

Minutes of Witton Gilbert Parish Council held on 8th February 2021 at 6.30 pm virtually through Zoom

- 20/113 Apologies: - Councillors P Guy and L Murphy.
Present: - Councillors F Reynolds, G Brown, A. Simpson, D Lynch, N. Liddle, and A. Hillary.
Also present: - G Thompson (Clerk), DC Rider (Deputy Clerk) and B Coult (County Councillor).
- 20/114 Declarations of Interest: - Councillor Reynolds declared an interest in agenda Item 13 (minute item 20/121)
- 20/115 Questions and comments from electors of the Parish: - None
- 20/116 Minutes: - The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 11th January 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- 20/117 Minutes: - The minutes of the Parish Council Personnel Committee Meeting held on 1st February 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- 20/118 Matters Arising: - None.
- 20/119 Correspondence: – The Clerk reported on the following: -
- a) Email from Sandra Fox requesting permission to build a Shed 8x6 foot on allotment plot 18A. Members agreed to this request.
 - b) Email from Stephen Prosser currently looking to move to Witton Gilbert and requesting to be placed on to the waiting list for an allotment. Members agreed to add Stephen Prosser to the waiting list.
 - c) Request from G. Bowron plot 11 for permission to place an 8x6 foot greenhouse on his plot. Members agreed to this request.
- 20/120 Accounts for payment: -

Swinburne Maddison	Allotment Sale	7972.92
D. Rider	External Hard Drives	41.15
G. Thompson	Telephone January	56.17
N Crozier	Maintenance January	70.00

- 20/121 Reports: - County Councillor Simpson reported on the installation of new play equipment at Fulforth Park, Footpaths, Salt Bins, The Flood Defences at the rear of Durham Gardens and South Lea and the Caravan currently sited at the former McAloons garage with surrounding fence. County Councillor Coult reported that the latest Covid 19 figures are falling in County Durham with some exceptions and that 500 people per day were being vaccinated at the County Hall facility. She also reported on future funding opportunities for Parish Councils.
- 20/122 Allotment Gardens: - The Clerk reported on the latest developments on the ongoing purchase of the Allotment Gardens.
- 20/123 Parish Council Website/Facebook Page: - The Chairman reported on an upcoming event run by CDALC on Using Social Media to promote your Council taking place on Tues 2nd March at 6pm on Zoom and it was agreed that the Deputy Chairman and Deputy Clerk would attend. The Deputy Clerk shared with members his thoughts on the future of the Parish Council website and possible changes he would like to make. Councillor Lynch asked if it would be possible to get a rundown on numbers of people using the website.
- 20/124 Parish Council Newsletter: - The Deputy Clerk reported that the latest newsletter was complete and currently undergoing error checking before being passed on to the Chair and Vice Chair for comments. It will then be uploaded to the website but not delivered at this point due to Covid.
- 20/125 Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Committee - Planning Application Ref DM/21/00324/FPA: - Councillor Reynolds vacated the Chair to Councillor Brown at this point and took no further part in the discussion of this item (see minute item 20/110). The Clerk and County

Councillor Simpson reported on the proposed development which is the Retention of 1.8m high boundary fence to front side and rear (retrospective).

Members of the Parish Council resolved to object to this on the following grounds: -

1. The close boarded boundary fence appears out of character to the surrounding area in a prominent position on a corner plot adjacent to the main B6312 road.
2. The view travelling south from Sacriston through the village is one of an unwelcoming barrier.
3. It is visually obtrusive from the public domain and harms the visual amenity of the streetscape.
4. Whilst acknowledging it does not present a highway safety issue, it does reduce visibility for pedestrians entering or leaving the estate.
5. If the application were approved it would set a very damaging precedent for the character of the village.

20/126 Planting Scheme and Christmas Tree: - Councillor Brown vacated the Chair and Councillor Reynolds returned to Chair the meeting. Councillors Brown and Lynch reported on and members discussed possible planting schemes for the village including a proposal to plant a permanent Christmas tree.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 7.36 pm.

Signed..... Councillor F Reynolds Chairman 8th March 2021