

Hawes & High Abbotside Parish Council

Meeting held on Monday April 3rd 2017 @ 7.15 pm at Gayle Institute

Minutes

Those present at the meeting -

Parish Councillors:

Cllr John Blackie (Chairman), Cllr Sheila Alderson, Cllr Debbie Allen, Cllr Abbie Rhodes, Cllr Albert Sunter, Cllr Ian Woolley, Cllr Andrea Caygill

Parish Clerk:

Ian King

Members of the public:

10 members of the public

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Tony Fawcett, Cllr Ben Fawcett, Cllr Stuart Hunter
2. **The Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd January 2016 were deferred until the next meeting.** There were no Matters Arising.

3. **Chairman's Items:**

- a. **Cash Machine (Automated Teller Machine – ATM).** When the HSBC Bank closed last October, Hawes was left with only one 24-hour ATM at Barclays Bank and a cash withdrawal facility in the Post Office which is only available during office hours. With the fragility of the Barclays ATM, the town had been left for one period of 10 days and at least one other shorter period without 24-hour access to cash, and this is important to Hawes as its economy is largely based on cash.

By chance, Cllr Blackie had learned that the town of Masham has been given an ATM by HSBC Bank after it closed that branch, so he started a campaign to get one in Hawes. After numerous phone calls and emails he has secured agreement for the HSBC Bank to install and run a 24/7 Free Cash Machine – and had identified a site to the installers - the telephone box located adjacent to the Penny Garth Car Park.

The new ATM will also incorporate a payphone, so this facility will not be lost, an important consideration as it serves as the emergency last resort telephone to obtain the code for the town's defibrillator, just 20 yards away mounted on the Hawes Market House. Cllr Blackie hopes that it will be installed before Easter, but it will definitely be there by May.

- b. **Play Parks.** Hawes and Gayle now has 3 Play Parks – at Town Foot, Little Ings and Bealah Bank. The Chairman said that he was desperate for someone to take over the supervision of their maintenance, as he has been doing this since Kevin Nugent retired from the Council, and with competing demands on his time, he simply could not give the necessary attention to what is a very responsible role in the community.

At the end of the meeting two members of the public agreed to share this responsibility as Volunteer Play-park Superintendents – Mr Robin Peters and Mr Ian Fraser.

Cllr Blackie confirmed that a new Play Cabin is being installed at Little Ings. It is being made by Sean Peacock with the base being laid by Chris Thwaite as a volunteer. After appeals from members of the public the old climbing frame is to be retained.

A Zip Wire is being installed at the Bealah Bank site, but there will be no call on the Parish Council to fund any part of the purchase price, as Cllr. Blackie and Hazel Thwaite and her Gayle Young Mothers group have raised the £8000 cost from other funding sources. However the Parish Council will be used to procure the equipment and its installation, which will allow it to legitimately reclaim the VAT.

- c. **Highways Issues.** While Cllr Blackie was in hospital the Highways Department had “repaired” the cobbles by patching them with tarmac. He had not been consulted as the local County Councillor ahead of this work being done. This had generated numerous messages and complaints received by him as an in-patient, and before he went home after his discharge from the Friarage he was driven through the town to see the results, was horrified, and was on the telephone to the Highways Department on the Monday morning.

The outcome is that all the tarmac (except for the bridge) is to be replaced by cobbles in a major work which will take a week to complete. As this will lead to the closure of the one-way system it has been agreed that the work will be completed after the summer season, either in the last week of September or the first week in October.

Geraldine Sumner had written to the Council regarding the poor state of the margins between the A684 and the frontage parking areas at the Cattle Market and Kiln Hill between Bear Cottages and Café Curva. In a site visit Cllr. Blackie showed Mr. Richard Marr, the NYCC Richmondshire Highways Manager, the problems of having to walk on these margins as there are no pavements. A reply as to when some work might be undertaken is awaited from NYCC Highways.

Mrs Belton from Laburnum House reported that the grit bin adjacent to her property is rarely used and suggested it might be removed if it was incurring costs for the Parish Council. She added that more signage is needed on The Holme to advise traffic that it is a one-way street. There are still instances of people driving up it the wrong way.

- d. **Community Land Trust proposal by the UWCP Ltd.** The Chairman outlined the pressures on affordable social housing in Hawes and the surrounding area caused by the Government’s *Right to Buy* initiatives. Tenants, or their relatives, of Housing Association properties are to be allowed to buy their houses at significantly reduced rates, whilst Councils must also sell their premium properties on the housing stock list when a tenant vacates or passes away to fund the process.

Cllr Blackie is in no way critical of the tenants or relatives of the tenants in buying what he described as a “Government Gift House in the mouth” with property prices being set at around £70,000 in a property market where 2 bedroomed houses cost an average of £200,000 each. The problem is that once sold the houses are not replaced and we will lost the affordable housing to rent sector it is essential to have in Hawes to maintain the viability of the community and its economy.

No wonder, he said, that the evidence of the rapidly declining numbers on schools rolls at the 7 Primary Schools in the Upper Dales demonstrates that young families are voting with their feet to leave our local communities.

Cllr Blackie has persuaded the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) that towns and villages with populations of less than 2000 in this deeply rural area should be ineligible from the Right to Buy, and this is its policy position. Sadly he recalled that when the same proposition was put to Richmondshire DC led by Cllr Peacock, the Conservatives voted it down.

There is a need for a thriving affordable housing to rent sector in Hawes, where ahead of the sell-off of these properties it currently comprises of 50 social houses and flats. The Government is promoting the concept of the Community Land Trust to drive the provision by the local community of affordable housing to rent in the future. The important point is that houses that come from under the auspices of a CLT are beyond the reach of the Right to Buy and remain available for rent in perpetuity.

Defined by Wikipedia - “A **Community Land Trust (CLT)** is a not-for-profit social enterprise (like the UWCP Ltd) that develops and stewards affordable housing, self-build sites for housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of a community. CLTs balance the needs of individuals to access land and maintain security of tenure of their houses with a community’s need to maintain affordability, economic diversity and local access to essential services”.

Cllr Blackie is proposing that the Upper Wensleydale Community Partnership (UWCP) Ltd should establish a CLT for the Upper Dales, including Hawes, and that it should work closely with Hawes & High Abbotside Parish Council and other Parish Councils where there is a need to develop affordable housing to rent in their boundaries.

The Parish Council resolved strongly and unanimously to support the UWCP Ltd in its objective to establish a Community Land Trust for the Upper Dales.

- e. **Richmondshire District Council (RDC).** The Chairman announced that the RDC had imposed restrictions on the cleaning of local public toilets from 3 times a day to just one, in spite of the heavy usage experienced in Hawes (200,000 footfall annually), Reeth (150,000) and Muker (125,000), the 3 highest footfall figures for all the toilets maintained by RDC.

Time allowed for street cleaning has been cut by two thirds in Hawes, and this leads to a reactive rather than a proactive service. Rather than spending the £750,000 RDC receives annually from the Government under its New Homes Bonus payments on public services and local projects, it is simply putting these windfall payments into reserves which now stand at just under £3 million. When RDC was under Independent control, led by Cllr Blackie, it allocated over £300,000 to the Upper Dales for community projects in 3 years, and some £1.5 million across the District as a whole.

The Boundary Commission has been called by the Conservatives at RDC to look at the number of Council Seats in the RDC, and the Tory political administration is proposing to cut them from 34 to 24. This will produce a minor saving of £15,000 and a major loss of local democratic engagement.

Cllr Blackie argued that the Boundary Commission does not understand the problems of rurality and that the proposals will mean that the local Hawes & High Abbotside seat on RDC will have to incorporate some 500 more electors, maybe by taking in Bainbridge.

The Parish Council resolved unanimously to support the Chairman to campaign against these proposals.

- f. **The potential removal of 24/7 Critical Care Services at the Darlington Memorial Hospital, including the 24/7 Accident & Emergency (A+E) Service and the 24/7 Consultant-led Maternity and Paediatrics Service.** The Chairman advised that these discussions has been delayed by the forthcoming elections, but they should resume in September.
- g. **Brown Moor Caravan Site.** The Chairman has been getting regular emails from the Caravan Club's National Sites Manager, assuring him that at least 50% of this site will be open by April.
- h. **Town Foot Highway Flooding.** Cllr Blackie was reassured that there had been no repeat of this flooding despite recent heavy rains. However, blockages were reported in drains in the following locations: outside the cemetery, outside the phone box on Main Street and sawdust from the Auction Mart is still blocking its drain.
- i. **Electricity Supply on the Hill (the old public convenience).** Council agreed that this supply was no longer needed at this time, and should be suspended.
- j. **Police Issues.** There have been further instances of poor parking by the Youth Hostel. Mr Rob Ward said that for two days the parking was so bad that vehicles heading towards Ingleton had to pull out without being able to see if they would be safe all the way up. It was **agreed to send a note to Inspector Mark Gee.**
- k. **Business Signage.** A letter had been received from Mrs Teresa Belton of Laburnum House Bed & Breakfast and was read out by the Clerk. She argued that the flag by the entrance to the Dales Countryside Museum which advertises the Firebox Café was contrary to the National Park's Design Guide.

The Chairman responded that this had been approved by the YDNPA. By agreement with the Enforcement section of the YDNPA Planning Department the Parish Council oversees signage in Hawes, but this relies on a

balanced and common sense approach, mutual support and co-operation, not just plain enforcement. "Tit for Tat" complaints do not help, and could lead to the new agreement being abandoned. The town needs to give the new arrangements a good chance to work.

The Parish Council did not support the request of Mrs Belton to request the Firebox Café to remove its flag.

4. YDNPA Planning Applications

- a. **R/48/50Q Simonstone Hall** – Full planning permission for installation of a biomass boiler system to be located inside a shipping container with larch timber cladding and two flues. Some concern was expressed that the shipping container has already been delivered, and is something of an eyesore. **The Parish Council resolved to support this application** provided that sufficient attention is paid to cladding and screening with new trees.
- b. **R/48/117B Collier Holme Farm, Hawes** – Full planning permission for erection of general purpose agricultural building. **Supported.**
- c. **R/56/487 Land off the A684 between Hawes and Appersett** – Full planning permission for construction of an agricultural building. **Supported.**

5. YDNPA Planning Issues

R/56/438 Full Planning Permission for conversion of existing stone barn to create stone tent at barn in fields adjacent Beggarman's Road, Gayle. This permission was granted in 2011 and development commenced last year.

The Parish Council had received a number of complaints on this development. It has been suggested that there is a 5* Luxury Holiday Cottage inside this barn, and it was being advertised on the Internet. A local dog walker commented that he saw the roofing going on, which was far more sophisticated than he would expect of a stone barn.

It was also stated by several members of the public present at the meeting that a road has been constructed to the barn, despite the planning restriction that "there shall be no vehicular access to or egress between the site and any highway ...". Another member of the public commented that this "makes a mockery of the whole planning process".

Council resolved unanimously that the YDNPA Planning Authority should be urged to look at enforcement on this development, and to hold the owner, Mr Tim Crick, to account for this absolutely blatant attempt to subvert the planning process. The Parish Council demanded that action should be taken immediately by its Enforcement Team.

Cllr Blackie said he would be promptly following this resolution up as a member of the YDNPA Planning Committee.

6. Correspondence

Hawes in Bloom. A letter had been received from Mr Richard Noble thanking the Council for previous support, and requesting a further donation of £1000 for the coming year. **Council agreed to make a donation of £1000, to be paid in 2 instalments, immediately after the first and second precepts are received from RDC.**

7. Financial Matters

- a. **Annual Accounts.** The Clerk had prepared a Bank Reconciliation to 31st March, and had circulated copies of the *Cash Book* Spreadsheet. The Chairman had circulated as a PDF copies of every HSBC Bank Statement for the municipal year April 2016 – March 2017, detailing every payment and every receipt for these 12 months.

Council agreed to approve the Accounts for 2016-2017 subject to a 14-day delay to give the Councillors time to study them and raise any questions or make any comments to either or both the Clerk or the Chairman.

After that period, the Clerk was authorised to take them to the Internal Auditor (Mr B Wilcox) and then to submit them to External Audit.

8. **Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 22nd May 2017 @ 7.15pm at Gayle Institute.

9. Any Other Business

- a. Cllr Mrs Rhodes said that a light was needed by the Defibrillator on the Market House.
- b. Mr Robin Peters offered to paint the railings of George's Garden if the Council would provide the materials. This offer was gratefully accepted.

The Meeting closed at 9.12pm.