

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
7.00 p.m. Thursday 23 November 2023  
Parish Rooms, Rothbury

**Present:** Hilary Dunn (HD -Chair), Peter Henry (PH), Fran Tait (FT), Alan Tait (AT),  
**In attendance:** Alan Winlow (AW) Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

*The meeting opened at 7.00 p.m.*

**1. Apologies for absence.** None.

**2. Flood risk assessment of properties within the Parish.** Alan Winlow presented the issues and possible actions to minimise risk for residents within the Parish Council in response to the global climate crisis and following recent flood risk problems within the Parish. There was insurmountable evidence that locally we were experiencing more extreme weather. For example:

- the River Coquet in Rothbury had risen to over 3m above its normal levels leaving the Whitton Bank Road 1.7m underwater resulting in a traffic diversion through Whitton. There was little in the way of localised flood warnings particularly for traffic, and a number of vehicles have had to be rescued in recent years.
- Properties at Ryehill had flooded due to the blockage of a culvert. Whilst NCC Highways had been able to clear the debris, effective engineering solutions would be highly costly.
- Road drains at several key points had also blocked, causing localised flooding and required to be dug out. AT undertook this work which had taken several hours over a number of days.
- Another key feature of extreme weather, was the damage to power lines during Storm Arwe, causing major power outages over several days. Currently funding was available to enable power lines to be laid underground in areas of natural beauty. This would create an immediate solution to the problem. Northumberland National Park Authority would need to negotiate with Northern Power Grid to take this forward.

The Parish and its residents needed to act now in order to mitigate future flooding events. To allay the effects of climate change there was significant work to be undertaken. Currently there was no collective knowledge of the real and potential effect to properties in the Parish due to flooding or and other effects of climate change. A risk assessment of the parish and its properties was required.

The members agreed that this was an extremely important issue which needed further investigation. Whilst the Council could take a lead on this matter within the Parish, it was evident they could not do this alone. Whilst the Parish was able to draw upon the limited resources of the County Council and other organisations and services, it also needed the engagement of its residents as we could not be reliant on already stretched services. For example, it should not be left to one individual council member to clear road drains and perhaps instead a team of volunteers could be set up to take on these responsibilities. There were likely to be numerous people in the Parish with enthusiasm, knowledge and or expertise who would be willing to get involved. Perhaps one way to take this forward would be to set up an emergency action committee/group. It was important to ascertain the extent of the problem within the parish, to agree a way forward and to call upon interested residents to become involved.

AW agreed to :

- Discuss with Graham Bucknall, NCC Highways regarding solutions to the flooding issues at Ryehill.
- Ask Sarah Winlow to follow up on procedures for gaining agreement/funding for laying underground power lines.
- To put together a risk assessment strategy document for the Parish when the Parish Council was in apposition to take this forward.

**Action: AW**

The Chair thanked AW for leading the discussion on this extremely important matter.

*AW left the meeting at 7.40 p.m.*

Members discussed this matter further and asked the Clerk to produce a draft circular, for further email discussion prior to its distributed to all residents which:

- Provided an outlined of the issues
- Requested a response from residents, (by way of email or letter to the Clerk), regarding their:
  - Concerns of the effects of climate change for their homes and across the parish
  - Views on what needed to be done to protect their homes and premises
  - Views on what they could do themselves and what help they needed
  - Agreement to taking part in a risk assessment of their homes and premises.
  - Views on sharing of knowledge and expertise and their active engagement in climate action initiatives within the parish.
  - Alerted residents to the Parish Council Webpage

**Action: Clerk**

**3. Minutes of the Parish Council held on Thursday 21st September 2023** were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record and signed as such (proposed AT, seconded (PH), All in Favour).

**4. Matters arising from the minutes including:**

- Freedom of the Parish event – framing of scrolls. The scrolls had now been framed and looked wonderful. They had been delivered to Alan and Katie.
- Sale of the Rothbury Estate Whilst there was a rumour that a sale was imminent this had yet to be announced. Rothly and Hollinghill had submitted a nomination for the Gate as a Community Asset but had been advised to amend the nomination and resubmit. No other nominations for community assets on the estate had been received by NCC.
- Noticeboard on Whitton Bank. Ongoing.

**5. Police Report**

- Crimes Reported :There had been no crimes reported in the Whitton & Tosson area between 15/09/23 – 19/11/23 which would have a wider community impact.
- Anti-social behaviour / Incidents of note. Officers would continue to provide enhanced, visible patrols in the village.
- Theft of generator Little Tosson . HD reported that a generator had been stolen from the new telephone mast site, on the previous weekend. Members questioned why this had not been included in the police report.

**6. Highways and Footways Report:** AT reported:

Highways Inspection:

- There was a significant pothole on Carterside Road on the way to Little Tosson to be reported. **Action: A**
- AT to speak to Highways about the drainage ditches beside Carterside Road, but expect it to be the farmer’s responsibility **Action: AT**
- AT had again contacted Alex MacLennan, Forestry England about the large potholes in the Simonside Car Park entrance who had agreed to chase this up.

Footpaths:

- The footpath signpost at the junction of Carterside Road and the U4016 leading to Weavers Cottage was in poor repair. AT to contact Footpaths Officer -Tony Derbyshire, to ask for it to be replaced. **Action: AT**

Verges:

- The pothole on Carterside Road east of the Newtown just past the Water Authority shed still had not been fixed.
- The culvert at the side of Carterside Road needed to be dug out further to prevent any debris blocking the pipes.
- The grips on the Lordenshaw Road had been checked and cleared.

Seats & Road Signs:

- Alan Winlow had agreed to repair the seat on Lordenshaw Road.
- Peter Henry had agreed to replace the seat half way up Whitton Bank with a brand-new bench. **Action: AW/PH**

Drains:

- One of the drains east at Ryehill was not taking any water (the pipes beneath must be blocked) and so the water was running across the road and on towards the farm into the next drain.
- Storm Babet had caused flooding in various location in the parish, but repeated clearing of drains enabled the flood water to recede quickly. The subsequent Storm Ciaran did not pose any significant problems.

Other Issues

- Northumbrian Water response to tree branches growing over the Tosson to Lordenshaw road along the boundary of the water treatment plant. AW had again reported this issue to Northumbrian Water and suggested how this situation could be monitored by the maintenance team. The Customer Care Manager had agreed with his recommendations and had shared them with their grounds maintenance team to ensure they would continue to review the area on a regular basis.
- Water leakage from the outlet from Rams Wood emerging at the drinking fountain at the junction at the top of Whitton Bank and flowing along Carterside Road towards the caravan park. Clerk to request Northumbrian Water to investigate. **Action: Clerk**

**7. Finance**

- i) Notification of receipts since the last meeting. Approved.

04/09/2023	Business Acc. 70103195	Interest	5.40
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- ii) Approval of Clerk’s salary, expenses, PAYE & NI and approval of Other Payments since the last meeting. Approved.

22/09/2023	Rothbury DCC	Parish Church Room Hire	12.00
01/10/2023	G Rhodes	Pay & Expenses (Jul-Sep))	259.52
01/10/2023	HMRC	PAYE (Jul-Sep)	61.00
10/10/2023	Jubilee Institute Rothbury	Room Hire Freedom event	30.00
09/11/2023	NCC 86101827200050	Parish Council Insurance 2023 -24	228.02
15/11/2023	Richard Tindale	Framing of scrolls x2	46.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>636.54</b>

- iii) Requests for donations. GNAA. £100 approved.

- iv) Bank Reconciliation at 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Approved.

Balance per online e- bank statements at 18/11/2023			
	Community account		1989.15
	Business Saver		<u>2021.24</u>
			4010.39
Less unrepresented cheques			0.00
Uncredited Deposits			0.00

Balance				4010.39
Balance per cash book				4010.39

8. **Planning:** To consider any planning applications

Reference	Address	Type/Status	WTPC Comments
23/03950/FUL	Carterside Farmhouse, Whitton Proposed detached garage	Application	Support the application
23/03982/FUL	Rams Wood, The Pele Tower, Whitton Single Detached Dwelling. Restoration of Historic Woodland Garden (self-build)	Application	Council object to this application on the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed steel cladding to the building is completely out of character with the Whitton Conservation area in which the proposed development would reside, where the buildings are almost exclusively of a stone and slate construction.</li> <li>• Proximity to a Listed Building.</li> <li>• Further loss of trees within the proximity of the build.</li> </ul>

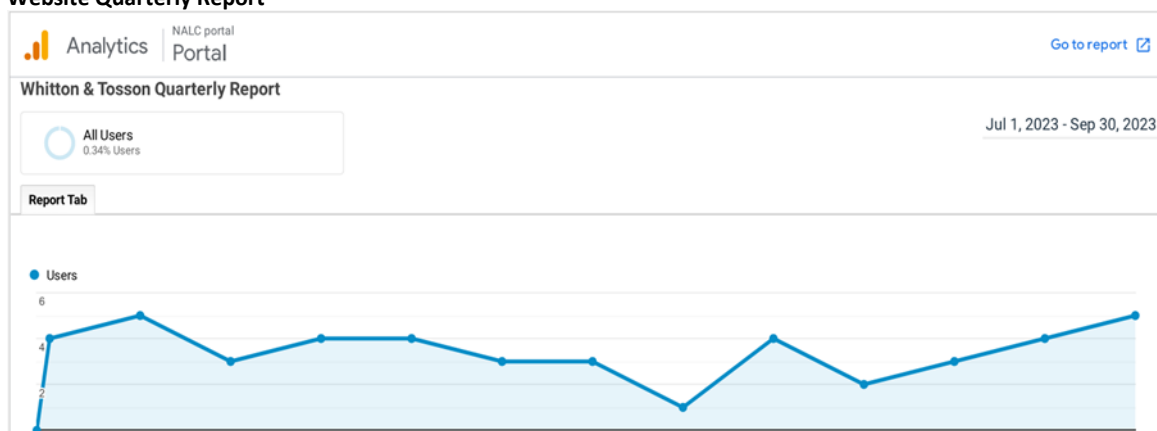
9. **Rothbury JBC Report** The construction of the staff facilities was now almost completed. A shed for storing equipment was being considered. The next meeting would be in December when the 2024-25 budget would be set following which parish councils would be informed of their cemetery fees for the next financial year. Funds have been ringfenced for the cemetery extension. Should the cemetery extension not be feasible, following the sale of Northumberland Estate, it might at some point be possible to reduce parish councils' contributions.

10. **Coquetdale Cluster:** The agenda for the next meeting had been set and included

- Broadband/Copper telephone lines: Meeting with Go Fibre and inorthumberland
- Climate Change Action Plan within Coquetdale
- Policing Matters
- Update on Borderlands Place Programme
- Roads/Traffic/Local Transport Plan
- Footpaths
- Crises Management/Emergency Resilience Grant Funding

11. **Request from Rothbury CAN for Coquetdale Network & Climate Change Action Plan.** The first meeting of the group had taken place. It had been agreed not to go forward with yet another action plan rather to set up a network: **Coquetdale Green Network** with the aim to create an effective network for the sharing of knowledge, understanding and resources between organisations, groups and individuals with an interest in climate action across Coquetdale.

12. **Website Quarterly Report**



13. **Any Other Business.** None

14. **Date for the next Parish Council Meeting:** **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Parish Rooms, Rothbury**

*The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.*

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