

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 via Google Meet

### Present:

Nigel Parkes--- Chairman  
Peter Levett – Councillor  
Shaun Hanson – Councillor  
Julie Parkes – Councillor  
Amanda Wilson – Clerk

### Apologies:

Patricia Hanson – Vice Chairman

The minutes of the last meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 were approved and subsequently signed by Nigel Parkes Chairman.

**All present as above.**

### Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

### Matters Arising:

**i) Broadband** – Still no progress getting a viable broadband service into the village from either Openreach or Digital Durham. Maureen has instigated an investigation into the viability of the Community Fibre Partnership Broadband Scheme and just before the meeting we were presented with an update from Maureen; the cost of this will be £366K. This quotation is based on the inclusion of properties in not only Ovington but also Thorpe, Wycliffe and also some dwellings to the north of the River Tees. Maureen has gone back asking for a revised quotation to include only for Ovington and any properties en-route to the village only. Nigel has also spoken to Ali Walker (DCC) who has agreed to approach another 3 or 4 companies to assess interest and hopefully more competitive quotations.

Nigel will also write again to our local MP Dehenna Davison and Openreach trying to get some resolution to this longstanding challenge our village faces.

It was also proposed that we contact EE, the internet provider of preference in the village, to see if there is anything they can do to bring a decent internet connection to our village at a hopefully preferential rate to all residence. **Action - Nigel Parkes (All actions)**

**ii) Maypole Plaque:** Still no progress has been made on this for over 2 years.

We have approximately £1,000 in the reserves that we could spend on this project.

### iii) Maintenance of trees on village Green

No progress to date. As far as we are aware DCC have not checked the trees for 5 years. **Action - Nigel Parkes to chase DCC**

**iv) Conservation Area Classification** – Proposals for Ovington Village are now all submitted and we will hear more in the new year as this is now in the hands of Durham County Council. To date it is looking positive and is being progressed by DCC as quickly as the current situation allows. The whole process from start to finish is expected to take around 6 months, as advised by Brian Harris (DCC) to Shaun earlier this week.

Brian also confirmed to our Councillor Shaun Hanson this week that an on-line consultation process will be provided in January 2021 along with targeted mail shots, a letter to each house directing them to an on-line survey and the documents for review. This consultation process will take a minimum of 6 weeks. If the outcome is positive, there will be a detailed report produced by DCC and an adoption report submitted for approval of a designated conservation area. **Action – Shaun Hanson to monitor progress and report as necessary**

**vi) Whorlton Bridge Closure** – Proposed reopening date to be February 2021 – sadly not. New news emerged this last week that the bridge has now had to be closed to ALL traffic, including pedestrians and bicycles with immediate effect. Herras fencing has been installed at both ends and a report in this week's Tessedale Mercury reports that the bridge cannot currently support its own weight and is at risk of catastrophic failure. This is obviously a huge set back to local residents with no prospect of repairs or reopening. It was agreed that the Parish Council will write to both our local MP Dehenna Davison and Durham County Council to express our concern and add pressure to the provision of an alternative crossing and/or immediate repair. **Action - Nigel Parkes**

**vii) Village Green Access Road** – Concern has, again, been raised about the condition of the road outside Maypole Cottage on the Village Green. Deep potholes have formed and the overall condition is deteriorating. It was proposed that the Parish Council should pay for the repairs however it was agreed that some investigation is required prior to this to establish who is liable for the upkeep of this road and report back to the Parish Council prior to any repairs being undertaken at the cost of OPC. It was also agreed that an approach should be made to the owner of Maypole Cottage to have a chat about the situation. **Action – Nigel Parkes and Shaun Hanson**

**viii) Tree Planting** – Not discussed 10.12.20 - Two of the trees purchased with the tree planting grant from DCC have been uprooted. They have both been subsequently located, retrieved and are awaiting re-planting. It was decided that a letter be sent to all residents of Cliffords View seeking their thoughts and wishes for the re-planting location of the two trees. **Action – Nigel Parkes**

#### **Consideration of any current Planning Application**

- Land to the north of Moor View – planning submission for an additional 3 houses submitted and subsequently refused. The land owner has now taken this to appeal. OPC submitted a letter in support of declining the appeal. We await the outcome which, again to the current situation, is taking longer than normal due to a national backlog. A decision is not expected until the new year. **Action – Monitoring on-going ALL**

#### **Financial Report:**

**Precept 2020/21** – the Parish Councillors agreed unanimously for the Precept to remain unchanged from the previous year at £1,968.00 as proposed by Nigel Parkes and seconded by Peter Levett.

Julie Parkes as the current Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting that there had been five bills paid since the last meeting: £792.00 to Mill Gardens for grass cutting May, June & July (Cheque No. 405 dated 23/07/20), £792.00 to Mill Gardens for grass cutting Aug, Sept & Oct (Cheque No. 406 dated 04/10/20), £125.00 to Jenny Burnley for a stone trough (Cheque No. 407 dated 12/10/20), £75.00 to Dave Nixon for collection & transportation of stone trough (Cheque No. 408 dated 14/10/20), £110.00 to Four Alls for the supply of village Christmas (Cheque No. 409 dated 01/12/20).

*Receipts* – None

As of Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the Parish Council had £356.69 in the current account and £3,442.26 in the savings account.

*Invoices to pay* – none

0 No. Invoices were agreed and authorised to pay by the Councillors.

*Future expenditure* – Display Board rental - £50,

*Future income* - £419.50 reclaimed VAT expected early 2021

#### **Correspondence:**

a) None

#### **Any other Business**

a) None

**Next Parish Council Meeting** – TBC depending on the current pandemic (Covid19) situation