

The minutes of the Meeting of Acklington Parish Council held on 7.00pm on 1 November 2022 at Acklington Village Hall.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs L Craig, S Ingleby (Chairman), T Mezza, J Newton, S Shanks, S Thorpe.

#### Open Session

A number of residents were in attendance to raise their concerns surrounding Planning Application 22/02845/FUL which is on the same site as the Black Poplar Tree (registered with the Ancient Tree Inventory under ID 153492). A resident asked whether Cllrs shared their concerns and if so, whether they will support the residents in their objections; how and when the Parish Council would provide any support; and when the outcome of the planning permission application will be known. Residents and councillors discussed the Black Poplar Tree and the development proposal at length. The following key points were made:

- a. The Parish Council is not a statutory consultee and its comments do not carry more weight than those of residents. Anyone who wishes to oppose the development should write to NCC or use the NCC Planning Portal to raise an objection. It is important that comments are not just copied word for word: duplicate comments submitted multiple times by a number of individuals will only count as a single objection.
- b. Comments can be submitted up to the date of the Local Area Planning Committee. It is not yet known when this will be or when the application will be determined but anyone wishing to raise an objection should do so as soon as possible. The Committee meets monthly and considers any planning applications which are ready to be assessed at that date, i.e. those for which all relevant information has been gathered and queries dealt with.
- c. Objections must be based on planning criteria. Access issues have been raised by NCC Highways but are likely to be surmounted by the Estates offering alternative options. The volume of recent development in Acklington is unlikely to be viewed as a reason for planning permission to be refused, particularly as this is a small scale development within the Settlement Boundary as set out in the Local Plan. Lack of infrastructure has not previously been grounds for refusal for housing development, but the Local Plan has introduced a measure of sustainability and Highways have begun to comment on this in their comments.
- d. The presence of the Black Poplar Tree is significant. The Tree is showing signs of re-growth and is a rare example of a pure black poplar, unlike other hybrid poplars in the area. The Woodland Trust has submitted a comment on the planning application setting out inter alia recommendations for the preservation and protection of the Tree, which include a buffer zone around the Tree stump. The recommendations are detailed and are supported by clear reasoning. The recommendations differ from the suggested mitigation measures put forward by Northumberland Estates. Residents would like the Parish Council to give significant weight to the Woodland Trust's comments and not to simply accept the mitigation proposed by the Estates. The Parish Council agreed that the Woodland Trust's comment provides a very valid expert reason for objecting.
- e. The site is within the Settlement Boundary for Acklington as set out in the Local Plan. However, the site has designated playing field status. This would also be a reason to object.

The Chairman opened the meeting.

#### 2022/48 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs D Barras and S Malone

#### 2022/49 Disclosure of Interests

Cllr Craig declared an interest in Item 5 (Planning) 22/02371/FUL as Woodbine Cottage is her house.

#### 2022/50 Planning Application 22/02845/FUL and its impact on the Black Poplar

[Taken out of order to allow the Parish Council to consider the comments made during the open Session and to reach a decision.]

The Parish Council considered the comments made by members of the public. Cllrs noted that the members of the public present at the Meeting would like the Parish Council to submit a formal objection to planning application 22/02845/FUL. The Parish Council noted the objections raised by other consultees such as the Woodland Trust and Highways, and considered whether these already covered all the key concerns of the Parish Council. The Parish Council noted that as well as the Black Poplar, a further twenty-four trees will be lost and only six replanted. The Parish Council noted that submitting a formal objection was unlikely to make any difference to the outcome of the application and may remove any opportunity to negotiate for conditions or changes to the plans.

**RESOLVED** not to formally object but to comment asking for the following matters to be taken into consideration:

- The site is designated as a Playing Field within the Local Plan; this would be lost.
- The plans result in a net loss of eighteen trees.
- The Black Poplar is of national significance and requires all possible protection while regrowth appears possible. The opinion of the Woodland Trust should be given significant weight and its recommendations implemented.
- The access concerns raised by Highways should be noted and resolved.
- Dedicated parking facilities for construction workers should be provided to minimise disruption and damage to the village (thereby avoiding unauthorised parking which has been a significant problem with other housing development in the village).
- Restrictions on working hours and noise should be in place to minimise disruption to neighbouring properties. These conditions should be rigidly enforced.
- Any on site facilities such as pumping stations should be adequate and should be selected and operated to minimise disruption to neighbouring properties.
- The development should take account of the Building Act 1984 statutory obligations.

#### 2022/51 Minutes of Previous Meeting

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held 6 September 2022 were agreed as a true record.

#### 2022/52 Report from County Cllr Watson

County Cllr Watson gave a report.

- a. The consultation regarding school tier system for James Calvert Spence has come back very strongly in favour of adopting a two-tier model (i.e. Primary and Secondary School, instead of the current First, Middle and High School model). A unit providing fifty special education places is proposed. The final plans are not yet finalised, but it is likely that this would make use of buildings at an existing school site. A large financial investment has been allocated and it is hoped part of this will be used to provide

improved sporting facilities and new buildings/extensions. Conduct at the School has improved and the School is now rated Good by Ofsted.

- b. The Vehicle Activated Signs are now both installed. Cllr Thorpe has observed cars driving through the village at speeds above 30mph, including one at 47mph. However, in most cases on triggering the VAS, drivers do then brake.

#### 2022/53 Planning

In addition to Planning Application 22/02845/FUL the Parish Council discussed the following applications:

- a. 21/02287/FUL – Land South of Waterside Cottage. The Parish Council noted that this application has been withdrawn. A note has appeared on the Planning Portal which refers to ‘prior notification’. The Parish Council is unsure of the implications of this and whether it may mean the development can take place without the need for planning permission.
- b. 22/02757/FUL and 22/02758/LBC – Guyzance Hall. The Parish Council noted the robust response of the Conservation Office and agreed not to submit its own response.

#### 2022/54 Damage to Verges

The Parish Council discussed the volume of cars being parked by construction workers on the verges around Morwick junction. The Parish Council noted that if parking facilities are listed as a condition of planning permission, failure to observe these can be reported to enforcement. However, the Parish Council also noted that preventing use of the verges may displace the parking issue to other areas of the village. The developers have previously informally agreed to repair damage at the end of the development and the Parish Council aims to ensure this happens.

#### 2022/55 Finance

- a. The financial summary, bank reconciliation and budget monitoring to 26 October 2022 was received. A donation has been made to the Church. The Village Hall has not requested a donation.
- b. **RESOLVED** to authorise the following payments.

Supplier	Reason	Amount	Payment Reference
S Malone (reimbursement)	Footpaths Working Group	£89.25	22/23.20
T Mezza (reimbursement)	Perspex – noticeboard	£16.98	22/23.19
C Lewis	Salary (Sep-Oct)	£285.30	22/23.22
HMRC	PAYE	£2.20	22/23.21

- c. The following receipts were noted.

Date	Payee	Reason	Amount
9/9/22	Lloyds	Interest	£0.51
9/10/22	Lloyds	Interest	£0.51

- d. The insurance policy requires a list of insured assets, totalling less than £10,000, under the terms of the Policy. The Clerk will instead seek a quote for insuring all the assets.

#### 2022/56 Footpaths Working Group Update

- a. The Cheviot Meadows Permissive Path will hopefully open in one week. Drainage works have taken longer than planned. One more drain culvert needs to be fenced off and then the path can re-open.
- b. The popular permissive path between the water bowser and Temple Wood has been closed by padlock to deter poachers. The land manager has agreed to cut a new pedestrian pathway next to the gate.
- c. On Saturday 17 September the team carried out a joint venture with the newly formed Warkworth Footpath Group to clear overgrown vegetation along Footpath 137/044 on Rake Lane.
- d. The brushcutters and mowers will be serviced in December by Robson & Cowan.

- e. Recent wet weather conditions have impacted planned work, however the Group has managed to clear half of Rake Lane (working with the Warkworth team) and the footpath from the Railway Bridge to Rake Lake. These are likely to be the last works of the year.
- f. The Parish Council noted that the verges on Bunny Lane have converged, narrowing the road to a single carriageway and causing difficulties for the school buses. The Clerk will report this to Highways.

#### 2022/57 Neighbourhood Plan

- a. The Steering Group met with the Planning Consultant to review a draft Neighbourhood Plan. The draft was discussed in detail. In particular, the Group focused on whether Guyzance should have a Settlement Boundary; how a Second Homes Policy might work and whether this should be applied separately to Acklington Village and the rest of the parish; and Green Spaces within the parish.
- b. The draft now requires further input from the Steering Group and the Planning Consultant. Members of the Steering Group are working on gathering evidence and making decisions about aspects of the draft policies, to be fed back to the Consultant.
- c. The next Steering Group meeting is planned for December.

#### 2022/58 Noticeboard

The occupant of the property in the village which hosts the current noticeboard is happy for a replacement to be installed.

**RESOLVED** to install the noticeboard in the existing location. The Clerk will inform Barry Knox.

#### 2022/59 New Bin

**RESOLVED** to purchase two new bins at a cost of approximately £200 each, to replace the bins at Morwick junction and the crossroads.

#### 2022/60 Play Area

Cllr Shanks will look at the play area, in particular the speaking area posts, with a view to getting prices for a new swing or other piece of equipment.

**RESOLVED** to remove the wooden boarding around the slide mound.

#### 2022/61 Items for the Next Agenda

Cllr Thorpe reported three new street lights which do not have number stickers and which are not listed on the NCC Streetlight Interactive map. Streetlight 67AA is not working and is not listed on the NCC map. The Clerk will report these and provide an update at the next Meeting.

#### 2022/62 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 3 January 2023 at 7:00pm, Acklington Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:36pm.