

## OVINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs. M. Davenport  
Clerk

Jubilee Cottage  
Ovington  
Northumberland  
NE42 6DH

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7.25 p.m. in the Reading Room, Ovingham

Present: Councillors Jordon, Heslop, Chalmers, Gray, Campbell, Bryan and Shield, County Councillor Kelly and 3 members of the public.

1. The Clerk asked for nominations for Chair of Council. Cllr Heslop proposed and Cllr Campbell seconded Cllr Jordon, who took the chair.
2. Vice Chair – Cllr Heslop was nominated by Cllr Gray and seconded by Cllr Bryan.
3. No apologies for absence were received.
4. No declarations of interest were received however, Cllr Gray said a pre-application for planning for The Old School House needed to be mentioned and as a neighbour he would have an interest.
5. Other Bodies representatives were agreed as follows:
  - a) Ovingham Joint Burial Committee – Cllrs Jordon and Campbell
  - b) Reading Room – Cllrs Gray & Jordon
  - c) OPPFUG – Cllrs Bryan and Shield
  - d) East Tynedale Town & Parish Council Forum – Cllrs Jordon & Gray
  - e) SCA – Cllr Heslop

It was also noted that Cllrs Gray and Chalmers attended planning training and together with Cllr Jordon, were also representatives on the Severe Weather Action Plan Group.

6. The minutes of the last meeting, having previously been circulated were taken as read, agreed and signed.
7. County Councillors' Report:

County Cllr Kelly had previously circulated his report and was thanked by Cllr Jordon. He reported that changes were agreed on reducing three Planning Committees down to two. As a result, performances had already improved radically. Whitfield Primary School has a 6 month reprieve from closure but funding formulas will always place small rural schools, of which there are many in Northumberland, under pressure. The school system in Alnwick and Amble areas causes concern as one has opted for a two tier (Alnwick) and the other a 9 – 18 year old establishment. Also the situation in Ponteland is even more complicated as the High School will become a secondary, some first schools primaries, but the Middle School is opting for an academy. It was a far from ideal situation and worrying for everyone. Over a 5 year period, four asylum seeker families every four

months, will be accommodated, probably in Cramlington. There will be significant input from NCC and communities to welcome them but it was acknowledged the decision would be a controversial one. A candidate from Newton Hall will be sponsored by Cllr Kelly to take part in the forthcoming Tall Ships Race. Cllr Kelly was pleased, at last, to see the completion of the bridleway linking Ovingham, Ovington, Whittle woods and Nafferton after almost 10 years. Finally, he mentioned the small scheme funding and pointed out that recently Wylam had been successful – he tried to be fair in his distribution across the Parish Councils. Cllr Jordon replied she was hoping to get a quote from Highways, NCC, regarding improving the state of the parking on Horsley Road.

8. Matters arising:-

- i) **Bridge Closure:** Cllr Jordon updated the meeting advising scaffolding access had been restored to enable the pier legs to be inspected above river level - six out of seven require repairs. Buried sections show signs of corrosion but are adequate to carry vehicular traffic. NCC are waiting for EA consent to repair the large scour holes. Painting contract will be put out to tender later this month.
- ii) **Castle View:** Cllr Jordon had today (19<sup>th</sup> May) spoken with NCC who thought the planings had been laid to the rear of Castle View but was assured this was not the case. NCC will look into it further.
- iii) **Traffic issues:** Cllr Jordon reported that two residents had complained about two cars for sale on Highway Land on Horsley Road. Cllr Chalmers commented residents had also complained to her about it. With the state of the grass verge and overflows from the White Swan Car Park, Cllr Jordon wondered what could be done. She had received advice from Martin King, NCC Highways, who advised that vehicles could not park on highways if it was creating a nuisance; damage caused can be dealt with by Highways. Cllr Jordon reminded the Cllrs that following a site visit with Martin King, a quotation was asked for the option of making a 2 metre strip the full length of Horsley Road and this still hadn't been received. The Cllrs were concerned and hoped to try and resolve the problem so it was agreed Cllr Jordon would contact Martin King again and request a site visit to discuss the situation further.
- iv) **Village projects:**
  - a) **Handyperson:** Unfortunately, Peter Hind had not been able to start on the agreed maintenance jobs but hoped to as soon as possible.
  - b) **Bus Shelters:** Following a short questionnaire regarding support for bus shelters, Cllr Chalmers expanded on replies received to date. Of the 37 received so far, 25 used the bus on either a daily or weekly basis and only one did not want a shelter by Piper Road. Cllr Jordon had received 2 responses and both were concerned about potential loitering around shelters. The Clerk had also received 8 -10 all of whom were in favour of a shelter by Piper Road and some also for Castle View. Cllr Heslop, following a recent meeting at SCA had asked the Clerk to contact the company with a view for possible funding. Unfortunately, SCA had replied advising it

was not possible at the present time. The Clerk would obtain detailed quotes for both sites and a decision would be made at the next meeting when it was likely further responses from the survey would also have been received.

- c) **Wild Flowers:** Cllr Chalmers noted seeds had been sown on the verge on Castle View and by The Hill. They seem to be sprouting already. Helpers had been working on the designated area on the Playing Field too.
- v) **Co-option to Council:** No applications had been received.
- vi) **Grazing Land:** Unfortunately the advert had not been included in the recent issue of the village newsletter although the Clerk hoped it would be included in the Parish Magazine. She would place adverts on the notice boards. If this brought no interest, the Cllrs would have to re-consider its use. Cllr Jordon advised the field was overgrown and needed cutting. Councillors agreed a quote be obtained from Adrian Jackson and the work to be carried out as soon as possible.

County Councillor Kelly left the meeting at 8.25pm

- vii) **Litter Bins:** These had now been delivered- Cllr Campbell hoped to have them in place shortly.

**9. Accounts to pay/be paid:**

M. Davenport (Salary & expenses April)	£293.28
Ovingham Reading Room (2 meetings in April)	£34.00
P Holden (diesel & new tyre for mower)	£54.73
H Chalmers (photocopying bus shelter survey)	£30.00
D Jordon (Plants)	£158.77

- 10. **To receive and adopt unaudited accounts for 2015/2016:** The Clerk advised that these had been returned by Chris Lindsay, the internal auditor who had raised no concerns other than to review the level of interest received on the savings account. The Clerk would obtain information but felt most easy access accounts offered very little interest. Council approved the accounts and it was signed off by the Chair.
- 11. **To approve the Annual return Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement for 2015/2016:** This was read out by the Clerk. The Chair and Clerk were authorized to sign on behalf of the Council.
- 12. **To consider and accept terms of Constitution for Ovingham Joint Burial Committee:** Having already been circulated, Cllr Jordon explained why a change in the constitution was required. It had been drafted on advice from NALC following comments by auditors and essentially required one of the four parish councils to “host” the committee. As this would involve incorporating figures into the accounts of the host council, Cllr Jordon had asked the Clerk but she had declined. However, the Clerk to Wylam Parish Council had offered and this was accepted.
- 13. **To consider Risk Assessment for Audit purposes:** Following the meeting in April, the Clerk had drafted a new Risk Assessment, based on one from SLCC adapting it accordingly. She had included levels of risk (high, medium or low) and circulated it to the Councillors. This was approved. Cllr Jordon raised the question of the list of assets which needed to be looked at in detail during the current year as she especially thought those

- included at the Pavilion needed examining.
14. **To consider proposals from NCC for LED street lighting project:** Cllr Gray had attended a recent “drop in” session with officers from NCC which included Gavin Barlow who was dealing with the issue. Ovingham was earmarked for the new lighting towards the end of 2017 by which time all of Northumberland will have been updated. Energy savings would equate to about 63% and this will be used to fund the operation. Councils have been given the option of whether they want lights switched off at night for instance but it was a costly venture as were other proposals. Cllr Gray advised that the Parish Council should not take up any of the proposals due to cost involved.
  15. There were no matters arising from the Annual Parish meeting.
  16. **Village Environment:** Cllr Jordon advised debris had been cleared from Whittle Burn although the middle culvert still needed doing. The surface water drain at Burnside required power hosing. EA will remove the tree trunks and debris from upstream of the Ovingham Bridge starting Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – Cllr Jordon had informed the schools. She had received complaints from residents about the state of grass cutting in the village. NCC had been 4 weeks late initially and followed the first cut two weeks later. Cllr Gray commented that an officer had also been at the meeting he had attended as regards the Led lighting and had advised due to flooding of their equipment as a result in Storm Desmond, new and better machines had been purchased which should improve the quality of cuts. Cllr Jordon had asked and received a quote for extra cuts during the year – for one in March and two at the end of the season would cost £670.99 plus VAT. A decision had to be made by late summer. Cllr Bryan mentioned a pile of grass cuttings/garden waste at the back of the garages which backed onto Castle View. Cllr Jordon would follow this up. Cllr Jordon also reported a skip on Bewick Lane which contained bags of rotting food and household furnishings which residents had complained about. Northumbrian Water are proposing to carry out improvements to the surface water drainage system/sewers in Dene Close & Wheatfield Close which could involve work on the grassed areas with possibly some large trees having to be removed. Knotweed on the River Bank leading to the Alders and Piper Road needed to be reported to Tyne Rivers Trust and she asked the Clerk to do this.
  17. **Planning application:**  
Cllr Gray reported that notice of a pre-application had been received for the Old School House. The Clerk would inform Planning that the Parish Council wished to be involved in this (and indeed any future ones). Cllr Gray stated the application was to erect a double garage on land to the rear of the Hall. Both he and Cllr Jordon queried the ownership of this area of land believing it belonged to the Scout Group. They also flagged up the fact that it was in a conservation area and vehicle access was a concern especially when the Hall is operating again, being used by children on a regular basis. Neighbours needed to be consulted. The Clerk would submit these concerns to planning. Cllr Gray also advised the Piper Road application was still slowly proceeding. The Legal dept. at NCC were making sure everything was watertight. He was assured the original agreed conditions would be repeated.

18. **Committee reports:** Cllr Heslop had attended a recent meeting at SCA and forwarded a copy of those minutes. Apprenticeships had proved successful – currently there were 34 on site and 113 recruited in total since 2002. Unfortunately as these were all male, schools were being encouraged to promote apprenticeships particularly to girls. A graduate On-boarding programme has seen the recruitment of 1 female graduate and SCA is looking to recruit 3 other graduates this year. SCA continued to be active in community activities and some of their apprentices helped clear damage to the Ovingham School House to which Cllr Heslop had conveyed his thanks. Local Councils gave updates – Cllr Heslop reported on the effects of the flooding and bridge closure amongst others. Other updates were given by Stocksfield and Wylam the latter looking forward to reduced traffic when Ovingham Bridge re-opens. The next meeting will be in November.
19. **Correspondence:**
  - a) A letter had just been received from “centenary fields” in conjunction with commemorating WW1 – protecting valuable green space across the country.
20. Distribution was still being circulated.
21. **Any other business:** Cllr Jordon asked the Clerk to check Transparency Fund to see if any application could be made with regards equipment such as a printer, laptop. The Clerk replied she thought it unlikely but would find out more information – any claim would need to be from Ovington Parish Council as they do not have a website.
21. The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 7.15pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.25pm