

Hepple Parish Council Ref 0221

**Minutes of Hepple Parish Council ZOOM meeting
held on Monday 8th February 2021 at 7.00pm**

Present: **Mr C France** **Chair**
 Mr J Hasson **Vice Chair**
 Mrs C Buckley
 Mr W Woolley
 Mrs C Bell **Clerk**

1. Public Participation

Chris welcomed 1 member of the public & David Biesterfield who attended on behalf of Northumberland & Newcastle Society - (under item 6.6, discuss after item 4 to allow David to leave and councillors to vote).

2. Apologies for absence

Mr S Whitfield – attempted to attend but had a technology failure

3. Declarations of interest/grant of dispensation or co-options

Chris France made a declaration of interest in the planning application for a cattle shelter at Bickerton. Jack Hasson will act as chairman when this is discussed as Chris will leave the meeting at this point. Stewart Whitfield also declared an interest.

4. Minutes of the November 9th 2020 meeting

The minutes were read and accepted as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters arising

- 5.1 Flotterton – Castron road – the resurfacing work is a great improvement.
- 5.2 Flotterton to Castron Road - monitor mud. Add to May agenda.
- 5.3 C181 Issues – a detailed report has been put forward to include this road in the LTP. Whitton & Tosson PC have also made a report for inclusion of sections in their parish.
- 5.4 Chris France noted that the drains at Bickerton became blocked and as such water streamed into his garden, although the rain was exceptional these drains need to be looked at by the Highways Department.
- 5.5 A parishoner reported that water streams down the Castron road from the main road and gathers in a large pool in the garden of one of the properties.

6. Items for Discussion and Potential Decisions

- 6.1 Pooling of water on eastern approach to Hepple – Jack met to discuss with Mitch Young (Highways) - this problem is to be included in works starting later in the year.
- 6.2 Grit bins have been replenished; councillors will check them at suitable intervals.
- 6.3 Road side drains – work has been/continues to carry out, and improvement is evident. However, extreme amounts of rain recently led to excess water on roads with drains running at full capacity.
- 6.4 Castron Fibre Broadband – David McKechnie has had a quote from Openreach for £4000 per property - which included 32 houses in the area (some of which already have the service!). No other companies have shown any interest. It seems it will be necessary to keep pressure on council and local councillor.
- 6.5 COVID Lockdown 2 – Chris reported that Simonside carparks are regularly full, and Mountain Rescue have been very busy dealing with slips, trips & falls. Chris asked everyone present to bring any problems to the attention of the councillor.
- 6.6 David Biesterfield from Northumberland and Newcastle Society gave a brief overview of the paper - **Northumberland Sandstone Ridges and Vales: A Valued Landscape** - that was sent to councillors asking for their support.

The N&N, last year, recognised the serious gap in Northumberland County Council's (NCC') approach to our landscapes, in the discharge of both its planning decision and plan making/policy functions. Put simply, despite being advised by its own experts (in 2010) to carry out just the sort of work now completed through the Study, it has never done so. The result, following the scrapping of the former Area of High Landscape Value designations in the now superseded Alnwick and Berwick District Plans, is that there is no evidence-based recognition of the 'value' of our wonderful landscapes. That deficiency leaves our landscapes exposed to bad planning decisions in relation to development which would be likely to harm those landscapes.

Resolution A: Parish Council supports the findings of 'The Northumberland Sandstone Ridges & Vales – a Valued Landscape' – Alison Farmer Associates January 2021 ('the Study') and adopts its suggested designation of that part of the Parish Area (and the landscapes surrounding it) as advised by the Study, as an Area of High Landscape Value.

Councillors voted unanimously for Resolution A.

7. Items for Information

- 7.1 NALC newsletter
- 7.2 Council elections are due to take place in May 2021. It is still not known what the costs would be to elect councillors if anyone wished to stand.

8. Correspondence received

A donation request has been received from Bailiffgate Museum. Councillors voted to decline the request as the precept is fully used at present.

9. Finance

- 9.1 Account to end of January agreed as correct. Bank statement & balance sheet seen by councillors.
- 9.2 Thanks, have been received for donations. The CAB cheque is yet to be presented due to the local offices not being manned now.

10. Planning

- 10.1 An application has been made for a cattle shelter at Bickerton. Chris France & Stewart Whitfield declared an interest; therefore, no quorate decision could be made. An objection has been made to NNPA and copied to councillors; the matter was discussed. The chair was taken by Jack Hasson and Chris France left the meeting for this item.

11. Meetings attended by Councillors or the Clerk

None

12. Future Events

None

13. Any other business

- 13.1 Parish clerk. An enquiry was made about the position, but no further correspondence has taken place. The position has always been on an unpaid, voluntary basis; however, it may become necessary to make this a paid position. It is estimated the precept would need to rise to £3000.
- 13.2 NNPA have asked parish councils for nominees to be submitted to DEFRA for appointment – 6 nominees needed.
- 13.3 Local elections are to be confirmed; due to take place in May.
- 13.4 Bill Woolley has stood down from HPC. Chris thanked Bill for 10 years' service to the parish. Due to Cllr Bill Woolley standing down Jack Hasson had approached Chris Wilson to see if she would be willing to be co-opted onto the Parish Council. Jack Hasson proposed Chris Wilson duly seconded by Chris France, a vote was taken and Chris Wilson was duly co-opted onto HPC.

14. Date of next meeting To be decided when elections are confirmed.

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