

Longframlington Parish Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting on: 1st December 2021
Meeting at: The Memorial Hall, Longframlington
Meeting time: 7:00 pm
Present: Cllrs: Allison Davis (AD), Graham Fremlin (GF) - Chair, Nick Heggie (NH), Diane Lakey (DL)
Gillian Nelles (GN), Gillian Apthorpe (GA), Dave Wellden (DW)
In attendance: Clerk

The meeting opened at 7.05 p.m.

- 1) **Apologies for Absence** –Trevor Thorne (TT)
- 2) **Table Urgent Business to be discussed in 20 below**
 - a) Storm Arwen: Parish Council Response
- 3) **Declaration of Interests** - None
- 4) **Gifts & Hospitality** - None
- 5) **Community Police Report**- There were no crimes recorded for the Longframlington area between 01/11/21 – 30/11/21. Officers had continued assisting rural villages after storm Arwen and would continue to patrol and assist with community engagement.
- 6) **County Councillors Report** – GH read out TT's report:

Pedestrian Crossing on A697. Cllr Thorne had put forward the need for a crossing on the A697 as his number 1 priority in the forthcoming Local Transport Plan for 2022/23. Following a recent meeting with National Highways (formally England Highways) regarding the construction of the A1 duelling and the possibility of a diversion through the village, it was extremely important to put all our efforts behind a crossing.

New School on the Rimside Site. TT met with the NCC cabinet member for Education regarding replacement for Swarland School. The current building was no longer fit for purpose, evident by the damage caused by Storm Arwen. One suggestion would be to go for a cost neutral strategy whereby the existing site be sold off for housing, enabling a new school to be built in Longframlington for both communities.

Recent Storm damage. Storm Arwen had resulted in widespread damage across the county and more especially in our area. Members of our community were still without power, even after considerable phone calls to Northern Powergrid (NP). Whilst NP had put in an enormous effort to make extensive repairs they had failed to keep local communities informed. TT was continuing to lobby for restoration for those without power. Thanks to NCC and farmers who had worked tirelessly to remove trees from our roads.
- 7) **Minutes of Previous Meeting** - The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such. Proposed GN, Seconded GA, All in Favour.

Housekeeping Issues.

- 8) **Matters Arising out of Minutes**
 - a) Traffic calming measures Rothbury Rd. No further forward, no additional work has been undertaken. It was agreed that GF contact the new NCC Northern Area Highways Manager directly about this matter. **Action: GF**
 - b) Power connection to bus shelter. As this was no longer an urgent matter it was likely to be some time before NCC would issue a quotation.
 - c) Queen's Silver Jubilee. GA had put a release on Facebook and received four responses from people who would be interested in helping. It was agreed that this be a 'picnic in the field' event which should take little in the way of organisation with games/sports for the children, fancy dress parade etc. Agreed LPC would pay for incidental costs such as prizes for the children. Details to be finalised nearer the time. GA to co-ordinate in the meantime. **Action: GA**
- 9) **Meetings to Attend / Attended** - None
- 10) **Finance**

- a) Receipts in the months of November 2021. Approved

19/11/2021	Aubrey Sanderson	Skelly Crem Plot & Memorial Inscription	190.00
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- b) Clerk's salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and approval of Other Payments. Approved

03/11/2021	Gavin Christie	Maintenance - Oct	321.00
17/11/2021	SWARCO Traffic Ltd	VAS Maintenance Contract	300.00
17/11/2021	Royal British Legion	Wreath	16.00
29/11/2021	Sintons LLP	Land Registry Searches	40.00
12/11/2021	British Gas A/C600689588	Electricity Sportscourt	11.46
01/12/2021	G Rhodes	Salary & Expenses	321.64
01/12/2021	HMRC	PAYE	79.60
		Total	1089.7

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- c) Requests for donations. None.
 d) Bank Reconciliation to 1st December 2021. Approved.

Balance per bank statements as at 25th November 2021:				
Community account				78477.54
Business Saver				6104.62
				84582.16
Less unrepresented cheques	17/11/2021	SWARCO Traffic Ltd	300.00	
	29/11/2021	Sintons LLP	40.00	
	01/12/2021	G Rhodes	321.64	
	01/12/2021	HMRC	79.60	741.24
Uncredited Deposits				
				0.00
Balance				83840.92
Balance per cash book				83840.92

11) Village Activities - None

12) Allotments

- a) Management including:
- i) Tenants' agreement termination for Plot 1a,1b. There had been no response from the tenants following their tenancy termination letters. The plots would be reallocated as from January 2022.
 - ii) Allotment Inspection Report. Allotments generally in good order with a small number which will need to be tidied up in the Spring.
- b) Maintenance including:
- i) Removal of rubbish and spoil around the allotments. Ongoing to be completed before the end of the year
 - ii) Replacement of taps. Completed

13) King George V Playing Field including:

- a) Clerk's weekly/monthly inspection report. No new issues
- b) Sports courts and playground inspection. DW presented his report. Most areas were in good order. Issues to note were:
- i) Multi-play climbing frame perimeter rail needed re-fixing. **Action: DW**
 - ii) Minor cracking on rubber fixing chain eyes on toddler swings. To be monitored.
 - iii) Painting of chipped areas on multigym equipment. Rust treatment already applied. **Action: DW**
- c) Play area hedge & fence. GA had approached Tantallon Developers to ask if they would provide funding for this. They have asked for a quotation. It was agreed that a single post and rail fence needed to be erected to support the hedge. Cost per plants of 60 -80 cm height would be approximately £1.50 ea. It was agreed that:
- i) Measurements and plan need to be drawn up.
 - ii) Hedging from Plot 13 to be dug up and planted within the new hedge.
 - iii) New plants to be purchased from local supplier where possible and to be of a British Species.
 - iv) Planting of a border of wild flowers so mowers would not damage new hedge to be considered once plans were drawn up.
 - v) Draw up quotation and submit to Tantallon. **Action GA/DW**
- d) Repairs to Tank Turn. Completed to high standard.

14) Planning

- a) To note any planning issues since previous meeting.

Reference	Address	Status	Parish Council Position
21/03583/REM	Land South of Fram Park	Registered	No objection
21/01648/VARYCO	Land North of Fairfields	Registered	See previous minutes for details
21/03127/FUL	Land West of Deneburn	Permitted	See previous minutes for details
21/02944/REM	Land South of Lightpipe Farm A697	Awaiting Decision	See previous minutes for details
21/03808/FUL	North End Farm North End Dairy Lane	Registered	No Objection

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15) Cemetery issues:

- a) Burials/Ashes internments. Permission granted for interment of cremated remains of Alan Skelly at the foot of the grave of Winnifred Skelly (paid in full). There was sufficient space for this between Row 10 and Row 10A (cremations). Members agreed that a memorial tablet must be placed on this burial plot to mark the grave as it sits outside an existing row.
Action: Clerk
- b) Memorial applications. Permission granted to update James Skelly Headstone (paid in full)
Action: Clerk
- c) Cemetery Extension. Actions to have ownership of the land formally recognised were moving along. Consecration arrangements of the land to take place once ownership had been settled.

16) Action Plan – December 2021

- a) Allotment Invoices for rent and water.
Action: GF/Clerk
- b) Allotment Meeting. Agreed that a meeting be called, either before the January or February 2022 PC Meeting, dependent upon when vacated plots had been reallocated and invoice letters sent out.
Action: GF/Clerk
- c) 2022 Action Plan. Agreed with some minor alterations.
Action: Clerk

Main Issues

17) Review of internal policies & procedures including. GH/Clerk had had reviewed the policies:

- a) Amendments to Standing Orders had made to include the required regulations for Online Banking adapted from the NALC Financial Regulations.
- b) Amendment to Social Media Policy regarding moderation of Council communications. No further amendments were deemed necessary. It was agreed that a notice be placed at the front of the Facebook page to outline the Council's position on how members, staff and the public should conduct their communications on the page and the correct procedure for communicating to and with the Council.
Action: AD
- c) Privacy Policy. The Council agreed to adopt the Privacy Notice on the Northumberland Association of Local Councils website. A note to be placed on the PC webpage to this effect. AD with assistance from the Clerk to review Privacy Policy Requirements for GDPR early in 2022.
Action: AD/Clerk

The policies and procedures with the above revisions above were approved.

18) Consider Tenders for Village Maintenance. Invitations to tender were sent to ten local companies. Only two contractors had submitted tenders. The PC were not aware of any other companies in the area who may be interested in this work. Members agreed under the circumstances, the two tenders submitted were sufficient and that the condition that a minimum of 3 tenders to be considered, be waived. The Council unanimously agreed to accept the tender from G Christie Ground Maintenance as this was significantly less than the tender from John Hood Landscaping & Garden Services and that the quality of work by G Christie was known to be of a good standard. A letter be sent to John Hood to say the tender was unsuccessful and to thank him for his submission. G Christie to be informed of his successful tender and contract to be issued. **Action: Clerk**

19) Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The referendum date was to be Thursday 20th January 2022. It was agreed in order to encourage people to vote, to place a notice regarding this on the PC and NP Facebook pages and to include a message that the PC remained neutral on this matter and people should be encouraged to vote in the way they so wished. **Action: AD**

20) Any Urgent Business

- a) Storm Arwen: Parish Council Response. The Council discussed the devastating impact of Storm Arwen on the area, our parish and its residents and what we could do if we were to face a similar situation in the future, to enable us to coordinate a better response, and get the required support and information out to people more quickly. The local networks and groups that were put in place during the Covid lockdowns had worked well to support many people in the parish, so it was agreed to look at ways to strengthen those links, and bring those together in a coordinated way, perhaps through a 'community hub'. It was suggested that a 'physical' hub could be St Mary's Church and the Church Rooms. It was agreed that GN would approach St Mary's on this matter.
Action: GN

Members were very appreciative of the tremendous efforts of the utility companies, local authority and emergency services in getting the network operating again, in such difficult circumstance and providing support in so many ways to people, particularly the vulnerable. However, having said that there was serious concern about the lack of local ongoing information made available to the community and immediate response for vulnerable people. Whilst a fairly general warning of the storm was forecast in advance, the likely overwhelming significance of it was only made known to the public a very short time before the event. During and after the storm, Northern Powergrid did provide frequent announcements through online services and the radio but there was virtually no specific local information provided by them or by central and local government and their representatives to what was happening in our immediate area. This made it very difficult for us as a local community to know exactly who needed help and where it was needed. There appeared to be no mechanism by which information could be provided to those without power and telephone communication. Many residents had noted that our key representatives in central and local government were conspicuous by their absence. This was particularly striking, when other local councils in the area seem to have received significant support from their elected representatives.

The County Council did eventually get their Storm Arwen support team up and running and made contact on Tuesday morning 30th December, more than 72 hours from when the storm hit our region. The general feeling on this is that it was too little, too late. In Longframlington, apart from an email from the Storm Arwen Team, to the Parish Clerk, there appeared to be little else in way of the County Council making contact with the people of the parish. There were no 'feet on the ground'.

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No doubt all those services that were involved in supporting the region in times of emergency would be carrying out a thorough evaluation to their response to Storm Arwen. It was agreed that a letter be written to the County Council, our local MP and our NCC council member to express our concerns and to recommend a number of essential elements for such a review:

- to improve emergency warning systems and advice so that people are informed of impending issues as soon as possible in order to make adequate preparations;
- to look at ways to improve communication at local levels, particularly when power is down and phones not available;
- to collate and have available to the available support networks details of vulnerable people who may require immediate help, rather than trying to collate this information after the event;
- develop effective means of communication between national and local government services, utility companies, emergency services and local support networks in order to get effective support for those in need as quickly as possible.
- to include representatives at a local level in such a review.

21) Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 5th January 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.22 p.m.

Garth Rhodes – Parish Clerk, 5 Wardle Terrace, Longframlington, Northumberland NE65 8AB. E-mail longframlingtonpc@gmail.com