

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting of Norham Parish Council held on 29th January 2018

Those present were: George Straughen (GS), John Urwin (JU) Sheelagh Hume (SH) John Grahamslaw (JGG) and Jim Greenwood (JG). . Victoria Craig (VLC) was present as clerk.

1.18.1 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies from Jim Blythe and Bill McLauchlan

1.18.2. To make any Declaration of Interest

No declaration of interest was made.

1.18.3. To confirm Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

1.18.4 Matters Arising from Minutes

i. Proposed Joint Neighbourhood Planning in Norham and Islandshire

GS confirmed there had been a recent flurry of movement. There was to be a public consultation involving drop in sessions at 4 parishes in the district in February so the public could find out more. The Norham session is on 7th February 4-7pm .The draft outline objectives as agreed so far are deliberately non-specific to cover issues which will apply to all the parishes. The intention is then to have more specific issues covered in the plan for each parish if appropriate. It is important to emphasise to all that this is a planning exercise, related to planning issues only. Flyers have been produced and will be delivered ASAP.

ii. Play Areas (incl posts and chains)

Seats have been purchased and are awaiting fixing by JU and JGG. No other works required at this stage but a coat of paint in the spring was recommended.

iii. Public Conveniences

After all the work put in the public toilets are looking well kept and clean.

iv. Leaflets for walks around Norham

There are still plenty left....

v. Mobile Mast/BT Phone box

VLC has contacted our local MP Ms Trevelyan (AMT) pointing out that lack of mobile signal also meant that Smart meters could not be used in the area. She in turn has written to the company in charge of smart meters asking how they intended to deal with rural communities. It is becoming increasingly important to rural communities that they have mobile and wifi connection in particular bearing in mind 21st Century models of business.

It was unlikely that businesses/house buyers would move to Norham until this had been resolved.

vi. Northumberland LED street lighting/Undergrounding of cables

Some LED replacement work has been done over the last few weeks. In addition it is apparent that some (overground) replacement of cables would take place later this year at the west end of the village. GS had been assured that no cable replacement in Castle Street would take place without the parish council being informed in advance so discussions re the possibilities of undergrounding.

vii Proposed Village Community Trust

A very positive village meeting was held on 22nd January. The Coordination group, which will have its first meeting on 19th February, will be made up of a rep from each working group, to be chaired by GS. It is accepted that this will be a big committee to start off with, but should in due course evolve into a more skills based smaller group, once it gets to the stage of needing a bank account, and a constitution. A query was raised re insurance cover and whether parish council insurance will cover groups at the moment. VLC will investigate at the same time as obtaining quotes for new insurance policy.

viii Use of Postal Addresses

JJG in process of arranging for a large map.

ix. Street Signs/Village Map

See above

x New Speed signs/30mph reminders

Results of a number of historic traffic surveys had been received from NCC. VLC will contact NCC to request up to date surveys be carried out as this is what had been discussed. The council still wishes to retain the purchase of two more speed camera as a special project.

1.18.5 Norham First School

Concerns had been raised by residents regarding the state of Berwick Academy and the knock on effects of the bad publicity it has had on surrounding first schools, including Norham First School. It was recognised that the existence of the school in the village is very important to the vitality of the village. It was also recognised that Norham First School is a very good school, but that unless the secondary education offered in the area was also good potential residents would not move here. VLC will write to NCC and AMT on the subject. It was also confirmed that the Governors were advertising for a new head teacher to start in September this year.

1.18.6 Ambulance Provision

Concerns had also been raised by residents regarding ambulance provision in north Northumberland after recent articles in Berwick Advertiser regarding a 3 hour turn around time for ambulances to Cramlington. VLC will write to AMT.

1.18.7 Review Register of Fixed Assets

In preparation for obtaining quotes for new insurance the Fixed Asset Register was reviewed. It was confirmed that the two notice boards outside the Village Hall were the property of the council and should be on the list. In addition it was agreed that the two informational panels on the village hall end wall had been donated by the WI to the village, and the parish council agreed to take over ownership of them. In addition the new sundial should be added. It was also agreed that the bench outside the Brides Gate belonged to the church not the parish council.

1.18.8 Renewal of Insurance

The current insurance policy expires at the end of May. It was agreed that at least two quotes would be obtained.

1.18.9 Stackyard Lane

A complaint had been raised regarding the state of Stackyard Lane. This is an unadopted road. GS will discuss this with Councillor Lawrie. It was noted that Cowholme was also in a bad state. It is adopted to the end of the tarmac. GS will also raise this, and JJG will discuss with D Foreman.

1.18.10 Norham Signs

It had been noted by a visitor to the village that there is no sign directed drivers to Norham at Velvet Hall, or at Salutation Arms road end, nor is there one near Swinton. VLC will write to NCC and Scottish Borders Council.

Finance

1.18.11 To agree appointment of Internal Auditor for 2017-2018

The terms of engagement letter provided by Roseanne Bennett was agreed, as was the fee of £150 to carry out the annual audit at the end of this financial year. VLC also reported that new external auditors had been appointed (PKF Littlejohn LLP)

1.18.12 To review Payments and Receipts since last meeting

Payments had been made to Norham Community Website £250; to Fenland leisure (replacement swing seats) £451.20; to S Penman £113.75, and £100.

1.18.13 To look at Bank balances in Current and Deposit Accounts

As at 29th January the current account stood at £8482.23 and the Business account at £1309.72. It was noted that the current account was high. It was possible that this might be used to buy next speed sign with assistance from Cllr Lawrie's annual contribution. GS will discuss this with him.

1.18.14 To look at Planning Application decisions

Application re 4 Castle Street had been granted. It was noted that the application in relation to the Masons Arms had been withdrawn. It was reported that there was an ongoing consultation regarding the extent of accommodation that the Masons Arms

wished to build. After discussion it was agreed that a letter in support of the application would be sent, confirming that the principle of the application accorded with the current aims of the parish council and indeed the more recent village workshops, to encourage visitors to come to the village.

1.18.15 To look at state of Roads and Pavements

It was noted that some patching work had been done at Morris Hall Farm. Councillors and residents were urged to keep on reporting potholes via NCC website

1.18.16 General Correspondence

VLC confirmed that she had written to Ladykirk Estates thanking them for the Christmas tree, and to Bernicia Housing regarding the damage to the grass verges at Ubbanford. The latter had not yet been rectified. If it has not been done by mid February (weather permitting) another letter would be sent. Some unhappiness was expressed regarding the pollarding of the trees behind the village hall. The tree officer had however refused to cut back trees in Castle Street. JB had prior to the meeting asked if Ian Martin could be approached regarding cutting back of vegetation on the path to Norham Dene. GS will deal. A complaint had been received regarding the state of the path to Horncliffe below the castle i.e. that it is very steep and slippery, and therefore off-putting to walkers. This will be considered. It was recognised that NCC had no funds to assist although they are very helpful in general.

Date of next meeting: 26th March 2018