

Minutes of the Darrington Parish Council Meeting Reading Room

Thursday 13th June 2019

Present:

Cllr Britton (Chair), Cllr Smith, Cllr Stainer, Cllr Stones, Wakefield MDC Councillor Jones (part time)

Apologies:

Cllr Tagger, Ian Thompson, Celia Loughran

In Attendance:

5 members of the public.

2019-06-01

Declaration of Interests:

None offered.

2019-06-02

Public Matters:

A resident reported that overgrown vegetation at the bottom of Church Lane was causing walkers to have to step out into the road. Cllr Smith agrees to contact the flat dweller to find out who the landlord is and ask them to cut back.

2019-06-03

Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the May meeting were reviewed and accepted as being a true record by Cllr's Stones and Stainer.

2019-06-04

Matters arising:

- Cllr Smith had said the damaged planter on Valley Rd would be repaired on 20th May, and it was. Unfortunately, a second planter next to it was similarly damaged shortly afterwards with no witnesses, so Cllrs Britton and Smith have been down and rebuilt it themselves.
- The idea of having Simon Smith quote to make moveable wheelchair ramps for access to the Reading Rooms was again discussed as there were many difficulties expected. It was agreed that we would still ask Simon to go and physically look at the steps to see if was even possible, and if so to quote as originally agreed.
- Cllr Jones was expected to the meeting later and would be asked whose responsibility it was to cut the grass verge on the way up to the Kyte Hotel.
- The climbing frame in the village field is now up and running for use.
- The issue regarding the emails received about the Equestrian Centre has now been resolved.
- Cllr Britton has shaved the wooden strip down the side of the door to the Phone Booth to ensure it now opens smoothly again.

- Cllr Stones is still waiting to hear whether the new house on Estcourt Rd has indeed been sold
- Cllr Smith tells Cllrs about a Befriending Service she'd registered with and asks if anyone might be interested in joining to contact her.

2019-06-05

Correspondence:

Celia Loughran wrote to the council asking for our thoughts on what traffic calming measures would best suit the village, so she can take up directly with the Highways Team. Cllr Smith agrees to write back asking for a second speed trap, but this time at a time and location that we choose, and also to ask what measure have proven most cost effective, and most effective elsewhere.

Letter from Ian Thompson offering to continue doing Minutes for the meetings until his replacement is taken on. He also informs the councillors that an email he'd received from Carol Glover about the damaged planter and rusty sign near the letterbox on Valley Rd has been actioned – WMDC have scheduled repairs, and Wakefield Met have confirmed they will replace the sign. He has forwarded info re solar powered lamp post Christmas lights to Cllr Stones for researching. He also attached his findings from research into Clerk Employment (which he'd also sent to all Cllrs). This would be dealt with later in the Agenda.

2019-06-06

Finance:

Cllr Stainer presented the accounts up to the 31st May 2019.

He reported that the balance at the start of the month stood at £23,108.39

There was no income for May 2019

The expenditure in May is shown below

Date	Item	Payment Method	Payee	Reason	Amount (£)	VAT (£)
9.5.19	06-1920	Cheque 780	Came and Company	Local Council Insurance Policy	294.17	0.00
9.5.19	07-1920	Cheque 787	Darrington Village Field Trust	S137 Grant - new play equipment	3,250.00	0.00
9.5.19	08-1920	Cheque 782	PCC of Darrington	S137 Grant - maintenance of clock	104.00	0.00
9.5.19	09-1920	Cheque 783	PCC of Darrington	Room Hire - PC meetings 2019/20	176.00	0.00
9.5.19	10-1920	Cheque 784	Mr James Robert Capon	Gardening and Maintenance	150.00	0.00
9.5.19	11-1920	Cheque 785	Simon Smith	Tithe Barn information board	375.00	0.00
9.5.19	12-1920	Cheque 786	Mr Britton	Lawnmower for village grass cutting	353.54	58.92
				Totals	4,702.71	58.92

Payments Scheduled For June 2019 For Approval

Date	Item	Payment Method	Payee	Reason	Amount (£)	VAT (£)
13.6.19	13-1920	Cheque 788	Mr Britton	Materials to repair damaged planter	18.00	3.00
				Totals	18.00	3.00

Cllr Smith proposed accepting these payments, Cllr Stones seconded the proposal and the councillors unanimously confirmed approval.

2019-06-07

Planning matters:

Kensworth House, Estcourt Rd	Non-material amendment to approved application	No Comment
Wenthill Farmhouse, Great North Rd,	Tree Work.	No Comment – (Application has been approved)

2019-06-08

Clerk Employment:

Cllr Britton suggests that before discussion begins, we confirm that the opinions on the topic, of the two potential new councillors in attendance, would be welcomed and so to speak freely. Cllr Britton reads Ian's initial report (see Appendices).

Cllr Britton estimates that a Clerk would need to work between 4 to 8 hrs a week and the rate of £10 an hr seems appropriate given the information in Ian's report. At 4 hrs a week the Clerk would cost £2080 pa which Cllr Britton deemed not a problem, at 8 hrs, £4160 pa which might.

Cllr Smith asks if we could set a term of hours, but with an option of additional hrs as needed – Cllr Britton said this could indeed be done.

Other councils of similar size spend between £1,200 and £4,000 pa on employment costs, so our estimates seem accurate.

Cllr Britton confirms that agreed expenses should be met rather than built into a salary.

If we do employ a Clerk, it has been agreed that they would also take on Cllr Stainer's role as Responsible Financial Officer. Linda Thompson agrees that is the standard approach. Cllr Smith asks if that might affect our estimate of hours needed, but it seemed not to.

Cllr Britton makes the point that the employment could be easily justified on the basis that sheer lack of councillors this year means the workload is too high for those left. We

also have one of the lowest precepts and potentially could ask for more which would cover the cost anyway.

Advertising of the position was discussed. It was agreed that to begin with a poster would be put up at the Feast & Fayre to see if any local interest could be generated. The a decision could be made at the next meeting re next steps. Cllr Smith agrees to draft the poster stating:

Job Available – Parish Clerk, £10 an hour, approx 20 hrs per month. CILCA qualifications desirable but not essential.

2019-06-09

Employment of Village Handyman/Gardener

Cllr Britton has been approached by a Daniel Wormold, a handyman who has worked for other Parish Councils, asking if we need any work. His qualifications and experience seem to fit the bill so Cllr Britton has arranged to meet with him on the 14th June, and if all ok, would be happy to employ his services as necessary – all Councillors agreed.

2019-06-10

Reports:

School:

Nothing to report.

Village Field:

Feast & Fayre coming up on 29th June. Cllr Stones and Smith agree to produce material for the stall and set it up.

Police:

22 Reported crimes in April – read out by Cllr Britton (see appendices).

In Bloom:

Planters have all been planted up and are looking lovely. Jonathan Jackson says the planting normally done at the bottom of Wentworth Park Rise, hasn't been done and is grown over. Cllr Smith agrees to contact InBloom.

Gardening Club:

The last meeting was very well attended. It was also discussed whether or not to ask for donations when giving the Air Crash CDs out. It was agreed they could as long as generic.

Newsletter:

It was agreed that 3 newsletters would be produced each year by Cllr Stones. Next one to be delivered mid-November, with a contribution deadline of end of September.

2019-06-13

Minor Items:

Cllr Britton cordially invited (with all other Councillors' agreement) Jonathan Jackson and Linda Thompson who were in the audience, to join the Parish Council with immediate effect. Both agree to join.

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 7.00 PM Thursday 11th July 2019 in the reading room.

The meeting closed at 8:20 PM.

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APPENDIX A – Crime Report as submitted by West Yorkshire Police.

Reported Crimes in Darrington April 2019

Theft on or near Beech Crescent

Investigation complete, no suspect identified. There is insufficient evidence to bring anyone to justice at this time. The investigation may be reopened if more information becomes available.

Theft on or near Orchard Lane

This crime is currently being investigated by the police

Violence and sexual offences on or near Orchard Lane

This crime is currently being investigated by the police

Crimes on or near Estcourt Road

Other theft, Investigation complete, no suspect identified.

Violence and sexual offences on or Estcourt Road

Investigation complete, no suspect identified. There is insufficient evidence to bring anyone to justice at this time. The investigation may be reopened if more information becomes available.

Crimes on or near Estcourt Drive - Vehicle Crime

Includes theft from or of a vehicle or interference with a vehicle - Investigations complete, no suspect identified.

Crimes on or near A 1

Criminal damage and arson

Includes damage to building and vehicles and deliberate damage by fire - Investigations complete, no suspect identified.

Crimes on or near Westfield Park

Vehicle Crime

5 Investigations complete, no suspect identified.

2 Are currently being investigated by the police

Crimes on or near Parking Area A1 (5)

Other theft, Investigation complete, no suspect identified.

Vehicle Crime Includes theft from or of a vehicle or interference with a vehicle

Investigation complete, no suspect identified.

Is currently being investigated by the police

Appendix B – Paid Clerk Overview as submitted by Ian Thompson

Initial Investigation Into Implications of a Paid Clerk to support Darrington Parish Council

At the last meeting I was asked to prepare a report on aspects of employing a clerk to the Parish Council. That work has begun but is not yet completed and I will continue with it on my return from holiday in late June.

I'd considered that perhaps our new clerk could be "self-employed", thus doing away with all the potential issues of running payroll and coping with national insurance, P60s and P45s etc. However, I have come across this very clear notice on the inland revenue website: -

"Parish councils and town councils (sometimes known as Community Councils in Wales) usually have only one paid officer, the Clerk. The great majority of these Clerks work part-time, their hours varying from one to two days per week to a few hours per quarter in connection with Parish Council meetings.

The Clerk is an office holder and emoluments received, whether described as an honorarium, a salary, a payment towards expenses or a combination of these, are chargeable to tax as employment income and are earnings for Class 1 NIC purposes. PAYE must be operated by the Parish Council on the income the Clerk earns. A Parish Clerk can never be considered self-employed for tax or NIC purposes. This is the same position as for any office or employment; there is no other acceptable tax treatment applicable to Parish Clerks.

In practice, most Clerks' remuneration is expressed as a certain sum per year on the understanding, though this is not always explicitly stated, that the Clerk meets any expenses incurred in performing the duties from that sum. Occasionally, however, a council will, in addition to making a fixed payment to a Clerk, make reimbursement for all or some of the expenses the Clerk meets on its behalf. Parish Council Clerks are generally paid in accordance with a formula related to the number of people in the parish."

I was interested in just how difficult and onerous running a payroll might be. I have discovered that the inland revenue themselves include a PAYE/NIC payment feature on their website. Once the initial employee data is set up, then a monthly run can be performed very easily. There are regulations regarding updating the Inland Revenue themselves on payments just before they are made, and their free product will do that. It does not produce payslips but another free product 12PAY does. It is approved by the Inland Revenue and indeed I have some experience with this product myself from the time when my wife and I ran a small business. It does produce payslips on blank sheets along with all of the appropriate reports and transmissions to HMRC.

The key to these products is the initial set-up and I know an accountant who will give free advice on that initial set-up.

With regard to the formula related to the number of people in the parish there are two salary scales for part time clerks. Salary scale LC1 is for populations of under 5,000 and LC2 for over 5,000. LC1 would therefore be appropriate for Darrington's clerk. However, there is not one simple hourly figure for LC1. LC1 itself is split into subdivisions. The first division is referred to as "LC1 below substantive benchmark", a second as "LC1 equivalent to substantive benchmark" and finally "LC1 above substantive benchmark". Further investigation is required but I would expect the workload for the Darrington clerk to be below any substantive benchmark particularly as no financial management workload is required. Even then "LC1 below substantive benchmark" itself had three pay rates, reduced to two for 2019-2020 and I believe in year 1 the clerk is paid the lowest of these with an increase in year 2 to the second. The rate for LC1 "below substantive range" bottom tier is £9.77 per hour for the financial year 2019-2020. It's worth noting that the second-year rate is £9.96 so estimating at £10 per hour might be the easiest for initial calculations.

All of the information above has been gleaned from various websites. The next step is for me to confirm my understanding either by finding someone at Wakefield MDC to confirm or perhaps better still to talk to the chairs or even clerks to local parish councils.

I then investigated the financial reports of other parish councils within Wakefield MDC. The end of year return requires an entry for employee costs, an entry of zero has been made by Darrington Parish Council for some years of course. One must also remember that most councils either employ both a clerk and an RFO or have a clerk who performs both functions. What is more many councils have their own parish hall and may well employ a caretaker. As a result, I'm not sure yet, how much one can take from the table I include below but I have found it interesting. The only council I can find with no costs are Darrington and East Hardwick!!

The table does indeed provide interesting reading. Starting with the fewest "voters", Darrington is 9th in the table. The annual tax a "Band D" occupant has to pay as part of his overall council tax is 4th lowest in Darrington and hamlets such as Thorp Audlin, Badsworth and Nostell payments are much larger than those made by Darrington's residents. A factor presumably is that they have employee costs and budget for them.

The percentage of the precept going on employee costs range from 11% to a massive 50% plus. I would expect our costs to be at the bottom end of this scale – mainly because we have a first class RFO in place and no caretaker costs. It must be remembered of course that other council's precepts will include a budgeted figure for their clerk and RFO!

Anyway – food for thought!

Let me emphasise the fact that I am **not** going to walk away whilst this investigation continues, and we understand the implications of taking on a paid clerk.

Ian Thompson

June 2019

<u>Parish Council</u>	2018 Registered Electors	<u>Precept 2018- 2019</u>	<u>Band D 2018-19</u>	<u>Staff Costs</u>	<u>Staff Costs %age of Precept</u>
East Hardwick	153	£840	£10.91	£0	0%
Nostell & Huntwick With Foulby & Hessle & Hilltop & West Hardwick	198	£3,800	£38.38	£1,200	32%
West Bretton	381	£5,400	£24.55	£2,022	37%
Badsworth	561	£11,000	£31.70	£3,207	29%
Thorpe Audlin	570	£10,000	£33.90	£1,778	18%
Warmfield cum Heath	705	£13,250	£42.64	£4,747	36%
Notton	768	£8,000	£18.65	£2,197	27%
Woolley	1,131	£31,800	£48.18	£3,404	11%
Darrington	1,213	£12,295	£19.80	£0	0%
South Hiendley	1,407	£34,160	£64.94	£10,052	29%
Havercroft with Cold Hiendley	1,583	£59,441	£115.64	£6,781	11%
Sharlston	2,212	£30,000	£38.41		
Ryhill	2,361	£54,185	£70.83		
Walton	2,626	£36,695	£31.60	£10,521	29%
Sitlington - (Middlestown & Netherton	4,538	£57,600	£29.52	£31,661	55%
Crofton	4,735	£53,928	£28.67	£11,017	20%
South Elmsall	5,301	£357,000	£188.59	£196,520	55%
Upton (and North Emsall for precept)	5,678	£248,670	£123.35		
Ackworth - (High & Low Ackworth & Moor Top)	5,903	£198,000	£74.44	£99,350	50%
Crigglestone	7,662	£60,047	£18.62	£10,404	17%
South Kirkby and Moorthorpe - South Kirkby	8,237	£847,447	£306.38	£478,067	56%