

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 15th September 2015 at Ovington Village Hall

Present: Nigel Parkes – Chairman

Margaret Towler – Vice Chairman

Maureen Begg – Councillor

Amanda Wilson – Clerk

Shaun Hanson - Councillor

One village resident

Apologies: Ian Guest - Councillor

The minutes of the last meeting on 4th August 2015 were approved and subsequently signed by Nigel Parkes

Declaration of Interest

No declaration of interest were made.

Matters Arising:

- i. BT Way Leave Compensation – No progress since the last meeting, the relevant contact is on bereavement leave. Mrs Begg previously chased BT and spoke to Sue Wildgoose at BT who advised that this has now progressed to the next stage. £1,000 has been offered previously. **Action: Mrs Begg to continue to follow up with BT.**
- ii. Ovington Bridge – Mrs Begg has spoken to George Rowlinson (DCC Councillor) who has confirmed agreement that the bridge wall has not been repaired to the original length and has asked for all information be sent to and through him until a satisfactory outcome has been achieved. Previous history:- Brian Harris the Durham County Council (DCC) Conservation Officer had agreed at the meeting held on site last year that the wall was too short. He had stated at that meeting that he was going to report back to Mick Donaldson (DCC Bridge Engineer) for his response and action. The Parish Council confirmed that they want the shortfall of wall reinstated but have given no timescale to date. Historical meeting notes retained for the record:- Mrs Begg had received 1 No. photograph from English Heritage at York which unfortunately doesn't show the whole bridge. MB counted 20 No coping stones and 1 No end corbel and is of the opinion that the current bridge is short of roughly 2m of stonework. Mrs Begg confirmed that she had received an email two weeks ago from Brian Harris who reported that he would hopefully provide an update for this meeting however none had been received to date. DCC currently denying that any more action is required on this and the bridge has been reinstated correctly, MB to continue to dispute on behalf of OPC. **Action: Mrs Begg to progress.**
- iii. Increased Broadband Service to Ovington – A successful meeting was held on the 2nd September 2015 to which approximately 25 – 30 people attended. Both BT and Digital Durham (DD) who were represented at the meeting, confirmed understanding that there was a need for faster broadband into the village. Tony Thompson (DD) assured the meeting that Ovington had been prioritised but cautioned us not expect results or progress overnight. It was also made clear that Whorlton was required to “upgrade” (Phase 2 scheduled from July 2016 – 2018) before Ovington could be considered. Previous history:- Mrs Begg informed the meeting that she had received an email from BT which reported that there was no further update but advising to contact them again in September when they may be able to provide further information. Since then Digital Durham (Janine Docherty) has advised that they will be looking at options mid September. **Action: Mrs Begg to monitor**

- iv. Public Footpaths - Concerns had been raised re the public footpath down to the river opposite Ovington edge in respect of the barbed wire fencing alongside the path with regards to health and safety plus overgrown hedge to pavement in the same vicinity. DCC Public Right's of Way Officer has agreed that a top rail should replace the barbed wire. As no action has been taken to date Mrs Begg has emailed the Public Rights of Way Officer for a time schedule of when the work will be undertaken and received an update on 11th March 2015 reporting that work will be undertaken shortly however nothing had been completed to date. **Action: Mrs Begg – No progress.**
- v. Grass Cutting – Nigel Parkes has been to see Mike Bains again following a Parish Councillor voluntarily strimming the grass around the area in question i.e. Porch Cottage/Rokeby Cottage), Mike still not impressed with the lack of satisfactory solution however it has been tidied up and the situation will be monitored. PC volunteers will continue to trim the area 2 -3 times/year. History - due to mainly safety and but also safety related cost issues Mill Gardens cannot trim the grass in this area. Agreed to again contact Mike Bains and offer the services of OPC to cut this grass once a year and sow wild flower seeds, the type of which are currently displayed beautifully on the entrance to Bishop Auckland via the bypass. Other areas now being attended to. **Action: Councillors**
- vi. Signing of Cheques – A Bank Mandate for Yorkshire Bank was signed by all four councillors to allow Nigel Parkes and Ian Guest to be added as signatories to the Parish Council cheques. Mrs Begg had previously explained that she had been advised by the Bank that the Mandate would not come into force until both Mr Parkes and Mr Guest presented evidence in person to the Bank. Mrs Begg reported that she had not yet taken the form to the Bank to check what documentation was required by Mr Parkes and Mr Guest. **Action: Mrs Begg ongoing**
- vii. Maypole rope & flag – A new rope & flag has been purchased and installed. Agreed by all that the flag should only be flown from Easter to September due to the detrimental effect of the weather on it outside of this period. Exceptions will be special events and deaths. Both flag and rope to be added to the asset register. **Action: Complete**
- viii. Sewage Treatment Works – All but completed, a neat job with no disruption to villagers. Upgrading works commenced on 3rd August 2015 and will be completed 30th October 2015. All residents advised by Northumbrian Water and footpath down to the river temporarily closed. **Action – Margaret Towler - monitor situation.**
- ix. Transparency Code – Internet Access – Accounts & other Parish Council statutory documents have been uploaded onto www.hugofox.com which offers free web space for Parish Councils in order that they comply with current legislation and requirements. **Action: Amanda Wilson on-going webpage maintenance.**
- x. Parish Council Newsletter – will be issued September, January and May only. **Action: Mrs Begg.**
- xi. Village Green Oak tree damage a continued concern, expert advice to be sort ref. future integrity of the tree (previously documented) – **Action: Mrs Begg**
- xii. Parish Notice Board has been varnished, thank you Nigel Parkes. New latch to be installed so a key isn't required to display notices – **Action: Nigel Parkes**

- xiii. "Ovington" Sign (The Maypole Village) rock solid and will have some spring flowers planted in front of it – **Action: Nigel Parkes**
- xiv. Advanced "zig-zag" road warning signs on entrance to village from the South being obscured by vegetation. DCC have been advised and the hedge has been cut back. There are other signs around the village that remain obscured e.g. footpath & right hand turn to Whorlton. DCC to be contacted again. **Action: Maureen Begg**
- xv. Weather vane on top of the Maypole needs attention – it's squeaking and complaints have been made to Councillors; cost to hire a cherry picker circa £500 per visit (20m height) prohibitive. Other options to be looked into i.e. lower cost access options, fire brigade, army etc. Amanda Wilson also volunteered a "look at" remotely by a Drone (foc) to see if anything untoward can be seen prior to the expense or inconvenience of appointing other access solutions. Drone to be "employed" only if the company recruited to access the top of the Maypole feels it's a worthwhile exercise, as notice will need to be given to all properties bordering the Village Green that a Drone will be in operation. **Action: Nigel Parkes and Amanda Wilson (Drones only).**

Consideration of any current Planning Applications

a) Ian Bainbridge - Hill Top Farm – Gypsum re-processing.

Application to expand his recycling plant. Concerns expressed over unsuitable and increased traffic through the village. A letter of concern to be drafted and sent to DCC. **Action: Mrs Begg**

b) AWSM - Lane Head Farm – Human Waste Recycling Licence

AWSM Current Licence for recycling human waste has been revoked but still active pending appeal regarding a breach of licence at both Hutton Magna and Bishop Auckland. Hutton Magna Parish Council have asked Ovington Parish Council to write to Gemma Palmer, Environment Agency and oppose the appeal by the end of the week i.e. w/e 18th September 2015. **Action: Nigel Parkes**

Financial Report:

Mrs Begg as the Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting that there had been three bills paid since the last meeting: £10 to Ovington Village Hall – hire of hall (Cheque 324 dated 05/08/15); £33.50 Ian Guest – Maypole rope & flag (Cheque 325 dated 05/08/15) and £102 to Mills Gardens Ltd – grass cutting (Cheque 323 dated 05.08.15). Receipts - none. To date the Parish Council had £1.57 in the current account and £2,873.86 in the savings account.

Future bills to pay – Ovington Village Hall £10 (hire of hall 15/08/15); Mill Gardens – Grass Cutting x 2 invoice not yet received. Ovington village hall hire invoice was agreed and authorised to pay by the Councillors.

Correspondence:

- 1) Durham Police poster ref. newsletter to be displayed on the village notice board.

Any other Business:

- A) Register of Interest declaration – Councillors requested to go online to DCC website and ensure theirs is up to date. Thank you.
- B) Transparency Fund – agreed to apply for as much as possible to help comply with this new requirement e.g. £350 for a PC, £100 scanner, Antivirus, Dongle and any Training. Funding available for access for the next 3 years only, therefore looking to apply for one-offs so it won't cost the Parish Council in the long term.

Action: Mrs Begg

The next Parish Council Meeting was arranged for Tuesday 17th November 2015 at 7:45pm and the following meeting after this will be held on Tuesday 12th January 2016 at 7:45pm both in Ovington Village Hall.

(Hall booked at meeting with Mrs Levett)