



MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF **HASWELL PARISH COUNCIL** held on  
**FRIDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2017 AT 6.30PM**

HELD AT **THE LISA DIXON CENTRE, BURT CLOSE, HASWELL, DH6 2DA**

**PUBLIC COPY (CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REMOVED)**

**PRESENT**

Councillor C Hood (Presiding), Cllr O Gray, Cllr H Milburn, Cllr K Welch, Cllr G Dunstone, Cllr B Ramsay, Cllr J Cook, Cllr E Major

County Councillors I Cochrane & E Huntington

**57.17 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Hartley due to holidays.

**58.17 CODE OF CONDUCT**

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

**59.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mrs. C Kell asked if the council had found the keys for the parish office as when she had spoken to Cllr. Gray she informed her that none of the trustees of The Hazelwell Centre had keys to the parish office.

Cllr. Gray said that she had tried to contact Mrs. T Bell and spoke to someone at her home and left a message asking if she could contact her back. However, no-one had since then.

Cllr. J Cook said that Mrs. T Bell probably felt as if she couldn't leave the keys with just anyone as the parish office contained lots of personal and private information.

**60.17 RESIGNATION OF PARISH CLERK and LINE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS OF PARISH EMPLOYEES**

Cllr. Hood read out a prepared statement:

“As by Haswell Parish Council Standing Order 1C - Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.

Standing Order 23 (b) states that Councillors and staff shall not disclose confidential or sensitive information which for special reasons would not be in the public interest.

As the same can be said about agenda item 10, I propose that we deal with both Agenda Item 5 and Agenda Item 10 at the same time when the press and public leave the room as to minimize disruption for all parties.

Therefore the motion from the floor is to exclude the press and public from this part of the meeting due to the sensitive nature of the subject as it involves both confidential information and information about council personnel. “

Cllr. Hood PROPOSED the motion. Cllr. Gray SECONDED the motion.

A vote was taken. Cllrs. Milburn, Welch, Dunstone, Ramsay, Cook, and Major all voted FOR the motion.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the press and public are excluded from this part of the meeting due to the sensitive nature of the subject as it involves both confidential information and information about council personnel.**

Members of the public were therefore asked to leave the room.

When the public had left the room, two motions from the floor were taken on staffing matters. Both motions were accepted unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) Motion 1 (Confidential – Staffing)**
- (ii) Motion 2 (Confidential – Staffing)**

The public were then invited back into the meeting where Cllr. Hood thanked them for their patience and understanding.

#### **61.17 FINANCES**

Cllr. Hood stated that the parish council need to gain access to the Parish Office to get ownership of the Parish Council Check Books so we can pay suppliers.

He continued that the motion from the floor was:

“To continue in our efforts to gain access to the parish council office so we can ensure payment protocols to staff and suppliers is continued.”

Cllr. Hood PROPOSED the motion. Cllr. Cook SECONDED the motion.

A vote was taken. Cllrs. Gray, Milburn, Welch, Dunstone, Ramsay, and Major all voted **FOR** the motion.

## RESOLVED

- (i) **The council will continue in its efforts to gain access to the parish council office so that it can ensure payment protocols to staff and suppliers is continued.**

### 62.17 THE HASWELLS CARNIVAL

Cllr. Hood said that the agenda point was raised so that the council could discuss the development of the carnival, it's general running and issuing payments in the absence of a clerk.

Cllr. Gray said that everything had been set up and the SAG file that Mrs. Bell said needed completing had been finished and given to Mrs. Bell to submit at her request. She continued that Mrs. Bell had not done everything with the file and it was given back to the council on her resignation, leaving the council with little time to submit to county hall.

Cllr. Gray said that Cllr. Hood then had to take the file to county hall but when he submitted the file, he was informed that the council did not need to compete the file as the carnival was being held on parish fields.

Cllr. Gray continued that as the council did not have access to the parish office, that meant it also did not have access to the cheque books and the ability to pay any suppliers. She said that Cllr. Ivan Cochrane has kindly offered to cover all payments to suppliers if the council cannot gain access or if the cheque books are not found once access was gained.

Cllr. Cochrane said that all he wanted was to ensure that the carnival went ahead.

### 63.17 REGISTERED PARISH OFFICE & CONTACT DETAILS

Cllr. Hood read a prepared statement:

"Since the 2017 Local Council Elections in May, this Parish Council have attempted to reinvigorate local interest and passion for their villages and the Parish of Haswell. Looking at tonight's attendance, we'd like to think we're doing a good job!

However, over recent months, there has been a growing concern at both the lack of availability to access of the parish council, so parish councillors can view financial and personnel information, but also with the obvious problems the public are having when trying to contact the council – this point was made extremely apparent over the past two meetings from representatives of local football teams.

This week's events, specifically the lack of immediate access to the parish council office to conduct council business, has exacerbated the situation we find ourselves in. The Hazelwell Centre throughout the year is only open a couple of times a week for access and is actually closed throughout the month of August, and attempts to gain access to the office on several occasions this week have proved futile.

It is important to note at this time that we have also been in constant dialogue with the legal department at County Hall, the Standards Committee at County Hall, and Durham Constabulary. The advice we have unanimously received from all those we have consulted with is to relocate the parish office to a more accessible location.

We have received an email from the management of the Giant Steps Nursery that states the following:

- That they will allow us immediate access to their facility
- That all the parish council property, such as filing cabinets, computer and store cupboards can be placed in a secure room that would only be accessible by the parish council
- That they will allow the parish council to have 24 hour access to the facility via a key fob scheme
- That they will allow us all of those things for free until May 2018, meaning there is no extra cost to the parish.

Therefore, the motion from the floor is to relocate the parish office in the interim to Giant Steps Nursery, located on Church Street in Haswell with immediate effect.”

Before the vote on the motion, a question was asked from the public regarding the legality of using commercial premises as a place for the parish office. Cllr. Hood said that Giant Steps Nursery was a council-owned building and that the relocation to this facility had been discussed with the relevant authorities at County Hall and they were fine with this proposal.

Cllr. Hood PROPOSED the motion. Cllr. Dunstone SECONDED the motion.

A vote was taken. Cllrs. Gray, Milburn, Welch, Cook, Ramsay, and Major all voted **FOR** the motion.

Cllr. Hood then continued his statement by saying:

“In conclusion, this motion has been passed so that the functioning of local government can continue unabated. This parish council want to continue to work closely with the trustees of the Hazelwell Centre to provide support in their future endeavours. I repeat, this motion has no effect on our desire to ensure that The Hazelwell Centre is a place for people of The Haswells.”

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) The council will relocate the parish office in the interim to Giant Steps Nursery, located on Church Street in Haswell with immediate effect.

#### **64.17 FOOTBALL PITCH BOOKINGS**

Cllr Hood said that the parish council had distributed all the contracts to the football teams that had shown an interest in booking the parish fields for the forthcoming season. He

concluded by saying the council were now awaiting the return of the contracts so that the bookings can be formalised.

Cllr. Cook asked how many contracts had been issued. Cllr. Hood said that there had been two issued, to Shotton Colts FC and The Oddfellows FC.

Cllr. Gray said she believed that more may be on the way.

#### **65.17 REDEVELOPMENT OF WINDSOR TERRACE PLAY AREA**

Cllr. Hood read a prepared statement:

“We’re happy to report that the new play area for Windsor Terrace is in production and installation of it will be taking place over the next few weeks.

The funding for the play area came from two main sources – the Rural Development Programme for England, otherwise known as Leader, that the council were successful in gaining funding from but also, and it is important to note, from the several current and former county councillors through their individual ‘Neighbourhood Development Budgets’, namely the late county councillor Robin Todd MBE and Cllr Eunice Huntington.

However, Mr Alan Liversidge, former County Councillor for Shotton and South Hetton, and former Chairman of Haswell Parish Council secured most of the funding for the scheme.

Therefore, the motion from the floor is to ask Mr Alan Liversidge to open the play area at the official opening ceremony, which is on a date to be confirmed.”

Cllr. Hood PROPOSED the motion. Cllr. Dunstone SECONDED the motion.

A vote was taken. Cllrs. Gray, Milburn, Welch, Cook, Ramsay, and Major all voted **FOR** the motion.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) The council will ask Mr Alan Liversidge to open the new play area on Windsor Terrace at the official opening ceremony, which is on a date to be confirmed.

#### **66.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Haswell Parish Council will take place at The Hazelwell Centre, Windsor Terrace, Haswell on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 @ 6.30pm.

Cllr. Hood thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 6.50pm