



Minutes of Meeting held on 23 January 2023 in Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

Present: Councillors J Oliver (Chair), V. Gibson (Vice Chair), A. Saunders, J. Benson, C. Kennedy, D. Finlayson, S. Armstrong, County Councillor A. Sharp, M. A. Smith (Clerk). Councillor Graham Gill (Bardon Mill Parish Council), Mike Glenton (Headteacher Henshaw School)

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were 2 attendees. Firstly, Cllr Gill who came to update on progress regarding woodland management at Redburn Park and secondly Mike Glenton regarding Henshaw School. These issues were discussed at the start of the meeting but are detailed under the relevant headings below at 12.2 and 15.1.

2. Apologies for Absence

All in attendance.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr's Oliver and Finlayson (Item 13.2).

4. Public Questions

None received.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 November 2022

5.1 These were read and approved.

6. Outstanding/Ongoing Repairs

6.1 Work to repair surface water issues on the road to Scotchcoulthard has been delayed over the winter but was still programmed to be done. There are also pothole repairs needed in this location.

7. General Amenities

7.1 Footpaths – nothing to report.

7.2 Seating – to be inspected in the spring to assess repainting/repair as necessary.

7.3 Lighting – nothing to report.

7.4 Verges – Cllr Sharp has been assured that verge maintenance by the County Council would be done to a better standard in 2023.

8. Miscellaneous

8.1 Civility and Respect Protocol. This will form part of the policies and procedures considered at the May Annual Meeting.

8.2 Proposed Development at Bardon Mill Sports Ground. The Clerk had circulated proposals for investment and improvements at this sports ground which included creation of football training, new pitches, and additional facilities. The site is managed by the Playing Field Association and not by either Parish Council (Henshaw or Bardon Mill) and therefore any decision on the future of the ground would need to be considered by the Association. Members were supportive of development/improvements as the ground is underused and agreed to await further information and/or decision by the Association.

8.3 Electric Charging Points. The County Council have advised that the parking bays next to Bardon Mill Village Green are suitable for the installation of charging points. The bays are owned by Henshaw Parish Council and Members agreed that charging points would be a useful asset/provision for the community. Clerk to follow this matter up with the County Council.

8.4 Defibrillators. Cllr Gibson asked if the defibrillators in the area were checked/maintained. Cllr Finlayson advised these were inspected every 2 weeks to ensure they are in full working order.

9. Village Greens

9.1 No issues were raised.

10. Planning Applications and Issues

10.1 Falcon Grange. Cllr Sharp advised that the County Council planning team have advised no action is possible regarding the unmade road and repairs to the drain covers as the planning condition time limit has expired. Members expressed concern and disappointment at the lack of enforcement in the past and allowing this situation to happen. Agreed the Clerk write a letter of complaint to the County Council and consider the matter again once a reply was received.

11. Transport and Highways Matters

11.1 A site meeting had been held in December 2022 with Roadlink to consider upgrades to footpaths and crossing points on the A69. Roadlink are to provide updated plans and proposals in the near future. Guy Opperman MP has also met with Transport Ministers and the Chief Constable to raise concerns about road safety on the section of the A69 through our area.

11.2 Speeding at Twice Brewed. Cllr Sharp is discussing this with County Highways to look at additional signage and markings.

11.3 Bardon Mill Station. Members expressed disappointment that Network Rail have advised they will not be installing lighting at the waiting room because it is too expensive. Clerk to liaise with the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership to see if anything further can be done.

11.4 The speed survey near the Bowes Hotel has now been completed and results were awaited to see if any improvement/markings etc are needed in this location.

12. Redburn Park

12.1 Inspections are continuing on a monthly basis. The Cemetery Team will continue to undertake these inspections but no longer provided a service to undertake any additional work or maintenance.

12.2 Following a site meeting in 2022, Cllr Gill (Bardon Mill Parish Council) had agreed to look at the issue of maintenance and thinning work in the woodland at the park. Cllr Gill advised he had now had discussion with several prospective firms/people and Denis Fleming (a retired National Trust Forester) was the favoured option and would undertake work at nil cost. It was agreed that Mr Fleming be formally appointed to carry out works and that Cllr Gill be appointed as agent/advisor to make the necessary arrangements (with assistance from the Clerk). Cllr Saunders also asked if consideration could be given to a longer term plan of replanting create a more native woodland with a mix of species/ages of trees. All agreed this would be looked at following the management and tree thinning. Members thanked Cllr Gill for all his work on progressing this.

12.3 Creation of Redburn Community Park Group. It was discussed that, given the increasing management and maintenance required at the park, that efforts be made to set up a separate 'sub-group' which would meet up a few times a year and undertake inspections, required maintenance, costs, suggestions etc. It was considered this would have representatives from both Parish Councils, the Village Hall, and the Community. Agreed that the Clerk would progress this and report back to the next meeting.

13. Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

13.1 Cllr Finlayson advised that bookings and events were continuing with the hall being very well used. The floor and heating were under review as both needed works/replacement.

13.2 A grant of £750 has previously been made by the Parish Council to the Village Hall at the beginning of each financial year but this had stopped during COVID-19 as other sources of funding had been given. It was discussed whether the grant should be made again in future years and agreed that this contribution be made from April 2023. (Note this decision was made in conjunction with budget setting and precept).

14. Northumberland National Park

14.1 The NNPA is currently reviewing funding and priorities as part of budget setting for future years.

15. Henshaw School

15.1 Mike Glenton, Headteacher of the school attended to give an update on events/proposal and the commitment to work more closely with the Parish Councils and Community. Mr Glenton also advised that actions were being progressed to look at providing additional spaces and a review of the yellow lines/parking restrictions.

16. Report by Clerk on Financial Matters

16.1 Estimated funds held by the Parish Council at 18 December 2022 as follows:

- Current Account £10,005.13
- Easement Account £5,361.92

16.2 Expenditure and Income to approve/note:

- Northumberland County Council (Grass Cutting Services 2022) £3,286.96
- Books Accountants Limited (Payroll) £42.00
- HSBC (est Bank Charges) £10.00 (*Pre approved*)
- Great North Air Ambulance (Monthly Donation) £10.00 (*Pre approved*)
- Wages £837.76 (*approved between meetings*)
- HMRC £156.00 (*approved between meetings*)
- Expenses £71.53 (*approved between meetings*)
- JC&C McDonald (Hedge Maintenance) £420.00 (Previously agreed but awaiting paperwork).

Estimated balance following outstanding transactions £5,687.83

16.3 Precept. The Clerk provided a summary of the Parish Councils finances based on previous years, current accounts, and future commitments. Following lengthy discussion Members agreed that the precept level would need to be increased to ensure future services and maintenance of assets/facilities and that the level be increased from £14,000 to £15,400.

16.4 Work is ongoing to change details and account holders of the Easement Account.

17. Northumberland County Council Update.

17.1 Cllr Sharp outlined the recent developments at the Northumberland County Council and had provided updates on work items and progress throughout the meeting.

18. General Matters and Correspondence since last meeting

18.1 All general updates and newsletters had been provided by email prior to the meeting.

19. Items to be included on the next Agenda

No items raised.

20. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting is on Monday 27 February 2023.

The meeting finished at 8.55pm.

M. A. Smith

Michael Anthony Smith (Clerk)

Signed and Approved at the Meeting held on 27 February 2023.....