

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held at Northumberland Crematorium, Bockenfield on Thursday 15 August 2024.

Present: Cllrs J Day, E Davidson, P Hantman and J Marshall. County Councillor Sanderson
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin
Five members of the public

24 Cooption of New Councillor – Mr Philip Hantman was coopted onto the Council and completed the relevant paperwork to accept this role including the application for dispensation to be included with the one signed on 4 May by the Councillors.

25 Apologies for Absence – Cllrs Clarehugh and Green

26 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda –

Councillor Marshall on item 10 - Application 24/02540/FUL - High Park Farm

Councillor Hantman on item 10 – Application 24/00517/FUL

The Chairman suspending Standing Orders to allow County Councillor Sanderson to give his report

£10m of NCC money is going into rectifying the water damage to roads. £1m has been allocated for drainage and gully works to resolve the difficult issues encountered last winter. Weeds have been very difficult this year and extra staff have been taken on to tackle this – most areas have had 2 sprays, some have had 3. Keeping seasonal staff on for over winter for street cleaning and pavement tidying.

Exams results have put Northumberland in the top quartile in UK – a vast improvement on previous years.

Received an outstanding report for Children’s Services. Adult Social Care is currently being inspected. Adult Social Services and Children’s Services are very important but very costly and CC Sanderson has asked for a summary of the £40m that NCC need to pay this year.

Parish & Town Council Conference at the beginning of October where there will be a session on budget for discussions on spending and Mr Murfin is to talk about the new housing consultation as the new government is seeking 200% extra housing in the County which has a knock on effect on the infrastructure, ie schools, GPs etc.

Winter fuel allowance is a concern with pensions who will fall in the gap. Communities Together and Warm Hubs will be stretched as costs go up.

Going to have to battle with road schemes, ie the A1. There are issues with bottle necks and this is being assessed.

Cllr Marshall raised this issues of recent A1 diversion and flytipping at the bottle bank. CC Sanderson asked the Clerk to drop him a note re CCTV installation again.

CC Sanderson stated traffic strips are being installed through the villages to monitor traffic on the Bank Holiday as traffic shortcuts through the villages as opposed to being stationery on the A1.

Standing Orders resumed and CC Sanderson left the meeting

27 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person) –

It was raised that the signage at Eshott Heugh on the A1 is incorrect. National Highways had been contacted about this a number of years ago and no action has been taken. Signage currently says Eshoththeugh and it should be two words. Clerk to contact National Highways.

Clerk

The Councillors were asked to review their objection to the application 20/04177/FUL for 139 holiday pitches etc. This application would be good for tourism, employment, climate change and support for other local businesses. The applicant has a good track record on tree planting and the land is of poor quality so cannot be used usefully for anything else. It was agreed the Clerk would circulate the original objection letter, this application goes against the Neighbourhood Plan.

Clerk

Lucy Grieve (LG) attended to discuss the issues being raised in relation to Pumpkin Pie. Cllr Marshall stated everyone is supportive of the nursery but there is an increasing issue with the traffic

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in the area but the Parish Council are keen to work with the nursery to try to find a solution. LG understood how now the nursery is at capacity (90 children and 46 staff) there is an issue with drop off and pick up times. However some residents are not helping the situation and concerns have been raised with one neighbour taking photographs, however is has got to the point where some residents are unable to access their driveways or entrance roads due to a few inconsiderate parents. Suggestions were made for more flexible drop off/pick up times or for employees to park away from the nursery. LG does stay at the door now at peak times so no waiting for parents to speed up time. Cllr Marshall stated as a PC we are receiving more complaints. The Clerk stated NCC are aware of issues and proposed setting up a meeting with NCC, the Nursery and the PC to see if a solution can be found.

Clerk

28 The minutes of the meeting 20 June 2024 were agreed as a true record.

29 Matters Arising therefrom:

1) Matters arising there from (excluding outstanding actions in relation to NCC)

a) Lighting on The Peth at roadside – no action as yet so the Clerk suggested this be added to the LTP.

Clerk

b) Missing Weldon Bridge signage – no response or action by National Highways – This report has been closed by National Highways with no further action to be taken. The Clerk to contact National Highways to request that this is re-opened and at the same time look at the sign for Bockenfield driving South to be moved as the signage is actually past the junction.

Clerk

c) Bus stop repairs – Handyman has just undergone an operation but once back to work will undertake the repairs.

d) Field run off at Eshott Village – Cllr Green not here to give update.

e) BOAT at Blackbrook Farm – Nothing further from NCC – Clerk to chase up with new contact.

Clerk

f) Access road/bridge between Bockenfield Caravan Park and Felmoor Park – HSE has responded to state “*Your enquiry does not fall within HSE's enforcement remit, so we are unable to comment on the matters you raise. As there is no current work activity, please raise your concerns with the Local Authority who have enforcement for installations on Park*” however NCC state they have not jurisdiction over bridge works on the park so neither organisation wish to take on responsibility for checking these works are safe despite residents concerns.

g) Felton Cemetery Joint Committee – Policies and Procedures update – New Clerk not started in post yet.

h) A1 Closure for removal of Ash tree due to dieback – TPC were again omitted from the information relating to this. If it had not been for Cllr Francis of N&S PC there would have been no information received despite a second reminder to National Highways. The Clerk informed residents via facebook, most residents received notification the day before via a letter drop. It resulted in total chaos as the traffic lights were in the wrong location, people were ignoring the lights, an ambulance got stuck for 20 minutes with blue lights on, all the fair bunting was ruined and residents got little or no sleep. Eventually the police came to restore some sort of order. This was duly reported to National Highways and the following evening there was no diversion through Felton, works were undertaken with one side of the A1 being closed. The Clerk is currently working with National Highways to get replacement bunting or payment for the new bunting purchased earlier this year. A discussion needs to take place with National Highways in relation to using Felton and West Thirston as a diversion. Clerk to forward information onto CC Sanderson and also Cllr Marshall has asked for the date the latest problems took place (Monday 22 July).

Clerk

i) The Helm bus stop – A response has been received from Arriva Depot Manager who states that “*this location serves Northumberland zoo which attracts a large number of visitors. There's a stop, southbound a short distance past the zoo which we stop at, however, there's no stop northbound. This is because this is the A1, and us stopping northbound would lead to passengers crossing a fast moving road. Passengers travel on the X15 northbound to Felton, get off and get the southbound X15 which as stated, stops just past the zoo. to state that this bus stop is used going South Bound*” It was agreed to wait to see what is happening about the dualling of the A1, raise the possibility of taking the bus stop away and moving it to Bockenfield Layby where it can service the airfield, crematorium, caravan parks and the zoo.

Clerk

2) Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC for information

a) Manhole cover at Wintrick (12/2021) – being installed when the pot holes are repaired there in the next few weeks.

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b) Road from A1 to Longhorsley has raised iron works and the edges of asphalt badly broken away both of which can cause damage to cars (01/2022) – repairs have been undertaken. A resident raised an issue that the works were only done for the benefit of the Burgham Horse Trials. He raised that he thought the road should be widened and kerbing put in and the Clerk stated that this would not take place as it was too costly and there is not room to widen the road plus this is what most country roads are like in Northumberland.

c) Footpath resurfacing request (02/11/23) – put on LTP

Clerk

d) Repointing of stone wall on the Peth (14/12/23) – no works undertaken to date.

Clerk

j) Water running down the Narrow Bank (14/12/23) – 22 July update *The area is going to be patched first until we get to the bottom of the drainage issue, to make it safe. We had an issue at the quarry which meant no Materials were available. Works should be undertaken tomorrow.*

30 Report by County Councillor Sanderson – see suspended orders section

31 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Felton Cemetery Joint Committee – This meeting was postponed.

CRAG – At the latest meeting the constitution was passed with Cllrs Day and Clarehugh being the nominated representatives from TPC. CRAGs would like to include TPC on their website with some wording and Cllr Day will draft up and circulate proposed wording.

Cllr Day

Proposed site visit to Eshott Airfield – Attended a site visit to meet with the new team. Constructive meeting where communications have improved and a liaison committee is being put in place.

32 Potential Projects

a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – The anglers have cut back vegetation along the walkways down to the river and trimmed alongside footpaths.

b) Landscaping – NCC has cut the verges into the village from the A1 on both sides to accommodate walkers from West Moor. Clerk to request only one side is done and ask how often this will take place as TPC currently pay contractor to do this.

Clerk

c) Short term / Medium term / Long term projects –

- Village gateways – Clerk to arrange meeting once mobile again to review locations. Cllr Marshall to speak to farmer re potential location.

Cllr
Marshall

- Bus shelters – The request to remove the discarded freestanding road sign from beside the shelter has still not been done by NCC despite reminders.

Clerk

33 Planning:

To report on any planning decisions:

23/02325/FUL - Inspectorate Ref: APP/P2935/W/24/3338945 - Erection of a single new self build holiday let including hardstanding and landscaping – APPEAL DISMISSED

24/00517/FUL - North High Moor Farm - Single storey oak frame extension to the main front elevation of the house, oak frame extension to porch and new garden building - WITHDRAWN

24/01451/FUL - Eshott Airfield - RETROSPECTIVE - Use of Building as Cafe and Extension to Café – going to Committee 12 August recommended for approval - APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

20/04177/FUL - Land North East of Felmoor Caravan Park - Extension to existing holiday comprising 139 no. pitches for holiday lodges plus ancillary features including water feature, play area and vintage vehicle museum – objections based on Neighbourhood Plan – Clerk to circulate original objection letters to Councillors for consideration following member of public request.

Clerk

24/01531/VARYCO - Eshott Heugh Paintballing Site – variation to a number of conditions following detailed drainage report – there has been an issue at this site with HGVs delivering equipment and blocking the road causing issues for those entering and exiting the zoo. Clerk to raise concerns about passing places not installed before works started.

Clerk

24/01770/FUL - Blackbrook Farm - Erection of new agricultural shed

24/02501/VARYCO - Land North West Of Burgham Park Golf Club - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission 24/00949/VARYCO for substitution of house type and garage to plot 18

24/02540/FUL - High Park Farm – Resubmission of plans for Change of use of agricultural building to a facility to dry paper pulp to produce animal bedding to include feeder, drum, burner, stack

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installation and control room. **(23/04081/FUL)** – Draft letter of objection had been circulated and with one amend and one addition it was agreed to submit this to NCC. Clerk

Planning Issues:

Bockenfield Caravan Park – blue lights illuminating entrance – reported to Public Protection but no response. Clerk

Felmoor Park – Entrance lighting and signage – reported to Public Protection but no response. Clerk

Felmoor Park – Not complying with planning approval for timber cabins – reported to NCC Planning Enforcement but no response. Clerk

34 Requested Agenda Items:

- Pumpkin Pie Nursery – covered in Item 27.

35 Correspondence:

- The Pension Regulator – workplace pensions re-enrolment request – duly completed
- NCC – Polling District and Polling Places Statutory Review – for information, Thirston Parish will continue to vote at Felton Village Hall
- NCC – Local Transport Plan Request – Previous requests have not made the priority list: widening access to Bockenfield layby has been passed to National Highways; passing places on Eshott to Acklington Road rejected due to lack of recorded injury accidents so intervention cannot be justified; footway from Verge at East Thirston to Wintrick Junction rejected due to distance involved and low number of pedestrians the likely cost is beyond the scope of the LTP. Agreed to submit – Lighting on The Peth, Anti-slip surface on narrow bank footpath, resurfacing of footpath adjacent to the farm out of West Thirston. Clerk

- NCC - Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultation – circulated – no comments
- NCC - Annual Joint Town & Parish Council Autumn Conference – Thursday 3 October – recirculate for Councillors to decide who is to attend. Clerk

- NCC – Bus Service Improvement Plan – opportunity to improve existing bus stops. 4 stops in Town Councils and 2 in Parish Councils to be considered and must hit certain criteria for consideration. TPC does not require anything at present.

- Acklington Neighbourhood Plan consultation – No comments to be made.
- Public Consultation by the Police & Crime Commissioner for Northumbria - the Police and Crime Plan within Northumbria – the Clerk has responded on behalf of TPC and circulated to Councillors if they wish to make individual responses.
- Email from Anne-Marie Trevelyan re personal data in relation to casework issues – asking what TPC would like AMT's office to do with any data they hold – either destroy or forward to incoming MP. The Clerk stated the only information possibly held would be in relation to Airfield meetings and it was agreed all information should be disposed of. Clerk

- Emails from one individual in relation to Parish Councils response to Eshott Airfield Application
- Text message re bus window being smashed by overhanging tree down The Peth including concerns that tree may fall down in heavy rains – this has been relayed to NCC.
- Bin Collection issue at new property – NCC has stated that they will not collect bin from private road and the bin needs leaving in Bockenfield layby. However when the owners of the bin are home in the evening to take the bin in there is already rubbish left from people walking past or flytipping. The Clerk has requested that NCC at least allow the driver to reverse one or two vehicle lengths up the private road so the bin is emptied and left out of sight but NCC have not agreed to this so Clerk to propose that the full bin be left in the layby but then the driver walk the bin slightly up the private road out of public sight if the vehicle cannot go up the road. Clerk

- Email requesting connection between West Moor and Felton from a resident of Thirston Court, West Moor - Residents of Westmoor have to drive into Felton. Walking would be an option but there is a small section of the road from the A1 to Felton which has no footpath so it would mean walking on a 60mph road which has safety issues. CC Sanderson responded that this would not be financially possible but would look to having the grass verges cut. It appears that both sides of the road have had the verges cut back (something the PC did not want on both sides of the road) and this leads to the question as to who is going to pay for this and also does this clash with the works our contractor is undertaking. Clerk to investigate. Clerk

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- Sisters and North Steads Community Windfarm Fund – Grants of up to £20k available for East Thirston and Eshott only for community projects – Clerk to investigate if funding could be used for the path requested to the Wintrick turn. Clerk
- Complaint re repairs to Burgham Road – covered in 29 (2b) above
- Airfield Draft Terms of Reference – Circulated and suggestions to put to the operators is to proceed with this without waiting for FPC and also there is no mention of resident representation and TPC believe a small number of residents from parts of the parish should be included to provide direct representation as opposed to everything coming via the Parish Council. Clerk
- Copy email re low flying – for information
- Copy email re airfield crash report – for information
- Numerous reports of fly tipping by bottle bank – settees and bedding flytipped and were removed by NCC.
- Public EV charging in West Thirston email – Clerk responded to state this has already been looked into and there are no suitable locations in West Thirston.
- Email request to complete Dissertation Survey - Assessing the Impact of Double-Hatted Councillors on Local Councils – circulated for completion if Councillors wish to do so.
- Email re dangerous tree – Clerk has informed NCC and sent photos *[This was subsequently removed on Friday 16 August]*
- Defib check email – checked and response sent
- Citizens Advice – Donation Request – not specifically budgeted for but agreed to donate £25 Clerk
- Hospice Care – Donation Request - £25 allocated in budget Clerk

36 Finance

- (a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £15,823.03 TPC funds and £3,106.33 FCJC Funds totaling £12,716.70. The balance was reconciled with the bank statement and Cllr Hantman signed the bank statement to confirm this.
- (b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

Payments this meeting:		
IB196	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 49 hours at £18.58 (£743.20) Home working allowance of 8 weeks (£8.00) Stationery (£91.77)	£842.97
IB197	Felton Cemetery 50% contribution	£442.24
IB198	Citizens Advice	£25.00
IB199	Hospice Care	£25.00

- (c) Income - None

37 Urgent Items

Access around the Northern powergrid substation – Clerk to request the site is cleared as a matter of urgency. Clerk

Sight lines on the exit from the Weldon Bridge/Felton junction need addressing – this is not in TPC parish but the Clerk will inform Longhorsley Clerk that this is an issue. Clerk

38 Items for next agenda –

- 2025 Meeting dates
- Position re Planning Application 20/04177/FUL
- Traffic Issues though Felton/West Thirston

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.42pm

Date of Next meeting: 19 September 2024 - Apologies received from Cllr Davidson