**Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 8th September 2014 in the Parish Hall.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Andy Dunhill (Vice-Chairman) Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. Jill Mills Cllr. Eileen Carew

Cllr. Bill Cairns

**In attendance:**

Cllr. Anne Dale – Northumberland County Council

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Public (5): Mr D Gibson (pre-meeting only), Mrs P Pryor, Mrs J Rowntree, Mrs L Stephenson and Mr J Tennet.

Cllr. Dunhill opened the meeting at 7.43 pm.

1. **Apologies & Resignation**

Apologies were received from Cllr. Reid.

Cllr. Dunhill reported that Eileen Ewen had decided to resign from the Parish Council and thanked her for her efforts to establish a garden share scheme and the Edible Riding Mill initiative.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in agenda item 7 – Cricket Club. Although not a member Cllr. Dunhill’s team regularly made use of the ground.

3. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14th July 2014**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14th July 2014 were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Dunhill.

The minutes of the confidential meeting held on 14th July 2014 were also approved as a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Dunhill.

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

1. *Minute 4(ii) – A695 Road bridge over the railway: removal of wall*

Cllr. Dale reported that the Planning Enforcement Officer at the County Council was currently holding discussions with Network Rail regarding the removal of the wall and she would give an update when possible.

1. *Minute 4(vi) – Grass cutting*

Cllr. Dunhill reported that he and the Clerk were working on producing a clear, detailed list showing the responsibility for grass cutting, hedge trimming etc in different parts of the village with a view to seeking quotes for next year for the areas which were the PC’s responsibility. A discussion was held as to why the grass cuttings were not collected. This service is available from NCC but it costs considerably more. If the grass was cut more frequently it would not be such a problem.

The extra grass cutting at the Play Park had vastly improved the surface and it was agreed to ask the firm to continue to cut the grass but on a two-weekly basis until the end of the growing season.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 4(viii) – Planters at the station*

It was reported that six planters had been installed at the station and following a donation from an anonymous benefactor had been planted with herbs and vegetables for residents to pick should they wish.

1. *Minute 6 – Speed Activated signs*

Cllr. Dale reported that work on the proposed gateway entrance to the village had been delayed because there had been staff changes at NCC. It was hoped that further progress would be made soon and the working group chosen at the last meeting would meet to look at a whole village approach to traffic calming.

Cllr. Mills reported that the speed sign at the bottom of Whiteside Bank had flashed when she was travelling at only 25mph. The Clerk was asked to report the fault to Swarco

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 8 – Hedging by single tennis court*

It was reported that the hedging would be planted soon.

1. Minute 9 – Play Park / Reinstatement of Football pitch

It was reported that the users of the play park felt that it had been improved greatly by regular grass cutting and there was no need to add extra equipment at this time.

Cllr. Reid had approached Tony Trapp, owner of Osbit Power, who had been supportive of the football pitch being recommissioned. It was agreed to take advice on how best to do this and obtain an idea of the likely costs.

**ACTION: CH**

One parent had indicated he might be willing to run some football practice sessions for youngsters in the village.

1. *Minute 16(v) – Quote to improve access to the bridge leading to the double tennis courts*

A quote to improve the path to the double tennis courts was received. Councillors approved the quote subject to clarification that it would make the path suitable for wheelchair users.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 16(vi) – Tennis Club lease*

Cllr. Mills reported that she had written to the PC’s solicitor with final information for the lease and had asked them to proceed.

1. Minute - Street Lamps

Cllr. Dale reported that she had asked the Lighting Officer to review the lighting in Riding Mill. It was considered to be in good condition but would be replaced in due course with LED lights which were being introduced throughout the County.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Cllr. Dale to ask that the Victorian lampposts be repainted if possible.

**ACTION: CH**

5. **Lighting of the footpath from Broomhaugh to the Station**

Cllr. Dunhill proposed that Standing Orders were suspended to allow only one quote to be considered for the installation of a light on the footpath from Broomhaugh to the Station. This was because NCC oversaw street lighting for the Parish and maintained the path. This was seconded by Cllr. Mills and unanimously approved and NCC was therefore duly appointed to undertake this work.

It was also agreed that as a priority the branches overhanging existing lighting on the path would be cut back.

**ACTION: CH**

6. W**heelchair access by the Parish Hall leading to the Play Park and Tennis Court**

Mr Tennet reported that he was still working on the plans for this new path and would submit further details to the PC as soon as possible. After a further discussion with Cllrs. Dunhill and Reid earlier in the summer he was currently working on a proposal that would see the path lie within the playground rather than run parallel to the existing footpath. Later in the meeting, Councillors returned to this matter and some queried the need for a disabled ramp. It was agreed to continue with the plans for the moment but to hold a review once the full costs were known.

7. **Cricket Club**

(i) *Grass cutting*

It was reported that a request had been received after the last PC meeting to make an early part-contribution towards payment for this year’s grass cutting and this had been approved;

(ii) *Damage to the Cricket Pavilion*

It was reported that windows in the Cricket Pavilion had been broken on two recent occasions. It appeared that children had been using the Pavilion as a back to a goal and that the damage was likely to have been accidental. On the first occasion the Cricket Club had paid for the repairs themselves but had now requested that the PC pay for the second repair.

It was agreed that the PC would pay for the repair (it was not possible to claim on the PC’s insurance as the figure was below the voluntary excess contribution) but a meeting would be convened with representatives of the cricket club to discuss the matter further before referring the matter to the police.

**ACTION: CH/AD/BS/MR**

8. **Japanese Knotweed / Himalayan Balsam**

It was reported that Sally Rogers had been unable to treat the Japanese Knotweed on Millfield Road as the plants were not large enough (the licence required stems to be at least 8mm in diameter). Unfortunately it had been cut by mistake earlier in the year and then weed killer applied. The area had been cordoned off. Plants by the double tennis courts had been treated successfully. A resident had suggested that the contaminated soil be removed but apparently rhizome systems can be up to 4 metres deep and have a spread of 7 metres. It was therefore agreed that it was not practical to remove the soil and that herbicides must be applied instead. Residents would be informed via the Parish News as to what was happening and a warning sign displayed by the affected area.

**ACTION: CH**

9. **Road safety issues – The Nick/Slaley Road junction**

Cllr. Cairns highlighted a number of near accidents on the junction of The Nick with the Slaley Road. Most of these incidents occurred because of motorists taking the turn onto the Slaley Road at speed and not being aware of a car exiting the Nick. Cllr. Dale reported that over the years she had had many officers from the County Council out to view the junction but the problem was The Nick was a private road and suggested changes to the junction layout might prevent lorries from being able to turn onto the Slaley Road. Speed was the actual problem and therefore other measures being considered to reduce drivers’ speed through the village together with the use of a speed gun, (she suggested the PC could even buy one for use by trained residents), might alleviate the problem.

On a separate matter it was noted that the gullies on the Slaley Road could be blocked and Cllr. Dale was asked to request that they be cleared.

**ACTION: ADa**

10. **Local Transport Priorities**

The PC was asked to recommend three local transport priorities for NCC to consider. Last year one of the recommendations had been approved and incorporated into the current work plans, namely improvements when turning right to Healey from the A68. A request for road improvements for pedestrians and cyclists travelling from Stocksfield to the A68/A695 roundabout at Riding Mill had been earmarked £10000. The third suggestion, widening the pavement beside St James Terrace, was included in the draft 2016/17 programme although Cllr. Dale recommended that the PC continue to highlight this priority to ensure that it was not removed from the programme.

A number of suggestions were considered and it was agreed to submit the following three priorities:

1. Traffic calming measures at the west end of the village by the Slaley Road junction and improvements to pedestrian footpaths.
2. Possible introduction of speed restrictions on the A68 from Kiln Pit Hill to the roundabout for Riding Mill. Cllr. Dale highlighted a number of fatal accidents along this road and made a request that all parish councils in the vicinity support her request for a review of road safety.
3. St James Terrace footpath widening.

**ACTION: CH**

11. **Consultations**

It was noted that Cllr. Reid had responded to a consultation on the Tyne Valley Line and his response would be displayed on the website. The PC had also received information on Northumberland County Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment but no further action was required at this stage although links to the documents had been displayed on the website should residents wish to view the information.

**ACTION: CH**

12. **Paths and Parishes Initiative**

Cllr. Dale reported that a group had been formed in Stocksfield to help monitor the footpaths in the Parish and she recommended that the PC form such a group for Riding Mill. It was agreed to highlight this in the next Parish News and ask for volunteers.

**ACTION: CH**

13. **Local Flood Risk Strategy**

It was reported that the PC had been asked to respond to a survey on flood risk by the County Council. The PC currently had no strategy in place for dealing with flooding incidences and it was agreed to review Stocksfield’s Flood Strategy to see if a similar approach should be adopted.

**ACTION: CH**

14. **Improvements to the path connecting the station to Corner House, Broomhaugh**

It was noted that the above path was very overgrown and, as it was only narrow, made it almost impassable. Cllr. Mills had suggested that some adjoining land be purchased to improve passage and Cllr. Reid had spoken to the owner although he awaited a reply. It was agreed that ownership of the path should be clearly identified although it was thought likely to be owned by Network Rail. As an interim measure the Handyman could be asked to cut back the vegetation although some councillors queried the wisdom of taking on the maintenance of additional paths. A further discussion would be held at a future meeting after the Clerk had clarified ownership of the path.

**ACTION: CH**

15. **Domestic Thermal Imaging**

A suggestion had been made by a resident to hire a thermal imaging camera for a short time which could be borrowed by residents to assess the energy efficiency of their home. Hire costs appeared to start from approximately £150/week and access to computer software to analyse the data would be necessary. Councillors considered these costs too high. Cllr. Dunhill did suggest that residents could instead contact the Building Advice Centre at Northumbria University.

16. **Finance**

a) Annual Accounts

It was reported that the External Auditor had approved the Annual Accounts for 2013/14. Details were displayed on the notice board.

b) Monthly expenditure

(i) The following payments were authorised:

Riding Mill Village Hall Trust – room hire £36.00

N. Mclaughlin – additional grass cutting at Play Park £105.00

C Harrison – July salary plus £10 home allowance £345.82

Archer Builders – repair of wooden footbridge by double tennis courts

and fence by single tennis court £299.19

Halls of Heddon – hedging by tennis court £319.30

BDO – External audit fees £282.00

NALC – Audit training course for Clerk £5.00

Northumbrian Water (Cricket Pavilion) £46.16

C Harrison – August salary (£374.83) and £10 home allowance £539.87

plus back pay to April following increment rise.

N. Mclaughlin – additional grass cutting at Play Park £105.00

Mills Glass – repair to window at cricket pavilion £142.14

**Standing Orders:**

Homevend (August) £75.00

Homevend (September) £75.00

(ii) A report showing budget spending for the financial year was received. There were no matters of concern to note.

17. **Handyman – August/September reports**

It was reported that the Handyman had trimmed back overgrowing branches from the Spinney onto Church Lane. He had also commenced cleaning and treating with wood preservative a number of benches.

18. **Planning**

It was reported that:

1. the following planning application was under consideration by NCC:

14/02310/FUL – Alnmouth Cottage, Sandy Bank (PC had queried building line).

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

14/02287/FUL – Westwood, Marchburn Lane (PC had no objections)

13/03133/FUL - Replacement of bridge deck and parapets, Underwood Road

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

14/02410/FUL - Hopton House, Riding Hills

19. **Meetings requiring councillor representation**

It was agreed that Cllr. Carew would deputise for Cllr. Dunhill at the Tynedale Forum meeting on 15th October. Councillors agreed to check their diaries to see if anyone was available to attend the Joint NCC and Town and Parish Council Meeting in October.

**ACTION: ALL**

20. **Correspondence**

There were no additional correspondence matters to consider although it was reported that Dr Young had asked for her correspondence to the PC to be relisted as pertaining to the conduct of the Parish Council and this was agreed.

21. **Minor Matters**

(i) *Trees in Marchburn Lane*

Some trees on PC land were now overgrowing telephone lines. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact BT and ask if they could be trimmed.

**ACTION: CH**

(ii) *Village Hall Trust*

Mrs Pryor reported that the extension works at the Parish Hall were running slightly over schedule but that the quality of the work was excellent and on budget.

(iii) *Littering of rubber bands*

It was reported that there was a problem of rubber bands lying all over the village dropped by postmen on their rounds. It was agreed to write to the Royal Mail to ask that the bands be reused rather than discarded.

**ACTION: CH**

(iv) *Network Rail repairs*

It was noted that Network Rail had made repairs to the footbridge as it joined the eastbound platform as requested.

(v) *Gym Club*

It was noted with regret that the Gym Club had not yet been able to reform.

(vi) *Hawkers*

It was reported that residents felt uncomfortable with the number of hawkers coming to the doors. It was suggested that they should check that the person had a hawker’s licence and if not should telephone the police. Mrs Rowntree had written to the Police Commissioner and awaited her response to the problem. It was also suggested that the PC could write to Guy Opperman MP.

**ACTION: CH**

22. **Date of the next meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next Council meeting on Monday 10th November 2014.

Meeting closed at 9.59 pm.