**Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 14th July 2014 in the Parish Hall.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Malcolm Reid (Chairman) Cllr. Andy Dunhill

Cllr. Jill Mills Cllr. Eileen Carew

Cllr. Bill Cairns Cllr. Brian Singer

**In attendance:**

Cllr. Anne Dale – Northumberland County Council

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Public (4): Mr R Archer, Mr D Gibson, Mrs J Rowntree and Mrs L Stephenson.

Before opening the meeting, Cllr. Reid thanked Mrs Stephenson for all her hard work in maintaining the amenities of the village and presented her with a small gift now that she had decided to retire from this role.

Cllr. Reid opened the meeting at 7.55 pm.

1. **Apologies**

 Cllr. Ewen and Mrs Pam Pryor, Chair of the Village Hall Trust.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

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

3. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 12th May 2014**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th May 2014 were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Reid.

4. **Matters arising from the May meeting other than those listed on the agenda**

 (i) *Minute 5 – Planning Sub-Committee*

It was noted that a third councillor was required to sit on the Planning Sub-Committee. Cllr. Reid nominated Cllr. Mills and this was duly seconded by Cllr. Carew and agreed unanimously.

(ii) *Minute 8(i) – A695 Road bridge over the railway and Railway Bridge, Underwood Road.*

Cllr. Dale reported that the road bridge on the A695 was a listed structure and that NCC would be contacting Network Rail to discuss the removal of the adjacent wall but for now they were currently undertaking negotiations with Network Rail re the bridge on Underwood Road. They did not want to confuse the issues and it would therefore be followed up in due course.

The retrospective planning application for the work to the bridge on Underwood Road was to be considered at a meeting of the West Area Planning Committee on 16th July. Cllr. Reid planned to speak at the meeting. Any comments Councillors wished him to raise should be emailed to him before the meeting.

 **ACTION: ALL**

(iii) *Minute 8(v) Triodos Account*

The Clerk reported that the reserve account at Triodos Bank was now operational and £20000 had been transferred into this new account.

**ACTION: Councillors to activate their accounts**

(iv) *Minute 8(vi) – Debmat*

It was reported that whilst Debmat had undertaken some of the repairs to the pavement in Millfield Road they had not made good the whole section and it was agreed to ask them to complete the work.

**ACTION: CH**

(v) *Minute 8(vii) – Youth Club Progress*

Mrs Pryor, Chair of the VHT, had submitted a written report outlining the progress to date in starting an Internet Cafe on a Friday evening for older children in the village. The initial interest shown had been very good but some children had failed to engage further to help design the format of the club. A trial session would be held in September.

(vi) *Minute 16 – Grass cutting*

It was reported that the standard and frequency of the grass cutting was poor. It was noted that the grass cutting team at NCC were extremely under resourced. Cllr. Dunhill agreed to undertake a full review of the areas to be cut with a view to seeking alternative quotes for next year.

**ACTION: AD/CH**

(vii) *Minute 19 – Dene Terrace Wall*

Cllr. Dale reported that she had contacted ISOS who owned part of the wall at Dene Terrace and they had approved the opening being made in the wall. She was asked to approach NCC to see if they were happy for the homeowners to assume ownership of the wall. Cllr. Dale felt this was unnecessary as the County Council had shown no interest in ever maintaining the wall.

(viii) *Minute 22(ii) – Planters at the station*

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Ewen had been working with Malcolm Chainey but progress had been slow but it was hoped that the planters would be received shortly.

(ix) *Minute 22(iii) – Lighting on the footpath from Broomhaugh to the Station*

It was reported that:

1. the PC were conducting a search with the Land Registry to establish who owned the land to the left of the path leading to Broomhaugh with a view to arranging for the overhanging trees to be cut back or removed.
2. the light nearest to the station was now being obscured by trees. These trees were on Network Rail land and it was agreed that the Clerk should contact them to ask for the trees to be cut.

**ACTION: CH**

1. A quote had been received from the County Council to install either one or a number of lights along the length of the path, the costs being £4450.33 or £13,473.98 respectively. As this matter had been raised many times over the years and it was clearly a safety issue, it was agreed that this was something the PC wished to pursue (nb. a much higher quote had been received some years previously). As NCC maintained the footpath and oversaw lighting in the Parish it was felt that it was most appropriate that they completed the work. It was therefore agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended at the next Council meeting to allow Councillors to consider only one quotation.

**ACTION: CH**

(x) *Minute 22(v) – WW1 Commemoration*

Cllr. Carew reported that it was not presently possible to plant any poppy plants by the War Memorial as this would need permission from the Church Council and would take some time. Instead two planters filled with poppies had been placed at either end of the Village.

It was noted that there would be a WW1 Commemoration Service in the Village on Sunday 3rd August.

5. **Wheelchair Access by the Parish Hall leading to the Play Park and Tennis Court**

Cllr. Dunhill reported that Jason Tennet had recently submitted some new plans to him and a meeting would be held on site to discuss them further.

In the pre-meeting discussion Mrs Stephenson had raised her concerns about a wooden structure being installed which she felt would not be aesthetically in keeping with the village.

Cllr. Reid confirmed that the Council would obtain quotes for various options both wooden and tarmac/cement and that consideration needed to be given to costs, aesthetics and longevity when making the final decision.

**ACTION: AD/MR/JT**

6. **Speed Activated Signs**

It was reported that a quote had been received from Swarco to reposition the existing signs and to install two additional signs showing drivers’ actual speeds.

It was noted that a number of residents had raised concerns about the proposals. Cllr. Dale also highlighted her plans to install a ‘gateway’ at the eastern entrance to the village and she felt it would be better to work in conjunction with Officers from NCC to develop a whole village plan and not allow a proliferation of signs.

It was agreed to form a working party to work with Cllr. Dale to look at the issue. Cllrs. Carew, Reid and Dunhill agreed to serve on the group.

**ACTION: ADa/EC/MR/AD**

7. **Street Lighting**

Cllr. Carew reported that the street lights were very dirty and that some lampposts needed painting. Cllr. Dale reported that NCC were planning to renew the street lights with LED ones. Also, the County Council should be informed which of the old Victorian lampposts needed painting.

**ACTION: CH**

8. **Hedging by the Single Tennis court**

It was reported that following discussions with local residents it was suggested that a fast growing Leylandii hedge be planted adjacent to the tennis court. Some concerns were expressed about a leylandii hedge which would require regular trimming but it was agreed that this was the only cost effective fast growing solution. The quote from Halls of Heddon was therefore unanimously accepted. Mr Archer asked that consideration be given to planting one laurel tree at the narrowest point and the Council agreed.

**ACTION: CH**

9. **Play Park**

 It was reported that:

1. the RoSPA inspection had recently been completed and no major issues had been raised;
2. it would cost £408 plus VAT to replace the two larger swings and if Playdale completed the work there would be an additional labour charge of £295. It was agreed to postpone this work until next year when additional work on the play park might be necessary;
3. a tree surgeon had been instructed to remove a dead tree from the riverbank adjacent to the play park. The cost had been £250;
4. Various comments had been received re possible improvements to the play park. Most respondents would be sad to see the grass removed and replaced by bark chippings although all agreed that when the grass was long the uneven surface was a concern. Suggestions for additional play equipment were received together with exercise equipment for adults. A request was also made to reinstate the football pitch beside the cricket field.

It was agreed that:

1. As an initial first stage the PC would arrange for the play park grass to be cut much more frequently.

**ACTION: CH/AD/EC**

1. That consideration should be given to installing fitness equipment for adults although probably not in the play ground. It was suggested that land by the double tennis courts might be appropriate. Mrs Mathers, who had contacted the Council with the idea, had agreed to act on a working group to look at the feasibility and costs and it was suggested that Cllr. Ewen work with her.

**ACTION: EE**

1. The PC would like to see the amenity land by the cricket field brought back in to use. An approach for sponsorship should be made to the engineering firm adjacent to the site as they had previously made use of it for their staff.

**ACTION: CH/AD**

10. **Spinney Entrance**

Cllr. Reid reported that he felt that the Spinney was underused and that making an entrance in the wall of the Old Playground would allow easier, safer access and encourage more use. He had discussed his ideas with the group that oversaw the Spinney and with the Vicar who were all in support of his proposals.

After a discussion about the aesthetics of making an opening in the old stone wall, it was agreed that other options should be considered instead to encourage use such as an information board in the Old Playground. A further discussion would be held at a future meeting.

11. **Finance**

a) Annual Accounts

It was reported that the External Auditor had requested two changes to the 2013/14 accounts, namely that the Fixed Asset value for 2012/13 should be restated to reflect original purchase cost rather than insurance valuations (the Clerk had done this for 2013/14 but it was necessary to do this for 2012/13 to highlight any changes to the Assets). Secondly, that the Council Tax Grant received with the precept be recorded as “other receipts” rather than precept. These changes had been made and it was unanimously agreed to approve the new accounts.

b) Monthly expenditure

(i) The following payments were authorised:

 Broker Network Ltd (Council insurance) £2503.79

Peter Basnett – internal auditor fees £104.30

RM Village Hall Trust – Annual grant +

additional £1000 towards building programme £3000.00

RM VHT – contribution to Village Day games £50.00

St James PCC – contribution to Parish News £37.00

Northumbrian Water – Cricket Pavilion £13.53

RM Cricket Club – part payment towards grass cutting £320.00

HG Penman – installation of bird bath (cheque re-issued) £85.00

Catherine Harrison – May salary and home allowance £345.82

Transfer to Triodos – new reserve account £20000.00

Homevend – additional maintenance £95.00

D Chapman – fence repairs Pre-School garden (materials only) £385.00

NALC – subscription + training course £189.51

Playsafety Ltd – play park inspection £85.20

Wendy Robe – plants for either end of village (WI) £33.99

Stuart Burns – Tree felling play park £250.00

Radiopages – website hosting £99.00

C Harrison – June salary and home allowance £345.82

C Harrison – expenses (postage – £17.52

 Stationery – £38.10

 Land registry fees - £74.00

 Gift and card - £45.24

 Poppies & planters - £44.60) £219.46

**Standing Orders:**

Homevend (June) £75.00

Homevend (July) £75.00

(ii) A report showing budget spending for the financial year was received. There were no matters of concern to note. It was agreed that Cllr. Cairns would review the accounts before each PC meeting as time did not allow a particularly thorough review during the actual Council meeting and he would highlight any issues to note.

**ACTION: BC/CH**

12. **Clerk’s Appraisal /Pay Award**

It was reported that following a recent appraisal the Clerk had passed her probationary period. As stated in her contract she was therefore eligible to receive a pay increment rise. Cllr. Reid proposed and Cllr. Dunhill seconded this rise backdated to 1st April 2014 and it was unanimously agreed by all. It was also proposed that the Clerk should be paid for an additional 4 hours in the week of a PC meeting (8 meetings each year – additional 32 hours in total). This was unanimously agreed.

**ACTION: CH**

13. **Handyman – June & July reports**

It was reported that the Handyman had completed work clearing leaf debris by the tennis courts on Millfield Road, had cleaned the soft play surfaces at the play park of moss and also cut back vegetation around the site. He had also cleaned and treated the bench by the Wellington.

In addition to his core work, the Handyman had cleared vegetation covering a bench on the Slaley Road and cleared the ground near the single tennis court ready for planting a hedge. This work had been invoiced separately.

It was noted that the bus shelter opposite the Wellington Inn was in poor repair and that the Clerk should review and ask the Handyman to paint if necessary.

**ACTION: CH**

14. **Planning**

 It was reported that:

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

14/01388/HEGRMN – Land south east of Grey court, Removal of hedge. PC had suggested environmental assessment and possible new hedge planted nearby.

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

14/00940/FUL Fairfield, Long Rigg

14/01072/FUL Long Rigg, Long Rigg

14/01523/FUL 1 The Bungalows, Broomhaugh (PC – no objections).

14/01723/FUL – Sandy Bank Cottage. Single storey garden room extension. (PC – no objections).

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

13/03492/FUL – Hopton House, Riding Hills.

15. **Correspondence**

There were no additional correspondence matters to consider.

16. **Minor Matters**

 (i) *Tyne Rivers Trust*

It was reported that Sally Rogers was preparing to treat the Japanese Knotweed by the double tennis courts. The TRT would buy the pesticide and apply for the licence to allow treatment near the March Burn. Cllr. Reid proposed and it was unanimously agreed that the PC would pay for the pesticide and for the licence and that the TRT should submit an invoice to the Council. The Clerk was asked to check how long the licence would last.

**ACTION: CH**

 (ii) Marchburn Lane Residents’ Association

 Cllr. Mills had attended a meeting of the Association recently and reported the following:

1. that Northern Powergrid would begin work to install new power cables in mid-September. The Clerk should inform Mrs Downs as the residents might wish to delay pothole repairs until after this work is completed:

**ACTION: CH**

1. that sections of the road bridge needed repainting and the residents requested that the PC undertook this work;

**ACTION: CH**

1. that the trees and vegetation on amenity land needed cutting back. In the pre-meeting discussion Mr Gibson had highlighted problems of weeds spreading from this land under the road and asked for commercial weed killer to be applied. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask the handyman to cut back overhanging trees and vegetation around the triangular area of land and by Mill Race pond. (Subsequent to the meeting Mr Neil Turner had offered to do this cutting back and this had been gratefully accepted.)

**ACTION: CH**

1. that the residents requested the PC to contact the County Council to ask for the cut between Sandy Bank and Marchburn Lane to be re-Tarmaced as it had been eroded by water.

**ACTION: ADa**

 (iii) *Dog Fouling*

It was reported that there had been issues of dog fouling in Sandy Bank. Residents should report such incidents to the County Council via their website.

1. *Village Shop*

Cllr. Reid reported that he had met with Frank Turner to discuss whether a likely tenant for the shop had been found and had been told that no one had come forward. The shop was therefore not likely to reopen for the foreseeable future. A discussion was held as to whether a community shop might be formed.

 (v) *Fencing*

 It was noted that the Pre-School garden fence had been renewed;

1. *Wooden Footbridge leading to the double tennis courts*

Rob Archer reported that he had renewed one support on the footbridge to the double tennis courts as agreed previously and would send an invoice for this work shortly. He also highlighted that the central downstream post was also starting to rot and needed filling and treating with wood preservative. It was agreed that this was a job for the handyman;

**ACTION: CH**

Cllr. Dunhill reported that he had been to view the new walkway and had noted the steep drop from the road to the footbridge. He wondered if a section should be taken out and the area re-Tarmaced. Rob Archer agreed to provide a quotation for the next meeting.

**ACTION: RA**

1. Tennis Club lease

Cllr. Mills reported that she was still waiting for the final approved draft of the Management Plan from the Tennis Club in order for the lease to progress. Rob Archer agreed to follow this up with the relevant person.

**ACTION: RA**

17. **Date of the next meeting**

 It was agreed to hold the next Council meeting on Monday 8th September 2014.

18. **Confidential Matters**

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Cllr. Reid proposed and Cllr. Mills seconded and it was unanimously resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item: FOI requests made by Mr B Young.

Meeting closed at 10.50 pm.