

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting held Northumberland Crematorium, Bockenfield on Thursday 2 May 2024.

Present: Cllrs L Clarehugh, J Day, E Davidson, D Green and J Marshall
County Councillor Sanderson
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin
3 members of the public

1 Election of Chairman – Cllr Green proposed and Cllr Day seconded Cllr Marshall as Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

2 Election of Vice Chairman - Cllr Marshall proposed and Cllr Davison seconded Cllr Green as Vice-Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

3 It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow County Councillor Sanderson to give his report

The Bywell Road has been completed

The Burgham Road will have maintenance works undertaken on it this summer.

Flooding issues are causing problems on the roads and £10m has been found to help address these issues across the county before the autumn.

Budget – 1.99% increase in council tax and 2% increase in adult care – totaling 4% increase which is not bad against the rate of inflation and there will be no cutting back on front line services.

There is an extra £1m for environmental policy – litter picking, nature trails and public spaces.

Investments in new projects including a super school at Seaton Deleval and one in Amble and a further one in Berwick next year. Morpeth Leisure Centre is going well with increased usage.

Berwick is also going well and the amount of children learning to swim in Berwick has doubled.

Local Heros event on 1 June – there is a nomination from Thirston for this.

6 June there will be a D-Day Commemoration on Blyth Beach.

Northumberland line is reopening from South East Northumberland direct into Newcastle where it will link directly with the metro.

Future use of NEP3 at Cambois for Artificial Intelligence (AI) – an agreement with Blackstone and QTS (Kansas) has been agreed – they have bought the land with a buy back clause. It is

anticipated there will be 5-10 years investment with 1,000s of jobs created in construction and £110m will come back into NCC over a 7 year period which will be used to fund new industries and

job investment.

Councillor Sanderson asked if there were any questions

A member of the public asked if there had been any assessment into climate change and sea levels rising and how this might impact on the Cambois site. Cllr Sanderson stated that a full

environmental assessment had been undertaken however he does not have the details to hand and some information is still being kept confidential at these early stages.

Cllr Sanderson stated AI is the future and people maybe concerned about loss of jobs but we need to be part of the new future. The site could still be used for giga battery manufacturer is needed or for any other large manufacturing industry going forward.

4 Election and nominations of Members to Committees and Groups

a) Cemetery Committee Meeting – Cllr Davidson with Cllr Clarehugh as Reserve

b) Finance Group – Cllrs Day, Green and Marshall

c) Complaints Committee – to be confirmed when required depending on the nature of the complaint.

5 Apologies for Absence – None

6 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – Cllr John Marshall, 23/04081/FUL - High Park Farm.

7 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person) –

A member of the public raised the issue that Eshott Airfield Café is operating without planning permission. The Clerk confirmed that the application was put on the planning portal late afternoon today.

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8 The minutes of the meeting 14 March 2024 were agreed as a true record.

9 **Matters Arising therefrom:**

1) Matters arising there from (excluding outstanding actions in relation to NCC)

- a) Lighting on The Peth – the footpath lighting is now repaired however the installation of a new light on the roadside is still outstanding. Clerk to ascertain the situation with regard to a new light as this is quite costly. Clerk
- b) Missing Weldon Bridge signage – Clerk has been informed that this is logged by Highways England for action. Clerk
- c) Bus stop repairs – Cllr Green to speak to the handyman to ascertain when works will start. Cllr Green
- d) Field run off at Eshott Village – NCC confirmed that further works were planned for this area – pot holes have been filled in but some of the ditches remain blocked and the Clerk was informed by NCC that these works were to be undertaken once the backlog of potholes was cleared.
- e) Parking at Pumpkin Pie – The Community Police Officer is going to arrange for visits to the village at busy times to speak to anyone undertaking dangerous parking and manoeuvres in the road. A letter has been received from a resident about the issues they have in getting in and out of their property and also people turning dangerously in their entrance. The resident is thinking about installing rising bollards at their entrance (subject to consent) however they are aware this will only move the problem elsewhere. In the meantime the resident is due to speak to a traffic survey company to potentially commission a survey. The Councillors felt it would be useful to see any survey information. It was agreed a better solution is needed for the short periods of disruption every day.
- f) BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) at Blackbrook Farm – NCC has not responded to the request of action to be taken over this byway. Clerk
- g) Access road/bridge between Bockenfield Caravan Park and Felmoor Park – The EA undertook a site visit and informed the owner that works should cease but would not relay any further information to the PC on why this was the case. However with the recent flooding issues the park issued a statement saying the bridge was closed due to safety concerns with the high water levels which shows that the bridge works had been completed despite EA stating work should stop. NCC advised that HSE should be informed of the bridge works so they could check that the structure is sound and the Clerk has informed HSE and awaiting a response. Clerk
- h) Hedging by Thirston Mill – Clerk still to contact land owner on this issue to request hedge cutting to be undertaken at the start of the hedge cutting season. Clerk
- i) NCC – Land East of Greycroft street naming – NCC has responded to the PC request for house names to say the site definitely needs a new street whether your village has any or not. It can also be extended at some point in the future due to its location which is another point we must take into consideration. As the PC did not object to the name Cromwell Grove this is now being registered.
- j) NCC Polling Station – It has been agreed that the polling station will remain in Felton Village Hall for Thirston Parish.
- k) Gas Gun complaints – the Clerk has spoken with the landowner who was not aware that they were causing an issue. They are currently off at present as not required but will look into this complaint and adjust the setting where necessary to lessen the noise made by the guns. The Clerk was informed that the gas gun is still being used and is still quite noisy in comparison to other gas guns.

2) Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC for information

- a) Manhole cover at Wintrick (12/2021) – this will be replaced shortly.
- b) Road from A1 to Longhorsley has raised iron works and the edges of asphalt badly broken away both of which can cause damage to cars (01/2022) – Cllr Sanderson stated this road would undertake repairs in the summer.
- c) Pathway improvements at riverside (03/2022) – NCC state they are happy with the situation but will review regularly.
- d) Road at Bywell Shooting Ground in need of repair (11/2022) – this work has now been completed.
- e) Footpath resurfacing request (02/11/23) -on the LTP list and resident has received a notice to state it is on the list of works.
- f) Repointing of stone wall on the Peth (14/12/23) – still outstanding but logged with NCC.

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- g) Blackbrook Farm road pot holes (14/12/23) – still outstanding but logged with NCC.
- h) Water running down the Narrow Bank (14/12/23) – Still outstanding but NCC have confirmed they are drawing up a works plan on how to resolve the issue. Clerk also to ascertain where we are at in terms of the grit bin being installed at this location.

10 Report by County Councillor Sanderson – see item 3 in the minutes.

11 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Felton Cemetery Joint Committee Meeting (FCJC) – Was postponed as the meeting was not quorate. In relation to the Cemetery, the Parish Chairmen and Clerks got together to understand the increase in the annual contribution and explore any ways of increasing income. It was proposed to look at releasing the £10k ringfenced money for new cemetery as a new cemetery would not be needed for a number of years. and when required this figure would nowhere near cover what is needed. For transparency and to keep everyone in the loop all agendas, minutes and financials will in future be sent to all Clerks not just the nominated members. Cllr Francis offered to look into the NCC Charter in relation to what they are required to undertake in relation of Parish Council managed cemeteries.

A member of the public stated that the minutes just approved by the Parish Council were inaccurate as they did not give a true reflection of the FCJC funds held by Thirston Parish Council. The Clerk stated that the figure given is the opening balance of the year and, as no breakdown of allocated funds has been received during the year, this figure remains the same until the Accounts provide an updated figure and this should be addressed going forward when all meeting paperwork is circulated to the Clerks.

The members of the public stated they had attended all three parish council meetings and all three parish councils were reporting back different information from the discussions. It was suggested by one member of the public that each PC should write up their recollection of the meeting.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would look into the situation further with regard to the FCJC. Clerk

12 Potential Projects

- a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – None
- b) Landscaping – Field of Hope has had the grass cut and looks very tidy and the rockery is looking good and it is lovely to see the Queen's memorial tree spring into life.
- c) Short term / Medium term / Long term projects –
 - Village gateways – Clerk to arrange meeting once mobile again to review locations
 - Bus shelters – the WI hope to be planting out some plug plants over the next couple of weeks. Intend to start with the oxeye daisies. The Clerk has informed Pumpkin Pie and the WI about arranging for the bus shelters to be power washed in preparation for art work to be undertaken before the end of May.

Clerk

13 To report on any planning decisions:

23/04081/FUL - High Park Farm Change of use of agricultural building to a facility to dry paper pulp to produce animal bedding to include feeder, drum, burner, stack installation and control room.-
WITHDRAWN

Planning applications pending:

20/04177/FUL - Land North East of Felmoor Caravan Park - Extension to existing holiday comprising 139 no. pitches for holiday lodges plus ancillary features including water feature, play area and vintage vehicle museum – objections based on Neighbourhood Plan

22/04112/FUL - Northumberland Arms Construction of first floor rear extension to provide 1no. additional en-suite bedroom and store room, and ground floor rear extension to provide covered goods reception area

22/04113/LBC - Northumberland Arms Construction of first floor rear extension to provide 1no. additional en-suite bedroom and store room, and ground floor rear extension to provide covered goods reception area

24/00517/FUL - North High Moor Farm - Single storey oak frame extension to the main front elevation of the house, oak frame extension to porch and new garden building

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24/00920/FUL - Erection of agricultural steel portal framed shed for storage of straw bales - Land To South East Of The Shaw

24/00949/VARYCO - Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) on approved application 23/03579/VARYCO in order to a change to the mix of house types on the site to reflect a change to the affordable housing provision (two, four bedroom homes replaced with two, three bedroom homes) and to change market house types on the site to respond to market conditions - Land North West Of Burgham Park Golf Club Burgham Park

24/01178/VARYCO - Land East Of Greycroft West Thirston - a two-year time allowance be sought as a variation of Condition 6 to give sufficient time for all required off-site highway works to be discussed, agreed and carried out in full

23/02325/FUL - Inspectorate Ref: APP/P2935/W/24/3338945 - Erection of a single new self build holiday let including hardstanding and landscaping.

Planning Issues:

Bockenfield Caravan Park – blue lights illuminating entrance – reported to Public Protection but no response.

Felmoor Park – Entrance lighting and signage – reported to Public Protection but no response.

Felmoor Park – Not complying with planning approval for timber cabins – reported to NCC Planning Enforcement but no response.

14 Requested Agenda Items:

- HP Instant Ink 6-month free contact end – there will be a monthly charge of £5.49 for 100 pages and this jumps up to £11.99 for 700 pages. If you go over the 100 pages you get charged £1 for every 10 pages. The Clerk proposed the PC go back to buying ink as and when required and has done this as the contract is near the end. It was agreed to monitor the situation for a year and see which is the most cost effective way forward. Clerk
- Spitfire Memorial Site – The Clerk approached Mr Skelton for his thoughts on commemorating the Spitfire Site as it is recognized as a war memorial. He stated laying a wreath for Remembrance Day - but not sure how many people would go, as the majority of people would go to the War Memorial. Perhaps doing something a different day - Battle of Britain Day - either 14th/15th September, when the daylight and weather should be more accommodating. Make it an event with RAF representation - possibly including a flyby by a transiting aircraft. RAF Boulmer are ideally placed to identify and direct aircraft over the site. Cllr Marshall said the Spitfire was a welcome addition to the parish and it was a very fitting ceremony of dedication. It would be lovely to do something annually but it was agreed that ultimately it was the decision of Mr & Mrs Clarehugh as to what they would like to see at the site. Clerk to liaise with them. Clerk
- Refund to NCC for underspend of grant – there was an underspend on the grant that the Clerk had hoped could be ringfenced for future works at the Field of Hope however NCC has requested this money to be refunded to them. Clerk
- Parish Council Vacancy – to date there have been 2 residents contact the Clerk to express their interest. Clerk to arrange interviews. Clerk

15 Correspondence:

- NCC - Cemetery Double Charge Payments – NCC has eventually paid the PC for the last three years amounting to £71. NCC state that if in the future calculation the yearly amount is less than £20 they will discontinue paying Parish Councils. Clerk
- NCC – Love Northumberland Award – The Clerk will circulate this email again for Councillors to think about who to nominate for next year. Clerk
- Zurich – Insurance renewal – It was agreed to continue to use Zurich for insurance. Clerk
- Colin Hall – Flood Resilience Officer report – Cllr Day had informed the Clerk of some specific properties that should be included in the report and this information has been passed to Mr Hall. Clerk
- Phone call re pot holes along Wintrick Road and road from Wintrick to East Thirston – NCC has been informed. Clerk
- NALC News – include changes in poultry laws -Clerk proposed putting this information of the changes in the law on Facebook, in The Bridge and on the noticeboards. Clerk

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16 Finance

- (a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £14,780.69 TPC funds and £3,106.33 FCJC Funds totaling £17,887.02.
- (b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

Payments this meeting:		
IB189	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 25 hours at £18.58 (£464.50) Home working allowance of 5 weeks (£5.00) Microsoft Office Licence (£79.99) Printer Cartridges (£72.90)	£622.39
IB190	Zurich Insurance	£499.77
IB191	NALC – Subscription and Website fee	£234.71
IB192	NCC Refund of unspent grant	£30.84

- (c) **Income** – NCC Cemetery Double Charge Payment £71.00, NCC Precept £5,250.00
- (d) **Certificate of Exemption** - it was agreed that TPC submit a Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors as gross income and gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000. This was duly signed and will be sent to the external auditors.

Clerk

17 Urgent Items

- Cllr Clarehugh reported some white goods had been flytipped in Bockenfield Layby. The Clerk had already informed NCC of this. It was agreed to ask NCC to install “No Flytipping” signs in this layby.

Clerk

18 Items for next agenda –

- Audited accounts and paperwork
- Policy Review – Clerk to circulate before the next meeting.
- CRAG Group – draft constitution and TPC to be a member of CRAG
- Felton Cemetery Joint Committee.

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm
Date of Next meeting: 20 June 2024