

# Whessoe Parish Council

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## MINUTES of the Meeting of Whessoe Parish Council held at Whessoe Parish Hall on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, at 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor S Goldfinch (Chair)                      Councillor T Musson  
 Councillor Jo Bennett    Councillor F Minay  
 Parish Clerk – B Goldfinch  
 One member of the public (Kerri-Leigh Caley) and Councillor Dawson remotely

| MINUTE NO. | ITEM   | ACTION |
|------------|--|--------|
| 21.20      | <p><b><u>Public Participation</u></b></p> <p>No issues were raised.</p>  |        |
| 22.20      | <p><b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Woodley, and Borough Councillors Lee and Crudass.</p>  |        |
| 23.20      | <p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>   |        |
| 24.20      | <p><b><u>Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Whessoe Parish Council – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020</u></b></p> <p>The Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Whessoe Parish Council held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May were presented.</p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Whessoe Parish Council held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 be approved.</p> <p><b><u>Action Points</u></b></p> <p>9.20 – Bank Mandate. Details are awaited from Councillors Woodley and Bennett so that they can become signatories to the bank account.</p> <p>9.20 – Quarterly Audit (last quarter of 2019/20). This had now been completed by Councillor Musson.</p> <p>15.20 – Green Space. Negotiations are continuing with Darlington Borough Council to acquire the green space between Camborne Drive, Penryn Close and Newlyn Drive.</p> <p>17.20 – What’s App. All Councillors had been included on this platform.</p> <p>All other actions are covered in the Agenda.</p> | DW/JB  |

Signed..... Date.....  
 Chair of the Parish Council

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| 25.20 | <p><b><u>Lessons Learned</u></b></p> <p>The Parish Council discussed what lessons could be learned from the experience during COVID-19. Key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WPC have always had issues in engaging with the public</li> <li>● Better use could have been made of social media - e.g. in signposting the public to LA and other assistance</li> <li>● These lessons would be considered should there be any further lockdown restrictions imposed over the winter.</li> </ul>   |          |
| 26.20 | <p><b><u>Planning</u></b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to raise no objections to planning application 20/00485/DD to determine whether approval is required to demolish dwellings at 1&amp;2 Burtree Cottages, Burtree Lane. The Clerk will notify Darlington Borough Council.</p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the planning applications log.</p>   | Clerk    |
| 27.20 | <p><b><u>Parish Councillor Vacancy</u></b></p> <p>The Councillor vacancy for the Whessoe Ward had been advertised. There was no request for an election and the Council was given approval by Darlington Borough Council to co-opt. Kerri-Leigh Caley had volunteered to take the position and was nominated by Councillor Goldfinch, seconded by Councillor Minay.</p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to co-opt Kerri-Leigh Caley Parish Councillor for the Whessoe Ward. She completed the necessary forms which would be passed on to the Borough Council</p>         | Clerk    |
| 28.20 | <p><b><u>Clerk &amp; Responsible Finance Officer</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk explained that the organisers of the CiLCA qualification have decided to increase the cost of applying for the qualification from October. The Council had not budgeted for this additional expenditure. In addition, it was not possible to register for the qualification nor obtain any form of training. The Clerk had written to CDALC expressing his concerns.</p> <p>The Clerk would not pursue CiLCA now but would present a case for next year as part of the budgeting exercise.</p> | Clerk    |
| 29.20 | <p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p><b>Quarterly Audit</b></p> <p>Councillor Musson has yet to complete the audit for the first quarter of 2020-21 as the bank statement is awaited. This will be done as soon as possible.</p>  | Clerk/TM |

Signed..... Date.....  
**Chair of the Parish Council**

**Financial/Budget Statement 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020-21**

The Clerk presented the Financial Statement for the period up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Receipts totalled **£15,980** of which £5,539 came from the precept and £10,000 from the rate relief Grant. There are no receipts from hiring the hall. The Council spent **£3,645** during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

The Parish Council noted that this year's internal audit cost £200 which means that the audit budget will be overspent. The Clerk will use part of the grant money to adjust the budgets to take account of this, the COVID-19 budget (see below) and other minor issues.

Payments more than £100 were as follows.

| Date Paid  | Transaction Detail      | Total      | Payee Name                 |
|------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 01/04/2020 | 2019-20 Q4 Pay          | £ 1,238.70 | Clerks Salary              |
| 21/04/2020 | Refund March and April  | £ 210.00   | Anvesaka Yoga              |
| 30/04/2020 | CDALC/NALC Subscription | £ 193.50   | CDALC                      |
| 20/05/2020 | Insurance               | £ 631.34   | Norris and Fisher          |
| 02/06/2020 | Annual Subscription     | £ 148.80   | Rialtas Business Solutions |
| 03/06/2020 | Padlocks and Keys       | £ 147.44   | Nothing But Ltd            |
| 04/06/2020 | Gas supply              | £ 190.03   | Npower Business            |

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the financial/budget report for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

**Bank Reconciliation to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Councillors Dawson and Minay confirmed they had reconciled the bank account against the cashbook.

**Gas Direct Debit**

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the planned direct debit to EDF for gas supply from December 2020.

**COVID-19 Budget**

The Council noted that additional cleaning and materials would be required to open the hall and **RESOLVED** to approve the projected budget (£1,400) to cover the cost.

Clerk

**30.20**

**Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2018-19**

The Clerk summarised the requirements for completion of the AGAR and advised that the internal auditor had reviewed the 2019-20 accounts on 18<sup>th</sup> February and

Signed..... Date.....  
Chair of the Parish Council

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|       | <p>15<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The AGAR allows smaller authorities to request exemption from an external auditor Limited Assurance Review where appropriate. However, this year the Parish Council is not eligible as payments and receipts exceeded £25,000.</p> <p><b>Internal Audit Report:</b> The internal auditor had certified that all internal control objectives had been achieved during 2019-20. The Internal Audit Report was circulated to Councillors for information.</p> <p><b>Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement:</b> The Clerk read out the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20 to confirm Councillors' agreement to the Statement. The Chairman and Clerk signed the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p><b>Section 2 - Accounting Statements:</b> The Clerk presented Section 2 Accounting Statements which he had signed on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The Accounting Statements were approved by the Parish Council and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>The Parish Council agreed that the period of Exercise of Public Rights would commence on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and end on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020.</p> <p>The Clerk to undertake the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Publish all AGAR documents on the Council's website along with other transparency documents (14 July 2020) and</li> <li>● Send all documents to Mazaars, the external auditors (15 July 2020).</li> </ul> <p>The Parish Council <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Annual Governance &amp; Accountability Return for 2019-20 be approved and noted the next steps for publication of the AGAR and submission of relevant documents to external audit.</p> | Clerk |
| 31.20 | <p><b><u>Policies</u></b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the Social Media policy.</p> <p>The approved policy will be version controlled and put on the website.</p> <p>The Council had no comments to make on the LGA/NALC consultation document in respect of the model Code of Conduct.</p>  | Clerk |
| 32.20 | <p><b><u>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)</u></b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the revised action plan and that further progress is dependent on the new website.</p>   | Clerk |
| 33.20 | <p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b></p> <p>The July edition of Clerks and Councils Direct was circulated.</p>   |       |

Signed..... Date.....  
Chair of the Parish Council

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| <p><b>34.20</b></p> | <p><b><u>Council Matters</u></b></p> <p><b>Local Council Award Scheme:</b> The Council noted that registration of interest had been made and paid for. The Clerk will put together a plan for meeting the requirements, with the intention of applying for the award in 2021.</p> <p><b>Equal Opportunities Policy</b> – Training was postponed until the next Council meeting.</p>   | <p>Clerk</p> <p>FM</p> |
| <p><b>35.20</b></p> | <p><b><u>Forward and Backward Look</u></b></p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the events/meetings and separate training log.</p> <p>Councillor training was being undertaken by Councillors Goldfinch, Dawson and Musson. It was noted that the first session of the three was not well received.</p> <p>There is a smaller councils forum scheduled for 30 July 2020.</p>  |                        |
| <p><b>36.20</b></p> | <p><b><u>Marketing and Social Media</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk had contacted Fernwood Projects, the Council’s preferred web designer.</p> <p>The Clerk will chase them to see if they can give a date for starting, but the Council agreed that they are the company they want to design the new website and are prepared to wait until they are available.</p>   | <p>Clerk</p>           |
| <p><b>37.20</b></p> | <p><b><u>Whessoe Parish Hall Committee</u></b></p> <p><b>Hall Committee Update</b></p> <p>The Committee met on 14 June 2020. The main discussion was how to open the hall in a safe way. Risk assessments were drawn up along with guidance for users and a COVID-19 budget was drafted. All documentation and the additional budget was approved by the full Council. The hall has reopened on a limited basis.</p> <p>New padlocks had been installed on the main entrance and kitchen door grills. The key log would be updated and will include a log of the cables for the sound system.</p> <p>Phase One is installing screens in the hall on 28 July 2020. The Council agreed their location.</p> <p>The Council agreed that the Committee should keep the hire charges under review to ensure that the cost of using the hall does not exceed the income.</p> <p><b>Contracts</b></p> <p>The cleaner has agreed to clean between each hire.</p> | <p>Clerk</p>           |

Signed..... Date.....  
**Chair of the Parish Council**

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|                     | <p>A new gas contract is in place from December 2020 which should reduce the cost by up to 50%.</p> <p><b>Hall bookings</b></p> <p>Great Paws have returned to their normal Saturday session and plan to increase their use on Saturday and take up sessions on a Friday evening.</p> <p>No other users are planning to return until August/September.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>38.20</b></p> | <p><b><u>Whessoe Parish Social Committee</u></b></p> <p><b>Update:</b></p> <p>The Committee met on 9 July 2020.</p> <p>They are actively planning a quiz night on 23 October 2020 and a Christmas lights switch on/party on 5 December 2020.</p> <p>A bi-annual newsletter was being prepared to promote these events, the Council, and the hall.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>39.20</b></p> | <p><b><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Dates for meetings were agreed as follows</p> <p><b>Meetings of Whessoe Parish Council:</b></p> <p>Parish Council Meeting – Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – 7.00 pm<br/> Budget &amp; Precept Setting Meeting – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 – 7.00 pm<br/> Parish Council Meeting – Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – 7.00 pm<br/> Parish Council Meeting – Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – 7.00 pm<br/> Annual Meeting – Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – 7.00 pm</p> <p><b>Annual Parish Meeting:</b></p> <p>Annual Parish Meeting – Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – 6.30 pm to 7.00 pm</p> <p>The Council <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Parish Council will meet on the above dates during 2020-21.</p> |  |

Signed..... Date.....  
Chair of the Parish Council