

Minutes of Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 23 September 2024

Those present were George Straughen (GS), John Grahamslaw (JJG), Dougie Watkin (DW) Alison Murphy (AM) and Sheila Johnson (SJ). Several members of the public were also present. Colin Hardy (CH) NCC County Councillor was also present. PC Curtis Ritchie and a colleague attended the meeting briefly.

- 9.24.1 To accept apologies for absence**
Apologies accepted from Sheelagh Hume (SH) and Jim Greenwood (JG).
- 9.24.2 To make any Declaration of Interest**
GS declared an interest in any items relating to Norham Development Trust (NDT), as a director of NDT, and to Norham Recreational Trust (NRT), which governs the Jubilee Field, as a Trustee of NRT. JJG declared an interest also as a Trustee of NRT. AM declared an interest in item 9.24.7 (Heat Pumps St Cuthberts Square). GS also reported that a complaint had been made, by a member of the public, to the Monitoring Officer against him, JG and DW regarding the meeting on 22 July.
- 9.24.3 To confirm Minutes of previous meeting**
After discussion the minutes of the meeting of 22 July 2024 as originally drafted by the Clerk were approved. AM indicated she wished it noted on those minutes that she did not approve the minutes in so far as they related to parts of Item 7.24.4.
- 9.24.4 Matters arising from Minutes**
 - i Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Plan**
It had been previously agreed that a one-off single item meeting of the parish council would be arranged - agreed this would now take place on 1st October with Sarah Brannigan, Neighbourhood Planning, Northumberland County Council, being training on the pros and cons, and uses, of neighbourhood plans.

ii Public Conveniences

No further anti-social behaviour in relation to WCs had been reported, and they are in reasonable order. EDF are planning to install a smart meter at some point.

iii Play Areas

GS indicated that there were some signs of possible corrosion on the big slide on the green. Agreed GS/JJG will carry out an inspection shortly and thereafter a decision would be made as to how to proceed with the slide, and the recommendation by RoSPA that more grasslok should be installed round the slide. Two quotes had been obtained for grasslok from Playdale (who originally installed the new play equipment) and they were high. Agreed it would be sensible to decide on the future of the slide first.

iv Community Police Report

PC Curtis Ritchie and his colleague were welcomed to the meeting. They had nothing further to add to the report below. DW thanked them for arranging for traffic cars to be present at school twice recently to monitor speeding. PC Ritchie reiterated that unless issues were reported, the community police could do nothing.

The community police report: -

Crimes and incidents - No crimes to report on this period and none occurring in the surrounding areas which might impact on the community and or anyone's vulnerability.

Incident wise there is nothing to report on either.

Local matters – No new reports of ASB in the area or issues with off road bikes and no new reports of speeding either. As ever should anything occur of this nature then it should be reported by the appropriate means (101 or a web submission or 999 in an emergency)

v Undergrounding of cables
Nothing to report.

vi Norham Development Trust

GS confirmed the refurbishment of 1 Tower Cottages was nearly complete, a tenant agreed, and it was hoped they might move in within the next month.

NDT continue to run Newsround, and the website is undergoing a refresh.

As regards the renewables project, AM indicated that she held a petition calling for a parish poll. It was explained that a parish poll could only be called for at a parish meeting (as opposed to a parish council meeting), which could be convened at any time by 2 councillors or 6 registered electors. Any costs of such a poll would be recharged to the Parish Council by the County Council (who organise such a poll once the proper procedures have been followed), and those costs would fall to be recovered from the electors in the parish through the precept. GS pointed out however that in light of NDT's earlier announcement that the planning application for the renewables project would be withheld for the time being to provide an opportunity for further discussions within the whole community, a parish poll might at this stage in any event be premature.

vii Jubilee Field

GS confirmed 2 gate posts have been replaced with the help of JJG. More pointing required on the boundary wall. Otherwise, the field is in good condition and well used.

viii Parking in Castle Street

GS confirmed a further amended plan had been received, the intention of which is to increase the available parking in Castle Street. Agreed that copies of the plan would be made available to the public and any constructive comments would be considered. Any comments may be sent to the Parish Clerk norhamparishclerk@gmail.com

ix Proposed 20mph Speed limit

It had recently been confirmed that it was now against government guidelines to allow 20mph speed limits on a through road. After discussion agreed that perhaps more/new signage and/or more traffic calming paintwork on roads especially at the Village Hall corner might help. To be discussed further with the County Council.

x Land at Glebefield

No further meetings have yet been held with Diocese representatives. The area is allocated for housing in the NCC Local Plan so it is inevitable that there will be new housing there in the not-too-distant future. DW confirmed County Council had agreed to provide £100000 to connect the school to the mains sewer so it would no longer use the very old sewage system by the Glebe Field (and £100000 for a new classroom).

xi Lower Tweed Trail

GS reported the finger post at the corner of Village Green has been temporarily re-erected. Two trees had fallen over the path in Castle Wood, but the County Council team had made them passable, though a footbridge nearby still needed attention.

xii Paton & Co Donations

Noted that Paton & Co have so far donated £2250 which is very generous. To date there is an unspent balance of £1200.04.

xiii Local Transport Plan Programme 2025-26

After discussion agreed that the three priorities for 2025-26 would be

a) Resurfacing of Boathouse Lane,

b) Resurfacing of Lane between West Street and St Cuthberts Square

c) Traffic calming measures throughout the village

9.24.5 Stackyard Lane Hedge

Work had been instructed by a resident on this hedge, which was encroaching on their property, so this was no longer an issue.

9.25.6 Trees

AM has raised several issues regarding low hanging branches around the village -these have all been addressed.

9.24.7 Heat Pumps St Cuthberts Square

The noise from vibration of heat pumps installed by Bernicia is causing significant upset to other residents who have approached the parish council for support. After discussion agreed that a letter raising the issue would be sent to Bernicia. CH confirmed this has been a common issue in other places and that some remedial works have been carried out by Bernicia.

9.24.8 Review of Clerks Salary

VLC has indicated that she is content with her level of pay. No review was therefore required. VLC was thanked for all her work.

9.24.9 War Memorial

GS and JJG had inspected war memorial at the request of Jim Gibson. It was agreed that some remedial work was required as the stonework was deteriorating. The War Memorials Trust may be able to provide grant funding – the first step in applying is to provide a detailed photographic survey.

Jim Gibson confirmed that he would be able to do this.

9.24.10 Mobile Phone Signal

NCC had sent some results regarding their survey of mobile phone signals in the village. Vodaphone would appear to be

best, and Three worst. NCC are now seeking information from residents regarding any addresses in the village/parish which do not have phone signal. Anyone affected may contact the Parish Clerk (norhamparishclerk@gmail.com) with information to be passed on to NCC

FINANCE

9.24.11 To confirm completion of Audit
VLC confirmed the requisite Declaration of Exemption had been returned to the Local Councils audit team so nothing further was required. The next step is fixing of the parish council's budget for 2025-26 at the November meeting

9.24.12 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments from Current Account:

5 Aug

S Broadbent	£192.45	WCs
Norham In Bloom	£250	Donation

3 Sept

D Gibson	£2040	Pathworks
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9 Sept

S Broadbent	£150	WCs
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Receipts Into Current Account:

2 Aug

NCC	£2000	WCs
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6 Sept

NCC	£2900	Precept 2
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19 Sept

NCC	£1700	Pathworks
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Payments from Business Account:

Nil

Receipts into Business account

2 Sept

Bank

£2.28

Interest

- 9.24.13 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Accounts**
As at 23rd September bank balances are
Current Account: £11919.77
Business Account: £613.71
- 9.24.14 To consider Planning Consultation 23/02607/FUL**
Salutation Caravan Park
GS confirmed that the parish council had unanimously
objected to this application in its original form. A great
deal of work had been carried out to meet concerns, but
some concerns still remained. A draft response had been
sent to Councillors who have been asked for their
comments.
- 9.24.15 To look at Planning Applications and decisions**
7 Castle Street: Granted
19 Castle Street: Granted
A query had been sent to NCC Planning enforcement
department regarding solar panels in a conservation area as
there appeared to be some confusion as to whether they
were allowed or not.
- 9.24.16 To look at state of Roads and Pavements**
The metal railings by the East Newbiggin crossroads were
still in a dangerous state. Continued flooding at Norham
bridge had been reported – it seemed that the gullies need
to be cleared again. The hedges round the pétanque area
need trimmed -these are believed to be the responsibility of
NCC.
GS reported that meeting had been held with Graeme
Bucknall and Bob Hodgeson from NCC, both of which had
resulted in a great deal of work having been done. Agreed
that thanks would be sent to their teams for a job well done.

This had included clearing of the path from Bridge Farm to the bridge. The path up past Birchill towards the station was impeded by the hedge. The landowner will be asked to arrange for the hedge to be cut. The hedges on Fishers Walk have also just been cut back.

**9.24.17 General Correspondence
None**

Any Other Business (For information only)

Date of next meeting: 25 November