

Acklington Parish Council

Chairman: Jeff Newton

Clerk: Elaine Brown
58 Westmorland Avenue
Newbiggin by the Sea
Northumberland
NE64 6RN
Tel: 07588659600

In accordance with Paragraphs 7 & 10(2) (b) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 , I hereby summon you to attend a Meeting of **ACKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL** to be held online on Tuesday 1st September 2020 at 7pm.

Elaine Brown PSLCC, CiLCA
Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

To join the meeting:
<https://zoom.us/j/92023474696>

Meeting ID: 920 2347 4696
Passcode: 809390

Dial by your location
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+44 208 080 6591 United Kingdom

OPEN SESSION

At the invitation of the Chairperson to consider any questions from members of the public prior to commencement of the business to be transacted on the agenda. Questions are limited to a 15 minute period or 3 minutes per person.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

C025/20 Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence

C026/20 -Declarations of Interests

To record any Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda and the granting of any dispensations

C027/20 Minutes of previous meeting

To agree as a correct record the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held 7th July 2020

C028/20 Clerks Report

To receive for information a report from the Clerk on actions taken since the previous meeting. Clerks report attached.

C029/20 Standing Item – Report from County Councillor

To receive a report from County Councillor Watson

C030/20 Finance:

- a) Financial Summary at 31st July 2020 Treasurers Account £2266.64, Business Bank Instant £16666.75
- b) To note receipt of bank reconciliation and budget monitoring at 31st July 2020

c) To authorise payments

07/07/2020	560	Playsafety Ltd	Inspection	£94.80
07/07/2020	561	Zurich	Insurance	£257.60
10/07/2020	562	Safety Signs & Notices Ltd, Shop 4 your signs	Signage	£41.94
20/07/2020	563	Staintons	Landscaping	£262.00
27/07/2020	564	Stephen Carey Fund	Defibrillator	£1750.00
27/07/2020	565	Vistaprint/Post Office	Signage/Postage	£46.31
31/08/2020	566	HMRC	PAYE	£39.60
31/08/2020	567	Clerk	Wages/Expenses	£190.04
31/08/2020	568	Huck Nets	Chains/sleeves	£190.80
31/08/2020	569	Shop 4 your signs	PROW signs	£36.90

d) To note receipts

09/07/2020	Lloyds Bank	Interest	£0.48
24/07/2020	Community Foundation	Grant	£5168.00
24/08/2020	Acklington Community Team	Donation to Defibrillator	£200.00

C031/20 Planning:

a. To consider any planning matters:

Pre-app Enquiry - Land North of Acklington School and No 18

C032/20 Acklington Village Hall Trustee Arrangements

To defer to the November meeting of the Council subject to the receipt of the required further information.

C033/20 Local Transport Plan 2021/22

To set priorities for Acklington Parish for the year 2021/22

C034/20 Community Access defibrillator guardians.

To agree to two named guardians

C035/20 Footpath Working Party Update

To receive the update for information.

C036/20 Application to Cllr Watsons Members Small Schemes.

To approve the application for funding.

C037/20 Cost of replacement laptop

To consider the purchase of IT equipment

C038/20 Play Area Consultation

To delegate the progression of a consultation to the Clerk.

C039/20 Planning for the Future White Paper Consultation

To note for information with Members to submit their comments to the Clerk by 1st October.

Next meeting: Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council TUESDAY 3rd November 2020 at 7.00 pm

Actions from previous meeting for information.

C022/20– Signage to deter dog fouling installed at entrance to Station Woods.

C024/20– Signage to deter parking on the grass installed.

C025/20 – Acklington Playspace re-opened with signage in place.

Matters dealt with out of meeting**Landscaping at play area**

Staintons Coast and Country Gardening Services carried out some maintenance to the landscaping in the play area.

Replacements chains ordered for the basket swing.

Community Access Defibrillator

The Community Access Defibrillator was installed at the Village Hall.

Churchill Way – resurfacing update

Churchill Way has been deemed by the Micro Surfacing contractor not to be suitable for this kind of treatment due to its poor condition. NCC Highways have therefore retained the budget allocation for this street and are now seeking to upgrade the scheme for the more conventional road resurfacing works. Subsequently, NCC still remain committed to delivering this financial year, only a different treatment specification.

Adoption of Dairy Court

The Developer has advised that the outstanding work had been completed and NCC Highways will be looking to visit to inspect the works. However, full adoption will not take place until the Development to the East have connected their drainage system. The site had been set back due to the Covid pandemic but are due to start again on site soon.

Clerks Report on Agenda Items

C031/20 Planning:

Pre-app Enquiry - Land North of Acklington School and No 18 -

Northumberland Estates have advised of a pre-planning application enquiry and supporting information, submitted to NCC on 24th August. The proposal involves 4 new houses and new road on land to the north of 16-24 Acklington and Acklington School. Part of the land already has planning permission for a single house.

Northumberland Estates would be interested to hear the views of the local community and have invited the Chair and selection of Councillors to meet to discuss the proposals during the day, sometime in September.

C032/20 Acklington Village Hall Trustee Arrangements

Cllr Critchlow was still to forward the documents requested by the Clerk, subject to being able to access the Village Hall

RECOMMENDED that this item be deferred to the November meeting of the Council.

C030/20 Bank Reconciliation on budget monitoring at 31st July

The Accounts to 31st July reconcile and are enclosed for information as Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the receipt of the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring document.

C033/20 Local Transport Plan 2021/22

Feedback has been provided on the submissions for 2020/21 and the Parish Council is now requested to consider the priorities for 2021/22. The Feedback from 2020/21 and the record of the highways and transport related requests relevant to Acklington that are currently contained on the Directory of Requests database are enclosed as Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDED that the Council set three priorities for the year 2021/22.

C034/20 Community Access defibrillator guardians.

The North East Ambulance Service require 2 guardians to be registered for the site, to carry out weekly checks on behalf of the community, to ensure that the defibrillator is in full working order, should it be required. A checklist of the requirements of the guardians is enclosed as Appendix 3

RECOMMENDED that the council nominate 2 guardians

C035/20 Footpath Working Party Update

Cllr Malone has prepared the report from the Footpath Working Party which is enclosed for information as Appendix 4.

RECOMMENDED that the report be received for information.

C036/20 Application to Cllr Watsons Members Small Schemes.

It is proposed that an application be submitted to County Councillors Members Small Schemes in the name of Acklington Parish Council on behalf of the Parish Footpath Working Group, the application is enclosed at Appendix 5

RECOMMENDED that the Council agree to submit the application.

C037/20 Cost of replacement laptop

ACER Aspire 5 A514-52 14" Laptop - Intel® Core™ i5, 256 GB SSD, Silver £499

MCAFFEE LiveSafe Premium 2020 - 1 year for unlimited devices £79

RECOMMENDED that the Council consider purchasing the equipment detailed above.

C038/20 Play Area Consultation

Play manufacturers are looking at the costs and visuals for changing the tunnel slide to an open embankment slide and also options for replacing the roundabout and talking poles area. This information will not be ready for the September Parish Council meeting.

RECOMMENDED that it be delegated to the Clerk to progress a consultation out of meeting and return the feedback to the November meeting of the Council.

C039/20 Planning for the Future White Paper Consultation

National Association of Local Council are collating responses to the consultation to submit a response on behalf of the sector. Their summary and questions they intend on responding to are enclosed as Appendix 6. They have requested feedback by 15th October.

RECOMMENDED that members submit their feedback to the Clerk by 1st October and it be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman to respond.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Acklington Parish Council held 7.00pm 7th July 2020 via Zoom.

PRESENT: Cllrs J Newton (Chair) L Craig, E Critchlow, D Barras, N Gair, S Ingleby, S Malone, T Mezza, S Thorpe and the Parish Clerk Miss E Brown.

Also, present County Councillor J Watson

C013/20 Apologies for absence – Cllr Orr – The apologies were received.

C014/20 - Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda and the granting of any dispensations – None.

C015/20 Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held 5th May 2020 be agreed as a true record.

C016/20 Clerks Report

The Clerk provided an update on matters from the last meeting.

It was noted with thanks that Councillor Newton had completed the refurbishment of the coal tubs.

C017/20 Standing Item – Report from County Councillor

County Councillor Watson continued to chase up the installation of the Vehicle Activated Speed Sign with NCC. Crossroad to join Warkworth Road – a request had submitted to have overgrowth cut back. County Councillor Watson informed he had funding remaining in his Members Small Scheme, it was suggested that this could be beneficial to the play area works or the footpath warden scheme. Funding had also been promised to the Village Hall.

Covid-19 anti-body tests had been carried out by NCC; residents of Northumberland were noted to have a low number of anti-bodies. Cllr Watson praised the residents of Northumberland in how well they have handled these unprecedented times.

C018/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/20

- i. To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor – Members were presented with a copy of the Internal Auditors Report.
RESOLVED that the minor recommendations be accepted.
- ii. approve the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 – Members were presented with the Annual Governance Statement.
RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman.
- iii. **To approve the annual accounts for 2019/20** – Members were presented with the Accounting Statement.
RESOLVED that the Accounting Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman.

- iv. **Explanation of Variances** -Members were presented with the explanation of variances.
RESOLVED that the variances be noted.
- v. **Certification of Exemption** – Members were presented with the Certificate of Exemption.
RESOLVED that Acklington Parish Council be exempt from a limited assurance review under section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

- vi. **Notice of public rights.** Members were presented with the notice of public rights publication of Annual Governance Statement (Exempt Authority) –
RESOLVED that the audit and accounting records be made available for public inspection during the period 17th July to 28th August.

C019/20 Finance:

- a) Financial Summary at 30th June 2020 Treasurers Account £1093.09, Business Bank Instant £13666.27
- b) Bank Reconciliation and Budget Monitoring at 30th June 2020
RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring documents be received.
- c) Payments
RESOLVED that the following payments be agreed.

19/05/2020	555	Widescope	Hard drive	£71.99
07/07/2020	556	Clerk	Wages/expenses	£213.91
07/07/2020	557	HMRC	PAYE	£44.20
07/07/2020	558	Cancelled Cheque		0.00
07/07/2020	559	J A Ainsworth	Internal Audit	£80.00

The Clerk provided an update on the issues with the corrupted USB stick and the laptop. It was agreed that costs for a replacement laptop/netbook be brought back to the next meeting.

- d) Receipts
RESOLVED that the following receipts be noted.

11/05/2020	Lloyds Bank	Interest	£0.47
09/06/2020	Lloyds Bank	Interest	£0.42

Lloyds Internet Banking – arrangements are being made to move to online banking.

C020/20 Planning:

There were no planning matters for consideration.

C021/20 To adopt revised Safeguarding Policy

RESOLVED that the Safeguarding Policy be adopted.

C022/20 To consider the purchase of a post mounted litter bin for 101/007 – Cllr Malone

Following an increase of dog fouling incidents at Station Wood, it was suggested a bin be located in the layby. Northumberland County Council had no issue with the installation of a bin but would prefer a ground mounted bin be provided. The parish council would have to cover the cost. Signage was also discussed as an option for encouraging dog owners to behave responsibly and not allow their dogs to foul the footpath.

RESOLVED that signage be installed to deter dog fouling in the first instance.

C022/20 Acklington Village Hall Trustee Arrangements

Cllr Critchlow would forward the documents requested by the Clerk subject to being able to access the village hall due to Covid-19 restrictions.

C023/20 Consultation for Street Naming adjacent Acklington Village Hall

The Parish Council had been invited to consult on the naming of the estate as Cheviot Meadows.

RESOLVED that the Council agreed to support the name Cheviot Meadows.

C024/20 Concerns of play areas being used as an exercise area and car park – Cllr Mezza

A member informed of increasing numbers of cars parking on the grass in front of the play area and adults using the play areas for exercise. It was noted that the adult use was likely a consequence of the gyms being closed.

RESOLVED that signage be installed requesting 'NO PARKING ON THE GRASS'

C025/20 Re-opening of Village Play Area

The re-opening of the play area was discussed and the following documents were noted to have been circulated by the Clerk:

- A statement on re-opening play areas from the Association of Play Industries (API),
- Covid-19 Risk Assessment template - to be completed,
- Sample signage taken from the Weymouth template in the API guidance, and
- the recent RoSPA inspection carried out by Play Safety.

RESOLVED that:

- The Council agree to complete the risk assessment, meeting on site and delegating this task to the Clerk and Councillors Barras, Newton and Mezza.
- The completed risk assessment be circulated to all Council Members and our Insurance Provider for endorsement,
- Signage be arranged advertising the agreed re-open date.

The RoSPA report was noted to show that the play area is generally in a good condition. The Council plan on replacing the slide in the future applying for funding which requires proof of consultation with the community. The Clerk is working on some visuals with play companies so the Council can carry out a brief consultation locally over the summer, perhaps with a focus group.

Next meeting: Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council TUESDAY 1st September 2020 at 7.00 pm.

ACKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
Financial Position @ 31/07/2020

	Budget	Total	
BALANCE B/F @ 1 April 2020		11,575.20	
INCOME:			
VAT Refunds	50	-	
Precept	7,500	3,750.00	
Interest received	6	1.82	
Miscellaneous	5	20.00	
Donations		5,168.00	
	<u>7,561</u>	<u>8,939.82</u>	
EXPENDITURE:			
Clerks Fees	1,050	419.85	
Clerks Expenses	230	96.61	
Insurance	280	257.60	
Audit Fees	100	80.00	
Subscriptions/Training	300	130.91	
Miscellaneous	100	15.00	
Donations	1,400	75.00	
Recoverable VAT	50	50.36	
Landscaping/Grass Cutting	1,550	107.03	
Street Furniture	200	-	
Play Area	1,600	341.00	
Election Costs	0		
Community Defibrillator	500	1,750.00	
Footpath Warden Scheme	200	8.27	
Neighbourhood Plan			
	<u>7,560</u>	<u>3,331.63</u>	
BALANCE C/F		17,183.39	
Balances per Bank Accounts:			
BANK RECONCILIATION			
Current Account		2,266.64	
High interest Account		16,666.75	1,750.00
		<u>18,933.39</u>	
			Unpresented cheques
			264 1750.00
Earmarked Funds			
B/F	11,575.20	including transfer from balances	
Transfers	4,050.00		
Expenditure to date	<u>2,099.27</u>		
		<u>17,724.47</u>	
Working Balance		<u>541.08</u>	



Northumberland County Council

Acklington Parish Council

Your ref:

Our ref: LTP

Enquiries to: Highways Programme

Email: HighwaysProgramme@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 0345 600 6400

Date:

Dear Miss Brown

Local Transport Plan 2020/21 - Feedback on Submissions

Thank you for submitting your priorities for the 2020/21 Local Transport Plan Programme. The programme has now been approved, as such we are providing feedback to all County Councillors, Parish and Town Councils, who submitted priorities, to identify whether priorities have been included in the LTP Programme.

A copy of the final LTP Programme can be found online at

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Highways/Transport-policy/Transport-plan.aspx>

If priorities have not been included we have provided comments on why it was not successful on this occasion to help you when considering your potential priorities for submission in future years. Detailed feedback can be sought from officers wherever necessary.

A large number of priorities are put forward each year which overall exceed the budget available and therefore there is a limit to what can be included. This years LTP programme allocates funding across the County and we will be delivering more for cycling and walking schemes as well as a number of initiatives such as increasing our spend on road signs and road markings and for road safety schemes. However, sadly, we can't fund every priority. Schemes have to be carefully prioritised for inclusion in the programme by scoring them against their relative contribution to the key goals of the LTP and taking into account what level of local support there is for the scheme and its affordability within the programme.

Key goals of the LTP are to support economic growth, to reduce carbon emissions, to improve safety and health, to promote equality of opportunity and to improve quality of life.



Highways Programme

T: 0345 600 6400 E: HighwaysProgramme@northumberland.gov.uk

www.northumberland.gov.uk



Maintenance Schemes		
Your Priority	Included in LTP	Comments
Resurfacing of Churchill Way, Acklington	Yes	This maintenance issue will be addressed by the additional capital funding that has been committed by the Council in 2020/21 specifically for minor roads and footways.
Slippage on the C101 to U3039	No	The maintenance issue has been recorded and will be considered when developing future planned maintenance programmes. In the meantime Area Maintenance teams will continue to monitor and carry out any minor works required to maintain in a safe condition.
Slippage on the C102 to U3088	No	The maintenance issue has been recorded and will be considered when developing future planned maintenance programmes. In the meantime Area Maintenance teams will continue to monitor and carry out any minor works required to maintain in a safe condition.

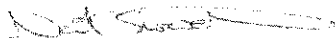
We are starting preparations to design and deliver the 2020/21 Local Transport Plan programme but as you can imagine delivery of individual schemes is likely to be delayed due to the coronavirus outbreak, although we are doing all we can to mitigate this and to minimise potential delays.

It is also our intention to send out letters in the early summer asking for priorities for the 2021/22 Local Transport Plan, although where practical you may wish to think about your potential priority options now.

Please be aware that should you have any queries when it comes to submitting future priorities, officers will be happy to provide advice as necessary to make the process more straightforward for those who may require assistance.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Snowdon
Principal Programme Officer



Highways Programme
T: 0345 600 6400 E: HighwaysProgramme@northumberland.gov.uk
www.northumberland.gov.uk





Northumberland County Council

To all Parish & Town Councils

Your ref:
Our ref: LTP
Enquiries to: Highways Programme
Email: HighwaysProgramme@northumberland.gov.uk
Tel direct: 0345 600 6400
Date: 14th August 2020

Dear

Local Transport Plan Programme 2021-22

We are starting our Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme for 2021/22 and as part of this process we would like to know what your top three highways and transport priority issues are for your area, so that they can be considered for inclusion in the LTP Programme for 2021/22. This consultation is part of the annual review of LTP Priorities.

To assist you in identifying priorities for your area we have enclosed a record of the highways and transport related requests relevant to your area that are currently contained on the Directory of Requests database. The Directory of Requests records all highways and transport related requests that we receive from Members, Parish/Town Councils, other organisations and the public over the past year. Please note that these are simply a record of requests received and not proposals. Please also note that inclusion on the list does not imply that a scheme will be implemented. It is for you to determine which should be priorities for us to consider for potential inclusion in the next programme. If you have any priorities that were submitted in previous years that have not yet been included in programmes and which remain as your priorities, then you should re-submit them for consideration. If they are not re-submitted then they will not be considered in this year's process. Equally if you feel that something should be considered which has never been requested, or been included on the Directory of Requests database, this can also be included as one of your priorities. As I'm sure you will appreciate it isn't possible for everyone's priorities to make it into the final agreed programme, but this is a transparent process and your priority issues will be scored against LTP criteria, and those with the highest score overall will be considered for inclusion in the 2021-22 LTP Programme.

Please remember that your input is valuable. For information 112 out of 148 Town/Parish Council's submitted their priorities for 2020/21, we are hoping for an increased number of submissions this year. Should you have any queries when it comes to submitting future priorities, officers will be happy to provide advice as necessary to make the process more straight forward for those who may require assistance.

You are asked to submit your priorities by email to highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk before 11th October 2020.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Snowdon
Principal Programme Officer



Highways Programme

T: 0345 600 6400 E: HighwaysProgramme@northumberland.gov.uk
www.northumberland.gov.uk



Verint Reports

Reference	Location	Details
BXE9Q5X5	request to slow traffic as large HGV's cause property to shake and vibrate	Acklington Village Acklington NE65 9BL
YAV2Q092	request for traffic chicane	Acklington Road Acklington NE65 9XD
ZHB2Q0X8	Request for traffic calming in village in 30mph	Acklington Village Acklington



**North East
Ambulance Service**
NHS Foundation Trust



Name of cPAD location:

Cabinet access code in full:

Please return the form in the first week of each month to firstresponder@neas.nhs.uk.

Month	AED ok (Y/N)	Cabinet lock, light & heater ok (Y/N)	Pads in date Hygiene kit present (Y/N)	Checked by (Print name)
Week 1				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				
Comments:				

NB: Any queries please contact firstresponder@neas.nhs.uk & report any problems immediately



Our badge stands for unmatched quality of care for every life we touch.

ForLife

Guardian cPAD weekly checks are:

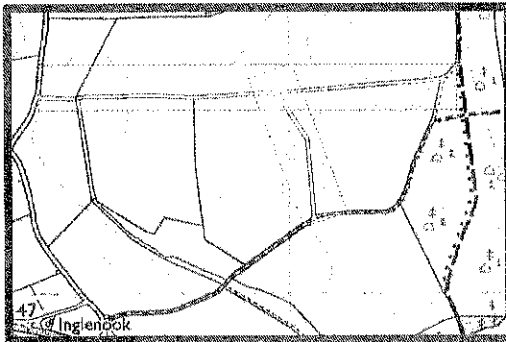
- Exterior of the cabinet
 - Is it damaged or is it not securely fixed to the structure?
 - Check the key pad and opening handle, if stiff lubricate with WD40 or similar (do this at least once a month in any case)
- Interior of the cabinet
 - Is the internal light working?
 - If cold, does the heater appear to be working?
 - Are there any signs of excess internal moisture or water ingress?
- Outside light working and does the PIR security light illuminate (if fitted)
- Defibrillator
 - Are all the indicators showing normal?
 - Are there two hygiene/rescue packs and two sets of pads?
 - Are the pads in date?
 - Is the battery charged?
 -
- It is advisable to annually have the cabinet inspected by an electrician to ensure that the cabinet and all electrical fittings are secure, functional and in good and safe working order.

Footpath Restoration Plan

Progress Report: Sept 2020



Volunteer tractor owners are cutting surface vegetation (working within the Covid19 guidelines). This picture shows a freshly cut section of the Permissive Millennium Pathway.



A further 1,430 metres of Permissive Pathway has been secured, making a total of 2,405 metres of newly-opened Permissive Pathways since the project began just 2 years ago.

You are invited to walk this Permissive Pathway by kind permission of Pigdon Farm Ltd.

Vehicles, and motorcycles are not permitted to use this route.

It is not intended that this pathway should ever become a public right of way.

This pathway may be closed on a temporary, or permanent basis at any time in the future as the owner so wishes.

A series of 5 X signs have been ordered to support the new sections of Permissive Pathway. The signs are robust, durable and clearly explain the extent of the given permission.



A grant application has been made for 2 X brush cutters. The equipment will enable us to routinely cut and maintain the surface of up to 5,427 metres of field-edge footpaths.

Grant Application

*Made on behalf of the Acklington Parish Council
Acklington Parish Council Footpath Restoration Project Working Party*

Executive Summary

We have restored 4.8 kilometres of the 14 kilometres of footpaths which criss-cross and surround the Parish of Acklington: making the newly restored pathways safe, accessible and enjoyable to walk.

As we expand our project reach and restore more of Acklington's footpath network, **the biggest challenge we face is cutting the overgrowth of vegetation on the surface of 5,427 meters of field-edge pathways.** The vegetative mix typically includes waist high grass, stinging nettles and bramble whips – making the pathways impassable to most walkers.

We have the Volunteers and the Footpath Wardens, but we lack the petrol-powered brush cutters and hedge trimmer to enable us to routinely cut surface vegetation (and up to head-high bramble whips) on all the field-edge footpaths.

If we could acquire 2 X petrol-powered brush cutters and 1 X petrol-powered hedge trimmer it would enable us to deploy a Volunteer Works Schedule, which would allow us to restore and reopen all 20 footpaths.

NOTE: The responsibility for cutting the surface vegetation on the 5,427 metres of field-edge footpaths in Acklington Parish lies with the Highway Authority (NCC), but regrettably, they don't have the resources to undertake the work. The landowners are willing to help but can't deploy their tractors and toppers whilst they have crops growing in the fields.

The Acklington Footpath Restoration Project

The aim of the Acklington Footpath Restoration Project is to ensure the 20 footpaths in the parish are restored to a minimum standard:

- **One metre wide**, free of overhanging trees, invasive hedging and overgrown surface vegetation.
- **Well maintained** stiles, gates and footbridges.
- **Easy to access**, with clear footpath signs and waymarkers.

We are collaborating with tenants, landowners and the Highway Authority. We have recruited 26 Volunteers to take part in work parties: using hand tools to clear up to 43 stiles, gates and bridges of vegetation. We have also recruited and trained 13 Footpath Wardens to regularly patrol the footpath network: monitoring the pathways for litter, dog-fouling and fly-tipping.

We have restored 4,808 metres of footpaths. The response from residents and visitors alike has been incredibly positive; suddenly people are walking the footpaths in Acklington - using the newly restored network to gain greater access to the nearby villages of Felton, Amble and Warkworth.

Newly negotiated Permissive Pathways

We are about to announce the opening of a further 1,430 metres of Permissive Pathway, making a total of 2,405 metres of newly negotiated Permissive Pathways since the project began just 2 years ago.

Tourist guide

We are planning the publication of a tourist guide, which will feature a map and description of all 20 footpaths, places of interest and the best circular routes to use. The overall aim of the guide will be to grow Acklington's reputation as a beautiful place to walk, inspiring more new visitors and encouraging returning visitors to stay longer.

This is what we need now

We have the labour (Volunteers and Footpath Wardens), we have the support of local landowners, but we need the equipment to enable the Acklington Footpath Restoration Project to routinely cut and maintain the surface of up to 5,427 metres of field-edge footpaths. **We need 2 X professional-quality Brush Cutter/Strimmers and 1 X petrol-powered hedge trimmer.**



Stihl FS410 C-EM professional brushcutter in action

This is what it will cost

QTY	ITEM	UNIT COST	TOTAL
2	Stihl FS410 C-EM professional Brushcutter	£581.25	£1,162.50
2	Stihl spare blades and trimmer bulk line	£194.15	£388.30
2	Stihl Professional safety pack (Operator's PPE)	£94.06	£188.12
1	Stihl HS82RC-E 24" hedge trimmer	£378.75	£378.75
1	Stihl grease and blade cleaning pack	£28.58	£28.58
		SUB TOTAL	£2,146.25
		VAT @ 20%	£429.24
		TOTAL	£2,575.49

** Above costs based on an indicative quotation supplied by Gustharts Ltd, Milkhope Centre, Blagdon, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE13 6DA.*

*** Footpath Wardens and Volunteers will be required to successfully attend a City and Guilds, one day course L2Award in Brush cutters/Trimmers - Maintenance and Operation, at a cost of £160.50 PP (based on an indicative quotation from Landbased Training LTD). Cost of training to be met by Acklington Parish Council.*

****The cost of future maintenance, spares and equipment to be paid for by Acklington Parish Council.*

The immediate benefits

- **Routinely cut the surface of 5,427 metres of field-edge footpaths,** covering a total of 13 footpaths.
- **More effectively collaborate with landowners:** we cut the vegetation growing on the footpath surface, they cut the hedges.

Longer term benefits

- **Attract more tourists to the area.** Improve the experience visitors have so they are more interested in our county, spend more money and support more local enterprises and local employment.
- **Reduce traffic and emissions** by giving people greater access to the local countryside, without use of the car.
- **Co-ordination with Warkworth.** Getting this equipment will allow us to more closely liaise with the recently formed Warkworth Footpath Team (Ron Farrell and Catherine Dowlen): sharing knowledge, capabilities and equipment.

Dependencies

- Acklington Parish Council will have to consider and agree to a yearly equipment and maintenance budget of approximately £200 per year.
- Acklington Parish Council will have to consider and agree to the equipment being stored in the homes of 1, or 2 Parish Councillors, and where necessary reimburse those Parish Councillors for any increase in home insurance premiums.
- Where a quantity of petrol (maximum 1 gallon) is stored with the equipment, a military grade, MOD type metal jerry can will be supplied (included with the original equipment order with each machine).
- Acklington Parish Council will have to make their insurers aware of any new arrangements, and where necessary bear the cost of any access premiums.
- Operators of the equipment must be in possession of City and Guilds L2 Award in Brush cutters/Trimmers - Maintenance and Operation.
- If appointed, Landbased Training LTD will conduct the City and Guilds training and assessments, and work with Acklington Parish Council to work-up all the necessary risk assessment documentation.

ENDS

10 AUGUST 2020

PC11-20 | WHITE PAPER: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Summary

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has issued a new consultation on planning for the future. This consultation seeks any views on each part of a package of proposals for reform of the planning system in England to streamline and modernise the planning process, improve outcomes on design and sustainability, reform developer contributions and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed. The main consultation document can be found [here](#).

First, we will streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan-making stage, and will replace the entire corpus of plan-making law in England to achieve this:

- Simplifying the role of Local Plans, to focus on identifying land under three categories
- Growth areas suitable for substantial development, and where outline approval for development would be automatically secured for forms and types of development specified in the Plan
- Renewal areas suitable for some development, such as gentle densification; and Protected areas where – as the name suggests – development is restricted. This could halve the time it takes to secure planning permission on larger sites identified in plans. We also want to allow local planning authorities to identify sub-areas in their Growth areas for self- and custom-build homes, so that more people can build their own homes.

Local Plans should set clear rules rather than general policies for development. We will set out general development management policies nationally, with a more focused role for Local Plans in identifying site- and area-specific requirements, alongside locally produced design codes. This would scale back the detail and duplication contained in Local Plans, while encouraging a much greater focus on design quality at the local level. Plans will be significantly shorter in length (we expect a reduction in size of at least two thirds), as they will no longer contain a long list of “policies” of varying specificity – just a core set of standards and requirements for development.

Local councils should radically and profoundly re-invent the ambition, depth and breadth with which they engage with communities as they consult on Local Plans. Our reforms will democratise the planning process by putting a new emphasis on engagement at the plan-making stage. At the same time, we will streamline the opportunity for consultation at the planning application stage, because this adds delay to the process and allows a small minority of voices, some from the local area and often some not, to shape outcomes. We want to hear the views of a wide range of people and groups through this consultation on our proposed reforms.

- Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test, and unnecessary assessments and requirements that cause delay and challenge in the current system should be abolished. This would mean replacing the existing tests of soundness, updating requirements for assessments (including on the environment and viability) and abolishing the Duty to Cooperate.
- Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new standard template. Plans should be significantly shorter in length, and limited to no more than setting out site- or area-specific parameters and opportunities.
- Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable (of no more than 30 months in total) for key stages of the process, and there will be sanctions for those who fail to do so. • Decision-making should be faster and more certain, within firm deadlines, and should make greater use of data and digital technology.

We will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions so that as we move towards a rules-based system, communities can have confidence those rules will be upheld.

- We will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of our reforms – so that, as we bring in our reforms, local planning authorities are equipped to create great communities through world-class civic engagement and proactive plan-making.

Second, we will take a radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process. This means moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data. We will:

- Support local planning authorities to use digital tools to support a new civic engagement process for Local Plans and decision-making, making it easier for people to understand what is being proposed and its likely impact on them through visualisations and other digital approaches. We will make it much easier

for people to feed in their views into the system through social networks and via their phones.

- Insist local plans are built on standardised, digitally consumable rules and data, enabling accessible interactive maps that show what can be built where. The data will be accessed by software used across the public sector and also by external PropTech entrepreneurs to improve transparency, decision-making and productivity in the sector.
- Standardise, and make openly and digitally accessible, other critical datasets that the planning system relies on, including planning decisions and developer contributions. Approaches for fixing the underlying data are already being tested and developed by innovative local planning authorities and we are exploring options for how these could be scaled nationally.
- Work with tech companies and local authorities to modernise the software used for making and case-managing a planning application, improving the user-experience for those applying and reducing the errors and costs currently experienced by planning authorities. A new more modular software landscape will encourage digital innovation and will consume and provide access to underlying data. This will help automate routine processes, such as knowing whether new applications are within the rules, making decision-making faster and more certain.
- Engage with the UK PropTech sector through a PropTech Innovation Council to make the most of innovative new approaches to meet public policy objectives, help this emerging sector to boost productivity in the wider planning and housing sectors, and ensure government data and decisions support the sector's growth in the UK and internationally.

Third, to bring a new focus on design and sustainability, we will:

- Ensure the planning system supports our efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits, by ensuring the National Planning Policy Framework targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively address climate change mitigation and adaptation and facilitate environmental improvements.
- Facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver our world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050.
- Ask for beauty and be far more ambitious for the places we create, expecting new development to be beautiful, and to create a 'net gain' not just 'no net harm', with a greater focus on 'placemaking' and 'the creation of beautiful places' within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Make it easier for those who want to build beautifully through the introduction of a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to automatically permit proposals for high-quality developments where they reflect local character and preferences.

- Introduce a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing England's unique ecosystems.
- Expect design guidance and codes – which will set the rules for the design of new development – to be prepared locally and to be based on genuine community involvement rather than meaningless consultation, so that local residents have a genuine say in the design of new development, and ensure that codes have real 'bite' by making them more binding on planning decisions.
- Establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes in every part of the country, and give permanence to the campaigning work of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission and the life of its co-chairman the late Sir Roger Scruton.
- Ensure that each local planning authority has a chief officer for design and place-making, to help ensure there is the capacity and capability locally to raise design standards and the quality of development.
- Lead by example by updating Homes England's strategic objectives to give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.
- Protect our historic buildings and areas while ensuring the consent framework is fit for the 21st century.

Fourth, we will improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions. We propose:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy and the current system of planning obligations will be reformed as a nationally set, value-based flat rate charge (the 'Infrastructure Levy'). A single rate or varied rates could be set. We will aim for the new Levy to raise more revenue than under the current system of developer contributions, and deliver at least as much – if not more – on-site affordable housing as at present. This reform will enable us to sweep away months of negotiation of Section 106 agreements and the need to consider site viability. We will deliver more of the infrastructure existing and new communities require by capturing a greater share of the uplift in land value that comes with development.

- We will be more ambitious for affordable housing provided through planning gain, and we will ensure that the new Infrastructure Levy allows local planning authorities to secure more on-site housing provision.
- We will give local authorities greater powers to determine how developer contributions are used, including by expanding the scope of the Levy to cover affordable housing provision to allow local planning authorities to drive up the provision of affordable homes. We will ensure that affordable housing provision supported through developer contributions is kept at least at current levels, and that it is still delivered on-site to ensure that new development continues to support mixed communities. Local authorities will have the flexibility to use this funding to support both existing communities as well as new communities.
- We will also look to extend the scope of the consolidated Infrastructure Levy and remove exemptions from it to capture changes of use through permitted development rights, so that additional homes delivered through this route bring with them support for new infrastructure

Fifth, to ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of our town and city centres, we propose:

- A new nationally determined, binding housing requirement that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans. This would be focused on areas where affordability pressure is highest to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. We propose that this would factor in land constraints, including the Green Belt, and would be consistent with our aspirations of creating a housing market that is capable of delivering 300,000 homes annually, and one million homes over this Parliament.
- To speed up construction where development has been permitted, we propose to make it clear in the revised National Planning Policy Framework that the masterplans and design codes for sites prepared for substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types from different builders which allow more phases to come forward together. We will explore further options to support faster build out as we develop our proposals for the new planning system.
- To provide better information to local communities, to promote competition amongst developers, and to assist SMEs and new entrants to the sector, we will consult on options for improving the data held on contractual arrangements used to control land.

- To make sure publicly owned land and public investment in development supports thriving places, we will: – ensure decisions on the locations of new public buildings – such as government offices and further education colleges – support renewal and regeneration of town centres; and – explore how publicly owned land disposal can support the SME and self-build sectors.

Proposal 9:

Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means of community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools. Since statutory Neighbourhood Plans became part of the system in 2011, over 2,600 communities have started the process of neighbourhood planning to take advantage of the opportunity to prepare a plan for their own areas – and over 1,000 plans have been successfully passed at referendum. They have become an important tool in helping to ‘bring the democracy forward’ in planning, by allowing communities to think proactively about how they would like their areas to develop. Therefore, we think Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system, but we will want to consider whether their content should become more focused to reflect our proposals for Local Plans, as well as the opportunities which digital tools and data offer to support their development and improve accessibility for users. By making it easier to develop Neighbourhood Plans we wish to encourage their continued use and indeed to help spread their use further, particularly in towns and cities.

We are also interested in whether there is scope to extend and adapt the concept so that very small areas – such as individual streets – can set their own rules for the form of development which they are happy to see. Digital tools have significant potential to assist the process of Neighbourhood Plan production, including through new digital co-creation platforms and 3D visualisation technologies to explore proposals within the local context. We will develop pilot projects and data standards which help neighbourhood planning groups make the most of this potential.

Consultation questions

NALC will be responding to the consultation questions as follows:

1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?
2. Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area? [Yes / No]

(a). If no, why not? [Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]

3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future? [Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]
4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]
5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
7. Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

8. (a) Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

9. (a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

13. (a) Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area? [Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other - please specify]
16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? [Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other - please specify]
17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it? [More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space/ Don't know / Other - please specify]
22. (a) Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy,

which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(b) Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally? [Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

(c) Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities? [Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(d) Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24.(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24 (c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24 (d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

25 Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

(a) If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

Your evidence

Please email your responses to this consultation to policycomms@nalc.gov.uk by 17.00 on 15 October 2020. County associations are asked to forward this briefing on to all member councils in their area.

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