

## NEASHAM PARISH COUNCIL

(Copies of minutes and agendas are available on the website at: <http://www.neashamparishcouncil.co.uk>)

### NOTES ON MEETING

of

**Neasham Annual Parish Assembly** held on May 16 2019 at 6:30 pm in Neasham Reading Room.

**Present:** Parish Councillors :- G Conlin, G Crute, D Dodwell, P Dunn, J Grainger, K Sandick, J Weighell, Ward Councillors L Tostevin, C Chou, J Walker (Clerk), Members of the Public (open invitation), Apologies were submitted by E Miller and L Blundell

#### **A19/01 Chair's Introduction.**

- J Weighell (Chair) welcomed the 16 members of the public who attended the meeting and introduced them to the Parish and Ward Councillors, in particular Dr Christy Chou who was elected to represent the Hurworth ward in the recent elections.
- The Chair gave a brief outline of events over the past year and emphasised the importance of liaising with parishioners in order to bring forward their ideas for benefitting the parish, for example previous assemblies had indicated that they would like to see a defibrillator and speed warning signs in the village, both of which had been installed.
- The Chair also summarised planning applications received within the Neasham Parish Council boundary, in particular a more controversial application by Gladmans (Developer) for 280 houses and a care home on a site near Middleton St George. Gladman appealed against Darlington Borough Council's planning refusal, but later withdrew the appeal.

#### **A19/02 Ward Councillor's Forum.**

- Unfortunately due to a clash between the Neasham and Hurworth meetings the Ward Councillors had to leave the meeting early. Councillor Chou was introduced to the meeting as the newly elected representative for the Hurworth Ward along with Councillor Tostevin. C Chou stated that he felt it important for strong communications between parishioners and the council and encouraged parishioners to contact him with any issues they may have, although a response may not always be immediate as was still working full time.
- L Tostevin reported that following the recent elections there was no overall control of Darlington Borough Council, however a coalition of Conservative, Liberal Democrats and Independents would form a majority. This was the first change of control in 28 years. In response to a query as to whether the Ward Councillors knew what their references would be, L Tostevin indicated that although it was not confirmed, it was likely that C Chou would be involved with Health and Social Care, L Tostevin with Health together with a cabinet post and a seat on the planning committee.
- In response to a query as to how green the new regime would be L Tostevin reported that although the current budget cannot be altered immediately, she anticipated it would have a greater emphasis on green issues starting with the planting of more trees.

#### **A19/03 Parish Council Budget and Precept.**

- The Clerk reported that the precept for 2017/18 was £6695 an increase of 74% which arose from additional planned expenditure on tree maintenance and work to the Millennium Garden together with the need to increase the reserves in respect of village green and pumphouse maintenance and possible elections costs. At the end of the financial year the ring fenced reserves stood at £5825 and the general reserve at £2750. The internal audit had been carried out and the accounts approved. The precept for 2019/20 was set at £9035 which included an allowance of £4260 for speed signs. If the speed signs were excluded the proposed expenditure on the remaining budget items would reduce in comparison to the previous year.

#### **A19/04 Neasham Reading Room Report**

---

- Unfortunately Lesley (Reading Rooms Chair) was unable to attend the assembly, but provided a copy of her annual report to the Reading Rooms. Pam abstracted point of interest of items affecting Neasham PC from the report and conveyed these to the meeting. (A copy of the full report is attached to these notes)

### **A19/05 Open Forum**

- The issue of many heavy lorries using the road towards Low Dinsdale was raised and in particular concerns over the dangers in adverse weather conditions and overgrown hedges, with fears that there could be a serious accident on the Hill. The Chair acknowledged these concerns and that Neasham PC would continue to seek a solution with Darlington BC.
- Frustrations were expressed over the lack of fibre optic internet in the village, the Chair reported that the previous ward councillor had been involved in the struggles with Openreach for it to be installed in Neasham, currently without success, and requested that the parishioner send us an email setting out his concerns for us to forward to the ward councillors.
- The lack of a user friendly bus service to Neasham was raised and the Chair shared these concerns and outlined the steps that Neasham PC had taken. G Crute stated that there would be a review of the services by Arriva in October and that some form of consensus was needed to formulate realistic proposals for Neasham PC to submit to the review. This was to be an agenda item at the next meeting.
- In closing the meeting the Chair gave thanks to all volunteers who had worked hard to maintain the high standards in the village, with particular regard to the litter pickers.

Many thanks to Cllrs Pam Dunn and Janette Grainger who had provided the light refreshments. The assembly dispersed at approximately 7.40pm .

John Walker  
Clerk to Neasham Parish Council

## **APPENDIX - NEASHAM READING ROOMS REPORT**

### **NEASHAM PARISH COUNCIL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

*The following notes formed the basis of the Chair's (L Blundell) report to the Reading Rooms AGM. Unfortunately Lesley was unable to attend the Parish Assembly and therefore Pam Dunn abstracted items from the report that affected Neasham PC and conveyed them together with other items of interest to the Assembly*

### **Reading Room AGM 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

Thanks to Committee and all villagers who have supported the RR this year. The financial year for the Reading Room runs from January to December and as at 31<sup>st</sup> December reserves were £23k but this has decreased since January due to other works being completed including a major overhaul of the heating system and so the aim for the coming year and onward will be to get our reserves built back up.

#### **Events Jan 2018 to December 2018 /19 - Total of 10 events**

Snake Davis

Applause Theatre

Simon Yates

2 x Coffee Morning - Easter and Christmas

Duck Derby and Prize Draw

Scarecrow Competition

Pumpkin Competition

Green Woodwork Workshop

Neasham Remembers – a week-long event organised by the Parish Council with an exhibition focussing on the photography of Helen Crute)

Events cancelled Halloween Festival (lack of tickets sold) also there were a low number of entries for scarecrow competition, so this is unlikely to be held again

No Christmas Dance in December 2018 – explain (but there will be one for 2019)

Since January of this year - a further 4 events Gareth Davies Jones, Police Dog Talk, Snake Davis, Coffee Morning

**Hires** -some new hires this year

KeepFit – 2 x a week, Whist 2x a week, pilates running 2x a week but now cancelled due to the tutor moving away, lymphoma action 2x a month, ukulele group 1x month, WI 1 x month (winter) Craft Group 1x month - equates to between 8/9 bookings per week overall that the hall has been used – not counting one off hires children's parties etc. Room for more hires but good usage.

(May wish to mention the Wall Hanging and 'unveiling' at the afternoon tea on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Also planned Duck Derby date for July 6<sup>th</sup>. Also great reviews on recent music and drama events and in reviewing the Desert Queen in a North East Arts publication the journalist who attended the performance refers to *'the rustic charm of the Reading Room in the village of Neasham nestled on the banks of the river Tees.'*

**Maintenance works completed** – Gents toilets, rear lobby, electrical inspection and associated work, repairs and improvements to central heating. Awaiting external decoration to be completed in the next few months. Hopefully no further big expenses in the near future but we have spent quite a lot of money.

**Committee / Resignations** – Tina Murray, Mark Newman and Esme Bebb so hence it is important to replace committee members and volunteers

**New Volunteers outcome of leaflet drop** – 8 volunteers inc 2 ex committee members (increased to 10 at AGM)

**Chairs Resignation** - this is the last year for the current chair who will finish April 2020 when she will have been in post 7 years. Looking for successor. Good to find someone soon so that we could have an effective handover.

---