

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF WHITTON AND TOSSON

Minutes of the Virtual PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on 22nd April at 7.00pm at Zoom 847 8708 8880

Present: Hilary Dunn (HD -Chair), Peter Henry (PH), Fran Tait (FT), Alan Winlow (AW -Vice Chair),
In attendance: Alan Tait (AT- parish resident), Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on the Thursday 18th February 2021** were considered. FT proposed that the minutes were a true record, seconded by PH. All in Favour. The minutes to be signed by the Chair.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes**
 - i) Actions following Temporary Traffic Regulation Order 120346154 C181 Carterside Road Newton: Northumbria Water (NW).

The PC had received a very positive response to our complaint:

1. From the end of April, a 12-week review of NW street works and permits process had been arranged to instigate any process change where it was identified. The Carterside Road scenario would be the first case study to be looked at.
2. The (NW) were offering their Just-An-Hour scheme, where a small number of their employees could support local communities and they had asked how they may be able to support our local area. AD had suggested that they could tidy up the verges on roads adjacent car parks which had been damaged whilst the car parks had been closed during the pandemic.
3. With respect to having a direct point of contact with NW, the Corporate Communications Team had agreed that their Partnering Manager, Ross Smith would carry out this role during normal working hours. His contact details had been lodged with the Clerk.
4. NW had suggested a site meeting with Stephen Thompson, Network Services Area Manager to discuss the situation as a whole, the JAH scheme and also to assess the verge near the access to Tossion Treatment Works. They suggested that this would be a great opportunity to build a rapport between the Parish Council and NW.

It was agreed that AW and AT would arrange to meet with Stephen Thompson.

Action: AW/AT

The inadequate NCC road works reporting system which often provided confusing, inaccurate information, particularly when repair work arrangements changed, was also discussed. There were numerous examples where residents and other road users had been caught out by incorrect information. It was agreed that AW would add this matter to the Highways & Footpaths report and speak to Graham Bucknall, NCC Highways to discuss how this system might be improved.

Action: AW

- ii) Digital Meetings. The Government's decision was not to extend remote meeting powers after 6th May 2021. NALC and others were contesting this through the courts. Village and parish halls were taking a cautious approach to re-opening their venues for meetings. It was agreed to continue to hold the AGM and next PC meeting on Thursday 20th May. The Clerk to arrange whether this would be face-to-face or online and organise the venue once there was further clarity on the situation. **Action: Clerk**
- iii) Election 2021. The WTPC May election 2021 was uncontested. The following were duly elected: DUNN Hilary, HENRY Peter, TAIT Alan, TAIT Frances Elizabeth. There was one vacancy which could be filled by co-option. This process could start from the first meeting of the new council on 20th May 2021. Co-option could take place without further publicity, as the existing notice still applied. Members were reminded that they must by law return their completed elections expenses forms, whether or not they had incurred any expenditure by Thursday 3 June 2021 but not before date of election. These need to be submitted in hard copy with wet signature. **Action: All**

As there were contested elections, purdah rules and election law prohibited the use of council resources to promote or attack a candidate or party. Normal council business could continue.

- iv) Alleged Public Bridleway No 40 Ref A/36/40z. Members unanimously agreed to object to this proposal. The following comment was agreed for submission to NCC:

'We wish to object to the proposal to convert this footpath to a bridleway. The terrain and gradient are not suitable for horses, and this path has never been used as anything other than a footpath. It shows on historic ordinance survey maps as a footpath and was designated a footpath on the formation on Northumberland National Park in 1956. This footpath does join an ancient drove road but would have been the foot access to the path around the hill as it is too steep for carts. On the ground there is no evidence that vehicles have ever used this footpath.'

Action: Clerk

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v) Coquet Riverbank Erosion. The footpath near the riverbank at Ryehill had collapsed and the river was encroaching onto farmland for a length of about 15 -20 m. The application to gain a permit from the Environment Agency (EA) to carry out remedial work using willow spilling, brash bundles and stone re-enforcement had required extensive completion of documentation. The EA had indicated that they were in the process of issuing the permit. The work would take about 10 days to complete. PH offered his assistance. The Chair thanked AW for all his efforts with respect to this matter.

4. **Highways and Footways Report. AW. AD submitted the following report:**

Highways:

- The road surface on the Lordenshaw road where it crosses the Grain Syke half a kilometre south of Lordenshaw is in a frightful state – first or second gear required to negotiate the badly damaged surface. Local residents who are using the road for access during diversions when Carterside road is closed are complaining about the condition of this section. The road at this location is in need of urgent action.
- There are several potholes in the Tosson to Lordenshaw road adjacent to the parish council seat.
- Potholes need filling on Carterside road. At the farm and about 100 yards to the west.
- Following a recent meeting with Mitch Young the following work has been carried out. Grips widened along Carterside road to minimise standing water on the road during flood events. Roadside ditches cleaned out near to Summerville and Tosson Lime kiln. Entrance to roadside drainage point west of West Newtown Farm improved.
- The potholes at West Newtown Farm entrance have been filled.
- Work is underway with the passing place 50 metres from the Tosson bank road junction.

Footpaths:

- Scans of Ordnance Survey maps of 1860, 1897 and 1920 have been circulated. These show the route of the Bridle Road from Tosson towards Windy Crag.

Verges:

- Amazingly the roadside wall at the new passing place near the junction of Carterside road and Tosson bank road has survived the excavation activity involved with the foundations for the new passing place. The excavations revealed that the wall has been pushed off its foundations by the movement of traffic on the soft verge.

Seats & Road Signs:

- The Cattle Grid sign on the Tosson to Lordenshaw road has been replaced and the nearby trees cut back so that it will not be obscured by vegetation this summer.
- The sign arms on the direction sign at the Lordenshaw road sign at the east end of Tosson are to be replaced with new ones that have lettering on both sides.

Drains:

- The entrance to the pipe under Carterside road has been checked and a silt catchment pit in the stream bed excavated to minimise the amount of silt passing through the pipe and filling up the roadside ditch on the north side of the road.

Carterside Road Bridge Inspection

- AW had inspected the bridge. The parapet wall was jutting out from the bridge and a large foundation stone at the foot of the bank support wall was dislodged. Evidence of movement of the parapet wall from the foundation. There was no doubt that the bridge wall was gradually moving outwards and it not in the best of condition to withstand an impact if a vehicle hit it. The structure needed a structural/highways engineer inspection and the parapet wall needed to be demolished and rebuilt securely onto the foundation. The foundation stone supported the road and not the bridge required inspection. AW agreed to include this information in the Highways & Footpaths Report to be sent to Graham Bucknall NCC Highways.

Action: AW

5. **Finance**

i) Accounts to 31st March 2021 - Approved

Whitton & Tosson Parish Council			
Annual Allocation of Income and Expenditure 2019 to 2020			
Opening Bank/Cash on Hand	3557.18		
Precept	5092.00		
Total Precepted Income		8649.18	
Other income			
Interest	1.43		
Donations etc.	0.00		
NCC Cemetery Double Charge	25.00		

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Capital Receipts	0.00		
General	0.00		
VAT	<u>0.00</u>		
Total Other income		26.43	
Total All Income		8675.61	
Expenditure			
Admin Salary (NET)	851.08		
PAYE	212.60		
Admin expenses	60.00		
Admin General	175.58		
Total Administration Expenditure		-1299.26	
Village Amenities Expenditure			
Insurance	175.07		
Maintenance	120.00		
Room Hire	0.00		
JBC	3592.36		
Capital Spend	0.00		
Total Village Amenities Expenditure		-3887.43	
Grant Expenditure			
Grants given	130.00		
S.137	0.00		
Total Grants Payable		-130.00	
Total Expenditure		-5316.69	
Net Income less Expenditure			3358.92
Total Council Income less Expenditure			3358.92

	Bank Reconciliation at 31st March 2021			
Balance per bank statements				£
at 26 th February 2021	Community account		1643.09	
	Business Saver		2007.02	
				3650.11
Less unpresented cheques	18/02/2021	Thropton PC	10.27	
	03/03/2021	Garth Rhodes	227.72	
	03/03/2021	HMRC	53.20	
				-291.19
Uncredited Deposits			0.00	0.00
Total				3358.92
Balance per cash book				3358.92

ii) Receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

07/12/2020	Business Acc. 70103195	Interest 29/08 - 30/11/2020	0.05
07/00/2021	NCC	Ref 4618978 Precept 1st half	2125.00
		Total	2125.05

iii) Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved.

03/03/2021	Garth Rhodes	Salary & Expenses (Jan/Feb/Mar)	227.72
03/03/2021	HMRC	PAYE (Jan/Feb/Mar)	53.20
22/04/2021	NALC	Subs £59.46. Website fee £75	134.46
		Total	415.38

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- iv) Requests for donations. None.
- v) Bank Reconciliation to Thursday 22nd April 2021. Approved.

Bank Reconciliation at 22nd April 2021				
Balance per bank statements				
at 26th February 2021	Community account		1643.09	
	Business Saver		2007.02	
				3650.11
Less unrepresented cheques				
	18/02/2021	Thropton PC	10.27	
	03/03/2021	Garth Rhodes	227.72	
	03/03/2021	HMRC	53.20	
	22/04/2021	NALC	134.46	
				425.65
Uncredited Deposits	07/00/2021	NCC	2125.00	
				2125.00
Balance				5349.46
Balance per cash book				5349.46

- vi) Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/21.
 - a. To consider and agree dates and process for submitting accounts to the internal auditor. The Clerk had prepared the accounts ready for internal audit. HD to contact auditor to arrange completion of audit prior to the next meeting on 20th May 2021.
 - b. To consider and agree dates and process for completing AGAR submitting accounts to the external auditor. Once the accounts had been approved by the internal auditor, they would be ready for external audit. The AGAR would be presented for approval at the next meeting on the 20th May 2021 and then submitted to PKF Littlejohn.
 - c. To agree the dates for posting the Notice of Public Rights. This was agreed: 14th June – 22 July 2021.

Action: Clerk

- vii) VAT Refund 2020-21. No VAT had been paid so no claim made for y.e.31/03.2021.
- viii) Insurance Renewal 2021-22. The annual insurance was up for renewal on 1st June. Awaiting details from NCC/Zurich Insurance. The cost of insurance through the joint arrangement with NCC would be significantly lower than taking out an individual policy and therefore it was agreed to renew the current policy. **Action: Clerk**
- 6. **Correspondence:** Key items of correspondence have been incorporated into the agenda and correspondence List had been circulated.
- 7. **Planning:** To consider any planning applications and planning matters including:

Reference	Address	Type	Status	PC Comment
21/00894/FUL	Juniper Whitton NE65 7RL	Application	Registered	Application details were sent out late to members but no objections to this proposal were received.

- 8. **Police Report.** None received.
- 9. **Rothbury JBC-** The draft minutes of the last meeting had been circulated. HD reported that the planning application for the cemetery extension had been refused as it was too near a watercourse. There was the possibility that the stream in question could be diverted and this was being investigated. There was sufficient land available in the current cemetery to accommodate burials for the next 10 yrs. A key matter that was to be discussed in camera had been dealt with by Rothbury PC instead, again demonstrating what little powers the JBC possessed. NALC had been asked to investigate the possibility of a dissolution of the JBC.
- 10. **Community Governance Review – Rothbury and Whitton & Tosson Parish Councils.** The official order for the change to the Parish boundaries between Rothbury and Whitton & Tosson Parish Councils had been received. The changes would be in place for the forthcoming Parish and County Council Elections in May 2021.
- 11. **Northumberland National Park Authority New Communities Fund.** NNPA had launched a new fund to support community projects that support the delivery of the Park’s long-term key priorities and aims. The fund would provide grants of up to £2,000 of funding to projects, community groups, businesses, charities and organisations both inside and outside the Park who demonstrate they are supporting the key aims of the National Park. The clerk had obtained further details and an application form if and when the Council decided to submit an application.

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Any Other Business

12. Coquetdale Cluster held on Tuesday 13th April 2021: Minutes previously circulated by AW. The PC would need to consider a replacement representative at its next meeting. **Action: Clerk**
13. NALC's Star Council Awards 2021: Details of the Awards were circulated. It was agreed to consider submitting an application to the Councillor of the Year category. **Action: HD/Clerk**
14. Webpage Usage: 1st Jan -31st March 2021: 33 users; 30 new users; 128 sessions; 3.88 sessions per user; 913 pages viewed; 4.13 mins per user; 25% bounce rate.
15. Retirement of Councillors: The Chair, on behalf of the members, thanked Cllr Alan Winlow for the excellent work he had undertaken over many years of service. His persistent effort, interest and enthusiasm was highly valued, and he would be sadly missed. The Chair also thanked Val Burwood, in her absence, for her contribution to the work of the Council particularly in the area of planning where her knowledge and expertise had been invaluable. Members were asked to consider suitable individuals from within the parish (including an area 4.8km outside the parish boundary) to be approached as suitable co-options to the existing councillor vacancy. **Action: All**
16. **Annual General Meeting: Thursday 20th May 2021 at 7.00 p.m. Venue to be confirmed**
17. **Date of next meeting: Thursday 20th May 2021 directly following the Annual General Meeting. Venue to be confirmed**

Meeting closed at 7.54 p.m.

Garth Rhodes, Parish Clerk,

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