

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 17th May 2021

Those present were: George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), Jim Blythe (JB) John Grahamslaw (JJG), Sheelagh Hume (SH), Dougie Watkin (DW) and Alison Murphy (AM)
One member of the public was also present.

5.21.1. To elect a Chairman

GS was proposed by JG and seconded by JB for Chair. He was duly elected unanimously.

5.21.2. Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

GS signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5.21.3. To elect a Vice Chairman

JG was proposed by GS and seconded by JJG, to become Vice Chair. He was duly elected unanimously.

5.21.4. To accept apologies for Absence

None

5.21.5. To make any Declaration of Interest

No declaration of interest was made.

5.21.6. To agree Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5.21.7 To Receive Chairman's Report

The Chairman's Annual Report was accepted. Copy attached. Agreed that notwithstanding lockdown a lot had been achieved.

5.21.8 Matters arising from Minutes

i. NCC Elections

Commiserations to DW but agreed his energy and enthusiasm would be much appreciated by the parish. Agreed the new county councillor Colin Hardy would be invited to next meeting, Noted that Election expenses forms had to be lodged with NCC by 3rd June, even if no expenses were being claimed.

ii Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

DW confirmed he would continue to represent the parish on this committee. Planning officers with NCC are hopeful that the public consultation will be able to take place this year.

Play Areas

JJG thanked for continuing inspections – nothing to report. RoSPA inspection scheduled for June. DW still spraying twice weekly weather permitting. Agreed this should continue until all covid restrictions lifted. Re plans for new equipment, fundraising going remarkably well. After discussion agreed that we should attempt to obtain further quotes even although it was unlikely that the Playdale one would be improved upon. Attempts had been made by Holly Wright to get other quotes, but suppliers were unwilling to come to Norham. More still needed and it was to be hoped that young parents/school would be involved. It was hoped that new equipment might be in place by late summer.

iv Public Conveniences

Repairs to back wall to be carried out 26/27 May. Thereafter would look at some internal improvements. WCs are still being cleaned three times per week-agreed this would continue until covid restrictions lifted.

v Lower Tweed Trail

Leaflet now finalised and updated quote was the same, so agreed to proceed to print. Horncliffe PC have still not agreed to make a payment towards the costs. Hope to have a decision from them at their July meeting.

vi Mobile Mast/BT Phone box

Nothing to report

vii. Northumberland LED street lighting/Undergrounding of cables

Still some sodium lights in the village. Agreed VLC will contact to NCC to find out the position re completion of this work, No news re undergrounding.

viii. Street Signs/Village Map

The frame for village map should be completed soon. Agreed that it had been decided to proceed with the name Birch Hill if residents were in agreement. After discussion agreed that first step was that GS should contact affected residents to canvass their opinion. If any of them refused then this project could not proceed,

ix New Speed signs/30mph reminders

New speed sign now in place. After discussion agreed that VLC would contact NCC to arrange for a visit to discuss change to 30mph on Castle Bank and the possibilities re having 20mph zones in the village., especially if a Traffic Order is planned for the area by the school.

x Norham Development Trust

The RCEF grant had been awarded, consultants appointed, and the feasibility study was underway. NDT will keep the parish council informed. In addition, meetings were being held with Destination Tweed (which was aiming to establish a path/cycle track from Moffat to Berwick) to see how and if Norham could benefit from this.

xi NCC Draft Local Plan-De-allocation of Land

No news.

xii Flagpole

This had now been purchased along with 4 flags, all currently being stored by GS. The team at the Masons Arms were to be thanked for raising the funds for the flagpole. GS has already thanked D McCreath for arranging for collection and delivery. Awaiting confirmation as to installation timing and plans.

xiii Trees

NCC have agreed they have responsibility for trees by the garage and by Foreman's. Lower branches and those interfering with phone lines would be removed.

xiv Jubilee Field

Previously had a meeting to discuss a refresh. However, it has now been noted that the wall on Castle Street was in a bad if not dangerous state. Agreed that refresh plans would-be postponed for the time being. A survey of the structure of the wall would be required before remedial works are carried out.

xv Pedwell Way Mud

T Smith awaiting materials and will then proceed.

5.21.9 Community Police Report

Terms of the report were noted. It was noted that there had been no crimes.

5.21.10 Norham 900

It is still hoped to hold a celebration in the castle on 11th September. Otherwise, the plan is to consider how the castle and its grounds can be improved for visitors.

5.21.11 Highways England Proposed Infill of bridge over railway at Norham Station

Highways England have confirmed that they no immediate plans to carry out infilling works and will not do anything without warning. It now appears they will also have to apply for planning permission. Possible future uses for the disused rail line were discussed.

5.21.12 Stackyard Lane

The housing association involved have indicated that their boundary is the fence behind the hedge. This has been disputed and we await a response. However, if that is the case then the hedge could be removed. Discussion of a proposal to reinstate what had been a footpath down the west side of the lane. Agreed that the lane should remain where possible in gravel to dissuade motorists from using it.

5.21.13 Parking

Parking problems obviously affected the whole village. Whilst parking is not within the parish council's legal responsibilities, a suggestion had been made in favour of residents permits for Castle Street, with visitors being encouraged to park in the castle car park. After discussion it was agreed this was unlikely to solve any perceived problem in Castle Street. The situation would be monitored.

5.21.14 Review Clerks Salary

In the clerk's absence discussion re salary review. Agreed to review salary to £12.50 per hour. The clerk was thanked for her contribution to the parish council's work.

5.21.15 Safeguarding Policy

The terms of the draft safeguarding and equality and diversity policies were noted and agreed.

FINANCE

5.21.16 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments received since last meeting: Ladykirk Estates £500 (towards new playground equipment); Ord parish Council £300 (Lower Tweed Trail leaflet) ; NCC £6700 (towards new playground equipment); NCC £2600 (precept I) Cash donation £573.04 (Flagpole collection; Total Cash/cheque £2695 Donations (towards new playground equipment); Milne Graden £1000 (towards new playground equipment); Payments made since last meeting; S Broadbent £22.92 (WCs); D Gibson Tree Services (£480 (trees); NALC £135.69 (subs); V Craig £49 (reimbursement pre-app fee); V Craig £16.20 (reimbursement pre-app map); V Craig £64.99 (reimbursement Norton Anti-Virus); S Broadbent £150 (WCs); V Craig £485.14 (salary); V Craig £1036 37 (Reimbursement cost of flagpole/flags)

5.21.17 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Accounts

As at 17th May the balance in the Current Account was £28526.37, and Business (Castle) Account £971.19.

5.21.18 To confirm Donations and Grants

Grants agreed as follows:

Norham Church yard £150; Norham Newsround £150; Norham Village Hall £250

Donations agreed as follows:

GNAA £50; CAB £50; HospiceCareNorth £50; CAN £50; NDT £75

5.21.19 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/2021

i To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor

The internal audit report was received and considered. No actions required.

ii To approve the draft annual accounts for 2020/2021

Considered and approved.

iii To approve the Annual Governance Statement

Considered and approved.

iv To approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances

Considered and approved.

v To confirm and approve the Certification of Exemption

Considered and approved. Signed accordingly.

vi To complete agree and sign relevant Annual Return sections

Completed agreed and signed accordingly.

vii To accept Bank Reconciliation

Considered and accepted.

5.21.20 To renew insurance policy

Renewal quotations had been obtained from Came and Co and usual, but they were particularly high. These had been queried but not satisfactorily explained. A further quotation had been obtained from BHIB (for Aviva) and after discussion it was agreed that their proposed 3 year deal be accepted.

5.21.21 To confirm Standing Orders

Considered and confirmed.

5.21.22 To look at Planning Application decisions

6 Ubbanford : Granted

10 Castle Street: Granted

5.21.23 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

Agreed that NCC should be thanked for the very thorough job done on Castle Street side lane, and on road up to The Salutation, and their return to complete the latter was anticipated. Concern raised re the safety barriers at Grindon/East Newbiggin Crossroads. This will be raised with NCC

5.21.24 General Correspondence

A query had been raised re an application for a Caravan Club licence for 5 caravans at Bow Well Farm, on the basis that the road was very narrow and there was a fair amount of agricultural machinery going along that road already. SH confirmed that there was an objection period of 21 days and an address on the notice for such objections.

Any Other Business (For information only)

GS reported that he had heard albeit through informal routes that the residents of Shoreswood did not wish to join up with Norham. agreed that the offer would remain open should circumstances change.

DW reported that there were proposals afoot re Berwick Academy which may or may not have a knock-on effect to Norham School. Nothing would however happen until after the next general election.

DW also sought permission to put up an interpretation board in the bus shelter at Grindon crossroads with the history of its being built. There was no objection to this on basis that the council would not be involved in any cost.

Date of next meeting: 26th July 7pm