

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 10th May 2023

Those present were: George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), John Grahamslaw (JJG), Sheelagh Hume (SH), Dougie Watkin (DW) and Jim Blythe (JB).

5.23.1. To elect a Chair

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

5.23.2. Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

GS duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5.23.3. To elect a Vice Chairman

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

5.23.4. To accept apologies for Absence

Apologies accepted from Alison Murphy. Apologies also from Colin Hardy and Rob Kelsey.

5.23.5. To make any Declaration of Interest

No declaration of interest was made.

5.23.6. To agree Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5.23.7 To Receive Chairman's Report

The Chairman's Annual Report was accepted. Copy attached. Agreed that the report should be placed in Newsround in full.

5.23.8 Matters arising from Minutes

i Norham School – Education in Berwick Partnership Consultation

The council is very pleased that the outcome of the recent consultation was favourable for Norham school, though it was understood that this must be difficult time for the Middle Schools in Berwick. Agreed that the parish council and Norham Development Trust would do everything possible to continue to support the school and increase its ties with the community. It bodes well for the future if the County Council is looking at investing a large financial sum in the fabric of the school.

ii Community Police Report

No report was available. The recent vandalism to the bus shelter and in the public toilets, and antisocial behaviour in the toilets, has been reported to the police, and mentioned on Facebook.

iii. Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Plan

After discussion it was agreed that in accordance with section 61G of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 Norham Parish Council recognises that Ord Parish Council is the relevant body for the purpose of designating the Norham & Islandshire Neighbourhood Area. In accordance with section 61F(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. Norham Parish Council consents to Ord Parish Council being authorised to act in relation to the Norham & Islandshire Neighbourhood Area.

GS and VLC had recently attended a lengthy meeting. Progress was slow.....

iv Play Areas

JJG still regularly inspecting. RoSPA inspection due to take place in June. GS still to find collars for wooden play equipment to protect from strimming etc.

v Public Conveniences

The WCs are in reasonable condition. The vandalism caused unnecessary expense (replacement of toilet seat and toilet roll holders) - it was ironic that reports of vandalism had occurred the

day after a very complimentary email had been received from a cyclist who had passed through the village and had felt moved to take the time to praise the parish council for having open, clean and free toilets.

vi Undergrounding of cables

Nothing to report

vii Village Map

Well received generally and well used. GS to add old Norham sign once he had renovated it.

viii Norham Development Trust

JG reported that NDT had had a very positive meeting with Matt Baker from NCC Climate Team, Rob Murfin NCC Director of Planning all facilitated by our county councillor. They were all very supportive, and urged NDT to lodge the scoping report in relation to the renewable energy project as soon as possible. This has now been done. NDT also has to apply for an extension to the time limit for accepting the offer for a grid connection made by Scottish `Power. This has now been done. It is anticipated that there will be another community event on 14th June. More details of this will follow but councillors were urged to attend themselves and encourage others to come as it is very important that the full range of opinions is obtained.

ix Jubilee Field

A brief ceremony, which was well attended, was held recently to mark the completion of the refresh of the Jubilee Field which is now looking very attractive. Mrs Orpwood (niece of Mrs De Clermont) unveiled the new information board, and helped plant an oak tree to commemorate the life of the late Queen. Work on the wall should start on 29th May. Agreed that the existing picnic table will be refreshed.

x Proposed 20mph Speed limit

Awaiting further information and ideas from Robin McCartney from NCC on possibilities. Noted that Belford and other communities had 20mph limits. Also agreed it would be helpful if police could attend now and then with a speed gun.

xi Approach to Diocese re Land at Glebefield

Further discussion is to be held with the diocese re release of Glebe land for affordable housing.

xii Tourism

The revised Focus on Norham document originally drafted by NCC was agreed.

xiii Sustrans – Declassification of National Cycle routes

Contact has been made with Sustrans and it hoped that a meeting will be held with them in late May.

xiv Tweed Valley Railway Campaign

There will be a presentation on this at the next meeting.

xv Paton & Co Donations

After discussion agreed that the gritbin would be purchased, and the bus shelter would be refreshed. Quotes will be obtained for new Perspex and /or replaceable glass and from Ian Simpson re the woodwork. Discussion re email received - VLC will identify who posts the bus timetables. NCC are responsible for the timetable board and have agreed to replace that broken Perspex. Discussion re parking opposite bus stop – to be monitored.

xvi Electric Vehicle Charging Points

EVCs are installed and operational. Awaiting more info re design of echelon parking to alleviate situation in Castle Street. VLC will chase. Also noted that EVCs do not work if driver has the wrong mobile network – this information will be passed on to NCC.

xvii Trees at Bow Well

The trees causing problems at Bow Well are the responsibility of NCC but quotes were obtained for some work. However, the proprietor of the garage does not want to proceed at this stage.

xviii Path Works Tender

Only one tender was received, from D Gibson, which was acceptable so GS will liaise with him re timing of cuts, as some grass is reportedly too long already. NCC will only reimburse however for two cuts.

FINANCE

5.23.9 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments since 20 March 2023: 27 March S Broadbent £207.81; 16 April NALC £139.54; 17 April V Craig £64.99; 18 April V Craig £106.14; 1 May V Craig £600; 1 May S Broadbent £150

Receipts since 20 March 2023 6 April NCC £2750

5.23.10 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Accounts

As at 10th May the balance in the Current Account was ££11676.43, and Business (Castle) Account £744.89.

5.23.11 To confirm Donations and Grants

Grants agreed as follows: Norham Church yard £150; Norham Newsround £150; Norham Village Hall £300 (an increase of £50 to reflect increased electricity costs)

Donations agreed as follows:

GNAA £50; CAB £50; HospiceCare North Northumberland £50; NDT £75

5.23.12 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/2023

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 consider and approve the draft annual accounts for 2022/2023
Considered and approved.

iii To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement
Considered and approved.

iv To consider and 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. It was agreed that the council was therefore entitled to certify itself as exempt, and the Certificate of Exemption was signed accordingly.

vi To accept Bank Reconciliation
Considered and accepted.

5.23.13 Renewal of insurance policy

Confirmed that the annual insurance should be renewed.

5.23.14 To confirm Standing Orders

Considered and confirmed.

5.23.15 To look at Planning Application decisions

None

5.23.16 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

Noted that roads were generally in a poor state though it was recognised that the County's budget was very small. Councillors were encouraged to report potholes via the NCC website. Discussion re paving slabs on side road. Agreed would arrange meeting with NCC to discuss a solution.

5.23.17 General Correspondence

None

AOCB

VLC to contact Philip Bradley NCC Footpath Officer re bridge over Mill Burn as it is in a bad state, and will thank him for the speedy response to the damaged bridge below the castle.

Discussion re the placing of another memorial bench – GS will discuss possibilities with the donor.

After discussion agreed that Councillor Glen Sanderson would be invited to the September meeting of the council.

Date of next meeting: 17th July 7pm