

Minutes from the Meeting of West Allen Parish Council
Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 19:00 - Carrshield Village Hall

Present: Steve Agar (Chair), Helen Adams, Rowland Hull, David Adams, Lee Sutterby, Fiona Hope and Joanne Sutterby (Clerk)

Apologies: NCC Councillor Colin Horncastle

1- Minutes of last meeting on 02/03/23: The Clerk noted that the wrong name had been included on the original Minutes from the meeting in March. Helen Manson was noted as being a new signatory, which was incorrect. Helen Adams is actually the new signatory. These Minutes have been amended; re-posted on the PC website and re-submitted in paper format to HSBC to support the change of mandate and new signatories form.

2- Matters Arising:

a) *Clerk role & changes to bank mandate:* Fiona Hope has agreed to become the new Clerk to the West Allen Parish Council. The Chair welcomed Fiona as the new Clerk and expressed thanks to Joanne Sutterby for her time in the role. It was confirmed that all new signatories-Steve Agar, Rowland Hull and Helen Adams had provided all necessary documents and paperwork to HSBC to enable the change of mandate to go ahead. FH now needs to be added as a user to HSBC online banking system and JS should be removed (SA agreed to action this) The Clerk noted that the new signatories must now complete a 'Change of Primary User' form to remove Barbara Ingman from the primary user for online banking. The Chair will now become the primary user.

b) *WAPC Resilience Group update:* RH provided an over-view of the work of the WAPCRG. Discussion ensued as to how to proceed with drawing up an agreement with the three local community venues- Ninebanks Church and Community Hall, Carrshield Village Hall and Mohope YHA. It was agreed that further meetings would be required between the PC and representatives of these groups. LS raised the matter of public liability insurance for any items purchased in future by the PC. SA reported that he had checked with current insurance provider and this is covered, along with items that may be purchased in the future for resilience purposes. Therefore, the existing insurance policy has been renewed to commence from 1st June 2023. RH noted that he has also applied for a £1000 grant from NCC to cover the cost of ongoing maintenance, running costs etc for items that may be purchased in the future. The Northern Powergrid Foundation Grant would only cover the capital expenditure on items and would not cover running costs or maintenance.

c) *Defibrillators for Mohope and Carrshield:* The Clerk had contacted Cllr Colin Horncastle prior to the meeting for an update on this matter. CH requested some additional information from each venue to assist with the grant application. The Clerk agreed to contact representatives from Carrshield Village Hall and Mohope YHA to pass on this request.

d) *Future tree planting on roadside verges near Mohope:* At the request of DA, the Clerk sent an email to Glen Harrison at NCC Highways to open a channel of communication about future tree planting. No reply to date had been received. DA noted possible issues with re-planting on select verges, including the siting of trees underneath existing over-head cables. Perhaps the planting of wild flowers, shrubs or smaller trees could be done instead. DA agreed to progress this matter directly with NCC on the PC's behalf.

e) *Highways Programme LTP priorities for 2024-25:* It was agreed to keep two of the same priorities from 2023/24 request- the resurfacing of the road from School Bank to Wardway, Ninebanks and also the road from Coalcleugh to Swinhope Bridge. After much discussion about highways issues in the Parish, it was agreed the third priority should be to request a passing place or places on the road from the Mohope Bank/Ouston junction to Blackpool Bridge. Apart from the entrance track to the property of White Walls, there is nowhere to currently pass on this section of road, which becomes busier in summer months due to the extra visitors to the area and YHA in Mohope. The Clerk will submit these priorities by the deadline of 28/07/23.

3- Correspondence:

a) *NALC Annual Subscription* – renewed at cost of £162.36 (2022 rate = £160.55)

b) *Parish Council Insurance* - renewed at cost of £242.88 (2022 rate = £192.95)

c) *Action for nature in the West Allen*: Liz Barnes contacted the PC to raise awareness of the importance of grass verges to wildlife, particularly pollinators. SA recalled contacting NCC several years ago to request verge cutting only be done in the West Allen as a matter of necessity, and left until as late in the summer season as possible. The Clerk noted the existence of several road signs in place around the Parish, stating that certain verges were being actively managed by NCC. It was agreed that contact should be made with NCC again regarding their current verge cutting policy. One section of grass verge that was deemed as requiring cutting earlier for road safety reasons however, is the section running between Blackpool Bridge and Mohope Bank/Ouston junction.

d) *Open Spaces Society- guide to help local councils and PC's protect green spaces and paths*: For information purposes, Frances Hinchcliffe sent the PC the following link to the Open Spaces Society website- (<https://www.oss.org.uk/open-spaces-and-paths-a-new-guide-to-protection/>). The Clerk will hold this information on file, should the need arise to refer to the guidance in future.

4 Audit: Annual audit documents were received from Mazars who are the appointed auditors. All documents relating to the audit were made available to councillors before and during, the meeting. As part of the audit process the Council was requested to:

a) *Consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor* – No actions arose from the internal audit conducted by Malcolm Dobson on 04/05/23.

b) *Approve the Annual Governance Statement*- This was read out, control measures and checks discussed and agreed.

c) *Approve the annual accounts for 2022/2023*- These were agreed as being correct and will be published on the PC website along with other documents required as part of the audit process.

d) *Approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances*- Accounting statement was approved. No explanation of variances were required.

e) *Confirm and approve the Certification of Exemption*- Approved

f) *Confirm the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights*- These will start on Monday 5th June and run to Friday 14th July 2023.

5 Planning: Local planning applications and appeals were discussed by councillors. There are no comments or further actions currently.

6 Any Other Business: LS raised concerns about delivery waggons reportedly being sent directions to use the Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) near Low Limestone Brae. This is totally unsuitable for anything other than 4x4 vehicles. It was decided that a request should be made to NCC highways for 'Do Not Follow Satnav' signs to be erected.

HA asked whether the road can be swept in Ninebanks due to all of the mud at the edges of the carriageway. Also, the 'Slow' sign painted on the carriageway is partly obscured by the mud at one end of the hamlet. The other slow sign was painted on top of a carriageway defect originally and as such, has degraded. The Clerk agreed to contact NCC Highways about these matters, along with the damaged cattlegrid on the top road to Allendale above Throssle Hole and various ditching/drainage issues around Mohope and Limestone brae.

7 Date and time of next meeting- Thursday 7th September 2023 at 7.00pm- Ninebanks Church & Community Hall