

# **Draft Minutes of Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 22 January 2024**

**Those present were George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), Alison Murphy (AM), Jim Blythe (JB) Sheelagh Hume (SH), John Grahamslaw (JJG) and Dougie Watkin (DW). Also in attendance were Rev Rob Kelsey and Colin Hardy, NCC County Councillor.**

## **1.24.1 To accept apologies for absence.**

**None**

## **1.24.2 To make any Declaration of Interest**

**None.**

## **1.24.3 To confirm Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**The minutes of the meetings of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were confirmed as accurate records and signed.**

## **1.24.4 Matters arising from Minutes.**

### **i      Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Plan**

**Awaiting date for next meeting. The 'neighbourhood' has been redesignated to take account of the departure of Holy Island. Ord is again the lead council. A Housing Needs Survey should be carried out within the next few months (subject to financial assistance being obtained) to cover the whole area, not just Norham Parish.**

### **ii     Public Conveniences**

**In a reasonable state. Will be refurbished when time allows.**

### **iii    Play Areas**

**GS continuing to inspect play equipment in JJG's absence. New litter bin still to be obtained for Ubbanford.**

### **iv    Community Police Report**

**No report received which is disappointing. Youth on pavements riding mini motorcycles of some kind have been reported.**

### **v    Norham School**

**GS and some parish councillors attended a very positive meeting with Head Teachers of Norham School, to discuss closer communication with and links to the community.**

### **vi    Undergrounding of cables**

Nothing to report, except that it is possible that BT's push to phase out their use of copper land lines may lead to fewer overhead cables.

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#### **Norham Development Trust**

GS confirmed NDT still in ongoing discussions with the PCC regarding 1 Tower Cottages, the proposal being that NDT will refurbish, let out and manage the property as an affordable let. In the process of agreeing heads of terms.

As regards the renewables project JG confirmed that GreenCat are still in the process of preparing/obtaining information required for the planning application before it can be lodged. A grant application for funding has been made to the Community Energy Fund in the sum of £100000 being the maximum award. A decision is expected in the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> Feb. In the meantime, a questionnaire for all residents will be prepared. If the grant application is successful, the questionnaire will be issued to all residents/businesses, with a drop-in session planned for 26<sup>th</sup> Feb, with responses to the questionnaire to be returned by 4<sup>th</sup> March.

viii

#### **Jubilee Field**

GS has carried out some works to the wall – the rest will be completed in the spring, but the wall is now safe. Some damage has been reported to one of the gates, which GS will fix. Also, a bird box has apparently been ripped off. JJG will check all boxes.

ix

#### **Parking in Castle Street**

Two further designs for new parking in Castle Street have been received from NCC Highways Dept arising from discussions with Richard McKenzie. One is for chevron and the other for perpendicular parking. The first would provide 15 designated parking places in addition to the EV spaces and a space for ad hoc parking, and the latter would provide 20 bays plus 2 EV bays, all of standard size, and ad hoc parking. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that a better plan might be to have perpendicular parking between the two sets of steps, and then parallel parking eastwards from the steps. VLC to contact NCC to request a fresh plan. All in agreement except AM who abstained and expressed concern regarding the cost to NCC of this

change in parking. CH confirmed the drawing of plans was already covered by the employees' salaries with a minor cost for the team to draw the lines. Agreed once the new plan is received it will be considered by the parish council and if approved then publicised and constructive comments from members of the Parish will be welcomed.

x Proposed 20mph Speed limit.

Traffic survey will be carried out in July/August.

xi Approach to Diocese re Land at Glebefield

There have so far been only a couple of very informal meetings with the Diocesan property manager, and there may be another meeting towards the end of February. The Housing Needs Survey to be carried out in the context of the Local Neighbourhood Plan may inform any decisions, but no decisions of any kind have been made as yet. It was agreed that if there were new housing it would benefit the school.

xii Lower Tweed Trail

A meeting had been arranged for all interested councils but had to be postponed again because NCC Footpaths Officer was ill. To be rearranged. Some of the path definitely needs work.

xiv Sustrans – Declassification of National Cycle routes

VLC contacted Sustrans to thank them for the new signage and asked that they put up more such signs along the routes. It was indicated that this would happen once they had more funds. VLC also to contact NCC re more 'cycle safely' signs.

xv Paton & Co Donations

There was discussion regarding the refurbishment of the bus shelter, and in particular sourcing and installation of new Perspex panels. After discussion CH suggested his small expenses scheme might cover the cost. VLC to contact him with formal request.

xvi Trees

GS has at last successfully contacted NCC Trees Officer who has confirmed he will get to Norham within the next couple of weeks.

## Mobile Phone Signal

The response by BT to VLC's letter to Local MP was discussed. Agreed that the main point of the 'complaint' had been ignored, namely that as digital lines do not work without electricity if there were a power cut many residents would have to rely on mobile phones – which require a signal. After discussion agreed that VLC would write again to MP, the Leader of NCC and our County Councillor. CH confirmed large swathes of Northumberland were in a similar situation. NCC had arranged for signal detectors to be fitted to bin lorries so there is an ongoing survey of mobile signal being carried out. The data would be passed to mobile providers. It was also confirmed that NHS in-ambulance laptops do not work in the centre of the village because of the poor signal.

### 1.24.5

#### Newsround

It was explained that Mr and Mrs Harris who had prepared and distributed Newsround for many years were now stepping back. Janet Young has volunteered to produce it, and Mrs Straughen will arrange for its distribution. It is hoped that the church and the village hall will each contribute £200 to the cost of production (C£600 per annum), as will the parish council in the next financial year.

### 1.24.6

#### Use of Village Green

A request has been made by a private individual for use of the village green. Whilst it is understood to be for an event for families, it is not a fundraising event of the usual kind e.g. for the hall or the church, or any other charity and accordingly should be looked on as a commercial venture. After discussion agreed that the village green could be used for that purpose but that the organiser was to ensure that the green was used responsibly, that a thorough clean-up of any litter would be carried out afterwards and that she should produce and exhibit a risk assessment and certificate of insurance for the event to the parish clerk.

### 1.24.7

#### Drop-in Meeting/Communication

It was accepted that communication was not as good as it might be. Agreed after discussion that a drop-in session involving any village

community group that wished to take part would be held in spring, and that the parish council would also take part so that residents could raise points/discuss issues and find out more. In addition, agreed that once minutes were agreed VLC would add a link to the website to Norham Craic

## **FINANCE**

**1.24.8 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting**

**Payments from Current Account:**

**22 Nov Royal British Legion £30 (wreath)**

**22 Nov George Straughen Ltd £97.38 (materials for Jubilee Field)**

**22 Nov George Straughen Ltd £26.60 (materials for war memorial)**

**22 Nov George Straughen £99.96 (plants for war memorial)**

**1 Dec S Broadbent £207.25 (WCs)**

**4 Jan S Broadbent £150 (WCs)**

**Receipts into Current Account:**

**None**

**Payments from Business account:**

**None**

**Receipts into Business Account:**

**4 Dec Interest £2.32**

**1.24.9 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Accounts**

**Current Account £12892.84**

**Business Account £606.88**

**1.24.10 Increased Use of Online Banking**

**In light of imminent closure of Barclays Bank branch in Berwick discussion regarding more use of online banking. The council still uses cheques as two signatures are required. However, this can now be achieved online. VLC to investigate this further.**

**1.24.11 To look at Planning Application decisions.**

**Land South of Border View: Refused**

**1.24.12 To look at state of Roads and Pavements**

**As regard gritting of roads, a suggestion had been made that a hand gritter be purchased. After discussion this was agreed. If it works well**

consideration will be given to purchasing more. Discussion re NCC failure to top up grit bins. CH will contact NCC direct on this. Noted that the finger post sign on NW corner of village green had been broken by Storm Isha, and the bridge on the bridleway between Morris Hall Farm and Norham Castle had been blocked by falling trees, and damaged. VLC will report to NCC Footpaths Officer. Noted that large pothole on Castle Bank that had been reported on FixMyStreet some weeks ago remains unfixed. VLC will email CH on this. CH confirmed best way to report any defect was via FixMyStreet – this covers everything from potholes to lighting, dog fouling etc. A very useful tool. Also noted worn road surface on school corner had worsened, as has the area at the T junction between Castle Street and West Street - these too were reported some months ago.

#### **1.24.13 General Correspondence**

None

VLC confirmed a thank you letter had been sent to Ladykirk Estates for in relation their gift of the Christmas Tree

JB confirmed blessing of Salmon Fishing will take place on 1 Feb.

SH confirmed Tractor Run this year will be on 23 March.

#### **Any Other Business (For information only)**

After discussion agreed that VLC will contact Cllr Glen Sanderson, Leader of NCC, with dates of all parish council meetings in 2024 and ask if he might be able to attend one of them.

**Date of next meeting: 25 March 2024**