

## OVINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs. M. Davenport  
Clerk

Jubilee Cottage  
Ovington  
Northumberland  
NE42 6DH

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 7.15 p.m. in the Reading Room, Ovingham

Present: Councillors Jordon, Gray, Campbell, Chalmers, Bryan, Shield, Jackson and MacDonald, County Councillor Kelly (in part) and 2 members of the public.

1. Paul MacDonald was co-opted to Council and he signed the form of acceptance.
2. No apologies for absence were received.
3. Declarations of interest were received from Cllrs Gray (item 8), Cllrs Chalmers and Shield item 6i on agenda and Cllr Jackson (item 10).
4. The minutes of the last meeting, having previously been circulated were taken as read, approved and signed.
5. County Councillors Report: County Cllr Kelly had previously circulated his report and highlighted some of the issues. Housing in Northumberland continues to be a concern partly due to an increasingly ageing population in rural areas. Beadnell has been earmarked for 45 new houses as, although it is in an area of outstanding natural beauty, much of the village consists of holiday lets or second homes and is very much a ghost village in winter. The housing will be 20% affordable homes and all must be principle dwellings in perpetuity.  
NCC cabinet meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January considered changes to pre planning protocols, planning application validation checklist, fixed penalty notices for environmental abuse and the treasury management report amongst others.  
Trends over the years show an increase in the ageing population with some 20% over the age of 65 and of which 13.4% are classed as poor. Fuel poverty has also risen – up to 16.7% of the population as well as 15% of children deemed to be living in poverty (an increase of 3.8%).  
NCC has delivered some £98 million in savings due to cuts in government funding. This has partly been through the sale of redundant properties, use of IT, joint working etc. Significant investment has been made in schools including Prudhoe.  
Cllr Jordon asked what was the current situation with regards Haydon Bridge High school. County Cllr Kelly replied that although NCC had proposed a new large school in the west end of Hexham which would incorporate Haydon Bridge, as well as changes to the feeder schools, it had rejected by the dept. of education – an academy was their solution.
6. Matters arising: -
  - i) **Parking on Horsley Road:** Cllr Jordon reminded the meeting that the decision had been made in December not to go ahead with the proposals for Horsley Road. She was disappointed with this as much

work had been put in by the Parish Council and both County Cllr Kelly and Martin King, NCC. Although County Cllr Kelly would fund a stone path (planings) from the top bend on Horsley Road, down into the village, she pointed out that because of NCC cutbacks it was extremely unlikely that the Parish Council would obtain financial help from NCC in the near future for the funding of improvements to parking on Horsley Road. She also confirmed that the drives and footpaths on Horsley Road would not be re-surfaced as this had been part of the package put forward by Martin King. It is hoped that the path will be completed as soon as possible although costings have to be confirmed and NCC are having problems sourcing suitable planings at the moment. She believed parking on Horsley Road will continue to be a problem and will only get worse but suggested that the matter be put aside temporarily and possibly approach NCC in future. Cllr Chalmers believed some residents would be prepared to contribute to the cost of re-surfacing driveways. County Cllr Kelly confirmed that he could only support a scheme approved by NCC officers and reminded the Cllrs that his funding could be used elsewhere as Wylam Parish Council had also approached him. Cllr MacDonald felt it was a safety issue but ultimately things move on (with regards to finance) and the problem, if ongoing, would need to be addressed.

Cllr Jordon thanked County Cllr Kelly for his hard work in the matter, (and Martin King), and asked if County Cllr Kelly would consider using his funding to improve some of the footpaths in Ovingham. County Cllr Kelly confirmed he would if he was to receive the proposal in time.

County Cllr Kelly left the meeting at 7.55pm

ii) **Traffic issues:** Data had still not been received with regards the recent speeding survey in the village. A second test had to be carried out as the first had not worked properly. Cllr Macdonald also wondered if a solution to the volume of traffic in Ovingham would be as simple as a one-way system or a traffic light system for the bridge. It had been suggested some years ago. The Cllrs felt this was unlikely to be approved.

iii) **Village projects:** Cllr Jordon advised the proposed “storyboard” was making progress. This was to be a (brief) history of the village to be placed by the entrance to the bridge and was being looked at by Cllrs Jordon and Gray together with two local residents. Cllr Chalmers had previously enquired about signage to the Playing Field. Cllr Jordon had checked with NCC and they would only provide this if it was approved by the Dept. of Transport. In this case, they would not agree to it. Cllr Jordon will check if playing fields signage can be added to the present Wheatfield Close sign (the PC will cover the cost of a replacement). Cllr Chalmers hoped that wild flowers could be incorporated in more areas this coming year and wanted to do this in conjunction with Green Ovingham. Cllr Jordon reminded her that the area known as the “red pond” could be suitable especially as it was by an entrance to the village

on Horsley Road. Cllr Chalmers would look at the site and contact Green Ovingham. Cllr Chalmers also continued to look at the possibility of purchasing a defibrillator for the village and wondered if it could be situated at the Reading Rooms. Cllr Gray will raise this at the next meeting.

- iv) **Lane to the rear of Castle View:** Cllr Jordon reported planings were still needed and that the matter was no further forward – what NCC had, was contaminated.
- v) **Bus Shelters for the village:** These were now in place. Cllr Jordon had arranged a photo shoot with the Hexham Courant and the resident who had made a donation – Val Mennear. A plaque commemorating this had also been arranged. The Clerk will thank Val for her generous donation. Unfortunately, some graffiti had already been noticed and the Cllrs agreed that this needed to be monitored and if applicable, reported to the Police.
- vi) **Transparency arrangements including a new website:** The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Cllrs were considering being part of the website which would be managed by NALC. As Ovingham currently operate a website managed by Phil Holden, the Clerk had contacted him for his views. Phil seemed happy enough to stop his involvement but rightly pointed out care needed to be taken if two websites were running. Cllr Shield wondered if the existing one could be used primarily for the village and was prepared to take this over from Phil. Cllr Jordon believed the current site needed much updating and Cllr Shield wondered if social media could be considered as this tended to be the preferred choice of many people. Discussion on the use of Social Media took place. Cllr Jordon replied that social media was one of the policies which needed to be written and would be looked at accordingly. Cllr Gray reminded the Cllrs that one benefit of being part of the NALC network would be that the Parish Council will be kept updated at all times and also be beneficial if a request for information was received – the person would be referred to the website. The Cllrs agreed to subscribe to the NALC proposal and Cllr Jackson volunteered to be an administrator along with the Clerk.

**7. Accounts to pay/be paid:**

M. Davenport (Salary & expenses Nov/Dec)	£595.83
Ovingham Reading Room (Room Hire, November)	£18.00
Maypole Manufacturing Ltd (Bus shelters)	£5901.60
TVRUG (Annual subscription)	£5.00
Peter Hind (prep work for shelter & handyman work)	£1150.00
Phil Holden (Anti-freeze)	£6.00
D Jordon (Village gardens)	£56.87
D Jordon (Tel Calls)	£5.00
D Jordon (plaque for bus shelter)	£30.00

**8. Planning applications:** Cllr Gray left the meeting whilst the tree applications were discussed.

**16/02589/FUL Old School House** – rear dormer to roof of house & construction of garage – further amended drawings showing changes to the scheme had been submitted – **Granted**

**16/00485/PREAPP – Tudorcroft, Horsley Road** – demolition of existing bungalow and construction of new (pre application). Cllrs Jordon and Gray had looked at this pre application and the site and confirmed the existing bungalow needed renovation. They advised there should be no objections to the application.

**16/04660/TREECA 8 Burnside Close** – fell one sycamore tree down to ground level. Cllr Jordon understood the applicant was concerned the tree could fall in high winds. She pointed out the tree was healthy and should not be removed; she proposed that the ivy on the tree be removed and the tree be pollarded. If the tree had to come down, a young tree should be planted to screen off the Old School House wall. If possible, a site visit to discuss further would be appreciated.

**16/04584/TREECA – 5 Burnside Close** – Fell one large flowering cherry tree. Cllr Jordon advised this tree was diseased and should be felled.

**16/04661/TREECA – Dene House** – fell 2 ash trees. Cllr Jordon noted these stand very close to the boundary and could be a danger in high winds. She had no objections to the application.

Cllr Gray returned to the meeting and confirmed that he had no updates to report on the Piper Road application. Cllr Jordon had contacted ISOS and asked that they arrange a site meeting with residents and the Parish Council before work commences so they can discuss the project. ISOS had agreed but advised they had not officially acquired the land yet although they should be in a position before the end of March to meet on site.

9. **To Consider Budget Precept 2017/2018:** The Clerk had circulated updated figures again. Cllr Jordon reminded the meeting that it had been suggested at the November meeting that the precept remain at £15,000 but Cllr Gray had raised the question of looking at different way of funding the Playing Fields & Pavilion. Cllrs Bryan and Shield believed they had more voluntary assistance now. Cllr Chalmers was concerned about the impact of likely NCC cuts whereby some services will have to be funded by Parish Councils in future. The Clerk advised this will not be during the next financial year. It was agreed to include a 2% increase (as recommended by NCC) and therefore the Precept would be requested for £15300.

10. **Grass cutting for season 2016/2017:** Cllr Jackson left the meeting whilst this was discussed.

A proposed contract/schedule was circulated for the Cllrs. This was for 16 cuts, and strimming, for the three designated areas – the Pack Horse Field, Village Green and by the Village Cross. Cllr Jordon asked that it also include those areas of the village which she had cut in the past (although Adrian Jackson had taken over in the last year in lieu of not being able to cut the Village Green). This was for an approximate one metre strip of grass for the small garden plots in Tyne Gardens, Windsor Crescent and Piper Road and around the tubs at the entrance to Piper Road as well as the Churchyard. Although these were on ISOS or NCC land, Cllr Jordon felt they did not cut to a high standard. Cllr MacDonald thought by doing so it would make the village attractive and the Cllrs agreed. Cllr Jordon therefore proposed, Cllr MacDonald seconded, the additions to the above and the Clerk would contact three contractors for prices. It was also agreed that although important to keep high standards, the cutting of the playing

fields not be included although the Cllrs did not rule out a separate contract for this.

Cllr Jackson returned to the meeting.

11. **To review all Parish Council Policies:** Cllr Jordon had handed out copies of policies which had been taken from the website of Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council (permission had been given via a Forum meeting). NALC were in the process of updating policies but this would take some time and in fact, Stephen Rickett, NALC, had been advised by Cllr Jordon that those on Broomleys' website was available as a starting point. Cllr Jordon explained at the last Forum meeting a checklist had been handed out and together with the standing orders, she commented that Ovingham have quite a few already although some may be out of date. She proposed that a working party be formed to look at the policies and that they hold a meeting in February. Cllr MacDonald wondered if all were needed but offered to be part of the working party as did Cllr Gray. They would meet on 16<sup>th</sup> February to go through them.

Cllr Jordon also mentioned that the annual review of rents for the Allotments, Grazing Land and Gardens (3) needed to be reviewed and this would also be considered then.

12. **Closed Churchyard:** This had been mentioned at the last meeting and Cllr Jordon had written to the chair of the PCC, Peter Pescod, asking for views on using the churchyard as a car park. The PCC had taken some advice and although it was an unusual step it had been requested before. The idea was not an impossible one. However, there were many obstacles to cross and Peter Pescod had asked if the PC wanted to take it further. The Cllrs acknowledged the difficulties which would need to be overcome but also that there was a distinct lack of car parking in Ovingham. As well as any services at Church, car parking was required for events at the Reading Room and Cllr Gray also felt spaces would be needed once the Bridge End Pub re-opened. Cllr Gray also suggested that more discussion was needed with the PCC and asked that a site meeting be set up before any decision be made. This was agreed that Cllr Jordon would organise.
13. **Forthcoming Parish Council elections (May 4):** The Clerk would receive a lot of literature about the elections in May. Basically nominations needed to be submitted by 4<sup>th</sup> April and central areas will be set up by NCC to check application forms. It was likely one would be in Hexham and the Clerk could take all applications at the same time. If there are 8 applications or less (and as long as there are at least 3 being quorate) all applicants will be automatically elected as a Parish Councillor. If there are more than 8, an election will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> which will coincide with the County Council elections and the Parish Council will be invoiced accordingly by NCC. In 2013, this had been about £500.
14. **Village Environment:** Cllr Jordon advised Northern Powergrid needed to prune a beech tree in the Playing Fields as branches were touching wires. This would be carried out in the next few weeks. Complaints had been received regarding dog fouling on the Playing Fields. Cllr Jordon had met with Stephen Wardle (NCC) regarding the state of the hedge in the lane to the rear of Castle View. Tynedale District Council used to attend to it many years ago but she was informed it was not the responsibility of NCC. After much discussion, it was agreed NCC would face both sides of the hedge on

an annual basis with the PC covering the cost of topping the hedge. NCC will write to residents on Castle View informing them when the hedge will be cut and requesting vehicles in the area be removed. Cllrs Jordon and Campbell had also met Ali Miller (NCC) on site and the state of footpaths in Ovingham had been discussed. Four footpaths had been put forward as a priority for attention. Cllr Jordon had since been informed the footpaths would not be done this year. Cllr Jordon asked if County Cllr Kelly be approached to fund the footpaths that were made a priority plus any others the Cllrs might suggest: - 1 – 8 The Terrace, 1- 12 Horsley Road, 1 – 6 Croft View, 48 – 74 Windsor Crescent, 44 – 51 Piper Road and 24 – 29 Wheatfield Close. This was agreed and Cllr Jordon will contact County Cllr Kelly.

Cllr Jordon also advised that the state of the road outside the schools was in a dreadful state. She had raised this with Ovington Parish Council too and the Clerk will be writing letters on behalf of both Ovingham and Ovington. Progress was being made with the various parties involved with the Ovingham Flood Plan and the Surface Water scheme. A “drop in” session for all village residents has been arranged for 7<sup>th</sup> March in the Reading Room. NWL and NCC will be available to give information on their plans for this work. A letter will be sent out by NWL/NCC informing residents of this.

It was agreed that Peter Hind be asked to paint the village tubs in future. The village green will be re-instated in the Spring.

15. **Committee reports:** Cllr Campbell had attended a recent meeting at SCA. Apprenticeships continued to be supported. This year SCA will be focusing more on process workers rather than engineers. There was a possibility of a ticket office at the railway station if there were enough users to warrant it. Cllrs Bryan and Shield advised that a draft report on the future of the Playing Fields and its aims was being prepared. Cllr Jordon asked if the Playing Fields Committee envisaged the Parish Council setting aside specific amount of funds for the future. Cllr Shield replied there was more volunteers now dealing with some of the maintenance. Cllr Jordon asked for progress on the risk assessment carried out by the Play Inspection Company last summer. Cllrs Shield and Bryan understood Phil Holden could attend to some but Cllr Jordon was concerned they were not being followed up. She referred to a recent article in LCR news which said “...there is a common misconception that anything low or very low risk can be ignored”. Although the inspection last year had only highlighted low or very low risks Cllr Jordon emphasized that they needed to be attended to sooner rather than later. Cllr MacDonald also believed that care had to be taken when repairing as the risk isn’t always automatically removed. He also asked if the Playing Field Committee had a 3 or 5 year plan and he volunteered to be part of the Committee which Cllrs Bryan and Shield accepted.

A resident left the meeting at 9.55pm

Cllr Jordon had attended a recent Forum meeting but had little extra to report other than that mentioned above – the policies.

16. **Correspondence:**
- a) **Nominations to be considered from chairpersons to attend Royal Garden Party:** The Cllrs decided not to take up this

- offer.
- b) **Ovingham War Memorial:** The Clerk had received confirmation that this was now listed as being of special architectural or historic interest.
  - c) **Letter re Rainwise – community led flood risk reduction project:** Received from NWater and it was noted that the Parish Council were already in contact with them.
  - d) **Draft Tyne Valley modelling review technical report (Tyne Valley Flood Initiative):** As above.
  - e) **Guidance re unauthorised obstructions (e.g. business notice boards):** This had been received from NCC and Cllr Gray advised it gave advise on the minimum passageway required if notice boards were on pavements etc. He did wonder if it would affect The White Swan.
17. Distribution was still being circulated.
18. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 7.15 pm.
19. **Any other business:** There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.00pm.