

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 16th May 2022

Those present were: George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), John Grahamslaw (JJG), Sheelagh Hume (SH), Dougie Watkin (DW) and Alison Murphy (AM). Colin Hardy (CH) local County Councillor was also present as were two members of the public.

5.22.1. To elect a Chairman

GS was proposed by JG and seconded by JJG for Chair. He was duly elected unanimously.

5.22.2. Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

GS duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5.22.3. To elect a Vice Chairman

JG was proposed by GS and seconded by AM, to become Vice Chair. He was duly elected unanimously.

5.22.4. To accept apologies for Absence

Apologies accepted from Jim Blythe.

5.22.5. To make any Declaration of Interest

No declaration of interest was made.

5.22.6. To agree Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5.22.7 To Receive Chairman's Report

The Chairman's Annual Report was accepted. Copy attached.

5.22.8 Matters arising from Minutes

i Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

David English of NCC Planning had come to last meeting and confirmed the current situation as regards NCC Local Plan and the Draft Joint Neighbourhood Plan. Agreed some progress was required as regards the Draft Plan, to try to mitigate the effects of there being a settlement boundary for Norham in the Local Plan, and that the area designated for housing was for general housing rather than affordable. It is likely there will be a meeting re the Draft Joint Plan in June, and that a delegation from Norham PC would attend.

ii Play Areas

The new play equipment was being well used. JJG was inspecting it visually on a weekly basis and would continue to do so. The RoSPA inspection would be carried out in June. VLC would confirm to them that there was new play equipment. There have been two requests regarding new memorial benches on the green. After discussion agreed that this was acceptable so long as they were in keeping with existing benches, that those donating were clear that they had to maintain the bench (and if it fell into disrepair it would be removed) and that if possible, the seat should not be low. GS will meet those concerned to discuss.

iii Public Conveniences

In reasonable condition. New chains were up across the entrances. Agreed after discussion to continue cleaning three times per week. Could perhaps do with some refurbishment in due course. GS will re-attach the WC direction sign which had been on the lamppost at Galagate.

iv Lower Tweed Trail

In reasonable condition except that the stretch from Norham to Horncliffe is still officially closed (but is nonetheless being walked frequently!). English Heritage have confirmed they have made safe the fallen tree and rocks but what was a mound of rocks and earth has now been flattened which has now made a slide of mud and rocks down the steps. Not clear who has done this. CH will contact Phil Bradley, NCC Footpaths Officer for some progress.

v. Northumberland LED street lighting/Undergrounding of cables

Replacement of LED lights is now complete and NCC Lighting have been thanked. Re undergrounding some of this has been done. NCC is aware that if that job proceeds further new streetlights will be required in Castle Street as the lights are currently attached to telegraph poles. Agreed VLC would try to arrange a meeting with NCC and Scottish Power. Also query raised by member of public re bright lights shining into bedroom windows. Agreed he should contact NCC Lighting department direct to see if shielding of the lights might be possible. Discussion re the possibility of turning off streetlights from midnight to 6am. CH confirmed there were Health and Safety and insurance issues which negated this.

vi. Village Map

GS and VLC had recently had a meeting with Osprey Signs to discuss possibilities for the map. Awaiting a draft.

vii New Speed Signs/Limit

CH confirmed 20mph at the school was programmed for later this year (noted once that has been done the speed camera would need to be recalibrated). Still waiting for 30mph signs to be put up on Castle Bank.

viii Norham Development Trust – Renewable Project

Still trying to make progress. Awaiting news re pre-planning application. Also having difficulty with Scottish Power Energy Networks as regards obtaining a quote from them re connection to the grid. Both these issues are contained in Stage 1 grant work. CH suggested contacting Matt Baker at NCC Climate team about both. JG will contact GreenCat on this. A Stage 2 grant of £35000 has been accepted but should complete Stage 1 grant work first. Stage 2 work has to go out to tender. Three consultants have been approached, one of which has already declined as they are too busy. CH also indicated there were now grants available from NCC re ‘green ‘projects. JG will investigate.

ix Jubilee Field

The Jubilee Field refresh is making progress. The fence is in the process of being replaced. One goal post has been resized repainted and re-netted and is now in place – the other is a work in progress. JJG can obtain timber to refresh the various seats and a new picnic table will be obtained. Discussion re the possibility of an information board about the field and how it came to be named, and donated to the village by the De Clermonts. Also discussion re the possibility of a decorative arch commemorating the the two jubilees.

x Community Police Report

Terms of the report were noted. It was noted that there had been no crimes. There was a warning that fossil fuel thefts had increased generally in the area. VLC will publicise this.

xi Stackyard lane

Awaiting rough quotation re cost of removing hedge, putting down kerb stones and creating a gravel path, and replanting a hedge. Will liaise with Church as regards the work. No work can be done until September at the earliest in any event for environmental reasons.

xii Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Details of events (which are not being organised by the parish council) are being listed in a flyer which will be distributed village wide very shortly. It is also hoped to light a beacon. Discussion re the suggestion of a mug for pupils at the school. After discussion agreed that the school governors would arrange for this.

xiii Dogs

Acknowledged that dog poo is a continuing issue not just in Norham, and not just because of residents of the village. The 'signs in buckets' seem to have made a difference. Signs also put on village green. There are poo bag dispensers around the village, so it appears to be a question of education.

xiv Steps near bird Hide

GS will discuss with Phil Bradley when he next visits the village. Agreed best option would be if NCC could install a handrail at their cost. Second option would be if NCC can pay for materials, volunteers could put up handrail. After a vote (passed 4:2 majority) agreed that if NCC could not provide funds, the parish council would pay for the materials required, and volunteers would erect the handrail.

FINANCE

5.22.9 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments since 21 March 2022: 28 March S Broadbent £150 (WCs); 18 April NALC £139.29 (subs); 18 April V Craig £159.98 (WC Chains), £51.69 (no dog fouling signs), £46 (WC signs); 20 April V Craig £79.99 (WC Chains); 21 April BHIB £443.39 (Ins premium); 24 April Norton (IT security); 25 April V Craig £29.99 (stationery); 29 April S Broadbent £150 (WCs); 2 May V Craig £600 (Clerk salary).

Receipts since 21 March 6 April Shorewood Ltd £1260; 8 April NCC £2750

5.22.10 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Accounts

As at 16th May the balance in the Current Account was £13388.79, and Business (Castle) Account £743.27.

5.22.11 To confirm Donations and Grants

Grants agreed as follows: Norham Church yard £150; Norham Newsround £150; Norham Village Hall £250

Donations agreed as follows:

GNAA £50; CAB £50; HospiceCareNorth £50; CAN £50; NDT £75

5.22.12 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2021/2022

i To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor
The internal audit report was received and considered. No actions required.

ii To approve the draft annual accounts for 2021/2022
Considered and approved.

iii To approve the Annual Governance Statement
Considered and approved.

iv To approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances

Considered and approved.

- v To complete agree and sign relevant Annual Return sections
Completed agreed and signed accordingly.

- vi To accept Bank Reconciliation
Considered and accepted.

5.22.13 Renewal of insurance policy

Confirmed that the annual insurance had been renewed as per the three-year contract agreed last year.

5.22.14 To confirm Standing Orders

Considered and confirmed.

5.22.15 To look at Planning Application decisions

7 West Street: Granted

5 St Cuthbert's Square: Granted

Re planning, after discussions at the last meeting VLC had contacted NCC Planning, and Director of Planning, Rob Murfin, has agreed to come to discuss current planning requirements and Local/Neighbourhood Plans. VLC will circulate possible dates to councillors.

5.22.16 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

Noted that the foot of Castle Bank at the bridge had flooded again right across of the carriage way, as had the road at Morris Hall Farm. CH confirmed NCC were aware.

Discussion re path/grass cutting. Agreed that GS and AM would meet with D Gibson to discuss further.

5.22.17 General Correspondence

None

Any Other Business (For information only)

Member of the public raised query re slow deterioration of the stone on the war memorial.

Query also raised re number of holiday/second homes. Agreed after discussion that this matter will be discussed with Director of Planning.

Also query re grass cutting by Norham Bridge and possible destruction of white campion. GS will raise the matter with the local farmer.

CH confirmed that North Northumberland NCC committee meeting would be held in Swan Centre Berwick this week.

Date of next meeting: 25th July 7pm