**Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council**

Minutes of the Meeting and Annual Meeting of the above Parish, held on Monday 12th May 2014 in the Parish Hall.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Malcolm Reid Cllr. Andy Dunhill

Cllr. Jill Mills Cllr. Eileen Carew

Cllr. Brian Singer Cllr. Eileen Ewen

**In attendance:**

Cllr. Anne Dale – Northumberland County Council

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Ms Rosalind Saul – Hexham Courant

Public (4): Mr R Archer, Mrs P Pryor, Mrs J Rowntree and Mrs L Stephenson,

Cllr. Reid opened the meeting at 7.44 pm.

1. **Apologies**

 Apologies were received from Cllr. Cairns.

2. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

(i) Cllr. Reid as Chairman of Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council in 2013/14 called for nominations for Chairman for 2014/15. Cllr. Mills proposed and Cllr. Dunhill seconded Cllr. Reid as Chairman and he was duly elected.

(ii) Cllr. Reid asked for nominations for the Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. Cllr. Reid proposed and Cllr. Carew seconded Cllr. Dunhill as Vice Chairman. Cllr. Dunhill was duly elected.

3. **Approval of Standing Orders**

It was agreed to approve the current Standing Orders subject to the removal of an inconsistency between the use of the terms ‘business days’ and ‘working days’.

**Action: CH**

4. **Declaration of Interests**

No disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting were given.

5. **Delegation of Responsibilities**

The Chairman proposed to delegate to councillors the Chairman’s authority to take decisions subject to approval at future PC meetings and working in conjunction with the Clerk in specific areas. This was agreed as follows:

 *Planning Sub-Committee – Cllrs. Dunhill & Singer*

*(Note: CH to email all councillors with details of each new planning application. Councillors may then, if they wish, request to see a copy)*

 *Parish Plan – Cllr. Dunhill*

 *Legal/FOI matters – Cllr. Mills*

*Appraisals – Cllrs. Carew & Singer*

 *VHT representatives – Cllrs. Carew and Cairns*

 *Website monitoring – Cllr. Dunhill*

 *Handyman/ Amenity matters/ Play park inspection – Cllrs. Dunhill & Ewen*

 *Accounts – Cllr. Cairns*

*Garden Share/Environmental issues – Cllr. Ewen*

 *Minutes – Chair of the meeting*

6. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 10th March 2014**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 10th March 2014 were a true record and these were duly signed off by Cllr. Reid.

7. **New speed restriction signs on the A695 to Corbridge**

(Agenda item 19 was brought forward as Cllr. Dale had to leave for another meeting)

At the annual Parish Meeting concerns had been raised by residents and councillors over the new speed restriction signs on the A695 to Corbridge which were considered confusing. Cllr. Dale had contacted NCC to ask why the speed restriction had not been continued along the length of the road to Riding Mill and had been told that the section of the road from Grey Court to the 30mph limit did not meet the required criteria to make it a 40mph zone. Councillors felt that the excluded area was a dangerous section as it was narrow and there had been accidents. Cllr. Dale was asked to clarify the criteria.

**ACTION: ADa**

Cllr. Dale also reported that the cats’ eyes would be reinstalled shortly on this road.

8. **Matters arising from the March meeting other than those listed on the agenda**

 (i) *Minute 4(i) – Railway Bridge*

A695 Road bridge over the railway: this item was discussed in the public pre-meeting. Network Rail had removed the leaning section of wall but had replaced it with a poor quality fence. A question of whether the bridge was listed had been raised. If it was the work would have required planning permission. Cllr. Dale agreed to investigate further.

**ACTION: ADa**

Railway bridge, Underwood Road – this was subject to a site visit by the relevant planning committee and a decision was awaited as to remedial works.

 (ii) Minute 4(v) – Access for emergency vehicles in Millfield Road

Cllr. Dale reported that she had received a response from the Ambulance Service.

The Ambulance Service had chosen not to put a flag on their system highlighting the width restriction on the bridge in Millfield Road as paramedic rapid response cars could use it. If they placed a flag on it all vehicles would be prevented from using it. Local crews and control room staff were aware of the restriction but occasionally an individual from outside of the local area could be working and might not be aware. The Ambulance Service was hoping to trial a new control system that would allow individual vehicles to be routed dependent on width and weight restrictions and would keep Cllr. Dale informed of these developments.

 (iii) *Minute 4(vi) – Memorial to Bobby Turner*

It was noted that the bird bath had been installed at the Parish Hall. It was lovely and the Council recorded its thanks to Linden Stephenson for sourcing it and arranging its installation.

(iv) *Minute 4(vii) – Long Rigg*

Cllr. Dale had met with officials from NCC to establish the work required before the road could be adopted and it would appear that it was considerable. Cllr. Dale agreed to contact the residents’ association to provide an update.

**ACTION: ADa**

(v) *Minute 5 – New bank account*

The Clerk reported that the application for a deposit bank account with Triodos had been submitted approximately 7 weeks ago but the bank was experiencing delays in opening new accounts because of the large number of such applications. It was likely to be opened shortly. Once completed she would then transfer the current account to the Unity Trust Bank.

 (vi) *Minute 12(i) – Debmat*

The Clerk reported that Debmat had still not made good the damaged footpath in Millfield Road as they had agreed despite numerous reminders. Cllr. Reid agreed to contact the director again if it was not resolved by the time of the next PC meeting.

**ACTION: CH/MR**

(vii) *Minute 12(ii) – Youth Club*

Mrs Pryor outlined her discussions with a group of youngsters in the village. They would like to be able to use the MUGA court and also have somewhere to meet. They did not want a youth club. She had arranged with the Tennis Club for the MUGA court to be available free of charge on some Friday evenings from 6 until 7pm. The children would then be able to use the Parish Hall afterwards to watch a film or use the wifi connection so that they could play computer games. There would be a rota of parents who would supervise these sessions starting with a trial period.

The PC was happy to support this initiative and it was unanimously agreed to provide £300 of funding for some games (table football and air hockey).

**ACTION: CH**

The children’s ultimate wish was for a bike ramp somewhere in the village. Cllr. Reid noted that it might be possible to install goal posts somewhere in the village but that the children had to express a wish for this. Cllr. Dale reported that she could also provide some funding if required.

9. **Outcome of the complaint against the Chairman made to the County Council**

It was reported that a complaint made by a resident about the PC Chairman to the Monitoring Officer at the County Council had been considered and it had been deemed that there was no case to answer.

10. **Consultations**

(i) It was noted that NCC was undertaking a number of consultations on school transport issues. One consultation was reviewing the provision of free transport for post-16 scholars who lived more than three miles from a Further Education provider. The PC felt strongly that NCC should not withdraw free transport for these youngsters despite the large costs involved. The County Council promoted ‘equality of opportunity’ and removing free travel could certainly stop some youngsters from continuing with their education because of the financial impediment. The PC agreed to urge the County Council to retain the existing provision for free post-16 transport despite the cost to the County.

 ACTION: CH

The other consultations were displayed on the ridingmill.org website including details of how to respond and residents who held views on these matters were encouraged to take part.

(ii) **Hexham Bus Station:** It was reported that a representative of Hexham Traders’ Association had been in contact asking that the Council canvass residents’ views on the proposals to relocate the Bus Station. Cllr. Dale informed the Council that a number of proposals were being developed and that all PCs would be consulted fully once this information was available. It was agreed that no further action was required at this time.

11. **Finance / Insurance**

 a) Annual Accounts

The following documents were received in advance of the meeting and were unanimously approved:

* The 2013/14 Accounts
* Budget Summary
* Annual Return
* Governance Statement

The Assets Register and Risk Assessment & Management document were noted and one amendment was made to the location of an item on the Assets register.

It was noted that the Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors’ Rights to view the accounts had been posted on the notice board as per the legislation. The dates for inspection were from Monday 12th May until Monday 9th June.

 b) Monthly accounts

 The following payments were authorised:

Catherine Harrison – March salary and home allowance £345.82

Catherine Harrison – expenses

 Files - £21.89, Postage £2.10

 Land registry £3, Office equipment £95.07 £122.06

Riding Mill Pre-School – reimbursement for fencing repairs £100

Haddonstone Ltd – slate bird bath/Memorial to Bobby Turner £520

Getmapping Plc –Parish Online Software £57.60

Northumberland County Council – litter bin at west end bus shelter £110.00

VHT – rent of room for PC meetings £24.00

Penman Bros. Contracts – installation of bird bath £85.00

Mrs L Stephenson – resin for installation of bird bath £10.79

Sandy Bank Residents’ Association – contribution to “The Nick”

Insurance £268.00

C Harrison – April salary and £10 home allowance £345.82

C Harrison – expenses printer cartridges £54.06

 Advert in Courant for APM £41.98

 Land Registry charges £77.00

 £173.04

Homevend (May) £75.00

 (ii) It was noted that the following payments had been received:

**Reserve Account**

Interest – April £3.32

**Current Account**

NCC – Precept £17500.00

RM Allotments’ Association – Rent £31.50

RM Cricket Club – Rent £25.00

RM Tennis Club – Rent £25.00

Monica Anderton – purchase of old printer £10.00

NCC – use of Old Playground for school buses £50.00

(iii) A report showing budget spending to date was received. There were no issues to note.

c) Annual grant to the VHT

The PC considered making its annual grant to the Village Hall Trust. Mrs Pryor was asked to outline the funding required for the new extension at the Parish Hall. It was noted that the grant had not been increased in the last eight years and it was therefore unanimously agreed to increase the award this year to £3000.

 d) Insurance

It was noted that the insurance premium from the current provider had risen considerably this year due to legal costs defending a defamation claim which was subsequently withdrawn. The Clerk had sought additional quotes which were considered by the Council. The Council decided to accept the lowest quote (Aviva Insurance Group via Came & Company broker) and to agree to a three year deal which would reduce the premium by a further 5%.

**ACTION: CH**

12. **Handyman**

It was reported that the handyman had cut back hedge growth in the play park. He had also planted trees on the Marchburn river bank close to the double tennis courts.

13. **Wheelchair access by Parish Hall leading to the Play Park and Tennis Court**

It was reported that following an initial meeting with the County’s Footpaths Officer, Jason Tennet had agreed to draw up plans and submit the planning application to the County Council. The cost for this work would be £500. The proposal was for a parallel path adjacent to the current public footpath. Estimates for the work ranged from £3000-6000.

It was unanimously agreed to ask Mr Tennet to complete the plans. Quotes would be sought and once a more accurate cost could be established the PC would consider whether to approve this project

**ACTION: CH**

14. **Play Park**

It was reported:

(i) that the grass surface of the Play Park had deteriorated considerably in the past few months. Mole activity had been high over the winter and tunnels had collapsed beneath the surface leaving the ground pitted. The Clerk had held a meeting with a local landscaper who had suggested that a hard base be constructed in the centre of the park covered by bark with paths constructed which would connect the play equipment. An initial estimate of £7500 was given. It was agreed that the surface of the play park had to be improved and that Cllrs. Dunhill and Ewen should explore different options.

**ACTION: AD/EE**

(ii) that the larger swings were showing signs of rust to the bolts and rubber damage. It was unanimously agreed to replace the swings (chains and seat).

**ACTION: CH**

15. **Fencing**

A quote was received from the Pre-School to replace sections of the fencing around their garden adjacent to the tennis court. The firm had offered to charge only for the materials. This was a substantial saving on earlier estimates and was therefore approved unanimously.

**ACTION: CH**

16. **Grass cutting**

It was reported that the County Council’s contract for grass cutting was accepted this year. The contract would appear to rely on historical data and a request had been made for NCC’s Green Spaces Officer to reassess all areas for which the PC was responsible and if necessary recalculate the quote. It was noted that NCC’s service was sometimes poor but many of the areas which residents complained about were actually land which belonged to NCC and the PC changing supplier would have no effect.

**ACTION: CH**

17. **Environmental Report**

It was noted that Sally Rogers was leading a group of volunteers to help tackle environmental issues in the village such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. Residents interested in joining the group were asked to contact Sally by email on sallyrogers@fsmail.net. Mrs Stephenson reported that the County Council’s gardeners had cut down the Japanese Knotweed near her house. She had been in the process of organising with Sally for it to be treated with pesticides. Residents should liaise with Sally about such issues or with Cllr. Ewen. The PC would pay for any pesticides required.

18. **Mill Race Gardens** – item withdrawn

19. **Dene Terrace**

Cllr. Reid reported that having written to the residents of Dene Terrace back in December asking them to assume responsibility for the wall and path adjacent to their properties (a resolution to which one resident had dissented) and withdrawing any claim by the Parish Council, he had now been shown an historical map which seemed to indicate that Northumberland County Council owned this land although they had not been maintaining the wall in recent memory. He would seek to discuss the issue with the County Council and report back to the residents in order to finally resolve this matter.

**ACTION: MR**

20. **Planning**

 It was reported that:

1. the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:

14/00940/FUL Fairfield, Long Rigg – extension. PC response – no objection although minor issues raised.

14/01072/FUL Long Rigg, Long Rigg – extension. PC response – no objection although minor issues raised.

1. the following planning applications had been considered by NCC and granted permission:

14/00055/LBC Stable End, Broomhaugh – new boiler and flue

 14/00254/FUL Brockencote, Sandy Bank – extension.

 13/03059/OUT Highfield, Sandy Bank – outline planning permission for new dwelling.

21. **Correspondence**

A letter from Mrs Soulsby had been received regarding the Tennis Club Management Plan. As it was unclear which residents she was representing the PC had asked for clarification before responding.

22. **Minor Matters**

 (i) *CAN Annual Meeting*

Cllr. Reid reported on a meeting he had attended. One of the discussions had been on renewable energy/energy saving. There was a scheme supported by the County Council – Warm up North – which would help with solid wall insulation – something which might be appropriate for a number of houses in Riding Mill. Further details of the scheme would be placed on the website.

**ACTION: MR**

1. *Planters at station*

Malcolm Chainey had indicated that he could get 6 or 9 half-barrels which could be placed at the railway station to improve the appearance. Cllr. Ewen and Sylvia Chainey had offered to plant up the barrels and maintain them. A small donation towards the plants was approved by the councillors.

**ACTION: EE**

1. *Lighting on the path from the station to Broomhaugh*

NCC had been to look at the problem of lighting on this path and would provide an estimate to place one or a number of lights along its length. There was currently a scheme to improve lighting in dark places and it might be possible to secure some funding from the County Council to help with this project. Cllr. Reid also suggested that some of the trees on the north side of the path might be removed to improve the situation.

1. *Hedging by the tennis court*

It was reported that the Clerk and Mrs Stephenson had sourced a number of options for hedging for the triangular section of land adjacent to the MUGA court. Cllr. Dunhill proposed to discuss the options with nearby residents.

**ACTION: AD**

1. *WW1 Commemoration*

It was agreed that Cllr. Carew and the Clerk should look at possible places to plant poppy seeds.

**ACTION: CH/EC**

1. *Speed Activation signs*

Cllr. Mills reported that the signs had malfunctioned as she drove past them recently. The Clerk confirmed that a meeting with Swarco was arranged for the following week to discuss the problems and look at alternative power sources.

23: **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Council on Monday 14th July 2014.

Noted: that future meetings would be held on the second Monday of the following months: September, November, December, February, March, May and July with the annual Parish Meeting in April.

With no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.59pm.