

Minutes of Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 23rd January 2023

Those present were George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), Jim Blythe (JB) John Grahamslaw (JJG), and Dougie Watkin (DW). Also in attendance was Cllr Colin Hardy (CH), and one member of the public.

1.23.1 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies accepted from Alison Murphy and Sheelagh Hume

1.23.2 To make any Declaration of Interest

DW declared a potential interest in item 1.23.xiv.

1.23.3 To confirm Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 21st November 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record

1.23.4 Matters arising from Minutes

i Norham School – Education in Berwick Partnership Consultation

It was reiterated that the parish council (NPC) and Norham Development Trust Ltd (NDT) were keen to do whatever could be done to help ensure the future of Norham School, as it was seen as vital for the life of village. Concern was expressed that the issues had not yet become a matter of any interest amongst the residents, whilst other schools in the Berwick Partnership had been holding open days, organising petitions etc. There seemed to have been little public activity from Norham School. As previously indicated the fear was that complacency was the greatest danger to the future of Norham School. DW confirmed that the Head had, at the meeting on 21st November, indicated that he would hold a public meeting but that he would prefer it to be in the new year to allow the first wave of high emotion to blow over (though it was noted that a date for a such a meeting had not yet been issued). The school and governors had in the meantime been working hard to get the school, now federated with Berwick St Marys, back on track after its Ofsted inspection. The parents had already had at least two meetings regarding the future of the school. The Head had also been present at every public open meeting in Berwick, putting the educational case for the two-tier system. It was confirmed the next of these public drop-in sessions in Berwick was on 9th Feb 6.30-8.30 in Berwick Middle School. It was agreed after lengthy discussion that a letter would be sent to the school Governors, seeking a response within one week, asking for details of what plan of action was to be taken to engage with all the residents of Norham, so that they were aware and informed about the consultation, and encouraged to submit responses to the Northumberland County Council online consultation, and asking for confirmation of a date for a public meeting. CH confirmed that the parish council, and individual councillors, should submit responses, as should other individuals and community groups. It was noted that even if the school survives this consultation, there were still challenges ahead due to the falling school roll, in Norham in particular, and in Northumberland generally. To this end it was

noted that further ties with the community should be encouraged by Governors, as the school currently felt detached from the rest of the community.

ii Approach to Diocese re Land at Glebefield

Agreed after discussion that the council would make an approach to Diocese of Newcastle regarding the land at Glebefield with a view to it being released by them for affordable housing.

iii Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning

Awaiting date for next meeting.

iv Play Areas

GS has spoken to Shunters re damage caused to posts on the green, and damage should be repaired shortly. JJG confirmed still carrying out weekly inspections and all in order.

v Public Conveniences

Still in reasonably good order. Agreed to continue to clean three times per week.

vi Northumberland LED Street lighting/Undergrounding of cables

NCC nothing to report except that NCC has lessons to learn re communication.

vii Village Map

The map is now ready and paid for -noticeboard will be re-treated with teak oil before the map is put up.

viii New Speed signs/limits

Discussion re comments from Robin McCartney at NCC, indicating that 20mph speed limit was not appropriate in Norham because it was a through road, did not have enough traffic or accidents. Total cost would be in region of £30000 taking into account the cost of new signages etc and required traffic calming measures. Agreed to invite him to the next meeting to discuss other ways to slow traffic down.

ix Norham Development Trust

JG gave brief update on renewables project, namely that after originally disappointing news from Scottish Power about their inability to provide a connection to the National Grid, they now had indicated that they could provide one. NDT currently awaiting a formal offer and will have 90 days to accept it.

x Jubilee Field

It was hoped the work required to the wall would be done by end January. The dog fouling notices had been obtained and will be put up shortly. The information board had been agreed and was in process of being made. Once finalised would have it unveiled and plant oak tree in memory of HM The Queen.

xi Community Police Report

Nothing to report. The speed police had been in Norham very briefly on a couple of occasions. Nothing to report on e-scooters.

xii Tourism

Discussion re the draft provided by NCC for the visit Northumberland website. This will be tweaked as it was felt it concentrated too much on the village's history. Discussion also regarding the level of tourism wanted in the village and the knock-on effect of an increase in holiday homes and parking.

xiii Sustrans – Declassification of National Cycle routes

Further discussion re this problem. CH confirmed it is a nationwide issue as Sustrans have declassified 3000 miles of National Cycle Routes. NCC is considering ways to resolve the issue.

xiv Tweed Valley Railway Campaign

After discussion agreed that they would be invited to a meeting to give their presentation.

xv Paton & Co Donations

After lengthy discussion agreed that Norham in Bloom would be given a further £250 towards plants/planters. In addition, after discussion agreed that a grit bin would be purchased for Ubbanford. GS will discuss with Paton & Co, including publicity for their donation scheme.

1.23.5 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Discussion re the installation of the electric vehicle charging point – not in the place expected by the parish council or agreed with NCC. Installation was carried out with uncharacteristic speed and with virtually no prior warning and when asked to stop they did not. It is understood this mainly arose as a result of poor internal communication within NCC between Climate Change Team and Local Services Team. Agreed it is unlikely it would now be changed but agreed formal complaint should be made. And request that diagonal parking bays be marked out to try to solve the problem that has been created.

FINANCE

1.23.6 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Paid: 4th Dec S Broadbent (WCs) £150; 15th Dec V Craig £75.60 (poo signs); 5th Jan S Broadbent (WCs) £150; 12th Jan Osprey Co £505 (village map)

Received: Nil

1.23.7 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Account

As at 23rd January Current Account stands at £12336.15, and Business Account £743.97

1.23.8 To look at Planning Application decisions

The Masons Arms 16 Castle Street - Withdrawn

3 St Cuthbert's Square – Granted

10 Castle Street - Refused

1.23.9 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

Noted that repairs to broken paving stones carried out on Castle Street between Foreman's and village shop on 23rd Dec had been done very badly. Repairs allegedly to be carried out. Request from Ubbanford for a new salt bin had been refused by NCC. It was possible to buy one for £240 but NCC would not fill it-this would have to be done by parish council or residents. Broken sewer drain on Pedwell Way has been reported to Northumbrian Water who have now acknowledged their responsibility for it and will rectify the situation. Have been general complaints about state of Boathouse Lane as a result of the building works.

Re path works this will go out to tender in spring – GS/JB/AM to meet to discuss what works are required.

1.23.10 General Correspondence

WI have thanked everyone involved re planting in Jubilee Field.

Has been complaint re the trees at Bow Well. The NCC tree officer will be contacted.

Query raised re external state of 39 West Street. Owners will be contacted.

Any Other Business (For information only)

JB query re availability of wood chops for path near viaduct.

Date of next meeting:

20th March 2023