

WARK PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Edward Jeffrey **Contact:** clerk.wark@gmail.com

Meeting to be held, Wednesday 29th March at 7pm in Wark Town Hall

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Present: Chair, Councillor Jeffrey (EJ), Councillor Hutchinson (AH), Councillor Murray (BM), Councillor Batey (SB), Councillor Weir (JW), Councillor Charlton (LC), Councillor Morphet (NM), MOP x3, Ms Kirkland (LK), Clerk

Apologies: Councillor Leadbitter (PL)

2. Notification of Other Business:

- Speedwatch – AH and MOP raised concern about speed of vehicles coming from the Wark village, EJ and AH advised of plans for signage to address this but this is delayed due to current building works.
- Academisation of Wark Primary School: Supported by Parish Council.

3. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest: None

4. Approval of Minutes - 6th December 2022 – Wark Parish Meeting (circulated 22 January 2023), AH proposed they are accepted and EJ as chair signed them.

5. Report from County Councillor Nick Morphet. Updates from meeting are detailed.

1) The County Council is offering **Coronation Community Fund grants** of up to £500 to help communities to celebrate the coronation. Community groups, parish councils, schools and churches can apply, and awards will be made on a first-come, first-served basis until all the money (£50,000) has been spent. Events must be held on Saturday 6th, Sunday 7th or Monday 8th May, with schools also being able to apply for funding for events on Friday 5th. To apply:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Projects/Coronation-Community-Fund.aspx>

2) The government's now accepting applications for the £400 **Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Fund** (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic>) and the £200 **Alternative Fuels Payment Alternative Fund** (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-alternative-fuel-bill-support-if-not-automatic>). Any household without its own direct electricity supply (in other words, people living in park homes or completely off-grid) can apply. Everyone else will receive both payments automatically.

3) The draft Local Transport Plan programme had suggested that they might surface dress part of the Watsons Walls road in the next financial year, but unfortunately it hasn't made **the final LTP programme**. As far as I'm aware, the only work planned within the parish is strengthening work at the bridge by Middleburn Farm.

4) I asked for a **street light consultation in Wark** last March, after a resident asked if the street lights could be switched off for part of the night, and the parish council agreed to me requesting the consultation. I gave up waiting for a response from the Street Lighting Manager, so I arranged a meeting with his boss (Paul Jones), and I can finally explain what's going on. Setting the street lights to switch off for part of the night (which is called Part Night Operation) would cost the council £75 per street light, and it would take 17 years to pay for that via the energy saved – which is long enough to put them off doing it.

The reason that we can't have motion sensitive street lights is that we don't have a Central Management System. When the County Council decided to install LEDs in every street light it had to decide whether to invest in a Central Management System, but it decided to save £2m by not doing so. Retrofitting a CMS today would apparently cost far more than £2 million.

My understanding of a CMS is that it allows you to control every street light from a desk in County Hall, which suggests to me that Part Night Operation would become easy and cheap to deliver. Paul told me, however, that he *thinks* it would still cost the council £75 per street light. I've recently asked him for clarification on this, and I'll let you know what he tells me.

Regarding the consultation, it seems that there's been a simple misunderstanding all along. Although they do consult with residents about switching off *certain* street lights, it turns out that they've never been asked to consult with *a whole village* before. Every time they told me that the next step was consultation I assumed that they'd go on to arrange a whole village consultation, but it turns out I was asking them to do something they'd never done before.

I've explained this to the resident who complained, and I've asked her if she would like her neighbours to be consulted on switching off the street lights in the vicinity of her home.

5) Edward asked me whether the County Council would be willing to make **a street sign for American Gardens** on the parish council's behalf. Highways Programme have since told me that they would be happy to make and install the sign, but it would be entirely at the parish council's expense. The Highways Maintenance Senior Team Leader is in the process of getting a price for making and installing the sign, and I'll be in touch as soon as I've got it. **Update from meeting: To progress.**

6) I finally received the quote for the installation of **the benches** late last year, but two of the parish councils found it to be too expensive and are getting their own quotes. As soon as they've done that I'll be able to submit the order. I'll let you know when I've got a delivery date, and we can make arrangements to install the bench at the picnic site in Stonehaugh.

7) A Stonehaugh resident told me that the village's drinking water is currently being delivered by tanker due to **a problem with the water treatment works**. I've spoken to Northumbrian Water and it seems that the entire water works are going to need to be replaced, and that it's likely to happen sometime between 2025 and 2030. Until then all water will be delivered by tanker. The water that's delivered will also vary from hard to soft, depending on the source.

8) Sue Rogers and Diane Holmes from the Local Access Forum are still keen to meet with Coldcotes residents to discuss their attempt to get **the Coldcotes to Scotchcoulard road** recognised as a Public Right of Way. I'll be in touch as soon as I have a date for the meeting. **Update from meeting:** MOP will host at Coldcotes Farm. NM to contact Sue Rodgers.

9) I'm not aware of any progress regarding the drainage problem on **the Linacres road**, but I've recently asked for an update and I hope to be able to report some progress soon. **Update from meeting:** SB says saw someone patching it. NCC not doing anymore till drainage improvements have been completed by landlord.

10) I think I mentioned that we've got a **new Locality Coordinator** (called **Angela Watt**), and that she'd like to meet every parish council in the area? Could you remind me whether you agreed to her attending a future parish council meeting, and whether anyone's invited her? I'd be happy to invite her on your behalf, if you like. **Update from meeting:** EJ happy for Angela to attend next parish meeting, NM to invite.

11) You said that you might want me to **speak to School Transport about the pick-up point in Wark**, Anne? Would you like me to, or have you already spoken to them yourself? **Update from meeting:** AH clarified pick up was in centre of village and was one of the reasons the toilets were retained to ensure school children have toilet facilities on route. AH and EJ thinks would be beneficial to move back to main village. EJ proposed and AH seconded.

12) And finally, could I check how many people have signed up to **Community Speedwatch**, and how far those people have got in the sign up process? It seems to be taking forever! We discussed it at a parish council meeting in June 2021, and I think I signed up at about the same time. I haven't got my hands on a speed gun yet, but I'm still keen to! **Update from meeting:** Volunteers needed, MOP present at meeting willing to volunteer to sign up.

6. Matters Arising

- 6.1 Tree Inspection – Need to prompt Matt Fathers to progress. AH of view that Chestnut tree to be prioritised and then Stonehaugh. SB will lead on this and contact Matt.
- 6.2 Stonehaugh trees – as above. SB to lead on.
- 6.3 Condition and Repair of Stargazing Pavilion at Stonehaugh – AH to update councillors. AH states it is deteriorating, contacted university and requested give advice on what is needed. EJ has seen it and inside is rotten. AH propose that we get their advice and secure an estimate for repairs. Ask Liam if stargazing shelter can be used/is viable for

repairs. EJ proposed, BM seconded.

- 6.4 Insurance for Wark Christmas Tree Lights. Mrs Nichol provides us with the electricity from her home, lights are coming to end of their life, Councillors questioned if NCC would install a proper box to light the lights. Agreed safer to get new lights and suggested that box is located on street lamp at the corner of the green. Parish will purchase the lights. AH propose that even if NCC won't do it PCC should do it.
- 6.5 Kings Coronation scheduled for 6th May 2023 – discussion on how this occasion will be marked in our parish. EJ update, Town Hall getting funding and will supply food for the event, talked about having the beacon lit again, PCC to supply drink for the toast. BM states that have applied for BBQ, magician and singer with food on evening from £500. Battlesteads to be asked to supply the food. EJ suggested that each area has a drinks budget, BM proposed and JW seconded. 100 for Wark, Discussion about viability of gift for children to commemorate it. Determining numbers is difficulty – could use school. To look into. LC proposed and AH seconded.
- 6.6 Sale of Wark Public toilet update. AH still working on this. Last heard waiting on DH solicitor. Highlighted that lengthy time of three years to resolve is unacceptable.
- 6.7 Progress of installation of Moving Vehicle Sign (MVS) in Wark – EJ querying if it is worth getting one installed (due to building works on others), Post cost is £2000. EJ states first one can go in, Nick Ridley to be approached. Can the sign be moved to bridge in light of housing development. Old post where 30 sign is? Can this be used to save money? Donation towards the cost of them has been offered. MOP states 30 would be better past the church, EJ feels that two posts could be installed. AH asking if we can appeal to village and businesses. AH proposed first one that goes in is on Stonehaugh road, EJ agreed, Sidwood house – NM to ask NCC to install. NM queried type of pole required and compatibility with sign. EJ confident Richard at NCC is aware. Discussion on type of sign and noted ones that display a Thank you are preferred.
- 6.8 Stonehaugh Play area (Bark) – balance paid (cheque dated 16 January 2023) – update on delivery/progress. BM confirmed it has been delivered. Thank you to Richard and David and Nunwick. Does not come out of Precept.
- 6.9 Signage for managing cyclists on road – brought forward from December meeting. AH clear that rule 66 states to pull in – EJ asking if we can ask NCC for signage to remind

cyclists of rules. NM clear that all need to obey the highway code. Discussion about number of cyclists observed to ignore Rule 66. Can we look at getting signs – identify locations and costing. AH, SB and BM.

7. Stonehaugh Greens Committee used to have responsibility for amenity, Sub Committee for raising funds for amenity land – Brought forward from December meeting. One person interested in sub-committee (CR). BM shared that Stonehaugh are running a Breakfast club, fish and chip evening – raising funds for decking replacement. Good group of young ones who are already committed. EJ suggested subcommittee not necessarily required and BM agreed to communicate with Parish Council to keep PCC abreast of what is going on/happening.

- 7.1 Emergency provision at West Acres Community Centre. AH shared that Karbon Homes had met with residents and promised to make provisions if electricity provision. Highlighted that Warm Hub already operating in Town Hall. AH states would be helpful for means to cook/keep warm. JW advised that Town Hall has generator which would afford residents opportunity for this. AH asking if we could chase Karbon Homes (something to cook on, Calor Gas stove, keep warm – Calor Gas). Town Hall will be given a generator. JW advised all are welcome to come to Town Hall. LC recognised the close knit community on West Acres. MOP states he has contact for Housing Officer at Karbon Homes and happy to contact them about the issue.

8. Correspondence

- 8.1 Planning Consultation 23/00340/FUL Hexham House Cottage Hexham Road Wark Northumberland NE48 3LR – circulated and supported by deadline 22 February 2023.
- 8.2 Planning Consultation 23/00004/FUL Barns West Of Sadbury Hill Wark Northumberland NE48 3DJ – Deadline 22 March 2023. Circulated 1 March 2023. AH proposed this is supported, BM seconded.
- 8.3 Proposed base station installation at Henshaw common, nr Wark, Northumberland, NE48 3ED - SB leading on this, NM liaising with SB – update needed. MOP asking what it is – mobile phone mast.

9. Financial Matters

- 9.1 Replacement of paper toilet holder at Stonehaugh – EJ – this was vandalised at picnic

site and now can buy rolls for both sites.

9.2 Accounts, Expenses and Approve Payment Schedule – To Be circulated at meeting.

9.2 Bank Account – Balance to be circulated from statement and noted.

9.4 Donations – Thank You's for donations have been received from the following:

- Great North Air Ambulance – letter of thanks 3 January 2023
- Wark Older persons Party – card from L. Kirtley dated 30 December 2022
- Ally Barker, Wark Junior Football Club – email received 12 December 2022
- Sport Tynedale – email received 20 December 2022
- Wark Town Hall – email received 22 December 2022
- Monday Men – email received 30 December 2022
- Wark Parent and Toddler Group – email received 8 February 2022

10. Reports from Representatives to Other Bodies (Wark Town Hall, Stonehaugh Community Hall and Giles Heron Trust)

- Town Hall – JW progressing well, lot more usage inc. children's parties, Warm hub through winter, bookings received for throughout the year.
- Stonehaugh Community Hall – campsite is fantastic, inclusive of the village, residents and owners come along to meetings. SCH has paid £1000 to have stage put up. Christmas put in new steps for emergency - £5000 will go up as wood is expensive (no air block which has impacted on sustainability of it). By October plan to have replaced decking. Powergen generator – SB helping with this. Dependent upon surrounding properties for support. Easter activities in place – open to everyone, bring a long a picnic. Beginning to generate some money, pellet boiler costs have escalated.
- Giles Heron – no meeting till May 2023

11. Highway Matters

11.1 Bridge repairs at Middleburn scheduled for April to June 2023, opportunity to have road resurfacing completed as road closure in place – SB. If doesn't get done we can ask to get on transport plan for next year.

11.2 Parking at Wark GP surgery – brought forward from December meeting. EJ reminded those present that there are always difficulties down there, grass is a disgrace, owned by NCC, Richard did say he would give quote – NM to chase up.

11.3 EV charging point – email circulated, clarified – feeder pillar not the charging point. SB querying if funding for EV chargers is available – confirmed. Green east or south side – JW states they will never get to them due to parking issues. NM reminded meeting that we have suggested multiple locations on multiple occasions – suggested opposite Battlesteads, Old petrol station and near doctors but not progressed. NM to push for estimate for parking bay.

11.4 SB asking if can we try for zig zags, NM confirmed it is a Local Transport plan consideration. SB proposed and BM seconded.

12. Other Business – Not for Decision.

HMRC PAYE liability of £282.29 goes back to 05/02/2020 – AH received communication – LK to check old records.

Resigning – AH – need to address this. Representative for Wark needed.

13. Items for Discussion at Future Meetings: Local Transport Plan

14. Dates for Next Meeting: 23 May 2023 at 7pm and 27 June 2023 – Stonehaugh JW given apologies in advance.

Close of meeting: 8.58pm

Louise Kirkland

Clerk to Wark Parish Council