

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 13 May 2021.

Present: Cllrs S Allan, E Davidson, D Green, T Jackson and J Marshall.
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

- 1 **Election of Chairman** – Cllr Davidson proposed and Cllr Marshall seconded Cllr Allan as Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.
- 2 **Election of Vice Chairman** - Cllr Davidson proposed and Cllr Jackson seconded Cllr Marshall as Vice-Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.
- 3 **Election and nominations of Members to Committees and Groups**
 - a) Cemetery Committee Meeting – Cllr Davidson with Cllr Jackson as Reserve
 - b) Recreation Field Group Meeting – Cllr Marshall with Cllr Davidson as Reserve
 - c) Finance Group – Cllrs Allan, Green and Marshall
 - d) Complaints Committee – to be confirmed when required depending on the nature of the complaint
- 4 **Apologies for Absence** – County Councillor Sanderson
- 5 **Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda** – None
- 6 **Public Questions (max 5 mins per person)** – None
- 7 **The minutes of the meeting 25 March 2021.**
- 8 **Matters Arising therefrom:**
 - a) Road to Longhorsley to Burgham complaint – outstanding awaiting NCC action Clerk
 - b) Ditch on the Burgham Park Road blocked – outstanding awaiting NCC action Clerk
 - c) Leak at riverside – Clerk to review Clerk
 - d) Parking/traffic issues at Pumpkin Pie – PC Teasdale has agreed to undertake patrols.
 - e) Bus Shelter opposite Northumberland Arms – Contractor appointed and awaiting works to be undertaken.
 - f) Street light request for East Thirston – outstanding awaiting NCC action Clerk
 - g) Letter to Highways and NCC re traffic diversions – outstanding awaiting Felton PC to send in their letters as leading on this issue. Clerk
 - h) Litter Pick – A call has gone out to residents to see if any volunteers are interested in undertaking ad-hoc litter picking if the PC provides equipment. Awaiting responses. Clerk
 - i) White railings by the bridge – CC Sanderson has confirmed works are still planned for the white railings - awaiting NCC action Clerk
- 9 **Report by County Councillor Sanderson**

I do not have any update for you other than I am very honoured to represent the Longhorsley ward again and I look forward to working with Thirston PC again.
As usual, please let me know if I can help with anything that crops up.
- 10 **Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC Felton Cemetery Joint Committee**

Peter Brown has taken a back step from grave digging so the grave digger who digs graves around a lot of cemeteries is being employed as and when needed. Composting of the flowers has been an on-going issue and it has been agreed that NCC will collect on the garden waste route. Cllr Walton is standing down as Chairman as he is not standing for election at the Parish Council level.

Recreation Field Committee

 1. Thirston PC has asked for the residents figures to be double checked as contribution towards recreation field is based on electoral numbers and there are large parts of Thirston Parish who do not benefit from the recreation field. Also there should be a recalculation due to the new houses in Felton.
 2. Quotes are being sought for new play equipment and MUGA resurfacing and new panelling.

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3. A decision as to how funding will be sought needs to be made as some funders will not fund Parish Councils. It may be that a charity need to be set up for Recreation Field but this does not come without its own issues so needs careful consideration.

11 Potential Projects

- a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – Northumberland Anglers have improved access to the river again this year, maintained the steps and seats and a letter of thanks to go to them. Clerk
- b) Landscaping – Nothing to report
- c) Neighbourhood Plan Update – Final version. Reg 16 examination taking place. Awaiting outcome of this consultation to see if any amends required. Deadline date is 24 May.

Cllr Allan suggested all Councillors think of ideas of what can be done to improve the parish. Short term, medium term and long term projects. For instance, welcome to signage on the entrances to settlements in the parish. Clerk

12 To report on any planning decisions:

20/01580/FUL – Thirston Court – Retrospective: 2 new dwellings (re 18/01327/AGTRES) alternations to site layout. Amendment submitted – APPROVED

20/02093/FUL – Burgham Park Golf Club - Replace greenkeepers shed, create six-hole golf course, re-locate driving range, create landscape bund, erect driving range shelter, extension and alteration of clubhouse and new car park layout – concerns on location of greenkeepers shed. - APPROVED

20/04000/COU - Land To West Of Longdyke - Conversion of redundant detached stable into 1no 3-bedroomed holiday letting unit. APPROVED

20/04256/FUL – Northumberland Zoo - construction of a large indoor, walk-through tropical house - APPROVED

21/00402/FUL - West Moor House Felton - Dining room extension and conversion of existing outbuildings to form self-contained annexe – APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

19/03659/VARYCO – Eshott Airfield – make temporary hours of 7am to 11pm permanent – objections submitted.

20/02026/COU – Cottages at Burgham Park Golf Club – Change of use from holiday cottages to residential dwellings – The PC submitted no objections at the time of the application being submitted however may change their opinion if the residents object. This application is linked to the erection of 56 dwellings however NCC do not assess the applications together. Clerk

20/02094/FUL – Land NW of Burgham Park Golf Club - Remove green keepers compound and erection of 56 dwellings plus upgrade of access road, electric sub station, SUDs, domestic package treatment works and domestic gas storage – Objections submitted

20/04177/FUL - Land North East of Felmoor Caravan Park - Extension to existing holiday comprising 139 no. pitches for holiday lodges plus ancillary features including water feature, play area and vintage vehicle museum – Objections submitted

21/00432/FUL - Ivy Cottage West Thirston - Remove existing roof, construct new pitched roof to kitchen and bedroom 2 [including new dormer window]. Construct new utility room to rear. Convert garage to 1 bedroom annex – no objections

APP/P2935/W/20/3254874 – Appeal by Northumberland Estates in relation to housing application at Land East of Greycroft (19/05017/OUT) – the land for this site is now on the market. NCC has confirmed that the site will need reserved matters approval and we consult with relevant parties on those application types. They have 3 years to submit this following the date of the appeal. Reserved Matters means Where outline permission has been granted, you may, within three years of the outline approval, make an application for the outstanding reserved matters, ie. the information excluded from the initial outline planning application. This will typically include information about the layout, access, scale and appearance of the development.

Planning Issues:

Northumberland Arms – Retrospective planning for beer gardens still not forthcoming. Remove from Agenda until Covid-19 situation has improved. Clerk

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13 Requested Agenda Items:

Replacement Bus Stop Signage – NCC confirmed that this should have been completed in the last financial year. They have stated they will find out why this has not been undertaken and progress it asap.

Directional Sign left over the bridge – a report has been received that the big directional sign that indicates where you are going when you turn left over the bridge. It is so bent over now it is impossible to see if you are driving. The Clerk cannot work out which sign this is so will ask resident to send a photo.

Clerk

14 Correspondence:

- NCC – Northumberland Respect Campaign – circulated. Campaign to keep Northumberland safe and litter free with lockdown easing.
- A1 Highways – Consultation re bridge for dualling – for information, circulated.
- Copy of residents Stage 1 complaint letter to NCC – copy received and circulated for information. Deadline for response is 13 May.
- Email re kerbing in Eshott Village – a resident has requested that kerbing be installed in the one small area where there are no kerbs in Eshott and the verge is being badly damaged by vehicles and there are concerns that there is damage around an inspection hatch. CC Sanderson has indicated he may be able to look at funding this through his members scheme.
- Email re Art on the Bridge – art work is going to be sold on the bridge and sites will be charged a small fee which it was agreed would be donated to the two parish councils – Thirston to ring fence any donation to go towards the childrens play area.
- Email re low flying over Pumpkin Pie – copy of an email sent re complaint of overflying the nursery. The airfield operator reported that he had spoken to the nursery and they had no concerns.
- Copy email re Trading Standards issue in relation to Eshott Airfield – for information.
- Copy email re FOI request to NCC re DTO aircraft registered at Eshott Airfield – for information.
- Numerous emails of complaint re overflying at Wintrick – a resident has spoken to the airfield and the operators state they are looking to review the flight paths.
- NALC – County Committee email stating there is a vacancy for our area – No Councillor interest.
- Emailed NALC updates

15 Finance

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £15,686.09.

(b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

Payments this meeting:		
IB113	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 24 hours at 15.50 (£372.00) 1 x Zoom Conferencing (£14.39) 1 x Home working allowance (£11.09) Microsoft Office Licence (£79.99) Gift for H Lindley (£35.00)	£512.47
IB114	Viking Direct – Stationery	£39.59
IB115	NALC – Subscription and Website fee	£230.01
IB116	Zurich Insurance	£416.07

(c) **Income** – HMRC for VAT £122.53, NCC Precept £4,575.00

(d) Certificate of Exemption for 2020/21 external audit – It was agreed that a Certificate of Exemption be completed for the PCs the income and expenditure did not exceed £20k which means an external audit is not required.

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- (e) Report back from Auditor – the auditor raised a few questions with the following responses:
- Is the 4 hours agreed as part of your contract or something set nationally? – These hours are per the Clerks contract.
 - Risk management. What prompts the weekly backup of digital information and is this evidenced at all? – This is undertaken on a Friday afternoon unless there has been a large document worked on earlier in the week, ie Neighbourhood Plan and then undertaken a back up mid week as well.
 - Is there a statutory frequency by which DPI forms are completed, as the majority appear to have been in force for c4 years? This was last done in January 2020 and it is minuted in the 23/01/20 minutes under item 104. New forms will be completed after the May election whether they are existing Councillors or not.
 - Should bus stops be included on the asset register and included on the insurance policy? – they are included on the insurance but not the asset register as not owned by the PC. The auditor asked that the insurance would cover any incident is PC not the owner. The Clerk has contacted the insurance company who has requested sight of the paperwork from NCC handing over responsibility to the PC.
 - Is there a certificate of exemption on the AGAR this year – Stated this would be agreed at this meeting as has to be after year end before this can be signed.
 - Also raised minute ref 151 (d3) Recreation Field Group in which Cllr Marshall raised a query concerning tenders and reassurance. TPC may like to consider the following; that if it is not possible for FPC to comply with SOs and Financial Regulations in obtaining the required number of tenders/quotes without competition, the assurance Felton should be providing yourselves would be for them to formally waive Financial Regulations see Sect 10 (c), and to your satisfaction. This needs to be looked at. Also need to discuss with Felton PC the make up of Recreation Field Group and the requirement for Thirston PC representation.

Clerk
Clerk

The Accounts were signed off with the comment that periodic bank account reconciliations were not properly carried out during the year due to Covid restrictions.

- (f) Approval of Annual Governance Statement was approved unanimously by the Council.
- (g) Approval of Accounting Statements was approved unanimously by the Council.
- (h) Insurance Renewal – this has been renewed with Zurich insurance for £416.07 which has increased slightly due to the inclusion of the speed cameras cover.
- (i) VAT reclaim on Zoom invoices - NALC has advised that there is a process for reclaiming the VAT now on zoom invoices and the Clerk will try to reclaim for last year which will amount to just over £28. It was agreed if this is an arduous task it is not the best use of the Clerks time. Clerk to review but will claim going forward.
- (j) Bank Signatories – The PC need to add another signatory for the bank account since Mrs Lindley is no longer on the Council. It was agreed that Cllr Allan would be a signatory. Clerk to prepare paperwork.

Clerk

Clerk

16 Urgent Items – None

17 Items for next agenda – Policy Review – Clerk to circulate before the next meeting.

Clerk

18 Resolution to exclude public and press

The Parish Council passed a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude public and press due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, which includes discussion of personal data.

- a. Update on ongoing communication with local resident – nothing has been received from the resident and the insurance company contacted the Clerk to see if this matter is now closed. The Clerk responded that hopefully it is now closed and the insurance company stated to get back in touch should the situation change.

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- b. NCC Stage 1 Complaint – the PC complaint was submitted 12 April – an acknowledgement received but nothing further. The residents letter was submitted on 19 April with a response stating they would hear back by 13 May. So on that basis the PC should have received a response from NCC already. Clerk to contact NCC to request a response. There was also a meeting with residents and NCC and it appears that NCC are trying to manage the situation as best they can.

Clerk

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm
Date of Next meeting: 24 June 2021