

## OVINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs. M. Davenport  
Clerk

Jubilee Cottage  
Ovington  
Northumberland  
NE42 6DH

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7.15 p.m. in the Reading Room, Ovingham

Present: Councillors Jordon, Gray, Campbell, Chalmers, Shield, Bryan, Jackson and MacDonald, County Councillor Kelly and 3 members of the public.

The meeting opened with one member of the public raising some concerns; Horsley Road with current diversion (from Wylam) and increase in traffic especially with school holidays ending – resident felt it was a dangerous corner; condition of steps leading down to the river at the east end of the village; rubbish left in the “beach” area by the river/whittle burn by youths. Cllr Jordon advised these would be followed up but she had already liaised with the Police regarding the youths congregating and unfortunately unless they were causing a nuisance, drinking under age, nothing much could be done. Police will patrol the area on a regular basis. The bottles etc. had been removed by volunteers and she also confirmed Green Ovingham carry out a litter pick twice a year and a resident also does a litter pick of the surrounding area on a regular basis.

1. No apologies for absence were received.
2. There were no declarations of interest.
3. The minutes of the last meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017, having previously been circulated were taken as read, approved and signed.
4. County Councillors Report: County Cllr Kelly had previously circulated his report and he stated how it had been a privilege to represent the Bywell Ward for 22 years, the last 8 as an independent, but felt the time was right for him to stand down. During that time, many changes had occurred at County level and he hopes that the next County Cllr for Bywell will continue to stand up for the interests of the ward. During his time, Northumberland has seen some 1000 affordable homes built, £1 million spent on machinery to repair potholes which Highways were gradually addressing. He highlighted some of the areas in Ovingham which had benefitted from the County Cllrs small scheme funding including the mower, footpath improvement (soon to be carried out) and the village green. Cllr Jordon also mentioned the dropped kerbs and thanked Cllr Kelly for his support and advice throughout the years on behalf of the Parish Council and residents of Ovingham. Cllr Campbell asked about the recent decision not to place planning notices in the Hexham Courant – Cllr Kelly replied it was not a member decision but one by personnel. The Cllrs thanked County Cllr Kelly, and he left the meeting at 7.50pm.
5. Matters arising: -
  - i) **Lane to rear of Castle View:** Cllr Jordon had nothing further to report from Highways.

- ii) **Traffic issues:** Cllr Gray had studied the data with regards the recent speed surveys and compared them with those from when the bridge had been closed. Whilst there were obvious periods during the day when traffic was greater, average speed overall was much the same (plus or minus 2mph max) since the bridge re-opened. The greatest increase in volume was on Horsley Road, but he felt that parking, although a problem, had the “benefit” of reducing speeding. Cllr Bryan asked if there was a trigger point for requesting a 20mph review - Cllr Gray thought this was an average of 35mph and NCC had indicated this had not been reached at any location. The Cllrs agreed that as there were 2 schools in Ovingham, and NCC had indicated their priority was to look at 20mph limits outside schools, they would continue to monitor and press for measures to be taken.
- Cllr Jordon also advised that following a letter from a resident in Windsor Crescent asking for a disabled parking bay, she had contacted Highways who had visited the area and confirmed that a parking bay could be incorporated. However, NCC advised that 100% approval was required from residents and therefore they will be contacting them shortly.
- iii) **Village projects:** Cllr Jordon reported that an estimate of £1000 had been quoted for clearing the “Red Pond” area and asked if Cllr Chalmers had discussed the project with Green Ovingham. Two volunteers had come forward but after further discussion it was agreed that until the proposed path down from the chalets was completed, it was best putting this project on hold.
- iv) **Policies and Standing Orders:** Cllr Chalmers thought a policy on discrimination should be included. Cllr Jordon replied this was being looked at by NALC in the revised Code of Conduct; the Clerk confirmed that this had been deferred until after the May elections. Once received, it was likely that the policy will be adopted by the Parish Council.
- v) **Forthcoming Parish Council Elections:** Confirmation had been received that 6 Cllrs (Jordon, Gray, Chalmers, Campbell, Bryan & MacDonald) had automatically been re-elected to Council. The Clerk advised that co-option will have to be considered at the next meeting (18 May).
- vi) **Closed Churchyard:** Cllrs Jordon & Gray, together with Neil Ramsey representing the PCC, had met with Jim Wardle who had drawn up plans for parking. A copy of this had been forwarded to the Archdeacon for consideration. Cllr Jordon emphasised that the process, if taken forward, would be a long drawn out procedure and may be turned down ultimately, but this was the first step and she felt it could help the parking problems in the village. The Cllrs agreed.
- vii) **Transparency arrangements including a new website:** The Clerk had uploaded some documents for the new website and was gradually working chronologically backwards with this. She advised the existing website (run by Phil Holden) will be gradually wound down but that following Cllr Jacksons decision not to stand as a

Cllr, a second administrator would be needed. She suggested that whoever volunteered, could concentrate on topics such as History & Community and the Clerk will continue with official documentation.

**6. Accounts to pay/be paid:**

M. Davenport (Salary & expenses March)	£321.01
Ovingham Joint Burial Committee (annual precept)	£2565.00
P Holden (petrol for mower)	£23.07
Ovingham Reading Room (Room Hire, March)	£18.00
R Little (Mole control)	£50.00
D Jordon (trees & plants)	£326.32

The Clerk advised that although the amount above for the annual precept for OJBC had been calculated correctly, an error had been made on the invoice and she hadn't received an amended copy so this would be deferred until the May meeting. Cllr Jordon had spent £283.85 for new trees so far, but the Parish Council had already been reimbursed by NWL.

**7. Planning applications:**

**17/00050/FUL Bridge End:** refurbish existing pub with new extension to the side and new pitched roof to replace flat roof. Cllr Gray had been in contact with the planning officer at NCC and on behalf of the Parish Council had forwarded concerns. These included the proposed parking area and the access to/from River View. Cllr Gray thought it could be some time before the application is fully considered.

He also updated the meeting with regards the Piper Road development. He noticed that per the ecology statement, shrubs/tress will be planted. Cllr Gray also advised notice had just been posted on NCC website regarding a planning application at Ovingham First School. Although this was technically within the Parish of Ovington, as in the past when any application had been submitted, comments from Ovingham Parish Council will be considered.

- 8. To consider defibrillator for the village:** Cllr Jordon asked for confirmation that all Cllrs had read the information Cllr Chalmers had circulated – this was confirmed. Cllr Chalmers commented that she would need to check that the offer made by the cardiac specialist to fund a second defibrillator if communities purchased one was still valid and if so, thought the Playing Field would be a good option for one. Public access was vital but Cllr Campbell thought care had to be taken with siting to ensure the least likelihood of damage/vandalism. Ovingham Middle School had recently bought a defibrillator, although whether this was only accessible during term time was unknown, (it was likely to be a paediatric one) and with a machine on the other side of the river, perhaps the Reading Room was not the best position. Cllr Shield thought residents would benefit if placed by the Playing Fields. The White Swan was also considered as a possible site being a central point in the village – Cllr Bryan will investigate this suggestion. The Cllrs agreed that the Parish Council would purchase one defibrillator in any event and asked that Cllr Chalmers arrange for the representative to attend the next Parish Council meeting when queries such as siting be answered as well as confirmation of the above offer. Cllr Chalmers agreed but pointed out she was unavailable for

the May meeting although she was happy for the Parish Council to proceed dependent on the advice received.

9. **To consider submitting application for funding (S106) for playing field:** The Clerk had been informed that a sum of £1388 was available from S106 Housing Development Grant to be used for new play equipment. Application needed to be submitted before 1 of 2 panel meetings for consideration – 6<sup>th</sup> June or 5<sup>th</sup> September – and it was agreed the latter date was the better option. Cllr Bryan would look at options.
10. **To consider Risk Assessment for Audit purposes:** The Clerk had circulated a copy of the existing risk assessment and advised that in her opinion, no amendments were required. This was adopted.
11. **OPPFUG – new constitution draft and maintenance agreement:** Cllrs Bryan and Shield had looked at the existing constitution which had been drawn up some years ago and circulated the new draft of the constitution and maintenance agreement. Cllr Jordon asked that all the Cllrs look at these carefully due to their importance and she wondered if a working party could be set up. Both she and Cllr Gray had some initial questions including the proposal regarding individual membership and make up of the management committee. Cllr Bryan reiterated that it was purely a draft, but he had compared it with that of Wylam although accepted there were differences between the way the two playing fields are run. He thought that OPC would need to invest about £4000 per annum although the Clerk said this was perhaps over cautious. Cllr Jordon wondered if funds could be raised by OviFun too. She also would want advice from NALC. As the AGM of OPPFUG was scheduled for the end of May, it was suggested by the Chair that a task and finish group be set up with 2 persons from OPPFUG and 2 Cllrs which would report back to the next Parish Council meeting.
12. **Annual Village Inspection:** Cllr Jordon had updated the village plan with details received so far but asked that all reports be forwarded as soon as possible.
13. **Storage of playing field mower:** As confirmed at the last meeting, the mower was currently stored in the garden of a resident and was covered under the terms of the Parish Council Insurance. However, this was not felt to be ideal and Cllr Shield had agreed to look at options including buying a shed. Cllr MacDonald thought an outlay of about £800 was acceptable as it would likely give 10 years' usage. However, putting it on the playing field could mean it was not the best option as it would not be easily monitored. Cllr Jordon believed there was space available in the cemetery, in one of the chapels, and she would raise this at the next meeting of the Burial Committee. It would mean putting a gate in the hedge between the cemetery and field but could be the easier solution. It was agreed that for the time being, the mower would remain stored at its present location.
14. **Village environment:** Cllr Jordon reported that complaints had been received about peacocks wandering on to the roads/properties. The Clerk was asked to report this to Environment Agency. Youths have been congregating on the riverbank and leaving rubbish but as previously advised above, unless they are causing a nuisance, they cannot be moved on. Trees had been purchased for Burnside (out of NWL replacement tree funding) and a request put in the Oracle for suggestions for other areas.

Peter Hind, handyman, should be starting his first set of maintenance jobs shortly. Complaints have been received about the shuttle bus (in operation due to Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam being closed) parking to the rear of the church. The Clerk will contact the bus company. Footbridge repairs are shortly to commence. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Adrian Jackson was not able to accept the grass cutting tender. Trevor Bell has been approached and will take this on.

15. **Committee Reports:** Cllr Jordon had circulated the report from Reading Room. She mentioned the pre-inspection for the playing field was due in May – Clerk replied June was the official play inspection – as there were still items to look at. Cllr Campbell reported that the concrete seat on the field had been damaged (vandalized) and he would check to see if it could be removed. Cllr Jordon said the wooden exercise beams were not being repaired and queried whether they needed to be removed. Cllr Bryan said they had been given a low risk assessment on the last inspection but would be monitored.
16. **Correspondence:**
  - a) **Letter from Cllr Shield regarding reasons for standing down as a Councillor:** The Clerk advised this would be addressed by Cllr Jordon and Cllr Shield and the residents left the meeting.
17. Distribution was still being circulated.
18. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 7.15 pm.
19. **Any other business:** There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40pm.