

BYWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes Council Meeting held on 20th November 2023 at Newton & Bywell Community Hall at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Harrison, Wright, Gallagher, Brown, Richardson and Jessop. Also in attendance - Monica Anderton, Clerk; Cnty Cllr Holly Waddell and 8 Members of the Public for the public part of the meeting.

Following protocols laid out by the council a number of questions were asked by residents to the Councillors. Relevant responses to these appear in the minuted items below.

1. **Apologies received:** None
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None
3. **Minutes from meeting of 18th September 2023:** These were agreed as a true record.
4. **Matters arising:**
 - ~ Benches: No further news has been received regarding the memorial bench that had been asked for: it was agreed to leave the matter until springtime. It was noted that 2 small benches had been placed on either side of Bywell Bridge, it was thought by Stocksfield Council as a temporary measure. (This is to be checked). Northumberland County council officers are still to reply to the Clerk regarding options for replacing the damaged bench at the bridge; it was discussed that the similar style benches to those on the Stocksfield side would be considered on the Bywell side to maintain the appearance.
 - ~ Glass recycling bin: The Community Hall Trust has indicated support for this and more details on how to proceed, size, collection etc. will be sought;

~ There are substantial issues with water draining off the land which is not accommodated by drains and is causing damage to roads and property. That by North Lodge has been looked at by Northumbria Water and NCC highways as the road is deteriorating. It is thought this is due to a combination of an underground spring and poor drainage across the fields. There is also water penetrating the basement of the Old Post Office in Newton itself on a regular basis. Again Northumbria Water have investigated and cannot do anything as there appears to be insufficient drainage and blocked drains. The Clerk will contact NCC Highways again on the matter;

~ Speed Limits: it was again noted regarding the travel plan and the need to consider traffic management / speed limits within the parish. Further correspondence would be sent to NCC and highways with regards to speed limits to request a further demotion to 20mph through the residential areas and 30mph on approach roads to Newton Village. The road heading into Newton Village from the A69 was discussed that the 30mph moved outwards of the village past the driveways of residences – this again would be raised with the Highways Agency / NCC.

~ Road Conditions – it was noted again the quality of the roads and that instances of potholes should be reported to the highways / NCC. Again, this would be raised by the Council to the relevant authorities but stressed the importance of residents to report any damage.

~ Rats had been seen along the road opposite the Hall. Comments from both NCC and Allendale Estates indicate this is a natural event in a rural setting.

5. **Council Policy re grants/Donations:** A request had been made for a donation to wards a village Xmas tree by a representative of the informal Social Group in Newton: this would have been on the agenda to discuss under finance with other requests but was discussed out of Council; The Clerk indicated that a grant could not be given to an individual on behalf of a Group that had no bank account etc. as auditors would not allow it. The matter was sorted by other means and the Clerk agreed to draft a Policy on the matter to go on the website for future reference.
6. **Dog Fouling:** this is becoming an issue again in the Parish. It was agreed to ask the County dog warden for assistance and Cnty Cllr Waddell agreed to add her voice to the matter; the Council could buy more bins but costs need to be found and emptying of them needs to be ascertained. Further investigation will take place
7. **Communication between the Council and the Parish residents and Conduct:** It was suggested that a simple survey be taken initially among parishioners to obtain email addresses where possible, taking into account Data Protection regulations, asking for views on any matters of concern and how a Newsletter would be received if produced on an occasional basis on behalf of the Council. It was noted also that the Village Trust website is in need of updating and this is being looked at. The idea of a survey would be taken up by the Council, volunteers and by the Trust. There needed to be a change to the way matters were communicated, this needed to be through the Clerk unless agreed otherwise.
8. **Chair's report:** As noted above with the emphasis on improving communications. Councillors cannot respond on an individual basis to queries from residents which should always be forwarded through the Clerk who will then forward to all the Councillors for consideration.
Cnty Cllr Report: Cllr Waddell reported that the Local Area Committees were now split into two types which would alternate: one for planning matters monthly and one for service issues bimonthly. She also noted the changes in the boundary review that Bywell will have two wards in future, one being linked with Stocksfield.
9. **Planning:** 23/00673/FUL: retrospective application Old Post Office – Appeal still pending;
23/02610/PRUTPO – Tree reduction at Oak Steading – Granted Permission;
23/03587/FUL – Beech Close Farm house and cottage Annexe to make one dwelling – Council objects to this application;
23/03612/FUL – fence at Old Stables, Stelling Hall; no objections but has been Withdrawn by applicant;
23/01444/FUL – Land north of Shaw House Cottages – change of use re car parking – Appeal pending;
23/03236/FUL – Old School House, Beech Close – extension- Granted Permission;
23/02814/FUL – Solar Panels on Newton Community Hall – Granted Permission;

23/03903/VARYCO – removal of measures re approved application(22/00937/FUL)
for gas protection measures at Stelling South Cottage; no objections;

23/03972/VARYCO – Land north of Shaw House Cottages revised parking – Council
has no objections;

23/01735/FUL – New dwelling and landscaping at Thornbrough Quarry – Granted
Permission.

10. **Correspondence:** E-mails from NCC, NALC and CAN on various topics;

11. **Finance:**

a) The Balance on the account at 31st October 2023 was £13,213.69

b) To note paperwork received for next year's precept;

c) The following payments were authorised:

Clerk, Salary, November 2023	£304.98
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NBCT, room (including planning meeting)	£26.00
Clerk, expenses	£60.97
CPRE Annual fee	£36.00
Payment to Lease a Leaf re Christmas Tree	£100.00
S.Ogg (grasscutting)	£1430.00

d) It was agreed to put the grass cutting out to tender for next year.

12. **Information received:** Clerks & Councils Direct; Countryside Voices; War
Memorial Trust – Bulletin; Leaflets re Digital changeover

13. **AOB:** None

14. **Date of next meeting:** Monday 15th January 2024 at 7.00pm

Chair:

Date: