

WARK PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Edward Jeffrey **Contact:** clerk.wark@gmail.com

Meeting to be held 23rd May at 7pm in Wark Town Hall

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Present: Chairman, Councill Jeffrey (EJ), Councillor Hutchinson, Councillor Batey, Councillor Murray, County Councillor Nick Morphet, x2 MOP, Guest Speakers -Locality Coordinator x2

Apologies: Councillor Weir, Councillor Charlton.

2. Notification of Other Business

None

3. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

None

4. Approval of Minutes – 29th March 2023 – Wark Parish Meeting (circulated 6 May 2023)

Proposed by EJ and seconded by SB.

5. Welcome to Locality Coordinator and Report from County Councillor Nick Morphet.

1. You asked me to arrange for a **post for an interactive speed sign** to be installed on the Stonehaugh road. Before I can do that we need to choose the model of interactive speed sign, so that I can make sure that the post is the right diameter. We decided at the last parish council meeting that we should go for a sign with a thank you message, which narrows it down to three options: Swarco, Evolis or Westcotec. I sent you more information and links to the various websites via Louise on 8th April - **Decision made to go for a Swarco sign. Will ask Highways Programme to install correct post.**

2. **The street sign for American Gardens** will cost £195 + VAT for the sign without installation or £483.88 + VAT for the sign plus installation. I can place the order on your behalf once you've made a decision. **Decision made to purchase sign without paying for installation. Have now checked that posts are included and ordered the sign.**

3. I've got good news about **extending the 30mph speed limit** to the S of Wark. The housing

developer has to extend it at their own expense as a condition of their planning permission.

4. I haven't managed to get my hands on **an estimate for the cost of creating a lay-by by the doctors' surgery** yet, but I do remind Richard McKenzie every now and then. The last thing he told me was that creating an estimate might involve doing what he called a "proper design". I asked him whether that would cost the parish council anything, and told him that I thought that the parish council would prefer the most accurate estimate that they could get for free. He hasn't responded yet, but I'll tell you what he says when he does.

5. I asked the School Transport team **whether the school bus could pick the school children up at the post office** rather than opposite the Battlesteads, and I'm afraid they said no. They said that it was because of the size of the bus and the nature of the road layout, and that if the bus stopped at the post office it would cause congestion and safety issues and that it would have trouble turning around. They said that if the bus did choose to stop at the post office in one direction it was at the operator's discretion, and suggested that the fact that it only stops there in one direction is because it's not possible to do it safely in the other direction. They also had no knowledge of the Battlesteads being a temporary stopping point. **I've since asked School Transport if they'll send someone to meet with parish councillors and see the problem first hand.**

6. I haven't been able to order **the benches** yet because the Newbrough parish councillors have raised a concern about landowner permission. If I can't allay their concerns I could install the bench without their involvement, and I hope to have this resolved one way or another within a few weeks. I've also just found out that I'd misunderstood how the spikes on the ends of the bench's legs work. They don't expand at the tip to lock the bench in place, and need to be set in concrete. Unfortunately my allowance can't be used to pay for installation costs, so I'm going to have to ask the parish councils to cover them. I've had a quote of £486 for installation on a concrete plinth the length of the bench, and a quote of £200 for installation on two concrete pillows. Would the parish council be willing to cover this cost? **Parish council opted to set the leg extensions in concrete themselves. Will order benches this week.**

7. The County Council has launched a new system for flagging up issues, called **FixMyStreet**. You can use it on a computer, tablet or phone and you can let it identify your location or enter the location manually. Once you've logged the issue you'll get updates on what's been done to fix it. I can share a link (<https://fix.northumberland.gov.uk/>) with anyone who wants it.

8. Talking about fixing streets, **the gulley wagon** will be cleaning out all of the gulleys in the ward over the next few weeks. It only does this every 32 months, so it's worth celebrating!

9. Northumberland has just received £7.8 million to improve its bus services. Most of the money will be spent on new and improved ticketing products and new and improved services. Apparently there'll be extra funding available for local bus service enhancements following engagement with parish councils and county councillors, so we should seize any opportunities we get to push for better bus services for the parish. They're creating a Local Bus Board, and I've asked to represent Tynedale on it - which would give me an opportunity to engage with bus operators and users as well as public transport officers. I'll let you know if I'm successful.

10. The LGBCE released its proposals for Northumberland's **new ward boundaries** on 2nd May. They're proposing to change most wards to a degree, but there are no proposals to change the

Humshaugh ward boundaries. They're consulting on the changes until 10th July, and I can share a link to the consultation (<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/northumberland>) with anyone who wants it. It's worth responding if you strongly agree with what they're proposing, as well as if you disagree. In case it's of interest.. The Bellingham ward has 18% fewer electors than the average ward, so it's going to take a little bit of both the Rothbury ward and the Longhorsley ward. The Hexham Central with Acomb ward is taking Sandhoe from the Corbridge ward, the Corbridge ward is taking Riding Mill from the Stocksfield ward and the Stocksfield ward is taking a bit of the Prudhoe South ward. There's also some changes proposed to how Hexham is divided up into the three wards.

11. The mobile network providers have decided to **switch off the 3G network** over the next few years. EE and Vodafone will switch it off in 2023, 3 in 2024 and O2 hasn't decided when yet. If you don't have access to either 4G or 5G you'll have to use the 2G network instead. The 2G network will allow you to make calls and send texts, but it won't allow you to access emails or use the internet. Unfortunately if you're with 3 you'll lose all functionality, because they don't have a 2G network. It's possible that 3 users will be able to access 2G via the Shared Rural Network, but there's no guarantee that this will be possible.

12. And finally, I've been looking into **sewage pollution and water quality in the North Tyne**, and Humshaugh Parish Council have asked me to do a short on presentation on the subject in July. I'm going to offer to do the same presentation for the other seven parish councils, so if you would like me to do it for Wark PC, just say. I think it'll be about ten minutes long. **Parish council keen for me to do my presentation but date not yet set (June 27th is too soon).**

Locality Co-ordinator - delivered presentation.

Delia and Angela. Covid and Storm Arwen rural communities just get on with things. Because of Covid we exist to support and enrich communities to work and collaborate with communities. Lots of networking and connecting. We worked with Food Banks right across NCC to individuals that are struggling, Food Banks received funding recently, August 2023 previous donations reduced due to cost of living. Because of cost-of-living need is great, support from Welfare Rights, NETS – provides support to households with vulnerable people they can access support. MOP - We have a coffee morning on a Friday morning, would be willing to attend. Work with health trainers and do six-week course for cooking on a budget. Give number to Jason who is trustee of Town Hall. Support Planners – described as low-level social work. Adult Social Care scaled back to essential needs, lack of funding. Support Planning looks at anything that isn't care, reducing social isolation, tends to be for people who don't have a network that is around them to support them. Advice and signposting to services that can meet need. EJ asked if support planners work and communicate with Adult Social Care. Trying to be one stop shop. We do preventative work, encouraging people to be active for as long as they can. SLA in place to track referrals which are made and progress. Fewer calls from West than South East Locality – will attend Town Hall Coffee Morning.

- **Matters Arising**

- 6.1 Tree Inspection – SB to provide update. Email to Matt Fathers to confirm priorities. SB to action this.
- 6.2 Condition and Repair of Stargazing Pavilion at Stonehaugh – AH advised that university visited but didn't tell anyone. Estimate for cost to repair it. EJ advised need more than one estimate. LK suggested use social media to advertise for those trades men interested in repairing job to make contact with parish. Internal works and roof repairs needed. Photograph damaged areas and use these to put on social media. Could approach university to contribute to cost of repair.
- 6.3 Wark Christmas Tree Lights – update following on from last meeting. EV went in, connection point installed and is willing to put trench in and you can plug in new lights. Costs for new lights – EJ to speak to Alan Nichol about this, old ones to be removed.
- 6.4 Sale of Wark Public toilet - update. Still ongoing. AH shared they have sent an engagement letter; PC need the money. EJ affirmed that they are good condition. 13 June will install smart meter.
- 6.5 Progress of installation of Speed Cameras in Wark – already mentioned. Obtain one for speed sign not camera.
- 6.6 Signage for manging cyclists on road – update (locations and costings). Query with NM if NCC would provide signage. SB querying if signage should reflect what is in highway code. Polite notice – can this be drafted and priced up. To check with NCC if they object – NM to action.
- 6.7 Emergency provision at West Acres Community Centre (from March 2023 meeting) - see notes for update. Town Hall have secured a generator if they can't fix the problem in 2-3hours they will drop off generator and plug in.

7. Correspondence

- 7.1 Planning Consultation 23/00340/FUL Hexham House Cottage Hexham Road Wark Northumberland NE48 3LR – Decision – refused.
- 7.2 MOP sent in email dated 16 April 2023 with a proposal to provide a memory garden/orchard – for discussion, further details in notes. EJ says lovely idea, agreed by AH. EJ to speak with Roy Bell to determine next steps.

8. Financial Matters

8.1 Accounts for financial year 2022/2023 are with Accountant.

8.2 Accounts and Approve Payment Schedule – To Be circulated at meeting.

Date of Cheque	Date Invoice/Receipt	Inv No./Ref	Payee Name	Description of Goods/Service	Amount (£)	Cheque No.
23/05/2023	31/03/2023	I-8308/WAR02	C I Accountancy Ltd	Payroll Services for 2022/23 including RTI submissions and completing year end procedures	240	1437
23/05/2023	04/05/2023	24990	Shotton Waste Services	Empty composting toilet at Stonehaugh	135	1438
23/05/2023			Edward Jeffrey Wark Mechanics Institute and Town Hall	Reimbursement of Expenses Letting fee for use of Town Hall for Meeting on 23 May 2023	140.55	1439
23/05/2023	23/05/2023		Mandy Stoker	Payroll to 31 May 2023	91.38	1501
23/05/2023			Natasha Reid	Payroll to 31 May 2023	93.78	1502
23/05/2023			Louise Keeney	Payroll to 31 May 2023	386.1	1503
23/05/2023			HMRC	Payroll Liability for May (Month 24/02)	2.4	1504
23/05/2023			Liam Reid	Expenses for fuel and earthings for Stonehaugh Activity Centre	42.03	1505
23/05/2023			Stonehaugh Community Hall	Kings Coronation Reimbursement of expenses	47.4	1506

8.3 Bank Account – Balance as at 4 May 2023 is £22567.46.

8.4 HMRC PAYE liability – AH provided update. LK to liaise with CIC Ltd Accountant to clarify.

9. Reports from Representatives to Other Bodies (Wark Town Hall, Stonehaugh Community Hall and Giles Heron Trust)

- Stonehaugh Kings Coronation – good event but poorly represented.
- Fish and Chips and Breakfasts alternate weeks – well attended.
- Drainage issue – EJ has visited the site. BT cable identified.

10. Highway Matters

10.1 Local Transport Plan Capital Programme 2024-25. NCC have advised that they are starting

the process to prepare the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme for 2024/25. Request for WPC top three highways and transport priority issues are for our area, so that they can be considered for inclusion in the Programme. To be submitted by 28 July 2023.

MOP – EV - distance takes up 12.6m of parking in village– EJ states that this is to accommodate size of EV vehicles. Compensation assists with costs of spaces outside doctors.

MOP – contacted NCC re: road around the green, person wanted disability space outside of his house, Would PC have any objection or allowed to put signs around the entrance of green for access only for residents. Keep cost to a minimum. Reduce traffic and prevent deterioration. Not PC land and not NCC. Discussion about resident responsibility and permission to put signage up to notify resident only, issues include walkers leaving cars and others use as a roundabout.

11. Other Business – Not for Decision

Scruffs – Saturday 22nd July (12pm – 4pm) lovely prizes, don't have entry numbers yet.

Hexham Vets coming as emergency on call, advertised locally in parish. Hexham Courant coverage. To raise funds for Town Hall. Public Liability Insurance – Town Hall event so likely covered but confirmed will check.

12. Items for Discussion at Future Meetings. Resident in the village would like Boxing Day Hunt stopped.

13. Dates for Next Meeting: 27 June 2023 – Annual General Meeting – to be held at Wark Town Hall (6.30pm). Auditor – Note same as last year. Nominate Chair and Vice Chair to be elected and sign declarations. Parish Meeting to follow the AGM. Then Parish Meeting in Stonehaugh – date to be agreed.

Louise Kirkland

Clerk to Wark Parish Council