

## **Confirmed Minutes of meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

Those present were: George Straughen (GS)(Chairman) Jim Blythe (JB), Jim Greenwood (JHG), John Grahamslaw (JJG) and Bill McLauchlan (BMcL). The clerk was Victoria Craig (VLC). Councillor D Watkin was also present. One other member of the public attended later in the meeting.

### 1.16.1. To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were sent by John Urwin (JU) and Sheelagh Hume (SH) for their absence.

### 1.16.2. To make any Declaration of Interest.

No declaration of interest was made.

### 1.16.3. To confirm Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

## **Matters Arising from Minutes**

### i) New Parish Council Clerk email address

VLC confirmed the new email address was [norhamparishclerk@aol.com](mailto:norhamparishclerk@aol.com) which was up and running. This was the preferred address for all parish council business. The password had been copied to GS so that access to emails could be achieved if the clerk was unavailable.

### ii) Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

The council's position has been intimated to Norham and Islandshire Council, and further information was awaited.

### iii) Letter about Speeding in Norham and response.

A letter had been sent to DPD re complaints of speeding by their drivers in particular in and around St Cuthbert's Square. A helpful response had been received indicating that their drivers had all been informed of the situation. BMcL confirmed that the drivers themselves did seem to be aware of the situation. Any further complaints should be intimated to the parish council. Concern was expressed regarding general speed of drivers down Birchhill. After discussion it was agreed that GS would contact the community police officer again to discuss this.

GS confirmed that he had been in contact with Unipart regarding electronic speed signs. After discussion it was agreed to proceed (subject to clarification of funding from NCC) with the solar powered version of the sign, to be placed on the north side of the road between the school and Rosebank. GS will speak further to Unipart/NCC re how payment would be arranged. It was confirmed by Councillor Watkin that funds were available for the first speed sign. Thereafter the parish council would require to use its own funds. It was noted that it had been agreed by the parish council that signs would be put up at Birchill and on Castle Bank once funds were available, and that speed signs would be treated as a special project.

### iv) Leaflets for Walks around Norham

After discussion it was agreed that GS would speak to James Gibson with a request that he start

the process of putting together a draft leaflet, using information he already held, and perhaps with the help of the NCC footpath officer, who had indicated he would assist with the use of Ordnance Survey maps under NCC's licence to use these.

v) Play Area Signage.

It was explained that in December Alan Cater had indicated that he had had difficulty sourcing appropriate insurance, and accordingly he had ceased all playground inspections with immediate effect. Since then it had been confirmed that the parish council's insurers only required a weekly inspection by a 'competent' person, and an annual inspection by a qualified play equipment Inspector. Weekly inspections are already carried out by JU (whom failing JB) and a written record kept. It was also indicated that Alan Cater had very recently been in touch to say he was hopeful that he might be able to obtain insurance for himself after all. After discussion it was agreed that if he could do it, Alan Cater would be asked to carry out an annual inspection in April, at the start of the season, and an interim inspection in August. In addition he would be asked to arrange for the signage as per the proofs attached to his email of 14<sup>th</sup> January. It was indicated that the problem with the Ubbanford swings was in the process of being resolved.

vi) Electronic Speed sign

See iii above

vii) Seat Location Plan

The list previously produced by JB was considered. After discussion it was agreed that JB would further investigate to identify more benches, and picnic benches, which were the responsibility of the council to ensure that all were on the list.

viii) Public Conveniences

It was confirmed that as of 1<sup>st</sup> January the council had taken on responsibility for cleaning and maintenance of the public conveniences. Sheila Penman had agreed to take on the task of cleaning them, and she appeared competent and industrious. NCC were due to pay £500 pro rata payment to cover the three month period to end March 2016. Thereafter the agreement was £2000 per annum to cover all cleaning and supplies. There would be some surplus - this had to be spent on the conveniences. After discussion it was agreed that any surplus would be used to replace/improve old equipment e.g. bins/dispensers in the toilets. It was agreed that Ms Penman would be asked to put forward recommendations in this regard.

ix) Maintenance of Footpaths

GS confirmed he had spoken to both David Gibson and the NCC footpath officer and it had been agreed that both would be prepared to proceed in the next financial year on the same basis as this year, namely that Mr Gibson would carry out the maintenance works and submit an invoice to the parish council, and NCC would reimburse those costs (ex VAT). VLC pointed out that reimbursement had not yet been received this year so it was agreed a reminder letter requesting this would be sent.

x) Mobile Mast

It was confirmed that planning permission had been granted for this, but that Arqiva, the company involved, had intimated that for a variety of reasons they would not be proceeding with its installation. Councillor Watkin indicated that he understood that government funding had been withdrawn countrywide. VLC indicated that she had received a call suggesting that the local MP

was interested in receiving information on this and that VLC would be contacted in this regards- she had not been yet. JJG indicated he would chase this up.

## **Finance**

### **1.16.4 To review Payments and Receipts since the last meeting**

There were none.

### **1.16.5 To Look at Bank balances in current and deposit accounts**

On 25<sup>th</sup> January Current Account stood at £4129.96 and deposit Account at £1308.85

### **1.16.6 To look at Planning Application decisions.**

The application in relation to 6 Castle Street had been granted.

The application relating to 47-49 Castle Street had been granted.

The application relating to Galagate had been granted.

The application relating to the shared communications mast had been granted (see x. above)

### **1.16.7 To look at the state of roads and pavements**

In view of recent bad weather a large number of potholes were reported including on the road and pavement in Castle Street just outside Foreman's shop and 6 Castle Street, at Morris Hall, on Stackyard Lane, and Church Lane. It was also reported that a number of slabs just outside the Mace shop were loose and required relaying. JB also reported that the footpath from Birchhill to the station had still not been properly cleared, though debris from hedge cutting had been cleared promptly after a complaint had been lodged. GS confirmed he would pass this information to JU for action. JGreenwood also raised query re the side road in Castle Street, and expressed concern for the safety of pedestrians and drivers using it. It was noted that the road was used a great deal more these days, and that perhaps consideration should be given to the possibility of a one-way system. This would require a Traffic Order. As regards its condition this should be added as one of the council priorities on the annual Local Transport Plan.

## **Any Other Business**

JB asked if the salt bins had been refilled. Councillor Watkin confirmed this would be done.

JJG raised the problem of the permanent puddle at the bottom of Castle Bank. Councillor Watkin confirmed that NCC are aware.

There was a query regarding the village Christmas tree. GS confirmed Ladykirk Estates had had none of their own trees available so they had bought one for the village. Their generosity was noted and it was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent. There had apparently been some adverse comment re the size of the tree. It was confirmed that if any resident could provide a larger tree any offer would be considered.

The question of the high Leylandii hedge at the back of Ubbanford was raised. GS confirmed that the problem appeared to have been resolved.

The terms of the recent report on Ambulance and A&E Activity were noted. Councillor Watkin confirmed that whilst some of the detail within the report seemed vague this was to ensure the

anonymity of casualties involved.

GS confirmed that the parish council had been given (by Branxton Council) 19 energy monitors for distribution. Whilst these were branded British Gas they did in fact monitor electricity usage. They could apparently be easily set up. These would be made available free of charge and on a first come first served basis. Only very basic information as regards recipients was required to avoid follow up marketing. It was agreed these would be advertised in the Newsround.

VLC reported she had been on training re new legislation regarding transparency of councils. Every council would require either a website of its own, or access to a community website. A great deal of material would need to be put up, and archived, including draft minutes, final minutes, fixed asset register, Freedom of Information policy etc. Funds were currently available for development of websites, training, and equipment. NALC were considering how best to assist in this and might provide a centralised portal. This matter should be kept under consideration.

Rev Dr Kelsey raised a query re brown signs on the main road. It was indicated that it was thought these would be prohibitively expensive. This matter would be discussed on the agenda at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting This will take place in the village hall on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

