

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held Thursday 26th January 2017 at Ovington Village Hall

Present:

Ian Guest --- Vice Chairman
Margaret Towler – Councillor
Maureen Begg – Councillor
Amanda Wilson - Clerk

Apologies:

None

Two village residents

The minutes of the last meeting on 8th November 2016 were approved and subsequently signed by Ian Guest.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

Matters Arising:

i) BT Way Leave Compensation – BT Legal have submitted a new agreement and have increased the offer to £1,250. The Councillors accepted the new wording and the document was signed and will be returned to BT. **Action: Mrs Begg to follow up with BT/Leslie Sheldon.**

ii) Ovington Bridge – Historic England, whom have previously emailed DCC ref. the bridge wall having been left 2 m short following extensive repair, advised the Parish Council that they have done all that they can and that the Parish Council should now contact DCC directly. DCC still maintain that wall has not been left short and will not progress the issue further. OPC agreed that the bridge wall is still 2m short but that without the direct support of Historic England, little headway would be achieved. Agreed that a final contact with DCC should be made expressing our continued concerns that the wall is still short. **Action: Mrs Begg to follow up with Durham County Council.**

iii) Broadband - OPC has expressed an interest, via registration, in the Community Fibre Partnership. BT has indicated that the baseline costs are in the region of £90k to upgrade the exchange and a further £20-30k to install a cabinet in the village. Simon Roberson from BT came and met the residents from Ovington to provide an update on progress and look at options. **Action: Mrs Begg**

v) Transparency Code – Internet Access – £819 cheque received for hardware i.e. printer, scanner, computer, router and also MS Word Licence etc, to be sourced and purchased. Funds still available for expenditure. **Action: Mrs Begg**

vi) Damage to Village Green Oak tree - Mrs Begg informed the meeting that she had been advised that the tree would try to repair itself by scaring over the damaged area however that the Council would have to risk assess the potential weakness in the tree. As DCC had agreed to take over the maintenance of the trees on the Village Green DCC would have the responsibility. It was agreed that the Parish Council would monitor and review the situation next year. Durham County Council has now taken over the maintenance and welfare of the trees on the green. **Action: Complete**

vii) Parish Notice Board – Mr Parkes advised the meeting that he would install a latch on the notice board. **Action: No progress - Mr Parkes (on going)**

ix) Maypole: The new Maypole has now been supplied and installed. It has been proposed that the expected VAT refund should be spent on a plaque inscribed with a short history of the Maypole Village. **On going - awaiting receipt of monies.**

x) Fairview Garage for sale with particulars mentioning potential of usage as a 'depot' subject to relevant consents: Concerns raised re more heavy traffic using roads within the 7.5 tons weight restriction if the garage was sold with this intent. The Councillors agreed to monitor the situation. **On going.**

xi) Britain in Bloom – funding is available, on application, for a project or idea and the purchase of planters and gardening equipment. A short discussion concluded that the current half barrel planters have seen better days and could do with being replaced and some ideas could be researched for planting around the village boundary nameplates. Further contact has been made and Margaret Towler will be attending a meeting to discuss with the funders on the 3rd February 2017 **Action – Margaret Towler**

xii) Speeding wagons through the village raised as a concern. A PACT meeting is to be held in the Old Council Offices in Barnard Castle 7pm on Wednesday 23rd November. Nigel Parkes has offered to attend and represent OPC. **Action – Nigel Parkes**

xiii) Grass Cutting Contract coming to the end of its 3 year period and needs to be sent out to tender again to renew. All agreed Mill Gardens Ltd have done a good job. Nigel Parkes to raise a Specification and Invitation to Tender and put an advert in the Teesdale Mercury. To date 1 quotation received from Mill Gardens and an expression of interest from 1 other company. Parish Clerk to invite this company to contact Margaret Towler to discuss the contract and offer the option to quote by Monday 30th January 2017 latest. **Action – Margaret Towler and Amanda Wilson**

xiii) Public Telephone update; Maureen Begg has spoken to DCC yesterday having received notification that BT are considering removal of the public phone box. MB advised DCC that Ovington does not have good mobile phone signal and this will be supported by DCC. DCC objected to the removal and the decision has been made by BT to “put on hold” the removal of the phone box and any future decisions will include consultation with OPC through DCC. **Action – Maureen Begg (monitor)**

Consideration of any current Planning Applications

Copy received;- Formal planning application notification letter Durham County Council Ref. DM/16/03432/FPA dated 3rd November 2016, for the construction of 5 No. detached dwellings to the Land to the East of Moor View Cottage, Ovington DL11 7DA for J & J Partnership – Planning application has now been withdrawn.

The Four All's – A village meeting has already taken place, followed by a quick Parish Council meeting regarding concerns that the Four All's are not following planning criteria and a letter was sent to planning documenting these concerns. Note:- The Councillors wish it to be documented that the letter drafted and submitted to the Council Planning Department did not represent accurately the objections and comments made at this meeting.

Financial Report:

Mrs Begg as the Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting that there had been two bills paid since the last meeting: £102.00 to Mill Gardens – Grass Cutting (Cheque 344 dated 13/11/16) and £10.00 to Ovington Village Hall (Cheque 343 dated 13/11/16)

Receipts – Interest - £2.68 on 04/01/2017, Land Registry Refund £40.00 on 24/01/2017 and VAT refund £913.94 (£755.40 VAT on Maypole) on 17/11/2016

To date the Parish Council had £41.11 in the current account and £4,016.08 in the savings account. (this includes Maypole Fund - £62.60 and Transparency Fund £819.00)

All invoices were agreed and authorised to pay by the Councillors.

Precept 2017/2018 – This was agreed at £1,212.81

Correspondence:

- i) Email from Dot Jones offering to provide a central logging service for BT phone/internet issues. Councillors agreed this would be a useful service and agreed to take Dot up on her offer and advertise it in the next Parish Council Newsletter due out sometime in February, early March 2017. Parish Clerk to confirm this with Mrs Jones. **Action: Maureen Begg and Amanda Wilson**

Any other Business:

- a) Parish Council Vacancies – Nigel Parkes and Shaun Hanson have resigned. To date, despite advertising on the village notice board, no one has come forward, therefore it has been agreed to carry on as three until the Elections in May 2017.
- b) Village Green – All Councillors agreed that the Village Green should be registered under Ovington Parish Council – **Action: Maureen Begg**
- c) Newsletter due for publication towards the end of February or early March, to include the offer from Dot Jones to collect and collate any issues arising from poor BT service and also the Council vacancies. Maureen Begg has queried what will happen if we don't secure three Councillors at the Elections in May. Awaiting a response. **Action: Maureen Begg**
- d) Field – since planning application has been withdrawn following a large number of oppositions at the proposed construction of 5 houses, the Parish Council is to take no further action, this will also be articulated in the newsletter, but we'll also assure village residents that they will be kept informed if we hear any more.

The next Parish Council Meeting was arranged for Thursday 2nd March 6.30pm and Thursday 6th April 2017 at 6.30pm. (Hall booked at meeting with Mrs Levett).