

# THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 10 September 2020.

**Present:** Cllrs E Davidson, D Green, T Jackson and H Lindley. County Councillor G Sanderson  
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

**154 Apologies for absence** – Cllrs Allan and Marshall.

**155 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda** – None

**156 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person)** – None

**157 The minutes of the meeting 23 July 2020** were agreed as a true record and were signed at a later date due to Covid-19.

**158 Matters Arising therefrom:**

- a) Road to Longhorsley to Burgham complaint – Cllr Jackson confirmed no works had taken place. Clerk to pursue. Clerk
- b) Steep Bank – slippery surface – Clerk contacted NCC with the request for new anti-slip surface. This needs to be approved for funding by NCC. It was agreed to add to the LTP request. Clerk
- c) Repairs to drain close to Glenshotton – Chased again, still outstanding. Clerk
- d) Ditch on the Burgham Park Road blocked - Cllr Jackson confirmed no works had taken place. Clerk to pursue. Clerk
- e) Litter Picker request to NCC – no response after repeated requests however the Clerk has been informed that the NCC contact who deals litter pickers is on long term sick. It was agreed to remove this from the agenda due to ongoing Covid issues. Clerk
- f) Street lights outside Pumpkin Pie Nursery – still not repaired and the Clerk has chased this up with NCC. Clerk
- g) Painting of bollards on bridge – CC Sanderson has agreement on these being painted. Cllr Marshall checked the white railings, these do not appear to have been painted however they are not bad.
- h) Japanese Knotweed – Clerk has now heard back from the Northumberland Arms who have agreed, if costs not too high to pay for their side to be treated. Clerk is getting quotes for this work. Clerk
- i) Pot holes by Birnie Farm, near Thirston Mill, Wintrick Road and Blackbrook Farm road – still outstanding, Clerk to chase up with NCC. Clerk
- j) Cutting back of hedges along pathways – this has been done as a joint effort by residents and NCC.
- k) Road onto A1 wearing issues – the repairs have been undertaken.
- l) Bench at top of Peth – This has been stained and compliments have been received on the work.
- m) Leak at riverside – Clerk still to investigate this as not be available when it has been raining. Clerk
- n) Repairs to Wall – Clerk informed NCC and repairs were undertaken within 48 hours.

**159 Report by County Councillor Sanderson**

Via email before the meeting:

We have launched a new enforcement project for flytipping in the Ashington and Blyth areas where figures are way too high.

We will be launching the next stage of our Climate Change Action Plan over the winter which will be highlighting our plans for a number of new initiatives for all of us - some fairly minor to very large schemes involving heat source pump projects and EV chargers in streets. These will require very large capital outlay and the recent Covid costs and loss of income to the Council mean this will be a harder decision to compete with all the other work.

And our Free Tree for every household in the County kicked off in August with the offer of 10,000 trees. All were gone in 4 days and so we paid for a further 5,000 - they have gone

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also. This is the first year - I want us to do this each year - and interestingly other Councils have been in touch to find out more about our scheme.

Locally I am still hoping for a start on the traffic calming scheme but we are running behind schedule and the latest spike makes things more difficult.

The bridge - I think I have agreement to paint the bollards that we looked at, and hopefully the railings on the Felton side.

CC Sanderson reported at the meeting:

Flytipping has increased as a result of Covid but Northumberland has not suffered as much as other counties. Recycling centres are still using winter hours but this is working well.

Services are running more slowly so the traffic calming for West Thirston is running late and may be delayed further with the latest spike so having to be more careful. Front line care and children's services are running well.

Northumberland is struggling to cope with the increase in visitor numbers – it has shown how bad the infrastructure is with traffic jams on the A1 and costal villages having a number of problems with parking and public toilets. Strategically NCC needs to think about the tourist push or try to move visitors to different parts of Northumberland. Highways England have been formally contacted with the A1 concerns, the dualling application is at public inspection stage, however coming 20 years too late. The A697 has not been much better for traffic. Parking is very important and many people were parking on double yellow lines in costal villages.

Budget – there is an overspend with the extra costs due to Covid ie toilets extra cleaning and hiring of portaloos and reduction in car parking fees during lockdown and also a reduction in station carparking as people not using trains.

NCC – all services are fine and not in crisis despite what the press is saying. CC Sanderson is the interim Leader of NCC and in this role has sent a short note to staff asking them to keep focused on the positives. There are accusations taking place that need to be dealt with but to keep working on.

The PC reported that the speed cameras at both ends of the village do not appear to be working and CC Sanderson said he would report to the manufacturers.

CC Sanderson was advised that residents of Burgham will no doubt be in touch re the golf club application. CC Sanderson confirmed he had been contacted by residents and has asked for the application to be decided at Committee level, not delegated powers.

The 30mph on the road coming into the village has been worn away and CC Sanderson stated this is part of the planned safety works.

Felton has requested a meeting to discuss traffic scheme/parking in the villages. CC Sanderson advised that the two PCs meet to decide what they would like to have done and then meet with CC Sanderson and NCC Highways. Need to look at disabled parking round the Running Fox and there is an issue with people parking on the pavement up the Peth which does not allow pedestrians to use the pavement. Clerk will contact Felton Clerk to arrange meeting to agree requirements.

It was raised that NCC are not responding to the PC and residents re airfield issues. CC Sanderson ask the Clerk to send an email requesting a meeting with NCC officers and he will try to facilitate this.

### **160 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC**

No Recreation Field meeting however they are pushing to reopen the children's play area.

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## 161 Potential Projects

- a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – there is a new bench at the Riverside which has been installed – it looks nice but no one knows who installed it.
- b) Landscaping – rockery looks good.
- c) Neighbourhood Plan Update – The plan is now ready to go to consultation along with the SEA Environmental Report. The Clerk will prepare the letters to go to residents and emails to consultees with the intention of the consultation commencing on 21 September for 8 weeks. Letters to residents will be hand delivered. A Groundworks Grant has been approved and received for the next steps of the Plan.

## 162 Planning:

### To report on any planning decisions:

**18/03736/FUL** - Felmoor Park, East of A1 - 24 lodges, 10 caravans, miniature golf – Site visit undertaken – GRANTED

**20/01942/PRUTPO** – Oak House, Eshott Village - Tree Preservation Order Application - Oak Tree (T1) Crown lift tree to 3.5 metres and thin crown canopy by 20% removing snapped and dead hanging limbs – APPROVED

### Planning applications pending:

**19/03659/VARYCO** – Eshott Airfield – make temporary hours of 7am to 11pm permanent – objections submitted.

**20/00764/FUL** - Pethfoot House, West Thirston - Repairs, maintenance, refurbishment, alteration and minor extension works – no objections

**20/01373/LBC** - The Old Manse, West Thirston - Listed Building Consent to replace lean-to with single storey extension, plywood door and window with french doors and north elevation windows with like style wood framed double glazed 12 pain sash windows – No Objections

**20/01327/FUL** – Building NW of Blackbrook Farm - Conversion of redundant agricultural building to provide a single dwelling unit – No objections

**20/01580/FUL** - Thirston Court - Retrospective : 2 no. new dwellings (re 18/01327/AGTRES), alterations to site layout to incorporate changes to parking, access, bin, external storage, realignment of boundaries including change of use of Agricultural Land to Garden, Orchards ancillary to residential use and discharge of conditions relating to landscaping and contamination remediation. Amendment submitted – No Objections

**20/02026/COU** – Cottages at Burgham Park Golf Club – Change of use from holiday cottages to residential dwellings – No Objections

**20/02093/FUL** – Burgham Park Golf Club - Replace greenkeepers shed, create six-hole golf course, re-locate driving range, create landscape bund, erect driving range shelter, extension and alteration of clubhouse and new car park layout – concerns re location of greenkeeper shed.

**20/02094/FUL** – Land NW of Burgham Park Golf Club - Remove green keepers compound and erection of 56 dwellings plus upgrade of access road, electric sub station, SUDs, domestic package treatment works and domestic gas storage – No objection can be submitted for housing on this land however objections submitted on the basis that there are too many dwellings, too small, not in keeping, lack of demand and lack of sustainability. Also housing was based on developments of the golf club and this application does not appear to compensate for such an estate to be built.

**APP/P2935/W/20/3254874** – Appeal by Northumberland Estates in relation to housing application at Land East of Greycroft (19/05017/OUT). The Clerk has received a couple of phone calls from residents who thought their comments submitted for the previous larger application would be forwarded for this appeal. The Clerk stated this was not the case and has put information in the notice board and the website to make residents aware. The appeal is to be decided by written representation however a request has come to the Council for this to be determined by a hearing. Where a proposal has generated significant local interest a hearing may be considered. In such cases the Local authority should indicate which procedure it considers would be most appropriate. It was agreed to contact NCC to state that the PC wish NCC to inform the Planning Inspectorate that a hearing would be more appropriate.

Clerk

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## Planning Issues:

**The Old Farm Byer, East Thirston** – Some progress has been made where the applicant has now removed the red container however all other issues remain outstanding.

**Northumberland Arms** – the Clerk has been informed that the retrospective planning application is in hand but this has been stated in the past and no action has been taken.

## 163 Requested Agenda Items:

- Response from NCC re outstanding issues from June meeting and related emails – cover in Closed Session
- Recreation Field Committee Terms of Reference approval – this document has been circulated in advance. It was agreed to approve the Terms of Reference. Clerk to relay this to Felton PC. Clerk
- NCC – LTP logged requests and new requests – The only item that to be added at present is the footpath as minuted in 158b above. Deadline is 11 October so Clerk will send out a reminder in case any further requests to be added Clerk

## 164 Correspondence:

- NCC – Local Plan Hearing Sessions – circulated, no one attended
- NCC - New pavement licensing regime – circulated for information
- Email re cars using Pumpkin Pie turning in road – the Clerk has received complaints from some residents about cars turning in driveways and access roads, the latter resulting in the owner having to resurface part of the road and putting up a no turning sign. A request has been made for a traffic management plan to be put in place. The Clerk has contacted the owner of Pumpkin Pie to request parents are contacted about this issue to see if this can be resolved before NCC involvement. It should be noted that there are a lot of residents' cars on the road around the nursery which are exacerbating traffic issues. One suggestion was to remove the wall which would provide more parking. It was agreed that this is not really a PC issue as the PC has no powers in this area. The Clerk to contact the owner to get an update and also to state the PC will be passing this issue over to NCC. Clerk
- Email complaint re Northumberland Arms overnight debris – glasses containing alcohol had been reported and to left in the beer gardens overnight along with a bin being thrown into the river. The Clerk contacted the Northumberland Arms and informed the Clerk that a night-porter is being employed to ensure the outside areas are cleared up at the end of the evening.
- Email in relation to pre-9am start at Eshott Airfield – residents have made complaints about vehicles being moved around the airfield before 9am where planning conditions state no machinery to be moved before 9am. This has been reported to NCC Enforcement.
- Residents concerns re social distancing and numbers at Canine Centre – the Clerk was contacted in relation to concerns over lack of social distancing, amount of people attending the Centre (over 20 cars in the carpark) and no face masks being worn. This was reported however by the time the incident was investigated the visitors had dispersed. This was at the time that lockdown was just being eased.
- Email re weed spraying and hedge cutting in village – weed spraying had been undertaken and the hedges reported have been cut back by residents and NCC.
- Email response from CC Sanderson following appointment of Deputy Leader – he gave his thanks to the PC for their support in this role which has now been changed to Leader.
- Auditors – confirmation of receipt of Certificate of Exemption – for information
- NALC and CAN update emails including new pay scales for Clerks
- Clerks and Councils Direct, CPRE newsletter – it was agreed not to circulate this at present.

## 165 Finance

- (a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £20,507.45.

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There are still two cheques current sitting in the accounts which have not been cashed and the time period for cashing these has passed. It was agreed to remove these from the financial summary.

Clerk

(b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

Payments this meeting:		
IB98	Mr Hodgkinson (staining of seat) – already paid	£60.00
IB99	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 28 hours at 14.90 (£417.20) 16 weeks pay adjustment (16 x 4 x 40p) (£25.60) 2 hours for Neighbourhood Plan at 14.90 (£29.80) 3 hours pay adjustment for Neighbourhood Plan (£1.20) 1 x Zoom Conferencing (£14.39) 1 x Home working allowance (£11.09)	£499.28

(c) **Receipts** – NCC Precept £4,425, Groundworks Grant for Neighbourhood Plan £3,850.

**166 Urgent Items**

The question was raised as to what is happening in relation to the Remembrance Day Service. Clerk to ask Felton Clerk what is proposed.

Clerk

**167 Items for next agenda**

Draft Budget

**168 Resolution to exclude public and press**

**The Parish Council passed a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude public and press due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, which includes discussion of personal data.**

a. **Update on Claim of Slander** – Mr Wilcock’s solicitors have stated that Mr Wilcock’s has accepted the statement below as acceptable. He has also requested a face to face meeting with Cllrs Marshall and Allan and CC Sanderson at County Hall. Due to Covid-19 a meeting is not possible at County Hall and Felton Village Hall is being sought as an alternative however the Clerk is seeking clarification from the Village Hall as to what the situation is with regard to the new changes taking place on 14 September and will get back to Mr Wilcock’s solicitors on this matter.

*On 4 December 2019, the Chair was contacted by the Parish Clerk who had in turn been contacted by a local resident who was concerned about the commencement of tree works on land adjacent to the Northumberland Arms Public House. The Chair immediately went to speak to the contractors on site to check they had the required permission to undertake these works. This was in fact the case, permission having been granted 15 months previously which the Parish Council had been notified of. The Chair reported back so that the concerned resident could be reassured.*

*Mr Wilcock (the landowner) feels that the Chair’s motives for getting involved were questionable as the Parish Council should have known about this. We are happy to reiterate that this was an oversight on our part, and that Mr Wilcock was acting at all times lawfully in accordance with planning permission gained and that the Parish Council had been made aware of this at the time of grant.*

b. **Request for assistance to seek clarification from NCC on a specific matter that NCC is not responding to** – No response has been forthcoming on a list of issues. A meeting to be arranged and if this does not resolve the problems then the PC will start the formal complaint procedure against NCC.

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.57 pm  
Date of Next meeting: 29 October 2020