



SACRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4th December 2024 at 6.30 pm
In The Fulforth Centre**

Present: Cllr H. Dixon (Chair), Cllr E. Waldock, Cllr D. Robson, Cllr A. Page, Cllr D. Forth, Cllr R. Sharp, and Mrs C. Dixon (Clerk)

Apologies: Cllr G Ludlow (Vice Chair), Cllr S Wilson, Cllr K Wilson, Cllr A-M Johnson, Cllr F. Morrell and Cllr L. Claughan

Item No:

1.	Introductions and Apologies for Absence	The Chair opened the meeting at 6.30 pm and welcomed everyone. Apologies received and accepted from Cllr G Ludlow (Vice Chair), Cllr S Wilson, Cllr K Wilson, Cllr A-M Johnson, Cllr F. Morrell and Cllr L. Claughan.
2.	Disclosure of Interest from Members	Nothing to note.
3.	Questions from the public	(Questions & Comments from the public in attendance – max 5 mins per item/individual) Matt Stevenson from Durham United Football Club attended and informed members about concerns and issues the club was experiencing at Fyndoune with the County Council and has requested support. RESOLVED The Chair will write to the Leader of the Council to express concerns raised. Two residents from Charlaw Terrace attended the meeting. They mentioned that in the past two months, they feel there has been no progress regarding the rat issue from the County Councillors. RESOLVED Residents were encouraged to reach out to independent pest control companies, many of which may offer free initial consultations. These companies could help identify entry points for the rats into the properties. The Chair noted that the Parish Council would help with this issue.
4.	Previous meeting minutes	Previous minutes from the meeting held on 6th November 2024 were accepted and signed as a true record by the Chair.

5.	Police Matters	Nothing to report.
6.	Clerks Report	Planning Application Application No: DM/24/03098/AD Proposal: Installation of non-illuminated fascia sign (Retrospective) Address: 37 Front Street Sacriston Durham DH7 6JS Application No: DM/24/03097/FPA Proposal: Change of use from former newsagent (Use Class E) to tattoo studio (Use Class Sui Generis) (Retrospective) Address: 37 Front Street Sacriston Durham DH7 6JS Thank you Thank you received from Salvation Army Sacriston regarding the donation for the Christmas Toy Appeal. Thank You Received from the Fulforth Centre to all volunteers for their hard work at the Christmas Extravaganza!
7.	Sacriston in Bloom	We received an email from the DCC legal team that included a copy of the proposed 30-year lease. They recommend that we hire a solicitor, register the lease with the land registry, and pay the following fees: £405 for registration, a £350 surveyor's fee, and a £163.17 advertising fee. The clerk informed the meeting that it is highly unlikely we will be able to instruct a solicitor to complete this work before Christmas. Additionally, the clerk mentioned that the AAP needs the necessary documentation before Christmas for the funding process to move forward. <u>RESOLVED</u> The clerk will send an email to all councillors to update them on the discussions about the lease. The clerk will also request quotes from solicitors for this work.
8.	Parish Assets	Bus Shelters – DCC has ordered the bus shelter. Village Clock – Nothing to report. Parish Building – Nothing to report. War Memorial – Work was completed to the lettering. Pit Wheel – Nothing to report.

9.	County Councillor's Reports	Cllr S Wilson was not in attendance but provided his report; 1. We are experiencing issues with pest control regarding rats, as they mentioned there has been no interaction. I was supposed to have a call with public health, but I need to rearrange it. 2. Crossroads – The lease will be issued imminently; I checked with Laura if it is okay to proceed. 3. The issue that Cllr Burn raised last month is being addressed. Cllr E Waldock; 1. Reported the pedestrian crossing for new white lines. 2. 3. SPO meeting took place. Areas have been highlighted. The billboard has now been taken away and will be looking at the gap site. Looking into the possibility of an alcohol exclusion zone. 4. PACT Meeting proposed for January. 5. Housing issues. 6. Application for a Blue Plaque for Annie Errington. The place identified for the plaque would be 8 Dorothy Terrace which was her last known residence. RESOLVED The parish would support an application for the blue plaque. A further discussion took place regarding the rats at Charlaw Terrace. RESOLVED An email will be sent to all Councillors to provide an update on the situation. We also plan to contact Beamish Pest Control to inquire whether they would charge for a report. However, the parish does not want to set a precedent by paying for this report, even if there is a fee. Our goal is to offer support to the residents.
10.	Group Representative Reports	Fulforth Centre Committee Meeting The meeting is now divided into two stages: the Project Development Workers Report and the Trustees and Management Committee Report. PDW Report The Xmas Extravaganza was very successful, raising nearly £1,300. However, we need to deduct the café costs before determining the true financial outcome. It was agreed by all that separating the Extravaganza and Xmas Market events was a better approach this year.

	Running costs were significantly higher due to the increase in expenses from John-Lee O'Brien. We agreed to explore other companies for potential cost reductions. The Lunch Club continues to operate well. The Xmas lunch is scheduled for December 12th, and the cost has been reduced from the initial £15 to £10. Please note that the Fulforth Centre will be closed from Friday, December 20th, to Monday, January 6th. We are in desperate need of more volunteers to assist at the centre. Lastly, Remembrance Sunday was a success. Management Report <u>Funding / Finances</u> - The amount of restricted funding is £22,417.46. - The accounts for the old charity have been finalised and submitted to the Charity Commission. - The Finance Control Policy has been signed by the Chair. - We are transitioning from SAGE Accounting to XERO Accounting, which will save the centre £88 per month. - We are currently looking to switch accountancy firms. - It has been agreed that all unrestricted funds earned from January 2024 onwards will be accounted for under the new charity. - We discussed and reviewed updates on current and future funding streams. - The Chair and Treasurer are both signatories on the new accounts. <u>Staff and Volunteers Contracts:</u> Several staff contracts are set to conclude soon, with two expiring on March 31, 2025, and another scheduled to end on April 30, 2025. It is recommended that staff be notified by the end of January 2025 regarding the renewal of their contracts. This information is important as it may impact maternity pay for one of the staff members. Funding could not be allocated for staff salaries due to inaccuracies in the previous accounts; however, it is now hopeful that funding can be secured for the staff. RESOLVED The parish discussed the information mentioned above and provisionally agreed that if the funding for the staff is not received, they will review the funding monthly to determine if financial support is needed. Cllr Forth will speak with Emma to confirm their estimate
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		of the monthly costs. There is currently an application pending approval. It was also suggested that there would be an end date for the financial support for both parties. HR & Finance Group • Discussion took place regarding Precept. Allotment Association Meeting • Nothing to report. New Hill Allotments • Nothing to report. Witton Gilbert Education Trust • Two applications had been put forward for two fully funded laptops.																																		
11.	Budget & Grant Applications	<u>Bank Account</u> As of the 6th November 2024, the bank balance was £86,385.48. This included the VAT reclaim of £1,959.80 which has been paid. <u>Invoices paid in November</u> <table><tr><td>Pension Contributions</td><td>28.19</td></tr><tr><td>Scribe</td><td>21.60</td></tr><tr><td>Smarty</td><td>6.00</td></tr><tr><td>Festive Lighting</td><td>4,874.88</td></tr><tr><td>O'Briens</td><td>262.50</td></tr><tr><td>Dobermans Flooring</td><td>828.00</td></tr><tr><td>Live Well North East</td><td>69.00</td></tr><tr><td>James Fletcher</td><td>669.58</td></tr><tr><td>The Salvation Army</td><td>500.00</td></tr><tr><td>GCS Medical</td><td>250.00</td></tr><tr><td>HS Walker</td><td>950.00</td></tr><tr><td>WM Scott & Sons</td><td>300.00</td></tr><tr><td>Employee Wages</td><td>945.72</td></tr><tr><td>HMRC</td><td>254.44</td></tr><tr><td>PJ Hobbs and M Hobbs</td><td>225.00</td></tr><tr><td>EJH Electrical Services</td><td>150.00</td></tr><tr><td>HP Ink</td><td>11.99</td></tr></table> <u>Invoices to Pay</u> The clerk asked Cllr Forth to forward the bank details for sending the agreed funds towards the cost of the Christmas decorations, which was agreed at the previous meeting.	Pension Contributions	28.19	Scribe	21.60	Smarty	6.00	Festive Lighting	4,874.88	O'Briens	262.50	Dobermans Flooring	828.00	Live Well North East	69.00	James Fletcher	669.58	The Salvation Army	500.00	GCS Medical	250.00	HS Walker	950.00	WM Scott & Sons	300.00	Employee Wages	945.72	HMRC	254.44	PJ Hobbs and M Hobbs	225.00	EJH Electrical Services	150.00	HP Ink	11.99
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11.1	Precept 2025 - 2026	The clerk discussed the tax base for the 2025/2026 financial year and confirmed the council's position on the matter. 1.380.4 x £45.91 = £63,374.16 Plus LCTRS grant of £2,278.00 (decrease from last year) = £65,652.16 (decrease of £381.40 from last year) After reviewing the account and forecasting expenditures until the end of the financial year, it is anticipated that we will carry over approximately £50,000 into the next financial year. Given this information, members propose it would not be justifiable to increase the precept again this year. Precept to be requested = £65,652.16. This is to be resolved at the next full council meeting in January.
12.	Policies and Procedures	The Disciplinary Policy was updated according to NALC's template policy. <u>RESOLVED</u> The Disciplinary Policy was adopted and approved by the Chair and Clerk.
13.	Date and time of next meeting	The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 6.30 pm. The meeting closed at 7.58 pm

Agreed and signed by Chair of Sacriston Parish Council Date