



Minutes of Meeting 22 January 2024 held in Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

Present: Cllrs J Oliver (Chair), V. Gibson (Vice-Chair), S. Armstrong, A. Saunders, J. Benson, C. Kennedy, D. Finlayson, County Cllr A. Sharp, M. A. Smith (Clerk).

1. Introduction and Welcome The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence All in attendance.

3. Declarations of Interest None received.

4. Public Questions None received.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2023 These were read and approved.

6. Outstanding/Ongoing Repairs

6.1 No additional matters other than those on the agenda.

7. General Amenities

7.1 Footpaths – nothing to report.

7.2 Seating – repainting or treatment of all seats to be undertaken in early 2024.

7.3 Lighting – Light at entrance to Redburn Park is permanently ‘on’. Cllr Armstrong agreed to report.

7.4 Verges – The Clerk is to set up a meeting with the County Council regarding the grass strips through the villages, with the Parish Council to finance cuts on a more regular basis in 2024/25.

7.5 The dog waste bag dispensers will be refilled soon as a new supply of bags has been delivered and it was agreed an additional dispenser be placed near to Bardon Mill Village Green.

8. Miscellaneous

8.1 Grazing Site Woodland Thinning. There is a woodland at the centre of the Parish Council owned grazing site next to Redburn Park which is in need of inspection and thinning. Denis Fleming, who was appointed by the Council to carry out similar thinning at Redburn Park (at nil cost in return for any felled trees) has offered to undertake this work. This was agreed and Cllr Graham Gill (Bardon Mill Parish Council) has kindly agreed to apply for the felling licence. Clerk will make contact with the grazing land tenant for access arrangements.

8.2 Electric Charging Points. Although initial take up appeared slow it was noted that these points are steadily being used.

8.3 Broadband Provision. Prior to commencement of the meeting, a representative of Fibrus (a Broadband installer/supplier) had given a brief outline of the service Fibrus could provide to the Community, with much higher broadband speeds, full fibre, and to reach all outlying areas in the local area. Fibrus are going to look at the number of properties in Henshaw, Bardon Mill and Melkridge Parish areas, and proposals/feasibility, and come back with any proposals with a view to having a wider community meeting.

9. Village Greens

9.1 Tree Surveys. The Clerk has issued a scope of work for surveys on Henshaw, Towhouse, and Bardon Mill Village Greens. 2 quotes have been submitted, with a 3rd expected in the near future.

9.2 Correspondence has been received regarding amendment to the easement for access across Henshaw Village Green for Wychwood Barn. There was lengthy discussion on this including the background to the granting of easements, legal position and costs. Whilst the Parish Council are no longer permitted to grant new easements, the one to Wychwood would be a variation to an existing easement which serves Henshaw Farmhouse and Members agreed in principle to the variation subject to additional information being sought on the terms and conditions of the grant.

9.3 Repairs to Access Road across Henshaw Village Green. Minor repairs were made to this unmade road 2 years ago and the Clerk is to look at costing of any current, and potential future repairs, and report back for consideration.

9.4 Further details are awaited from Northumbrian Water for access across Towhouse Village Green to install an electricity supply and connection point for a temporary generator if there are power failures to the pumping station.

10. Planning Applications and Issues

10.1 The Clerk advised that an appeal to the planning application refusal at Cragside Stables for a change the use of existing staff accommodation to residential has been made to the County Council.

11. Transport and Highways Matters

11.1 A69. Still awaiting details from National Highways and Clerk to chase up.

11.2 Speed Limit at Twice Brewed. Cllr Sharp advised that the proposal to install gateway signs has been agreed and the final design and costing are expected shortly.

11.3 Additional road markings at Bardon Mill. As in 11.2 this has been agreed and designs/costs are awaited.

11.4 Bardon Mill Station Access Road. The Clerk advised he is in discussion with the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership and Network and Northern Rail regarding contributions towards a repair or resurfacing scheme. A meeting has also been arranged with the County Council Highways Team for advice on the repairs required, and potential costs of a scheme.

12. Redburn Park

12.1 Inspections. Members agreed that the County Council be appointed to undertake the monthly inspections at the park at an estimated cost of £500 per year. This to be reviewed at the end of 2024/25.

12.2 Maintenance. Further emergency work and general maintenance has now been completed in accordance with the RoSPA report by Mark Watson. This included repairs to the football pitch and making safe all the exposed concrete areas around the play equipment.

12.3 Specialist Repairs. The RoSPA report included recommendations to inspect and repair play equipment such as the SpaceNet, Zip Wire, and the Basketball Court. An estimate had been submitted by Kompan, the supplier of this equipment, and it was agreed that they be appointed to inspect and repair the SpaceNet and Zip Wire. As the Basketball Court (which needs a new hoop and net) was not considered to be well used, and the cost is high to replace these items (and the previous one was vandalised) that this repair be put on hold and considered in the next financial year.

12.3 Woodland Management. Work to thin out the woodland has now been completed. It was however reported that following recent storms there were trees damaged near to the Pitmans Trail. Denis Fleming, who had carried out the woodland thinning had attended the site to make safe, would return to remove any damaged trees as a matter of urgency.

12.4 Redburn Community Park Group. An initial meeting of the group had been held to plan repairs and future management. This would be a developing idea and would seek input and representation from the community to improve facilities at the park and seek out external funding opportunities.

13. Bardon Mill & Henshaw Village Hall

13.1. The recent storms and power cuts has highlighted the need to apply for funding to install an emergency generator so the hall could be used in emergencies. Agreed the Parish Council would support the Village Hall Committee to complete the application and seek estimates for the work required to purchase, install and house the generator.

14. Northumberland National Park

14.1 Cllr Saunders gave an update on the recent developments.

15. Henshaw School

15.1 Plans for improved parking arrangements and layout had previously been distributed by Cllr Sharp. These included additional road marking, amendments to layout of parking, possible

extension into the grassed area to the rear, and installation of bollards at the entrance to stop parking on the footpaths. Work to progress these was ongoing with the bollards to be installed in the near future.

16. Report by Clerk on Financial Matters

16.1 Estimated funds held by the Parish Council as at 18 December 2023 as follows:

- Current Account £12,827.61
- Easement Account £5,620.45

16.2 Expenditure and Income to approve/note:

- Books Accountants (Accountancy Services 3rd Quarter) £48.00
- Wages and Expenses (3rd Quarter) £1130.24
- HMRC Tax Contribution (3rd Quarter) £225.00
- Great North Air Ambulance (Monthly Donation for Dec and Jan) £20.00
- HSBC (Bank Charges) £24.00

Estimated balance following outstanding transactions **£11,402.37**

16.3 Precept. The Clerk presented a report on the estimated spend in 2023/24 and the budget for 2024/25. Given the ever increasing cost for the upkeep of Redburn Park, planned woodland management, extensive maintenance costs for all of the Village Greens, contribution towards additional maintenance of grass verges in the villages and along roadsides up to the National Park, that the Precept submission be increased by 10% to £16,940.

17. Northumberland County Council Update

17.1 Cllr Sharp had updated on all matters during the meeting.

18. General Matters and Correspondence since last meeting

18.1 No further matters were raised.

18.2 It was agreed that the Parish Council would send a representative (and the Clerk) to the Town and Parish Council Spring Conference with the County Council on 14 March 2024.

19. Items to be included on the next Agenda No items raised.

20. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting is on Monday 25 February 2024 at 7.00pm. The meeting finished at 8.47pm.

Signed and Approved at the Meeting held on 26 February 2024.....