

Minutes of the Darrington Parish Council Meeting
Reading Room

Thursday 12th September 2019

Present:

Cllr Britton (Chair), Cllr Smith, Cllr Tagger, Cllr L Thompson, Cllr Stainer, Cllr Jackson, Wakefield MDC Councillor Jones (part time), Clerk – Ian Thompson

Apologies:

Cllr Stones

In Attendance:

2 members of the public.

2019-09-01

Declaration of Interests:

None offered.

2019-09-02

Public Matters:

It was reported that the roadworks on Leys Road have finally been completed and the road is clear.

2019-09-03

Minutes of the last meeting:

The proposition from Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Stainer, that the minutes of the July were a true record was unanimously agreed.

2019-09-04 Matters arising:

i) The clerk has written to Highways England asking for the slip roads at Darrington to be made a special case as unlike most slip roads ours are an integral part of the village. The reply was not from Highways England but from their contractor A-one+ stating that their contract was to cut a swathe from the slip roads twice a year and lack of funds prevented anything more. Cutting was for safety reasons not aesthetics ones. Cllr Stainer told the meeting that the footpath up to the Kyte was overgrown. Cllr Thompson stated there was evidence of horses being on the footpath. The chairman told the meeting that he had separately asked three different contractors to cut this path but not one of them arrived on their agreed date. The clerk was asked to contact Wakefield MDC to see for a quotation for adding this stretch to their agreed grass cutting contract and also to contact

the clerk at Cridling Stubbs parish council to see if they had a reliable contractor for such tasks in place.

ii) Regarding the parish council paying for “education” for the clerk he wrote to the “Clerk & Councils Direct” magazine asking for their legal expert’s opinion as to whether there was any issue in such an arrangement given that as an ex-parish councillor no “payment” can be made for twelve months after a councillor leaves the council. Their reply stated that despite being a non-paid clerk the position is such that the clerk is an employee of the council. Their legal expert confirmed the HMRC ruling and stated that any education paid for by the parish council must be declared on the clerk’s tax return as a benefit. The clerk stated he accepted this situation and as yet had not found any suitable education anyway!

iii) The clerk wrote to Mr Iles at Wentbridge reminding him of the concession we had obtained from Wakefield MDC to cut the verge adjacent to his property and confirming we are well aware of our responsibilities not only to Darrington village but also that part of Wentbridge within our domain. He replied stating that Wakefield MDC had not cleared cut grass and asking whether or not Darrington parish council was responsible for the floral display on the street light near his property. The clerk wrote back confirming this was the case and that email was sent in mid-July. There has been no further correspondence so hopefully the process has bedded down and is satisfactory.

iv) Cllr Smith received the West Yorkshire police report. She had been given discretion at the last meeting as to whether or not to post it on appropriate social media decided not to as it had originally been published at a much earlier date.

v) Regarding the “Metro” questionnaire on local bus services Cllr Smith put the link to the questionnaire on Facebook page. A resident commented that non-IT users would not be able to access the questionnaire. The clerk hand carried a number of copies to the Monday morning coffee morning where everybody there took a copy to complete. social media outlets. decided not to post it on social media.

vi) The chairman and Cllr Tagger completed the Wakefield Highways questionnaire and the clerk returned it to Wakefield.

vii) Wakefield MDC have written to the clerk asking if there are still two vacancies on the parish council. The clerk has confirmed that is the case. No further correspondence has been received.

viii) Cllr Briton has not yet spoken to the vicar regarding benches in the old orchard and will endeavour to do so.

ix) To further the investigation into using some of the infrastructure levy to pay for a bus shelter at the site of the Darrington Hotel the clerk wrote to Wakefield MDC who advised that the contact should be made initially to West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The clerk has contacted this organisation and is awaiting a reply.

x) Cllr Tagger will host a viewing of the air crash memorial ceremony video at the Golf Club on the 16th of September. He has promoted the event widely with a full page feature in the Yorkshire Post, an entry in the Pontefract and Castleford Express, on Facebook and on village notice boards. “Deadline Digital” the company that has produced the DVD will be present and after showing the documentary they will explain how people can access the film in future. There will be a permanent copy on “YouTube”, but it was agreed the parish council’s website should also host a copy. For those not having access to the internet a small number of DVDs will be available. One of these will remain with the parish council. The work is “owned” by the parish council. In its production assurances were given to those third parties who have allowed material such as music to be included with the video that any copies will not be charged for. This was the requirement of the copyright holders for allowing their material to be used. The names of those asking for actual DVD copies will noted at the meeting and the council will ensure that anyone asking for a DVD will receive one.

Despite not being part of the “matters arising” agenda item the chairman allowed the next two points to be raised at this point in the meeting.

i) Cllr Jackson raised the point that since Highways England have closed all of the “laybys” on the A1 lorries are parking on the grass verge at the exit from the A1 just to the north of the Kyte Hotel. Consequently all grass has disappeared from this area and the lorries’ occupants have left significant litter deposits. The chairman expressed concern that if this area was banned the verge further down might well be used in place and expressed reluctance to complain to Highways for this reason. However, the meeting confirmed that the clerk should write to Highways but include some evidence – such as photographs of lorries in place and litter.

ii) The chairman raised the point that the field on the right-hand side of the A1 southbound slip road, just after the roundabout, has changed hands. The gate for that field has been smashed making free access to the field. He expressed a concern, based upon his experience in the security industry, that those people who used the field for their vehicles and caravans can be removed within 24 hours if they force entry but entering a field which does not have a secure entrance can result in it taking many weeks for removal proceedings to be enforced. Cllr Smith will investigate who owns the field. Cllr Smith or the clerk will contact the new owner to discuss the situation and asking for the field to be secured.

2019-09-05 Correspondence:

Mr. & Mrs Glover from Valley road have furnished the clerk with two photographs. The first shows the electric substation adjacent to their home which they contacted about the general weeds and untidy condition of the area. The owners have taken action and transformed the site with weed removal and gravelling the area – and it now looks neat and tidy! Secondly, they sent a photograph of a dead tree at the junction of Ash Tree Fold and Valley Road. They have asked whose responsibility it is investigate the situation. Cllr

Stainer had met the Glovers in Pontefract and they raised the issue with them. He advised them to contact Wakefield Planning Dept about the matter. The clerk was asked to put the case to the Wakefield MDC “tree” expert who adjudicates on tree related applications within the area.

The clerk stated that “Friends Of The Earth” had written enclosing a leaflet discussing services including mowing and path repair work. Cllr.Stainer questioned if the email was indeed from Friends Of The Earth. He was correct the missive came from “Opencountry.org.uk” who themselves are a registered charity. The clerk was asked to make a tentative enquiry about such services given our difficulty in finding a handyman.

A company called “TWM Traffic Controls” have written advertising their speed measurement systems.

Wakefield MDC have written regarding the polling station facilities within the village. They are tasked with investigating all of their polling stations within the area. They have asked the parish council to comment on using the school as a polling station. They point out that parking facilities are required, access for disabled voters and easy walking distance for elderly residents. The chairman pointed out the same request was made last year. The councillors unanimously confirmed that it is their belief that the school is the only viable option within the village. The clerk was asked to advise Wakefield of this consideration.

2019-09-06 Finance:

As there was no meeting in July Cllr Stainer presented two sets of accounts covering months July and Aug 2019.

He reported that the balance at the start July stood at £20,276.09.

There were no sources on income in July. Two payments were made – the first, as budgeted, of £1,104.17 to the Public Works Loan Board for the street lighting loan. The second payment of £16.98 was to the clerk for printer ink.

The expenditure for July is tabulated below

Date	Item	Payment Method	Payee	Reason	Amount (£)	VAT (£)
11.7.19	14-1920	Direct Debit	Public Work Loans Board	Loan repayment	1,104.17	0.00
11.7.19	15-1920	Direct Debit	Mr. I Thompson	Stationery – printer ink	16.98	0.00
				Total	1,121.15	0.00

This left a balance of £19,154.94

Payments Scheduled For Aug 2019 For Subsequent Approval

At the July meeting Cllr Stainer and the chairman were authorised to make payments in Aug on the understanding such payments would be scrutinised at the September meeting. The first payment of £1,674.00 was to Deadline Digital for their work on the air crash memorial documentary. Wakefield MDC invoiced and were paid for “election” fees for the paperwork associated with publishing the “potential” parish council May election. The final payment was also to Wakefield MDC – the annual charge for ground maintenance (grass cutting) within the village.

Date	Item	Payment Method	Payee	Reason	Amount (£)	VAT (£)
1.8.19	16-1920	Cheque 790	Deadline Digital	Second payment to Deadline Digital	1,674.00	279.00
1.8.19	17-1920	Cheque 791	Wakefield Council	2019 Parish Election Fees	101.50	0.00
1.8.19	18-1920	Cheque 792	Wakefield Council	Annual Ground maintenance fee	1,136.29	0.00
				Totals	2,911.79	279.00

The RFO (Cllr Stainer) then moved on to review the Aug finances. As stated above the opening balance for Aug 2019 was £19,154.94. As in July there was no income in Aug.

There were three items of payment as discussed above.

Payments in Aug 2019

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1.8.19	17-1920	Cheque 791	Wakefield Council	2019 Parish Election Fees	101.50	0.00
1.8.19	18-1920	Cheque 792	Wakefield Council	Annual Ground maintenance fee	1,136.29	0.00
				Totals	2,911.79	279.00

This left a balance of £16,243.15.

There are no payments for approval at this meeting for September.

Cllr. Smith asked if there had been any income from the “community infrastructure levy”. Cllr Stainer confirmed not as yet although he has budgeted for a receipt of £3,750 within the financial year.

With regard to our current situation regarding budgets he has a budget of £1,000 for as yet undefined parish projects. Also, there is a budget figure of £1,200 for gardening & general maintenance The search for a contractor to fulfil this role continues! There are also budget figures for defibrillator maintenance, a possible orchard provision of benches and general publicity.

The RFO's conclusion is that, subject to budgets being exactly fulfilled, he is anticipating an end of financial year figure of £21,575.03.

2019-09-07 Planning matters:

Holme Cottage, Valley Road, Darrington	First floor extension	This application has been approved.
23 Beech Crescent, Darrington	Black ash tree that hangs over property and touches applicant's roof, and dropping branches. Wish to be able to trim overhanging branches.	Defer to opinion of "tree" expert at Wakefield planning department.
Hillcroft Farm, Estcourt Road, Darrington	Variation of condition 2 (approved plans). Plot 5 only to include increase in roof height, omission of front porch, changes to doors and windows and new single storey element to rear.	Application approved.
Orchard Bungalow, Valley Road, Darrington	Detached garage with pitched roof (part retrospective)	Application approved.
Kensworth House, Estcourt Road, Darrington	Amendment to approved planning application to permit a change to the use of frosted glass screening to the rear balcony.	Application approved.

The appeal against the refusal by Wakefield planning for an extension to 19 Estcourt Drive to add two further dormer bedrooms to the existing four bedroomed bungalow has endorsed the decision by Wakefield and the application is refused.

Bank Wood Stables Update

The parish council are dismayed at the inability of Wakefield planning department to enforce their planning decisions on this development. Cllr Tagger emailed several senior officers with Wakefield MDC to complain about the situation. He contacted Merrin

McRae the chief executive, Neil Rodgers the service director, and Tom Stannard the corporate director. His email was intended as a complaint. No acknowledgement was made either then or subsequently from Messrs Rodgers and Stannard. The PA to Ms. McRae replied saying she would forward Cllr Tagger's email to the appropriate department. Cllr Tagger replied to her stating that the original email was intended as a complaint, not as a request for progress. The reply this time came from Nicola Horsley, a customer services manager within the complaints department acknowledging the email and stating that a reply would be forthcoming on or before the 12th of September. That did not happen. As a result Cllr Tagger telephoned the customer services office and was told that the matter was being discussed on the morning of the parish council meeting (12th September), but that the matter was "so complex" that they want extra time. Cllr Tagger expressed his disappointment and anger that nobody had even contacted him to advise extra time was required. Cllr Tagger has sent another email to Ms McRae and Messrs Rodgers and Stannard registering his disappointment and anger that no progress is being made. Cllr Jones of Wakefield MDC reminded the gathering that complaining to the local government ombudsman is a potential next step. He cited an example of how this had focussed the planning department's energy to resolving that particular issue. Cllr Tagger confirmed he would follow the procedure to get the ombudsman involved.

2019-09-08 Reports:

School:

Cllr Tagger is accompanying a school trip to the Houses Of Parliament on the 21st of October.

Village Field:

No report.

Police:

Cllr Stones has established a good relationship with the police and is now receiving monthly reports. She forwarded of the report from the police of Darrington related crime in Aug and this is included as Appendix A of these minutes. In addition the chairman confirmed that there are probably two incidents a week of fly tripping. Wakefield are very efficient at responding and removing the offending material. Cllr Smith suggested messaging the report to the Darrington Community Facebook page and requested it be sent to her.

In Bloom:

Cllr Tagger expressed his delight at this years display. Cllr Smith will contact the suppliers to register the council's approval along with asking for guidance as to when the order should be placed given the fact that the "Feast and Fayre" date moves annually and all should be in place before that date. During the meeting she received a text stating that the date required would be part of the "invitation to order" from the supplier. That invitation is sent to the clerk.

Gardening Club:

Yet another pleasant meeting was held recently. The theme was “reminiscing”. The next meeting will have a theme of “vegetable and food related”. The club is “running along nicely”.

Newsletter:

Cllr Stones has asked for guidance for the date of the next newsletter. Previous year’s pressure for something before November 5th has gone given no fireworks this year. The meeting agreed it should be produced during November.

2019-09-09

Minor Items:

The chairman has received some “nasty” emails at the chair@darrington.org.uk email address. He has reported these emails to the police. He believes that the chairman email address is the reason for the targeting. Given that he does not use this email address anyway he has requested it be removed. The clerk will pass the request on to Mr. Kelvin Wilkins.

Cllr Jones reported that he had been asked by the police what areas of his ward were a concern to him regarding speeding vehicles. He included Darrington in his response. He has accompanied a police speed monitoring session on Ackworth Road. He reminded the meeting that Wakefield have their “Smiley Sid” monitoring portable speed measuring equipment available to borrow. The clerk was asked to confirm whether or not Darrington Parish Council have a request to borrow this equipment and if not request such a loan.

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 7.00 PM Thursday October 10th 2019 in the Reading Rooms.

The meeting closed at 8:52 PM.

APPENDIX A

Crime Figures Exactly As Supplied by West Yorkshire Police

- 2nd Aug – Concern for safety, child left alone in car
- 3rd Aug – Road related, male seen driving erratically brushing teeth at wheel
- 5th Aug – Road related, driver seen swerving lane to lane A1, possible drunk
- 6th Aug – Theft from vehicle, fuel taken from parked lorry
- 6th Aug – Theft from vehicle, attempt break into van at Kyte Hotel
- 21st Aug – Burglary residential, lock snapped and car keys taken, car taken on The Paddocks
- 25th Aug – Suspicious vehicle, vehicle seen speeding down Marlpit Lane with lights off; turn around on Beech Crescent and speed back up Marlpit with lights still off
- 25th Aug – Suspicious, road works portacabin left open with signs of beer bottles on Leys Road
- 29th Aug - RTC damage, male uninsured crashes van into parked car on Sotheron Croft
- 30th Aug – Theft from vehicle, two suspects seen trying to get into a vehicle on Applewood Gardens
- 31st Aug – nuisance, traveller forcing way onto campsite at West Park Homes