

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting held Northumberland Crematorium, Bockenfield on Wednesday 24 May 2023.

Present: Cllrs S Allan, L Clarehugh, J Day, E Davidson and J Marshall
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

1 Election of Chairman – Cllr Marshall proposed and Cllr Clarehugh seconded Cllr Allan as Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

2 Election of Vice Chairman - Cllr Allan proposed and Cllr Davidson 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 Clarehugh as Reserve

b) Finance Group – Cllrs Allan, Green and Marshall

c) Complaints Committee – to be confirmed when required depending on the nature of the complaint.

4 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Doug Green and County Councillor Sanderson

5 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda –

Cllrs Davidson and Marshall in item 13 – Felton & Thirston Fair Donation

Councillors signed a dispensation in relation to airfield applications to enable the Parish Council to submit a response to the forthcoming application.

6 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person) – None

7 The minutes of the meeting 28 March 2023 were agreed as a true record.

8 Matters Arising therefrom:

1) Matters arising there from (excluding outstanding actions in relation to NCC)

a) Dog Bin West Thirston – Clerk chased up NCC for a response and a resident has had her hand cut on the bin so this is becoming more urgent. This needs resolving before the summer comes. Clerk

b) Light issue in West and East Thirston – Lights are now working correctly, just waiting on a baffle to be installed at East Thirston and the light shining down the road to be readjusted. Clerk

c) EV Charge Points – Clerk forwarded the findings in relation to where points can be located to Felton Clerk to see if Felton PC could look to installing more points.

d) Lighting on The Peth – still waiting to hear back from NCC as to whether they are looking to install more lighting. Clerk will chase up. Clerk

e) Footpath at East Thirston – A meeting has taken place and reported until item 10.

f) Missing Weldon Bridge signage – Still waiting on a replacement Clerk

g) Green Lane (U6002) – Clerk wrote to NCC to request repairs to the landowners fence following collisions due to state of Green Lane. NCC state this is a matter for the landowner to take up with offending vehicles or their own insurance. This information was forwarded onto the land owners.

h) Electricity Substation – Northern Powergrid has confirmed that they will be undertaking the necessary works within the next by having the doors moved and they will clear the site of residual rubbish at that time. Cllr Marshall reported that NCC has cleared up a lot of the rubbish when installing the new handrail alongside the path. Clerk to thank NCC for this and reinstatement of the handrail. Clerk

i) Pot holes on Wintrick Road – these are getting worse. Clerk

2) Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC for information

a) Ditch on the Burgham Park Road blocked (11/2019 & 04/2022) – this has now been cleaned out by NCC.

b) Blocked drain and manhole cover at Wintrick (12/2021) – Drains have now been cleared and the manhole cover now has a cone on it and a works order has been produced to have this replaced.

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- c) Road from A1 to Longhorsley has raised iron works and the edges of asphalt badly broken away both of which can cause damage to cars (01/2022) – NCC has confirmed they have raised a works order for repairs.
- d) Pathway improvements at riverside (03/2022) – Still waiting for a response from the Footpath Officer – Clerk to chase up again. Clerk
- e) Path in West Thirston – water issue (08/2022) – NLW have been out to investigate and the Clerk is waiting their feedback.
- f) Path in West Thirston – Cyclists (08/2022) – NCC has no resolution for this. Clerk has suggested metal barriers but NCC do not appear to be amenable to that.
- g) Road at Bywell Shooting Ground in need of repair (11/2022) – Repairs have now been undertaken but it is just pot hole filling not a large patching. Possible addition for the LTP. Clerk

9 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

The Boundary commission has put out its plans for the NCC seats - they recommend two extra ones from 67 to 69 and a change to quite a few. The Longhorsley ward is recommended to lose Scots Gap and Cambo areas but bring in Brinkburn and Felton.

I hope there might be a rethink on those.

At the NCC AGM we created two new Freemen of the County - Winton Keenan and Tony Gates and a Freewoman Liz Morgan who was our Director of Public Health during the Covid times.

I am continuing as Leader of the Council for another year so plenty ahead of me but things are so much easier now with the exit of some senior staff and recruitment of a new team all of whom all want to help me deliver good things for the County.

10 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Bus Shelter Meetings – Cllrs Allan and Clarehugh attended meetings with the WI to look at the bus shelters. The first shelter being addressed is the one at the Wintrick Road end planting of wild flowers took place at that meeting and it was agreed to look at painting the shelter both inside and out and removing half of the wood at the front and replace the Perspex window. The Clerk suggested “the Handyman” from Eshott may be willing to do this work. Cllr Allan said he could probably provide the Perspex. Clerk to contact The Handyman. Clerk

It was also agreed to try to get the mile marker repairing and improving which is on the roadside between Thirston New Houses and the bus stop. Clerk and Cllr Allan to look into this. Clerk

East Thirston Meeting - The Chairman and Clerk met with 3 residents in relation to their request for a footpath to the entrance of the Wintrick Road. It was agreed that they would get the support from the residents and then forward a formal request to the Parish Council which can be added into the Local Transport Plan request. At the same time discussion was had about one property not complying with their planning approval and the Clerk wrote to NCC about this and NCC are now in discussions with the resident about non-compliance and works have stopped until conditions can be met. There is also slippage of soil from a bank onto the road and this will only get worse and the Clerk raised this with NCC Highways but will probably be addressed under the planning issues. A final issued raised was the speeding through the hamlet and the Clerk has made contact with the local police to see if speed checks can be done. The voluntary speed check scheme is no longer happening but they are agreed, when manpower allows, to do spot checks. Clerk

This discussion with the police also results in the PC being linked into email notifications of issues in the areas which the Clerk is now receiving.

11 Potential Projects

a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – Concerns have been raised about the bench along riverside which way moved back due to erosion of the riverbank and whether it needs moving again. It was agreed that no action is required at present however the situation will be monitored.

b) Landscaping – Nothing to report.

c) Short term / Medium term / Long term projects – Village gateways, bus shelters – ongoing. The village gateways in Eshott are underway and feedback from residents re the installation of the bin have been very pos

12 To report on any planning decisions:

23/00314/PRUTPO - Ferndale The Pipistrelles Eshott Morpeth – Tree Works – PERMITTED

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23/00589/FUL - 7 Thirston Court West Moor Farm - Construction of Garage – APPROVED

22/03759/FUL - South High Moor Farm - Proposed demolition and rebuild of existing dwelling and conversion of existing agricultural barn to dwelling house - APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

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 based on Neighbourhood Plan

21/04280/FUL - Paintballing Site Eshott Heugh - Hybrid planning application consisting of a detailed application for 30no holiday lodges, storage barn, parking and access and an outline application with access and all other matters reserved for the associated leisure building (Use Class E)

22/04112/FUL - Northumberland Arms Construction of first floor rear extension to provide 1no. additional en-suite bedroom and store room, and ground floor rear extension to provide covered goods reception area

22/04113/LBC - Northumberland Arms Construction of first floor rear extension to provide 1no. additional en-suite bedroom and store room, and ground floor rear extension to provide covered goods reception area

23/00547/REM - Land East Of Greycroft West Thirston - Reserved Matters application for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 9mo. residential dwellings on refused application 19/05017/OUT (appeal reference APP/P2935/W/20/3254874)

23/00601/S106A - Land East Of Greycroft West Thirston - Modification of S106 agreement dated 07-10-2020 on approved application 19/05017/OUT in order to change tenure of the 2 Affordable Homes from Rented Units to Discount Market Value Houses.

23/00711/FUL - Land North Of The Shaw – New entrance

23/00850/FUL – Old Chapel, Eshott Village – conversion to a residential property

23/01436/FUL – Northumberland Zoo - Proposed building for housing 15% of the worlds' captive population of a critically endangered species – Already constructed

It was agreed to approach the zoo for a meeting to see what they are planning for the future, see how the zoo is developing and to see if the Parish Council can be of any assistance to them.

Clerk

Planning Issues:

All the issues below are being addressed by NCC in a number of ways and feedback will be provided to the Parish Council when NCC are able to.

Bockenfield Caravan Park – blue lights illuminating entrance

Eshott Airfield – viewing area and café

Eshott Airfield – Enforcement Notice

Felmoor Park – Tree removal and building works without planning

Felmoor Park – Entrance lighting and signage

13 Requested Agenda Items:

Felton & Thirston Fair – A written request has been received for a donation to be made to the running of the Fair. It was agreed to donate £100 as per the budget.

Clerks working from home payments – following government guidelines on Working From Home Allowances the Clerk has proposed the weekly amount is charged at £1 per week – this was agreed by the Councillors.

Clerk

14 Correspondence:

- Boundary Commission – New Boundary Proposals for Northumberland – the Parish Council support the move for Felton and Thirston to be within the same Ward of Longhorsley and the Clerk to write giving evidence to support why the Parish Council believe this to be a good idea based on the arguments given from Thirston PC not moving to Hexham Constituency.

Clerk

- NCC – email re New Boundary Proposals for Northumberland

- NCC – Promoting Northumberland Day – 28 May 2023

- NCC – Public access guidelines for planning applications – for Clerks information

- Northumberland River Trust – help with invasive plants along riverside – a joint response is being submitted with Felton PC. Cllr Day has ascertained what invasive plants there are in

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Thirston and Felton and Thirston Clerk to respond to Rivers Trust with information to hopefully gain their support in removal of these invasive plants.

Clerk

- Email from Manchester Uni student re Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire – wants those involved in the Neighbourhood Plan to complete a questionnaire re their experience. Clerk has circulated to NP Group.
- Email from Felton CAN with poster for next litter pick on 29 April 2023
- Electric Car Guide – request to put on website – it was agreed there is enough information out there on electric cars so not to add this to the website.
- Zurich – renewal quote for insurance - £486.74
- Hospice Care donation request – it was agreed to donate £25 as per the budget.
- NALC Subscription Notice and Web site charges - £231.02
- Felton CAN bulletin – already circulated
- Email re flytipping in Bockenfield Layby – a pallet has been flytipped, this has been reported to NCC for removal.
- Email from Burgham resident re litter on roads and request for signage – this email included Glen Sanderson and he has taken the lead on this by forwarding to the relevant department in NCC.
- Emails in relation to Eshott Airfield breaching planning conditions – for information
- Copy email in relation to facebook post by Eshott Airfield – for information
- Text re narrow bank footpath – a hole opened up in the footpath and the Clerk reported to NCC on the Sunday and this was filled in by 8.30am on the Monday. The Clerk thanked NCC for their speedy response as it was a tripping hazard.

15 Finance

- (a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £13,552.59 TPC funds and £4,929.97 FCJC Funds totaling £18,482.56. The balance was reconciled with the bank statement and agreed by the Councillors.
- (b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

It was agreed to cancel zoom as it was no longer required and could be reinstated easily if the situation required it.

Clerk

Payments this meeting:		
IB164	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 40 hours at £17.58 (£703.20) 2 x Zoom Conferencing (£31.18) Home working allowance of 8 weeks (£8.00) Microsoft Office Licence (£79.99) Printer Cartridges (£85.98)	£908.35
IB165	Zurich Insurance (£461.50 & £25.24) Invoice splits into two for increase for new assets	£486.74
IB166	NALC – Subscription and Website fee	£231.02
IB167	Donation to Felton & Thirston Fair	£100.00
IB168	Donation to Hospice Care	£25.00
IB169	J Day (Plants and NALC seminar)	£13.00

- (c) **Income** –NCC Precept £5,000.00
- (d) **Certificate of Exemption** - it was agreed that TPC submit a Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors as gross income and gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000.
- (e) **Internal Audit feedback** – Some minor amends required on the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to include the fact the PC receives quotes from online companies which the Clerk will address in the Policy Review next meeting. Also need to inform Felton PC that they are required to change the Recreation Field Terms of Reference at Thirston PC no longer on the Committee – Clerk has informed Felton Clerk.
- (f) **Approval of Annual Governance Statement** - was approved unanimously by the Council.

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(g) **Approval of Accounting Statements** - was approved unanimously by the Council.

16 Urgent Items

- NCC Local Transport Plan (LTP) – two potential items have been listed. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting but for Councillors to think about what can be included in the LTP.
- Weed spraying – Cllr Day asked if weed spraying has taken place and the Clerk did not think so so will chase up with NCC before they get out of hand.

Clerk

17 Items for next agenda –

Policy Review – Clerk to circulate before the next meeting.
Local Transport Plan
Bus Timetables

Clerk

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm
Date of Next meeting: 15 June 2023