

**Minutes from the Meeting of West Allen Parish Council
Thursday 5 September 2024 at 19:00 – Carrshield Village Hall**

Present: Stephen Agar (Chair), Rowland Hull, Helen Adams, Lee Sutterby, Colin Horncastle (Northumberland County Council)

Apologies: David Adams and Fiona McIlroy (Clerk)

In Attendance: 5 members of the public

1. Minutes of last meeting on 29 May 2024

The minutes were reviewed and approved.

2. Matters arising

- a) AGAR was submitted, with no requests for exercise of public rights.
- b) State of roads was considered under other business at this meeting.

3. Ninebanks Defibrillator

The request from David Manson for the Council to cover the cost of replacement pads and battery was approved and he will be reimbursed on submission of invoices for any purchases made as and when required.

4. Correspondence

Requests for donations received from Citizens Advice and Sport Tynedale were turned down.

5. Planning

Local planning applications were discussed and the Council did not wish to make any submission to the Planning Department in regard to the pending application.

6. Any other business

a) The following priorities are to be raised with NCC with regard to the Local Transport Plan Capital programme 2025/26:

- Resurfacing of road from School Bank to Ward Way. Emergency patching is inadequate and does not last (as rainwater drainage is inadequate and not properly maintained by NCC) with ongoing safety concerns. This is particularly acute at the junction of the Ward Way with the road as NCC has still failed to address the problem of erosion caused by rainwater runoff.
- Resurfacing of road at Leadgate Bank, also requiring remediation of drainage. NCC should also be informed that removal of gravel caused by rainwater runoff from the junction with the Ninebanks road is required as it presents a serious safety concern.
- Provision or reinstatement of a passing place on the road between Blackpool Bridge and Mohope Bank/Ouston junction. Although previously rejected by NCC, the absence of a passing place presents a significant safety hazard given the collapse of the verge and erosion and increased use by large agricultural vehicles and delivery vehicles.

b) The proposed changes to public rights of way were reviewed and the Council had no comments to be submitted.

c) The Council agreed to prepare a draft “virtual information leaflet” for publication on its website although it was agreed that keeping information up to date was problematic.

- d) The Council agreed to add the GoCompare link to its website.
- e) The Council does not wish to apply for funding for bus stop improvements.
- f) The request for database information from NHS Foundation Trust was refused as the relevant information is already publicly available on the Council and NCC websites.

7. WAPC Resilience Group

a) The Council has received several requests by e-mail from members of the public to spend the balance of the Northern Powergrid grant funding on the proposed replacement of the roof of Ninebanks Church and Community Hall with insulated roof sheets. This was further discussed with the members of the public at this meeting. The current quotation received for the work is around £13,000, and the Hall has £6,000 available following the reimbursement by the Council for the provision of the wood-burning stove. A planning application has not yet been submitted. The Council considers the work to be very beneficial and agreed in principle to providing financial support but cannot at this time commit a firm amount as it needs to consider what grant money it needs to retain to cover future costs, including ongoing maintenance, and further needs for funding that meet the resilience aims. The Ninebanks Hall group will also apply for grants from elsewhere and keep the Council informed of progress.

b) Storage and maintenance of the generator for Ninebanks Hall was discussed and it was agreed by all present that a location closer to the Hall itself would be preferable. The Council offered to purchase a small storage shed if the Ninebanks Resilience Group could find a suitable location for it. The Council also offered to take the generator back into storage itself, if the Hall Group considers that it is not required, even though lack of alternative means of providing electrical power in the event of an emergency would severely compromise the Hall's use as a Resilience Centre. Mr. Agar also agreed to send out a note covering the regular maintenance of the generator that is required.

8. Update from NCC

Colin Horncastle provided an update on the activities of, and challenges facing, the County Council. This included information on road repairs, budget constraints, recycling, schools provision and investments in Blyth and Ashington.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 5 December 2024 at 19:00 at Ninebanks Village Hall