**Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 8th February 2015 in the Parish Hall.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Malcolm Reid Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. Andy Dunhill Cllr. Jill Mills

Cllr. Eileen Carew

**In attendance:**

Cllr. Anne Dale – Northumberland County Council

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Mrs G Brown – Hexham Courant

Public (5): Mr R Archer, Mr C Mitchell, Mrs P Pryor, Mrs J Rowntree and Mrs L Stephenson

Cllr. Reid opened the meeting at 7.48 pm.

15/01 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr. Cairns.

15/02 **Declaration of Interests**

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

15/03 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 8th December 2014**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th December 2014 were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Reid.

15/04 **Matters arising from the December meeting other than those listed on the agenda**

1. *Minute 4(i) – Superfast Broadband*

Cllr. Dunhill reported that the cable installation was complete and that it was likely it would become available at the end of February. Cllr. Dale reported that the County Council planned to do a press release once the service was live. There were ongoing discussions with iNorthumberland and mobile broadband providers about how to improve broadband services to remote locations and it was hoped that this would be possible using a wireless service.

1. *Minute 4(iii) – Footpath adjacent to the railway*

Earlier correspondence from Network Rail had been passed to Tim Fish, NCC Area Countryside Officer, who would now put forward a request to Network Rail to have the path by the railway made a public right of way.

1. *Minute 4 (iv) – MUGA* *court: plans for 2015*

Mr Archer reported that the Tennis Club had written to local residents as requested by the PC. Usage figures for the MUGA court showed that only 10% of the hours agreed with local residents had actually been used. There were no plans to increase the agreed hours. The Tennis Club would be canvassing members and residents to ascertain which sports they would like to see offered e.g. netball, walking football (+55), five-a-side football etc.

Mrs Soulsby had written with concerns about the questionnaire. Mr Archer confirmed that children would not be completing the questionnaire rather it would be the adult who holds the family membership. An offer was made by the PC to review the questionnaire before it was sent should the Tennis Club wish. Other issues to do with completing the final pieces of work at the entrance to the MUGA court were in hand.

1. *Minute 4(vi) – Defibrillator*.

The Clerk reported that the Stephen Carey Fund had kindly agreed to form a partnership with the PC to offer a defibrillator in Riding Mill. The cabinet housing the defibrillator had been installed and a defibrillator would be fitted once the training had been undertaken which was scheduled for Sunday 22nd February from 2-4pm. The PC had made a contribution of £1000 towards the equipment.

1. *Minute 4(vii) – A695 road bridge and Underwood Road bridge*

Cllr. Dale reported that NCC Enforcement Officers were continuing to pursue the outstanding issues with Network Rail.

1. *Minute 4(viii) – Lighting on the footpath from Broomhaugh to the station.*

It was noted that the lighting column was due to be installed on 12th February.

1. *Minute 4(ix) – Paths & Parishes initiative*.

It was reported that the group had now met and would commence by undertaking a review of all public rights of way in the Parish. Dr Malcolm Chainey would chair the group. The Clerk was asked to publicise who was a member in the next Parish News.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 7 – Grass cutting*

Cllr. Dunhill reported that a meeting had been held with NCC officers to discuss grass cutting in the village. The quote for this year was awaited together with confirmation of a rebate from last year as the scheduled number of cuts had not been made. Three quotes from private companies had been received for areas which were the responsibility of the PC. These would be considered at the March meeting together with the quote from NCC.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 9 – Neighbourhood Plan*

(also see Minute 15/17). An article explaining the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan had been drafted for the Parish News in order to canvass opinion.

1. *Minute 14 – Tree works.*

Permission was still awaited from NCC before work could commence to trim trees overhanging the approach road to the station. It was also noted that a tree had fallen by the bridge leading to the double tennis courts partly into the March Burn. Under delegated powers the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr. Dunhill, had arranged for it to be removed. The cost of this work was £350.

15/05 **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy**

It was reported that Councillors had attended a number of meetings arranged by NCC following publication of the Core Strategy. A separate document had also been released - “Small Settlement and the Green Belt” - and councillors needed to respond to some specific questions relating to Riding Mill and Broomhaugh. Currently planners had identified land east of the village and south of the railway together with a ribbon development along the A68 as possible planning sites. Councillors felt these sites were inappropriate but considered a development on land adjacent to the cricket pitch and north of the road as a possibility although a discussion was held as to whether this might encroach on the flood plain although on checking the plans this land does not appear to be affected.

It was noted that a further consultation exercise would be held in the summer which would look at possible planning sites in much greater detail.

A response to the documents had been drafted by Councillors Reid, Mills and Dunhill and circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The response reiterated points made to planners in an earlier consultation and recommended one area for possible development.

The response was proposed by Cllr. Dunhill and seconded by Cllr. Reid and it was unanimously agreed to submit it to NCC without any further changes. A copy of the response would be made available on the Riding Mill website.

**ACTION: CH**

15/06 **Wheelchair access by the Parish Hall leading to the play park and tennis court.**

The Clerk reported that she had obtained quotes for a simplified ramp running in parallel to the current path. The cost, including a handrail and landscaping of the adjoining land, was in the region of £3000-5000 depending upon the surface used. As previously agreed further details would be given in the Parish News and residents asked for their views.

**ACTION: CH**

15/07 **Reconditioning of Football Field**

Cllr. Singer reported that an application for S106 funding was currently being made to help with the costs of reconditioning the field. If successful it would allow funds agreed to be reallocated to help finance the redevelopment of the pavilion at the Cricket Club. The outcome of the application would be known by 20th March 2015. Cllr. Dale also recommended that the Cricket Club apply for Community Chest funding.

15/08 **Amendment to Standing Orders with respect to the number of quotations required**

A discussion was held about whether Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be amended as the required number of quotations seemed inappropriate for lower value purchases.

Cllr. Reid proposed that the following changes should be made:

Below £1000 - 1 quote (previously £500)

Below £5000 - 2 quotes (previously £2000)

Below £50,000 - 3 quotes

Over £50,000 different tendering processes exist.

This was seconded by Cllr. Dunhill and unanimously agreed.

**ACTION: CH**

15/09 **Bus Shelter opposite the Wellington Hotel**

A discussion was held about whether to replace the bus shelter opposite the Wellington Hotel as it was showing signs of age. A quote for approximately £5000 had been received to replace and install a like for like structure. It was felt that a new shelter would not address the real problem i.e. the pavement was too narrow for a proper shelter with a seat and wind protection to be installed. It was unanimously agreed not to replace the current structure but rather arrange for it to be repainted. The Clerk was asked to explore with NCC if they would give permission for an additional shelter to be installed at the bottom of Whiteside Bank. Those waiting for the bus would be able to see it coming and walk to the bus stop in time to catch it but would have a more suitable shelter in which to wait.

**ACTION: CH**

15/10 **CCTV**

A report from Mr Paul Goldsmith was received outlining possible providers of CCTV which would be installed as a security measure in the village. Mr Goldsmith was thanked for his efforts and it was agreed to look at this again once superfast broadband was working and after having taken advice from the police.

**ACTION: CH**

15/11 **Shop**

A working group had been set up by some residents to explore the possibility of reopening a village shop albeit in a new location. Cllr. Reid felt that the PC could play a role by offering to provide some funding either as a grant or loan should a viable business plan come out of this initiative e.g. finance for initial stock. He proposed that the PC set aside £5000 from reserve funds. This was unanimously agreed although it was stipulated that there would need to be a formal application process including submission of a workable business plan.

15/12 **Traffic calming measures**

Cllr. Dale reported that the working group had met with her and the officer from NCC. The plan was to create a gateway entrance at the east end of the village to slow cars down. A review of the positions of the speed signs was also being undertaken. In addition, NCC was currently looking at whether it would be possible to create a cycle route from Riding Mill to Stocksfield. The Highways Officer would now put together detailed plans and it was suggested that he be invited to come along to the annual Parish Meeting to answer residents’ queries.

**ACTION: ADa/CH**

15/13 **Yearly Newsletter**

The Clerk reported that parish councils were encouraged to produce a newsletter. The insert in the Parish News probably met the requirement but she suggested that it might be a good idea to produce a yearly newsletter which would be distributed to all residents that could include what was happening in the parish together with information about the clubs and events at the village halls and useful telephone numbers. A quote from a local printer put the cost at approximately £150 for 500 copies of a 4-sided A4 leaflet (similar to that produced by Broomley & Stocksfield PC).

Mrs Pryor reported that the Parish News editors had been considering a similar initiative and it was agreed that the Clerk should liaise with them so as not to duplicate work but in principle it was unanimously agreed that the PC should produce a yearly newsletter.

**ACTION: CH**

15/14 **Finance**

a) Monthly expenditure

(i) The following payments were authorised:

Catherine Harrison – December salary £408.11

RM Village Hall Trust – room hire £36.00

Neil Mclaughlin (Practical Landscapes) grass cut Play Park £35.00

Community Action Northumberland S137 grant £60.00

Tynedale Hospice S137 grant £60.00

Sport Tynedale S137 grant £60.00

Citizens Advice Bureau S137 grant £60.00

Age UK S137 grant £60.00

Great North Air Ambulance S137 grant £60.00

St James PCC – refurbishment Church Cottage S137 grant £200.00

Stephen Carey Fund – donation to defibrillator costs £1000.00

Catherine Harrison – January salary £393.08

Catherine Harrison – reimbursement postage and additional

Copies of Core Strategy document £36.36

Stuart Burns – removal of fallen tree by March Burn £350.00

Marmax Products Ltd – recycled plastic seat £496.80

(to be reimbursed by Cllr. Reid less VAT)

Homevend (January payment) £75.00

Homevend (February payment) £75.00

(ii) The following receipts were noted:

Bank of Ireland - December interest £1.79, January interest £1.85

Triodos - Oct-Dec interest £22.71

Allotments Association £31.50

War Stocks £2.15

Unity Trust bank – interest £11.15

Malcolm Reid - £414.00 reimbursement for bench

1. A report showing overall spending for the financial year was received. It was noted that the maintenance budget was overspent due to the extensive repairs to the wooden footbridge leading to the double tennis courts and the number of fallen or dangerous trees which had had to be dealt with.

b) Reserve accounts

(i) The Clerk reported that the PC was now in a position to open a new reserve account (a decision had previously been taken to close the Bank of Ireland account). Currently the Nationwide Building Society was offering a 1% business saving account and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should open this account.

**ACTION: CH**

(ii) A review of the funds held in reserve was undertaken and the budget categories to which they were assigned was approved.

15/15 **Handyman**

It was reported that the handyman had cut back vegetation and cleaned equipment and play surfaces in the Play Park. He had also cut back hedges on the approach to the station and cleared road edges (January and February payments).

15/16 **Planning**

It was reported:

(i) that the following planning application was under consideration by NCC:

15/00185/LBC Renovation works to Church Cottage (NB: Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest as Church Cottage adjoined his property and he would not therefore be commenting on the application).

(ii) that the following planning applications had been considered by NCC and granted permission:

14/03363/FUL – Hopton Hills – extension to west elevation

14/04022/FUL – 4 Oaklands – replacement of conservatory.

(iii) that NCC planned to make changes to their Planning Service. Cllr. Dale explained that a review of the Planning Service had been commissioned with the aim of improving the service. Concerns had been raised about the quality of decision making with regard to planning and the associated costs where inappropriate decisions had been made once the application had been taken to Appeal. It was suggested that more decisions be delegated to Officers and that the number of committees be reduced.

Cllr. Reid expressed his concerns about the recommendations as he felt that removing Area Committee West would be detrimental to democracy as it would be harder for local residents to attend. Whilst appreciating that some objections submitted might be politically motivated he felt that a town or parish council should still be able to trigger the application being considered by Committee.

Cllr. Reid proposed that a letter be sent to NCC outlining these concerns. Whilst the majority of councillors were in agreement (3 for MR, BS, EC, 1 against AD, 1 abstention JM) it was suggested that the letter should contain the stipulation that there must be a clear specification as to the number of objections required before an application goes to committee and that they must be material objections.

**ACTION: CH**

15/17 **Annual Parish Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the annual Parish Meeting on Monday 20th April [this was subsequently changed following the PC meeting to Monday 27th April due to room availability]. It was decided that presentations/discussions would be held on Neighbourhood Planning, the plans to introduce a gateway entrance to the village and possibly the ramp by the Play Park.

**ACTION: CH**

15/18 **Correspondence**

(i) *Letter from Mrs Linden Furness re parking problems in Broomhaugh*

Cllr. Dale agreed to look into the matters raised and would respond.

**ACTION: ADa**

(ii) *Email from Mr Eddie Nickson re rights of access to the allotments*

No mention was made in the deeds or conveyance documents about rights of access to the allotments. The Clerk was asked to conduct a search with the Land Registry to try and establish ownership of the lane although as the lane had once been the main road before the railway was built its ownership might prove unrecorded.

**ACTION: CH**

(iii) *Copies of emails to Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency from Mr Douglas Henderson re pollution incident*

The PC noted the reports of a pollution incident by the Wellington Hotel. Northumbrian Water had verified that it was not their responsibility to deal with future incidents and it was for the pub to resolve the problems with their sewers and drainage.

Mrs Stephenson also reported that the drainpipe on the corner of the pub was discharging soapy water on to the pavement and road which could potentially cause an accident if the discharge froze. Cllr. Dale was asked to deal with this as it was a highways matter.

**ACTION: ADa**

15/19 **Minor Matters**

(i) *Seat for the Spinney donated by Cllr. Reid*

It was noted that Cllr. Reid had donated a seat in memory of his wife to the PC for use in the Spinney. As it was made from recycled plastic bottles it would require no ongoing maintenance.

(ii) *Councillor attendance at meetings*

Tynedale Forum – Cllr. Dunhill was unsure if he would be able to attend the next meeting and Cllr. Reid confirmed that he would go if required.

NALC roadshow – no attendees.

(iii) *Village litter pick*

It was agreed to hold a litter pick on Saturday 28th March at 10am.

**ACTION: CH**

(iv) *Gas repairs*

Although extremely disruptive it was agreed that this was not a matter which the PC could take up with Northern Gas Networks as the repairs needed to be undertaken.

(v) *Consultation on subsidised bus services*

Cllr. Reid reported that this NCC consultation needed to be completed by individuals rather than collectively by the PC and he urged fellow councillors to complete it.

**ACTION: ALL**

(vi) *Logo*

Some suggestions were made about repositioning the central image and text above.

**ACTION: BS**

(vii) *Victorian Lamppost outside the Manor House*

The shade appeared to be on the point of falling and Mrs Stephenson offered to alert the owners.

**ACTION: LS**

15/20 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Council on Monday 9th March 2015.

Meeting closed at 10.14 pm.