

Minutes of Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 21st March 2022

Those present were George Straughen (GS), Jim Greenwood (JG), Jim Blythe (JB) John Grahamslaw (JJG), Sheelagh Hume (SH) and Alison Murphy (AM).

AGENDA

03.22.1 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Dougie Watkin

03.22.2 To make any Declaration of Interest

None

03.22.3 To confirm Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the meeting of 24th January 2022 were confirmed as accurate records and signed by the Chair.

31.22.4 Matters Arising from Minutes

i. Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

David English from NCC Planning Department was welcomed to the meeting and thanked for coming. He explained his team's involvement in the possibility of a Norham & Islandshire Joint Neighbourhood Plan (NIJNP). After a number of sessions with representative from the various parishes, a Framework document had been produced about 2 years ago, but thereafter for a number of reasons including Covid not much feedback had been received. The County Council Local Plan is on the point of being adopted. Any neighbourhood plan would supersede to some extent the NCC Local Plan, but not where strategic policies were concerned, so to that extent any new neighbourhood plan has to be in conformity with the NCC Local Plan (in place till 2036). For example, as regards second homes, Policy HOU10 in the Local Plan if 20% or more of houses in any parish are 'vacant' based on census data (currently based on the last census in 2011 until the most recent census data has been processed) then a planning application can be objected to on the basis that it is to be holiday home. The concept of a settlement boundary was also discussed-it defines those places within the village where generally development would be acceptable. It is still possible to get planning permission outwith a settlement boundary but there are more stringent rules. NCC Local Plan has inserted a settlement boundary in Norham – query whether the parish council had ever been asked/informed about this. If the parish council wished to change the boundary the only option would be to widen it, but this would require justification/evidence of demand. In addition, re the Glebefield this has been allocated for general housing not just affordable housing. Agreed that Mr English would check the situation re the settlement boundary and allocation of housing. In the meantime, the parish council would have to consider its possible response re the Framework document as soon as possible.

ii Play Areas

The play equipment has now been finalised-and pile of mud removed. Discussion re an official opening/photo opportunity. Agreed that 8th April 3pm might be suitable. All main sponsors would be invited to attend (and indeed anyone else who wanted to come).

iii Public Conveniences

Agreed that these should continue to be cleaned three times per week. Agreed new chains would be investigated. VLC will also arrange for no smoking signs to be put up.

iv Lower Tweed Trail

The Storm Arwen damage was generally repaired apart from the tree and fallen rock below the castle, so that part of the path was still closed. VLC confirmed that EH were being chased. GS will also speak to Phil Bradley at NCC.

v Northumberland LED Street lighting/Undergrounding of cables

GS reported that Scottish Power were to underground s two cables which cross Castle Street between Foreman's Shop and the village shop. In addition, some new cables were to be put up further down Castle Street-this was purely for health and safety reasons as the existing cables were not insulated. Scottish Power still wished to underground all cables if financially possible. In addition, a cable serving the lamp on the corner of North Lane will be removed and the lamp will be powered from the underground cable serving the sewage works.

vi Village Map

GS produced a list of places of interest etc to be highlighted on the map. Councillors were asked to check the list ASAP and comment if necessary. VLC will arrange a meeting with Osprey Signs to discuss how to proceed thereafter.

vii New Speed signs/limits

VLC reported that she had discovered that the speed limit on Castle Bank had in fact been changed in September 2020 (!) but that the necessary signage had just never been put in place. In addition, apparently the idea of 20mph by the school and possibly in other parts of the village was with the Design Team.

viii Norham Development Trust – Renewables Project

JG reported on current progress with Feasibility report. A public meeting had been held on 23rd Feb in village hall and had been well attended and supportive of all that had happened so far. Stage 1 was complete except for the obtaining of a quotation for cost of connecting to the grid, and lodging of the pre-planning application. JG also explained that a Stage 2 grant application had been made for c£93000 but due to lack of grant funds available NDT had been offered an award in the region of £35000. This should be useful and will be discussed by NDT shortly. It would allow for appointment of consultants and for scoping and impact assessments to be carried out. JG was thanked for all his efforts so far.

ix Jubilee Field

A huge amount of work has been done to clear the Storm Arwen mess. The logged excess wood is being taken by a local farmer for biomass and will be weighed and paid for. The mole man has been and will come back to carry out another check. Two quotes have been received for renewal of the fence, one £2050, and the other £1257. After discussion unanimously agreed to go with the lower quote. That contractor had indicated that he should be able to have that work done before Jubilee Weekend. A donation of seven silver birch trees (for the seven decades of the Queen's reign) had been received and these have been planted and were being watered. The goal posts have been resized and are currently being painted by volunteers who have also donated new nets. Some of the existing benches are to be refurbished and/or moved. It is also hoped to obtain some new picnic tables. In addition, the steps down to the bridge over the Mill Burn would be tidied up and hopefully made less slippery.

x Community Police Report

Received and noted that 'none of the incidents or crimes reported would have any impact on the local community'. Our new Community Police Officer had agreed to attend the meeting September 2022 if possible.

xi Stackyard Lane

Rev Kelsey had confirmed that the diocese/he had no objection to the plans to renew the hedge etc. This work would now have to wait till after 1st September so the time till then could be usefully used in planning and costing proposed works.

xii Electric Vehicle Chargers

A meeting was arranged for 24th March with Nick Johnstone of NCC Climate Change Team to try to find appropriate sites for some on street ECVs. The possibilities were bottom of Jubilee Field, by the bottle bank, Ubbanford, and Castle Street.

xiii NCC Free Tree Giveaway

120 hedge plants had been collected by VLC and needed to be planted immediately. The delay in Stackyard Lane project and the Damage to Jubilee Field meant they were not needed yet. After discussion Sheelagh Hume offered to take them and use them and, in the autumn, would supply the equivalent amount to the parish council. VLC anticipates that NCC will have another giveaway in the autumn too which hopefully would provide hedging for Stackyard Lane.

xiv Queen's Platinum Jubilee

A public meeting had been held to encourage suggestions/participation. It looked as though there would a village picnic on Friday 3rd June, a cake competition, decoration of Post Boxes and Hunt the Corgi competition. Janet Young was coordinating but not organising events,

xv Parish Noticeboard

GS had obtained quote from Ian Simpson who proposed an oak double doored noticeboard. After discussion agreed that this would look very handsome and would last a long time so agreed to accept the quotation.

There appeared to be an immense amount of unpicked up dog poo in the village. After discussion agreed VLC would obtain some notices for the village green and would put a strongly worded notice in Newsround.

03.22.6 Steps Down to Bird hide

JB asked for some funds to purchase wood to create a handrail down the side of these steps which were very slippery and muddy – the state of the steps put people off walking there and visiting the bird hide. After discussion agreed that in the first instance GS would contact Phil Bradley NCC Foot Paths Officer to see if there was any help he could provide.

03.22.7 Representative on Village Hall Committee

VLC confirmed Village Hall committee was in process of trying to obtain accreditation and as part of the process its governance had to be better formalised. The Parish Council should have a representative on that Committee (as per the hall's constitution). Agreed that VLC should be formally appointed as that representative.

Finance

03.22.8 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments from Current Account:

3rd Feb S Broadbent £150 (WCs); 24th Feb Cheviot Trees £310.80 (Jubilee Field); 4th March S Broadbent £181.16 (WCs); 11th March D Rutherford £60 (Jubilee Field)

Receipts into Current Account:

25th Jan HMRC £815.64 (VAT reclaim); 21st Feb HMRC £915.64 (VAT reclaim); 24th Feb Anon Donation (Jubilee Field); 15th March Paton & Co £250 (Donation)

Receipt into Business Account

7th March 2p (interest)

03.22.9 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Account

As at 21st March Current Account £11294.11; Business Account £743.27

03.22.10 To look at Planning Application decisions

The Victoria Hotel Castle Street - Granted

03.22.11 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

SH reported some big potholes along Boathouse Lane. GS reported road still flooding on Norham side of the bridge. GS will report both to NCC.

03.22.12 General Correspondence

Discussion re proposal by Alncom to Village Hall to provide free access in hall in return for 40 residents signing up to their internet service and placing box outside hall. Agreed the box would be ugly but perhaps could be placed elsewhere. Agreed might be best if Village Hall arrange public meeting to discuss the pros and cons.

Approach also received re a large wedding in church on 28th May, and organisers were concerned about parking. Agreed GS would confirm they would just park round the village as normal or contact Mr Orpwood.

Any Other Business (For information only)

SH reported the annual tractor run had been very successful and had made c £1200.

JJG complaint of a particular vehicle frequently parking on the area designated as a Bus Stand at the school.

Date of next meeting: Annual Meeting 16th May 2022

