it was resolved the minutes were a true record of the Whitley Parish Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023.

**Action:** The Clerk to deliver a copy for signature by the Chair.

**7.0 Matters for information and action as required:**

**7.1 New Parish Councillor:** Councillors welcomed Mrs Maureen Thompson as a newly co-opted Parish Councillor who duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and provided the Clerk her completed Declaration of Interest Form.

**Action:** The Clerk to advise Democratic Services of North Yorkshire Council of the co-option and due appointment of Mrs Maureen Thompson to the position of Parish Councillor of Whitley Parish.

**7.2 Precept and Budgets 2024-25:** Following further reflection on the Parish Council budget affected by Councillors since previous parish council meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> October it was resolved the Whitley Parish Council precept for 2024-25 be set at £12,500. The amount represents an increase of £5.10 per annum on the band D level over last year’s precept, an effective percentage increase of 19.6%.

Parish councillors deliberated on the challenging decision of setting the precept level for Whitley Parish. Expressing reluctance, councillors acknowledged that the parish's sole source of income is derived from the parish precept. However, to effectively address the demands voiced by residents regarding the management of village open spaces, verge cutting, tree management, and considering current inflationary pressures, the council determined that there was no alternative but to increase the precept charges. The decision reflects the council's commitment to maintaining essential services and meeting the expectations of the community while grappling with the financial constraints imposed by the need for additional funds.

**Action:** The Clerk to present a summary of the budget to Cllr Humphrey for upload onto the social media pages of the Whitley Parish Council at the commencement of the new financial year.

**7.3 Trees in Daffodil Park & Lee View:** The Clerk provided an update on the quotation from the tree surgeon concerning the management of trees in Daffodil Park. Councillors were reminded of the two options under consideration: pollarding three willow trees, removing two ash trees adjacent to the rear fence of properties in Whitley Farm Close, and pollarding a tree beside the public path on the field; or the entire removal of all the trees in question. The tree surgeon offered to completely remove all identified trees for a fixed cost of £780 being the same price for the pollarding option. After thorough deliberation, councillors considered the pros and cons of both options. They ultimately concluded that the removal of the trees, despite being financially equivalent, posed two significant issues. Firstly, there was a concern that certain community members might object to the removal of healthy trees. Secondly, the trees in Daffodil Park play a crucial role in managing the water table, which is already high, contributing to excessive flooding in the

park during the winter season. As a result, councillors decided against the removal of trees, opting instead to proceed with the more conservative approach of trimming them.

Cllr Thompson volunteered to take the lead in overseeing the work.

**Action:** Clerk to order the necessary pollarding work from the tree surgeon. Additionally, Cllr Thompson to liaise directly with the contractor to ensure the smooth execution of the tree management work.

It was agreed that consideration of the trimming of the hazel thicket at the rear of properties on Lee View will be deferred until the January meeting of the Parish Council.

**7.4 Drainage in Daffodil Park:** Cllr White provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing efforts to address drainage challenges in Daffodil Park. He highlighted the proactive steps taken by arranging a meeting with the professional drainage company, "Sweetings." Acknowledging the concerns of the farmer whose land borders the park, Cllr White emphasised the importance of securing permission for drainage water to be directed onto the farmer's property.

During discussions with Sweetings, it was revealed that the drainage company recognises the farmer's apprehensions and has proposed an innovative alternative solution. This solution involves the excavation of an additional channel in the farmer's field. The new channel is designed to efficiently redirect excess water from both Daffodil Park and the farmer's field into the natural drain network. This alternative approach aims to address the drainage issues effectively, while mitigating any potential adverse impacts on the farmer's land and crops.

Further updates will be provided once there is a response from the farmer to these new proposals.

**7.5 Christmas Tree:** Cllr White provided an update on discussion with the landlords of the pub regarding the placement of lights on the existing small Christmas Tree. Councillors expressed their desire to contribute to the festive spirit in the community by providing a Christmas Tree planted near the pub as the focal point of the village. However, there is recognition that the council should be mindful of community sentiments that excessive expenditure might not be well-received. Alternatives were considered being purchase and planting of a large and substantial Christmas Tree or purchase of new lights that could be appropriately fitted onto the existing small tree.

After due reflection, given the limited resources available to the Parish Council, it was decided that purchase of suitable lighting for the small tree, would provide the most cost-effective solution.

**Action:** Cllr White to pursue the purchase of Christmas Lights for the existing tree.

**8.0 Correspondence received:** The Clerk summarised the details of correspondence received by email or post.

**8.1** Emails and postage.

**8.1.1** Clerk presented the following details of emails or correspondence by mail relevant to the affairs of Whitley Parish Council:

**8.1.1.1** An email from PC Sarah Ward of the North Yorkshire Police Neighbourhood Policing Team, attaching a copy of her November newsletter for circulation among the community. Noted.

**8.1.1.2** An email from the North Yorkshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner's engagement team reporting on progress made in

response to causes for concern expressed by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Service. Noted.

**8.1.1.3** An email from North Yorkshire Council presenting an update on the North Yorkshire Local Plan setting out the process of engagement with the community inviting observations and comments. Noted.

**8.1.1.4** An email from St Edmunds Church providing notice of the forthcoming Carol Service to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> December requesting that the notice be shared with the local community. Noted.

**8.1.1.5** An email from an individual requesting information on the approved suppliers of replacement wheelie bins. Noted.

**8.1.1.6** An email exchange between a resident on Gravel Hill Lane and Parish Councillors expressing frustrations about action following complaints about HGV vehicles passing, in contravention of traffic regulations, through Gravel Hill Lane. Noted.

## 8.2 Social Media

**8.2.1.1** Cllr Humphrey advised, that there was nothing posted onto social media, directly concerning matters relating to the Parish Council. General comments were posted on the vehicle activity on Doncaster Road following the uploading of statistical data about vehicle movements and speeds, gathered from the Vehicle Activated Sign.

**9.0 Planning matters:** The Clerk provided a summary of the planning applications made in the month for review and consideration by the Council.

**9.1.1 ZG2023/1116/HPA:** 21 Yew Tree Park, Whitley. Erection of single storey garage. Noted with no comments.

## 10.0 Council Finance & Administration:

### 10.1 RFO Report as at 21/11/2023:

| Bank/Account                          | Income since 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023 | Expenditure since 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023  |  | Current Balance       | Notes/Comment         |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Santander Deposit                     | 112.65                                  |   |  | 15,325.77             | Interest paid monthly |
| Santander Current Account (Cash Book) | 11,323.18                               | 11,788.02   |  | 5,535.16              | No interest           |
| <b>Total Bank Balances</b>            |   |   |  | <b>20,860.93</b>      |                       |
| <b>Less following funds:</b>          |   |   |  |                       |                       |
| Allocated Funds                       |   | Surplus from Crossing Drainage Daffodil Field   |  | 1,798.71<br>12,230.00 |                       |
| Total Allocated funds                 |   |   |  | 14,028.71             |                       |
|                                       |   | Legal Action and Complaints against the Council.<br>Future Development and Facility Provision –Buildings. |  | 6,832.22              |                       |

|                                       |  |   |                 |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|--|
| Parish Council Bank Funds             |  | Future Development and Facility Provision – ROS.<br>Future Development and Facility Provision -Nature Reserve.<br>Unexpected/unforeseeable expenditure. |                 |  |
| VAT due for reclaim                   |  |   | 2,361.70        |  |
| <b>Total Unallocated Parish Funds</b> |  |   | <b>9,193.92</b> |  |

The Clerk presented a cash flow summary analysing month by month the actual receipts and payments up to November 2023, with a forecast of income and expenditure for the remainder of the year to March 2024. Income to date is £12,252 including the second tranche of precept received in October 2023 and the proceeds of sale of the jet wash for £90. A donation to Parish Funds from the Allotment Association of £550 was gratefully received by Councillors. Total expenditure up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is anticipated to amount to £30,288.82. This amount is predicated on the planned drainage work in Daffodil Park being completed during early spring. The balance of reserves carried forward at the end of the year is forecast to be £5,982.62.

**10.2 Accounts Payable:** The following payments were approved for settlement by cheque.

| Cheque No. | Payable to:  | Amount: £ |
|------------|--|-----------|
| 22554      | J R Hunter – Clerk Salary                                  | 494.30    |
| 22555      | HMRC – PAYE  | 123.60    |
| 22556      | S Cole – reimbursement for Remembrance Wreath              | 20.00     |
| 22557      | K Walton – Christmas Parcel for Over 80's                  | 367.11    |
| 22558      | George Fillingham – grass cutting final quarter Aug to Nov | 1,800.00  |
| 22559      | Compost Bin for allotments                                 | 660.00    |

**10.3 Accounts Payable retrospectively:** The following retrospective payments made by bank transfer since the last council meeting were approved.

| Cheque No. | Payable to: | Amount: £ |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
|            |             |           |
|            |             |           |

**11.0 Recreational Open Space in Whitley:**

**11.1 Parks and Verges:**

**11.1.1 Parks & Playground Maintenance:** Cllr White raised the issue of the pending play area health and safety report. The Clerk informed councillors that the report has yet to be finalised. Concerns were expressed about the time that has elapsed since the actual inspection, emphasising the seriousness of ensuring the safety of playground equipment and the play area. Councillors agreed that pressure needs to be applied to the inspection

company to expedite production of the final report. In the event of the company failing to meet a deadline of the end of the year, alternative options were to be considered. It was recognised the paramount concern is to address any safety issues swiftly and comprehensively to ensure the well-being of children using the playground facilities.

Cllr White presented concerns about the inadequate maintenance of the gas tank enclosure in Daffodil Park. He highlighted that the recently appointed gas supply company disclaimed ownership of the enclosure, stating that beyond addressing Health & Safety issues, they held no further responsibility for its upkeep. The matter prompted questions during the meeting regarding the ownership of the area.

The Clerk clarified that pinpointing the precise ownership of specific parcels of land, including the gas tank enclosure, was not currently feasible. This lack of clarity raised additional challenges in determining responsibility for maintenance and addressing any potential Health & Safety concerns associated with the enclosure.

**11.1.2 Community Payback Scheme:** Cllr White provided an update informing the council that he had written to the school to formally request a decision regarding the willingness of the governors to reconsider the Parish Council's previous request for access to school facilities by members of the Community Payback Team.

This initiative seeks to engage the Community Payback Team in contributing to the improvement and maintenance of open spaces in the village, for the benefit of the local community. The communication aims to prompt a response from the school's governors, clarifying their position on the matter. Further updates will be provided as soon as a response is received from the school.

**11.1.3 Verge Cutting:** Councillors recognised that the final round of grass cutting in parks and verges has been successfully completed. It was noted that a budget for grass cutting for the spring and summer growing season in 2024 has been included in the precept calculations. This reflects the Council's commitment to the ongoing care and upkeep of public spaces within the community.

**12.0 A19 Safety:**

**12.1 Speeding on A19:** Cllr White reported that the fault in the speed sign has been rectified and shared his intention to relocate the speed sign to the north of the village.

**13.0 A.O.B.**

**13.1** Councillors revisited the idea of selling certain equipment owned by the Parish, specifically mentioning the PA system, projector, and speed gun. Cllr Humphrey noted that the PA system has reasonable second-hand value and suggested that it could potentially be sold or made available to the local youth club.

It was collectively agreed that details of these assets would be compiled with the intention of placing them on social media marketplaces. Further updates will be provided as the process of collating and advertising these assets progresses.

**13.2** .Cllr Cole commented on the success of the Remembrance Service that was reasonably attended.

**13.3** Cllr White advised that Tunstall Health Care have confirmed that they wish to make a contribution to the Over 80's Christmas Parcels.

**13.4** Councillors debated the value of the subscription to the Yorkshire Local Council Association and speculated that better use can be made of their services.

**13.5** Cllr White brought attention to the ongoing annual consultation exercise conducted by North Yorkshire Council, which aims to gather the views of community members. This county-wide initiative encourages community engagement, allowing individuals to express their opinions on what they desire from the County Council.

Cllr White proposed that, given the potential increase in the number of Parish Councillors, the council should consider a more proactive participation and engagement in this exercise. By doing so, the Parish Council can ensure that the views and preferences of the local community are effectively communicated to the County Council. This increased involvement aligns with the spirit of fostering stronger connections between the Parish Council and the broader community, allowing for a more representative and inclusive decision-making process. Further discussions and planning may take place to determine the extent of the council's participation in the annual consultation exercise.

**14.0 Confirm the date, time and place of next meeting:**

**Next Parish Council Meeting:** Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm at Whitley & Eggborough Primary School.

**Closure of meeting:** 9:05 pm