

Minutes of meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 21st March 2016

Those present were: George Straughen (GS)(Chair) John Urwin (JU) (Vice Chair) Jim Blythe (JB), Jim Greenwood (JHG), John Grahamslaw (JJG) and Bill McLauchlan (BMcL). The clerk was Victoria Craig (VLC).

3.16.1. To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were sent by Sheelagh Hume (SH) for her absence.

3.16.2. To make any Declaration of Interest.

No declaration of interest was made.

3.16.3. To confirm Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from Minutes

i. Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

Since the council's position had been intimated to Norham and Islandshire Council, there have been no developments. NIPC Chair was due to meet NCC to discuss a draft boundary map. A letter had been received from the office of Anne Marie Trevelyan seeking information.

ii. Leaflets for Walks around Norham

GS had discussed this with Jim Gibson, who is very interested in being involved and who had agreed to draft a leaflet. He had indicated that he estimated it should be possible to buy 5000 leaflets within the budget set.

iii. Signage for Play areas/ playground inspections

The new signage has been erected on the Ubbanford and Village Greens. Alan Cater had indicated he did not wish to proceed on the basis of only two inspections per year. It was confirmed that weekly inspections, with written record, were being carried out. It was therefore agreed that VLC will arrange for an annual inspection to be carried out by ROSPA. The council's insurers had previously confirmed that this was sufficient for their purposes. JU indicated that the equipment whilst old, was robust, but would eventually need to be replaced. He also confirmed he would place rubber mats under the Ubbanford swings to remedy the point raised by Alan Cater previously.

iv. Electronic Speed sign

GS confirmed there had been little progress due to the complexities of ordering the sign. It transpired that the cost of supply and erection of the post on which the sign was fixed was not included in the price quoted by Unipart. GS will discuss this with D Watkin to seek confirmation that NCC will also reimburse this cost. It was agreed that the sign would be ordered in the meantime. It was acknowledged that it was important to try to have the sign in place by end of June. GS also confirmed he had contacted the Community Police Officer and had informed her of the ongoing concerns re speeding and of the intention to erect the first sign. There appeared to have been an increased police presence in the village since then.

v. Seat Location Plan

JB confirmed he had identified 18 seats and one picnic bench. He will pass a list of their location and condition to VLC for circulation. It was agreed that consideration would have to be given to costs of repairs going forward.

vi. Public Conveniences

NCC has rewired the building. The agreed funds had also been received from NCC to cover cleaning costs to 31st March 2016. Sheila Penman continued to do an excellent job. She had purchased cleaning products and recommended certain upgrading of items within the toilets. It was agreed that she would be authorised to buy 3 x paper towel holders, and 6 x locking toilet roll holders at a total cost of £109.74. This would leave a small surplus of funds. JB agreed to use this to buy paint for at least the outside of the building.

vii. Maintenance of Footpaths

It was confirmed that reimbursement of costs less VAT had been received as agreed from NCC. It was also confirmed that the request to have the path at the east end of South Lane formally designated as an official footpath was going through 'due process'. There had been no objections to the application.

viii. Mobile Mast

It was confirmed that VLC had been in contact with Anne Marie Trevelyan's office and had provided them with the information they had requested. Nothing further had been heard until 21st March. They had, after prompting, confirmed that a petition had been signed by 78 people. Surprise and disappointment was expressed that this was the first news of this petition. It was thought that many more would have signed it had they known about it. The 'closing date' on the petition was stated as 29th February. It was agreed that VLC would contact Ms Trevelyan's office to request that the petition be reissued and more widely distributed, as this was probably the one matter of most importance to residents.

ix. Request re brown tourist sign re Norham Church

GS confirmed he had contacted NCC re this matter. A planning application was required for any such sign. The planning authority was apparently reluctant to grant such applications as they wished to discourage a proliferation of signs. The signs cost c£4-5000. After discussion it was agreed in the first instance to report back to The Rev Canon Dr Kelsey, as it would be for the church to make any such application.

x. Northumberland LED Street lighting

It was explained that NCC were in the process of replacing all orange street lights with LED lights over the next few years. This programme would reach Norham in 2017. There was amongst other things therefore the possibility of asking that the overhead cables in Castle Street be removed as part of this process. One obstacle to this being done previously was that the street lights were fixed to the poles. If they were going to be replaced then perhaps this matter could be reopened. GS will look into this further.

xi. Request re removal of tree in North Lane

A request had been received that the parish council arrange for removal of a tree in North Lane. It was agreed after discussion that the tree was on the highway and therefore not the responsibility of the parish council but a county council matter. It was further agreed however that the parish council would have no objection to the tree being removed. VLC will contact the resident in question to recommend that he contact NCC direct.

xii. Parish Council Website

As previously discussed the parish council was now legally bound to place certain information on a public website, including Minutes, agendas and certain information regarding finances and assets. At present this was all put on the Norham Community website, by Alexander Dalgety. There were other options open to the council but after discussion it was agreed that if possible the preferred route would be to retain the use of norham.org. It was agreed that VLC and JU would meet with Alexander Dalgety to discuss the viability of this option. VLC confirmed some central government funding was currently available for such purposes.

xiii. St Cuthbert's Summer Fair

VLC confirmed that in a different role she was organising the church fundraising fair to take place on 25th June. The intention was to put up bunting again round the green; there would be a car boot sale, bouncy castle and swing boats on the green (subject to clarifying the insurance situation) and a possible visit from a fire engine. Stewards would be required. GS confirmed that as with any village event the parish council would be supportive.

On a separate matter the question of booking the village green had been raised recently. It was confirmed that those wishing to book the green should do this via the clerk, and that a voluntary bodies or charities would be given preference to commercial ventures. A notice to this effect would be put in the next Newsround.

xiv. General Correspondence

A letter had been received re commemorative coins for the Queens 90th birthday. It was agreed this would not be appropriate for the parish council.

An email had been received with a request to publicise a new Freegle service. A notice will be put in Newsround.

Leaflets and posters had been received from Dawn CAB in Morpeth. In addition leaflets had been received re Northumberland Residents Weekend. After discussion it was agreed that GS will look into possibility of a waterproof Perspex 'leaflet box' under the notice board for this type of leaflet and perhaps the new leaflets of walks round Norham once produced.

Finance

3.16.4 To review Payments and Receipts since the last meeting

Received: £1600 from NCC being reimbursement for maintenance of paths; £500 from NCC being funds for cleaning of WCs

Payments: Sheila Penman £259.42 for WC Cleaning and cleaning products; Alan Cater £53.52 for play signage; Ian Simpson £53.04 for repair to notice board

3.16.5 To Look at Bank balances in current and deposit accounts

On 21st March Current Account stood at £5914.02 and Deposit Account at £1309.01

3.16.6 To look at Planning Application decisions.

An appeal has been made against refusal of planning re Land North of The Victoria Hotel North Lane

The Application re 6 Cross View has been granted

3.16.7 To look at the state of roads and pavements

JU was asked to report large potholes outside Morris Hall Farm, outside the Castle car park, outside Morris Hall Lodge, at Velvet Hall, and outside the village hall. In addition there are a number of pavement slabs outside the Mace shop were loose. It was pointed out that any member of the public can report potholes via <http://mapreport.northumberland.gov.uk/potholes> . It was acknowledged that NCC funds were diminishing re road repair and maintenance. There was also lengthy discussion regarding the condition and increasingly frequent use of the side road in Castle Street. It was agreed that more thought would be given to how more use of parking on Castle Street (rather than on the side road) could be encouraged. There had been a complaint re the state of the vegetation on the footpath to Ubbanford. This will be dealt with.

Any Other Business

Concerns were raised regarding ambulance cover for the village in particular in light of a recent 3-hour wait by a resident. After discussion it was agreed that GS would raise the matter again with D Watkin in the first instance. It was pointed out that there was a great deal of roadside litter from Velvet Hall along to Norham. GS will raise the question of a litter pick with D Watkin. There had been complaints about dog fouling on Ubbanford Green, and on North Lane. It was agreed a notice would be placed in the next Newsround. GS confirmed there were still a number of energy monitors available. A notice will be inserted in the next Newsround to this effect.

Date of next meeting This will take place in the Village Hall on 23rd May 2016. It will be the AGM.

