

Simonburn Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes – Wednesday 9th October 2024 Venue – Simonburn Village Hall

Chairman: Mrs JE Lamb

Clerk: Miss K L Heaney

Meeting started at 18:05pm

Present Cllrs Mrs JE Lamb (Chairman), Cllr NJ Morphet, Alan Mardell, Nick Ridley, and Clerk Miss K Heaney.

09-10-01 Declaration of Interest

No declarations received.

09-10-02 Apologies for absence

Adrian Langford – Received by Jane (Chair) Cllr D Bulman absent.

09-10-03 Welcome B4RN - Presentation by Martin Dennis

Martin Dennis from B4RN provided an overview of the organisation, dedicated to improving internet connectivity for rural communities.

Specific updates on the Simonburn project were shared, including network installation in our village halls and church. Simonburn has around 195 properties, and B4RN is seeking expressions of interest and permissions from local landowners for wayleaves. So far, 35 residents have registered their interest.

B4RN works with volunteers and community dig teams to support the installation process should anyone wish to get involved.

Further details, including registration links, will be shared on the council's website and Facebook page. Registration of interest is available on B4RN's website, and residents are encouraged to spread the word locally.

With current interest levels, the Simonburn project timeline is estimated at approximately two years.

09-10-04 Minutes – Wednesday 22nd May 2024 The minutes were circulated around members after the previous meeting. Members agreed the minutes to be a true record and Chair, Mrs Jane Lamb signed the minutes.

09-10-05 Clerks Report

The Clerk reported on the Birtley Woodland Creation consultation, with comments due by 7th November. Nick noted that the proposed plan appears to include over 50% non-native species

alongside native plantings. A Councillor expressed a preference for a greater proportion of native trees and plants in the scheme. No additional comments were received. Nick has submitted his feedback, recommending the inclusion of native softwood Scotch pine.

Members may forward any further comments to the Clerk by 7th November, with a focus on Birtley Parish concerns. Members expressed their satisfaction with the Clerk's report as circulated.

09-10-06 Reports – Village Hall, NCC and PCC

Village Hall:

In Dennis's absence, it was noted that fundraising events, such as bacon butty mornings and ceilidh events, are ongoing to raise funds for local charities.

Highways and Maintenance Updates:

High-Capacity Gully: Installation has not yet occurred but is scheduled within 4-5 weeks.

Fallen Leaves: Residents can report leaf build-up via Fix My Street or contact Geoff Cairns directly.

Castle Lane Ditches: Landowners are responsible for maintaining ditches on Castle Lane.

Nunwick Traffic Measures: Traffic measures have been delayed due to undelivered signage. Originally planned for early October, completion is pending.

B6320 Signage Improvements: A study from 2022 recommended clearing vegetation and adding new signage along this route.

Teckett Lane: Road safety measures were discussed following several serious concerns raised by residents that, in the winter months, it is more likely that a vehicle will come off the road, especially as this road is not on the gritting route. A meeting was to be held with Neil Snowdon, Principal Programme Office Highways Improvements @NCC to discuss this matter further and petition for improvements.

Layby and Passing Places on the Ward Lane:

The Council advised contacting a haulage company for potential funding for a passing place, as current laybys are becoming slippery and unusable. Ditch maintenance was done, but soil has since been pushed back by the public. Highways maintenance confirmed that local farmers are responsible for verge upkeep, which will be clarified next year.

Nunwick Mill Bus Stop Safety:

A recent safety review deemed the installation of new measures unjustified due to low usage.

However, if a child is entitled to free school transport, the Council may need to reconsider. Jane is following up on this.

Cyclist Safety:

Stop lines are set to be added to Chollerford Bridge, delayed due to staffing issues.

Climate Action and Environmental Initiatives:

The Climate Action Plan has been posted online, and members are encouraged to review it. New Climate Change Team Leader Leanne Wilson has joined.

Warmer Homes Scheme: This programme will end soon.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Nick will forward event details for member engagement.

Community Energy Projects: Funding deadlines for projects aiming to boost energy efficiency are approaching on 13th and 14th October.

Improvement Plan Consultation:

The County Council seeks feedback on its draft improvement plan, which will allow parish involvement and engagement with Rights of Way officers.

Local Bus Services:

The Local Bus Board has been active for over a year. John Surname?? will serve as the Parish representative, with Nick Morphet assisting. Members are encouraged to submit ideas for improvements. The 680-bus service doesn't currently run on Sundays, a Sunday service was requested by Jane, Nick will coordinate additional support requests.

09-10-07 Teckett Lane – Road safety discussion

Members discussed under 09-10-05 as part of NCC report – no additional comments.

09-10-08 Matters Arising

No matters.

09-10-09 Annual Governance and Accountability Return, Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd

Conclusion

The Council approved and accepted the AGAR accounts report as presented.

Website

The old website will be decommissioned, and the Clerk will ensure all minutes are uploaded to the new website. The AGAR report will be posted online for a 30-day public viewing period.

VAT

A discussion on VAT claims is scheduled for the next agenda to determine the frequency of claims.

Audit

Members were satisfied with the AGAR report and agreed to secure a new auditor well in advance for next year's audit. The Clerk will confirm the submission deadline for the current AGAR and plan accordingly for next year.

09-10-10 Payments to be approved including Mower Insurance and Audit Information

Members approved the following payments Rickerby's Chainsaw Belt £149.10 and Village Hall Hire £60. Clerks' home allowance and salary to be approved at the next meeting following issues with HMRC and getting onto the account.

Rickerbys	Chain belt replacement	£149.10
Simonburn Village Hall	Village hall hire	£60.00
	Total	£209.10

Payments above approved total of £209.10.

09-10-11 Date of Next Meeting Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 11th December 2024 6:00pm.

Venue – Simonburn Village Hall. *Meeting closed at 19:05pm*

Signed Chairman..... Date