

Minutes of meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 27th September 2021

Those present were George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), Jim Blythe (JB) John Grahamslaw (JJG) Dougie Watkin (DW) and Sheelagh Hume (SH). Two members of the public was also present.

AGENDA

09.21.1 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Alison Murphy.

09.21.2 To make any Declaration of Interest

None

09.21.3 To confirm Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 26th July 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

09.21.4 Matters Arising from Minutes

It was agreed unanimously that item 09.21.4.ii would be dealt with first.

ii Play Areas

GS ran through the history of the project from its inception some years ago when NPC were approached by some young mothers with the suggestion of new play equipment to the present day. He pointed out that those parents had consulted widely at the time, in Norham and elsewhere, that the matter had been discussed at length at a number of parish council meetings, and with those young mothers. It had been agreed that the best location in the village would be the village green, as it would be most widely used (near shops and public WCs) rather than Jubilee Field or Ubbanford. It had also been agreed to try to keep as much of the village green as clear as possible. The design had been put for consultation at a village drop-in session soe time ago.

A fundraising campaign via website and Facebook had been set up and monies raised very quickly from local firms and residents which seemed to indicate a desire for the new equipment. A contract was entered into with Playdale, and the deposit paid. The installation work was started on 17th September. Also approached by another parent who suggested another piece of inclusive equipment which is also now on order.

However, some residents of Cross View have enow expressed some concerns regarding the position of play equipment, the safety aspects of its position, the aesthetics of the equipment and from a personal perspective how it might affect the value of their property. They had mistakenly assumed that the new equipment would simply replace the older equipment, and that there would not be additional pieces. They were unhappy with the size of the piece of equipment directly outside their house, and that the new green slide was ugly. GS Acknowledged the residents' concerns but explained that part of the remit the parish council had given itself was to help keep Norham viable as a village, which meant helping to make it attractive for families, and visitors. and confirmed the council would endeavour to bring about an amicable resolution. The two members of the public then left the meeting.

After lengthy discussion it was agreed that the parish council would meet on site (7 days' notice required) with a view to trying to achieve a compromise acceptable to all. It was agreed that no further installation work would be carried out until that meeting had been held. As regards safety it was pointed out that generally the village green was surrounded by chains, and that moves were in place to reduce the speed limit in the centre of the village to 20mph. It was also pointed out that at no point had Playdale (equipment providers and installers) expressed any concern re safety or over position of the equipment. It was agreed that we would invite representatives from Playdale to the meeting agreed to take place on 5th October 10am. Formal notice was required which VLC will deal with. Representatives of Playdale would be invited.

i Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

No progress to report. Dismay expressed that it was taking so long. GS requested that undergrounding of cables be specifically included in this local plan as it had been contained in the (still in force) Berwick Burgh Plan. DW confirmed that he would ensure that it was.

iii Public Conveniences

After discussion agreed these should continue to be cleaned three times per week for the time being. VLC reported an email received from a visitor to the village complimenting the council on its upkeep of these toilets.

iv Lower Tweed Trail

The leaflet is in process of distribution, and Facebook page is now up and running. A number of compliments but also some comments re the state of the path, in particular a stretch near Ord and near Cornhill. A meeting has been arranged for 18th October with Phil Bradley, NCC Footpaths Officer which would also be attended by Colin Hardy, and members of the various participating councils. Unfortunately, Glen Sanderson could not attend but had offered to come to the parish council meeting on 22 November to discuss this and other matters.

v Northumberland LED Street lighting/Undergrounding of cables

It was noted that the lampposts round the green had been repainted, and new 'traditional' LED lamps were to be fitted in the near future. As regards undergrounding of cables Scottish Power had contacted GS to discuss the possibility of some of undergrounding work being carried out in Castle Street. This would be classed as repair work to the cables/posts in question – it was suggested the parish council might be able to request new lamp posts.

vi Village Map

The new noticeboard was in place and much complimented. Agreed that any new map need not just be to display postcodes but could highlight 'landmarks' as well as house names. JJG confirmed he had an old map a copy of which he would pass to GS and would also provide slates for the noticeboard road. Also, discussion re finger post sign for centre of village. VLC to look at costs.

vii New Speed signs/limits

Still Waiting to hear further from NCC re 20mph speed limit possibilities and request for pedestrian crossing near the school. Agreed that would like 20mph through the centre of the village, but certainly at least by the school. VLC will contact Colin Hardy to ask him to pursue this. Also agreed residents should be encouraged to call 101 with speeding concerns.

viii Norham Development Trust

Greencat Renewables have completed Stage 1 part of feasibility report, during the course of which they considered all possible renewable energy sources. The recommendations at this stage are solar and wind. Stage 2 involves more detailed consideration of these possibilities, including asking NCC re their attitude as regards planning consent. A further meeting with Greencat had been arranged to discuss all of this. A drop-in session had been arranged for 22 October for all groups, but which Greencat would also attend.

ix NCC Draft Local Plan-De-allocation of Land

the area west of Glebefield has been re-allocated for affordable housing in the current version of NCC draft Local Plan which was however yet to be finalised.

x Flagpole

The flagpole was now up, and the first flag had been raised by the duke of Northumberland (with GS). There may also be a Norham flag – still under consideration.

xi Jubilee Field

Re repairs to the wall, one of the quotations had been accepted on basis that the work would be carried out quickly-but frustratingly it had not yet started. Agreed that the aim should be to have the field, which was originally donated for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, refreshed for her Platinum Jubilee in 2022 but works would be held off until the dispute re play equipment had been resolved.

xii Pedwell Way Mud

The works have been carried out, and a new drain is to be put in at the contractor's own expense. So far the drainage seems to work – though acknowledged that the river flooding will always leave silt build up on the road.

xiii Community Police Report

The terms of the report were noted. Also noted that any reports of speeding should be made to 101 not to the parish council. VLC will put this in Newsround and on Facebook. Agreed that it was good that there was very little for community police to report.

xiv Norham 900

Agreed that the Big 900th Picnic had gone very well. The Duke of Northumberland had been very accommodating. GS would thank Mr Orpwood re use of his field for parking. Further Discussion as to whether a bonfire and BBQ could be held. One suggestion was a well stewarded bonfire with BBQ, entry by ticket only (to include the cost of food) in jubilee field. Fireworks were still controversial. Agreed that Jubilee Field might be best venue as not pitch dark, is cordoned off by walls etc so probably most safe. VLC will contact insurers to discuss. Would definitely need stewards.

xvi Stackyard Lane.

Discussion re possible improvements. Still waiting to hear from Church of England re section of hedge by vicarage. Discussion as to whether hedge needed to be replaced as there is a fence. Agreed would remove hedge and consider possibilities thereafter. Also agreed would hold off this work until other expenses issues had been resolved.

9.21.5 Climate Emergency Declaration

Discussion re NCC email. Agreed after discussion the parish council would not declare a climate emergency, as unclear as to the ramifications of such a declaration. But also agreed a response would be sent conforming that a feasibility study re renewable energy was under active consideration, and seeking financial assistance to install electric car chargers, and reduction of speed limits.

9.21.6 NCC Free Tree Giveaway

Discussion re NCC email. After discussion agreed JIG 's offer of oak tree for Queens Jubilee for placing in Jubilee field would be accepted. VLC will contact NCC re hedging offer.

9.21.7 Member Councillor Census

Councillors urged to complete this very short NALC survey.

Finance

09.21.8 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments from Current Account: 2 Aug S Broadbent (WCs) £162.99; 5 Sept S Broadbent (WCs) £179.98

Payments from Business Account: 18 Aug Nixon Hire £228 (portalos)

Receipts into Current: Total Donations re Play Equipment £4771; HMRC VAT reclaim £2084.09; 5 Sept V Craig (LTT Waymarks) £57; 6 Sept Playdale (deposit) £5493.82; 6 Sept NCC £2600 (Precept II) 9 Sept V Craig £45 (LTT waymarks)

Receipt into Business Account: 0.02p interest

09.21.9 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Account

As at 27 September Current Account £22825.86; Business Account £ 743.23

09.21.10 To look at Planning Application decisions

None

A complaint had been received re installation of plastic windows in a property in Castle Street. Agreed this would fall into permitted development in particular as the windows were similar in style to the original astragalled ones. In addition, many of the properties in Castle Street now had plastic windows (probably favoured by planning if in keeping because of sustainability issues).

09.21.11 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

Complaint received re surface of footpath/pavement in West Street opposite Masons Arms. Barry Knox will be invited to inspect. As regards the new pedestrian gate at the Cow Holme this was not on common land but was across a public right of way. It is the parish council's ambition to make footpaths round the village accessible to all including pushchairs and mobility scooters.

09.21.12 General Correspondence

None

Any Other Business (For information only)

Query re making progress re installation of electric charging points somewhere in village. JB will investigate grant funding.

Re dog poo on village green, agreed VLC will obtain some signs.

Date of next meeting:

Site meeting 5th October 10am Village Green

22nd November 7pm Village Hall

