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**Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 11th December 2017 in Church Cottage, Church Lane, Riding Mill.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Andy Dunhill (Chairman)

Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. Jill Mills

Cllr. Malcolm Reid

Cllr. David McKenzie

**In attendance:**

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Three members of the public were present (two for part only)

Cllr. Dunhill opened the meeting at 7.42 pm.

# 17/108 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Eileen Carew, Cllr. Peter Howe and County Cllr. Anne Dale.

17/109 **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. McKenzie declared an interest in 9(b) – S137 funding applications, as the scout group, with which he was involved, had made an application.

17/110 **Approval of the minutes of the meetings of 13th November 2017**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13th November were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Dunhill (Proposed: Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Singer).

17/111 **Matters arising**

1. *Minutes 17/95(i) - Relocation of bus stop sign*

It was noted that this matter was still unresolved and the Clerk would continue to liaise with the County Council.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 17/95(v) – Play Park*

It was reported that the work to install the new play equipment had gone well and the first phase of the redevelopment had been completed. The Play Park would not be reopened until early January in order to allow the grass to recover and the new turf to root. The final phase of the work was to install connecting paths. A company to undertake the work had been identified but the Play Park Group still needed to raise approximately £2500 towards the project.

1. *Minute 17/95(vii) – Defibrillator training*

It was confirmed that a refresher training session would be held on Sunday 22nd April 2018. The Clerk would publicise details in the New Year.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 17/97 – Marchburn Lane Bridge / Weir Footbridge*

Cllr. Dunhill reported that two contractors had been asked to provide a quote to plant and maintain the planters at Marchburn Lane Bridge as well as oversee other gardening projects in the village, namely the Edible Garden and the gateway entrance. Only one had submitted a quote by the deadline. This was considered at the meeting and it was unanimously agreed to appoint Seymour Gardens and Trees (proposed Cllr. McKenzie, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 17/99 – General Village Maintenance*

The Clerk reported that permission had been granted to undertake the tree work on the unregistered land opposite Broomhaugh School and that she would suggest to the tree surgeon that this work should be completed during a school holiday period.

The pavement along the A695 from Riding Grange to Station Close had been inspected by officers from the County Council. One small area of pavement needed to be repaired and the officers agreed to recommend that foliage on the opposite side of the road be cut back. The pavement would be swept once the County’s main leaf clearing duties had ended but, if a more regular clean was required, then the officers suggested that the Parish Council may wish to use their own handyman.

1. *Minute 17/105(i) – Millfield Road turning area.*

It was reported that the specialist Japanese Knotweed treatment company had not been able to provide a letter confirming that the proposed turning area land was safe for cars to use and it was therefore felt that it would be inappropriate for the Council to remove the cordon from the area at this time. The County Council had been contacted about additional signage but because it was a private road they would not be able to provide this. However, the Parish Council agreed it was prepared to cover the cost of a sign if Mr Archer and Mrs Stephenson liaised with the other residents to confirm that they were happy for a sign to be installed and to agree on its location and wording. The Clerk noted that she had reported the bridge’s weight and width restrictions to Google maps and indicated that access should be via Church Lane.

**ACTION: RA/LS/CH**

17/112 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Dale submitted a written report to the meeting which confirmed the following:

1.   She had received numerous complaints about the new lighting which she had in hand.

2.   The Council would cut back the growth on the side of the A695 as requested by the Parish Council.

3.   The work to extend the footpath outside St. James Terrace was now complete.

4.   She had had a further meeting with the County Council concerning the introduction of the 20 mph in part of the village.   A meeting to discuss the provision of the signage in the village, both old and new, would be held in the New Year.

5.   She had received complaints concerning water leaks in the village and was in constant contact with NWL over this matter.

6.   Sandy Bank had been swept following a complaint by a resident.

7.   The pavement on the A695 had been inspected and work would be undertaken on the area outside the Coppas where maintenance was required.

Cllr. Dunhill reiterated Cllr. Dale’s comments re water leaks. He was concerned with a leak at the junction of the Main Road with Millfield Road. He knew NWL had been contacted about this but was unsure what repair work was necessary and advised that he would continue to monitor the area.

17/113 **Millfield Road & Marchburn Lane Bridges Re-inspections / Sinking Fund**

1. *Re-inspection of Millfield Road bridge*

A quote for the re-inspection of Millfield Road Bridge was received and reviewed following which it was unanimously agreed to appoint BT Bell to undertake the re-inspection work. (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Reid). In future, both road bridge inspections would be undertaken at the same time and with a five yearly interval.

**ACTION: CH**

(ii) *Practicalities of establishing a sinking fund for the bridges*

The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted NALC and that they had advised that it was perfectly permissible for a Parish Council to hold marked reserve funds (subject to providing justification to the external auditors) and that the fund could be invested. It was agreed to seek advice on possible investment options and Cllr. Reid asked that consideration be given to the type of investment i.e. it should be ethical.

**ACTION: CH**

17/114 **Agreement not to enforce covenant**

Cllr. Dunhill reported that a request had been received from a resident asking that the PC issue a letter confirming that it would not enforce a covenant with respect to a past extension in line with the Council’s policy as displayed on the website. It was noted that all required documentation had been reviewed by the Planning Sub-Committee (Ref: CR17/001) and Cllr. Dunhill proposed that the letter be issued. This was seconded by Cllr. McKenzie and agreed unanimously.

**ACTION: CH**

17/115 **Budget for next Financial Year**

A document showing current budget spending and proposed spending for next year was received. After discussion the budget was agreed as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget Category** | **Proposed budget for 2018/19** | **Last year’s budget** |
| Staff Costs | £5,500 | £5,300 |
| Insurance | £2,400 | £3,100 |
| General Admin | £1,600 | £1,350 |
| Professional Fees | £3,500 | £3,500 |
| Donations/Grants | £6,000 | £3,500 |
| Maintenance | £12,000 | £10,400 |
| Capital Expenditure | £15,500 | £10,500 |
| Miscellaneous | £800 | £800 |
| Bridges sinking fund | £1500 | ---- |
| TOTAL | ***£48,800*** | ***£38,450*** |

*Points to note:*

* Proposed 26.9% increase in budget.
* Donations/grants – this had been increased to allow for a donation to the Sports Club. (This was a redistribution of funds – the grass cutting, water and insurance budgets all been reduced and the funds incorporated into this new award).
* A number of large maintenance projects would be undertaken in addition to normal activities:

1. Likely repainting of Millfield Road Bridge
2. Additional tree work as recommended in the survey

Plus, the PC would like the scope to pay for some enhanced services – e.g. extra weed clearing in the village.

* Capital expenditure projects

A number of likely projects had been identified:

1. Resurfacing of part of the Old Playground
2. Additional pool added to the fish pass (recommended by Tyne Rivers Trust)
3. Entrance improvements to the Spinney
4. Road safety improvements
5. New light for Marchburn Lane

* Introduction of a sinking fund for future bridge replacement

Due to the high level of capital expenditure projects foreseen, the amount invested in the sinking fund would be initially quite low - £1500. The PC intended to set aside more funds in future years but it would be a variable amount dependent on financial factors each year.

**Precept Calculation**

It was agreed to use £11,300 from the Reserves and set the Precept at £37,500 (an increase of 5.6%). This was proposed by Cllr. Dunhill, seconded by Cllr. Mills and unanimously agreed.

**ACTION: CH**

17/116 **Monthly Accounts**

1. *Monthly accounts*

The following payments were authorised [Proposed Cllr. Dunhill/Seconded Cllr. Mills]:

SD Building Services – installation of safety mirror £125.00

Complete Weed Control – treatment of Mare’s Tail £180.00 (inc. £30 VAT)

Northumbrian Water – cricket pavilion water charges £17.28

Stephen Rutherford – bus shelter window cleaning £40.00

Playdale Playgrounds – new play equipment £8405.65 (inc. VAT £1400.94)

Rockworks Ltd – new play boulder £15120.00 (inc.VAT £2520.00)

Society of Local Council Clerks – yearly subscription £100.00

Catherine Harrison – November salary + home allowance £446.16

Catherine Harrison – reimbursement (postage, photocopying,

Land Registry charges) £10.15

Marchburn Lane Residents Association – frontager fees £75.00

Playdale Playgrounds – new play equipment £5481.42 (inc. VAT £913.57)

Homevend (December Invoice 87) £80.00

*The following receipts were noted:*

Transfer from Triodos Reserve account £10,000.00

Donation from Riding Mill Play & Regeneration Group £15,250.00

Broomley & Stocksfield PC – reimbursement SAD maintenance £286.44

Sandy Bank Residents’ Association- contribution to safety mirror £165.16

1. *Budget report*

The budget reports were received and reviewed. It was noted that there were no new issues to consider. The Capital Expenditure budget was vastly overspent but the majority of these funds were either being recouped via grants or had been held in Reserves.

b) *S137 Requests for Funding*

A paper was received detailing requests for funding from voluntary organisations. Following review it was agreed to make the following grants/donations (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Singer):

* Tynedale Hospice at Home (£60)
* CAN (£60)
* Sport Tynedale (£60)
* CAB (£60)
* Age UK (£60)
* Great North Air Ambulance (£60)
* The Stephen Carey Fund (£60)
* The Children’s Foundation (£60)
* Core Music (£60)

**ACTION: CH**

It was noted that the PC normally made a donation to the Pre-school but no request had been received this year. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Chair of Pre-school and indicate that if an application was submitted the PC would look on it favourably.

In addition to the above organisations, three further applications were received from village clubs and societies.

1. RM Tennis Club – yearly grant request.

Cllr. Dunhill summarised the grant request which was to help with the running costs of the club and to assist with the eventual replacement of the courts. Whilst understanding the reason for the Club making the application, councillors outlined their concerns about making an award to a private members club. They drew the distinction with the Sports Club which allowed open access to the community when not in use by a team, making it a valuable village resource. The PC intended to reduce the amount of support it gave the Sports Club over time but noted it would have an obligation to maintain the field if not used by a sports club and would therefore always have some financial commitment.

If the Tennis Club wished to revise their application and ask for help towards events which were open to the whole community e.g. netball coaching, walking football etc, then the PC would be happy to consider making a donation.

1. RM Tennis Club – Capital expenditure project – Improvements to footpath by entrance to double tennis courts

As the PC owned the land which the Tennis Club was suggesting improving, the councillors agreed in principle that it was something they would support and would be happy to meet some of the costs. The Tennis Club was asked to resubmit a fully costed project.

**ACTION: Tennis Club**

1. RM Scout Group – grant towards cost of materials and consumables

The PC welcomed the reintroduction of a scout group in Riding Mill and councillors were happy to support the request and agreed a £60 award. (Proposed Cllr. Singer, Seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

**ACTION: CH**

c) *External Auditor*

It was reported that PKF Littlejohn LLP had been appointed as external auditor for the Council by Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAA). This appointment was for 5 years, commencing with the financial year 2017/18.

17/117 **Policy Review**

The following policy document was reviewed and re-adopted subject to minor amendments (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Reid):

* Grant Award Policy

17/118 **Handyman**

It was reported that the handyman had swept and cleared leaves from the approach road to the station as well as cut back shrubs and ivy in the surrounding area. This accounted for his December payment.

17/119 **Planning**

It was reported that:

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

* 17/04196/FELTPO – 4 Oaklands. Removal of various trees and maintenance to others. PC – no objection.

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

* 17/03479/PRUTPO – Removal of limbs from oak trees opposite Broomhaugh First School;
* 17/03473/VARYCO – 4 St James’ Close. Variation of conditions;
* 17/03800/FUL – 5 Dene Terrace. 2-storey extension to rear and side.

17/120 **Minor Matters**

1. *Old Playground surface*

Cllr. Dunhill reported that he and Cllr. Howe had inspected the surface of the Old Playground and were concerned that in certain areas, namely where the bus entered the Old Playground, the surface was beginning to break up. He suggested that repairs would be necessary within the next year and that an idea of costs should be sought. He also recommended that the agreement with the County Council for using the Old Playground as the pickup and drop off point for the school buses be reviewed. The County Council currently made a nominal contribution for using the land which had remained unchanged for a number of years.

**ACTION: CH**

17/121 **Consultations**

1. *Special Educational Needs School Place Planning Strategy*

Cllr. Reid confirmed that he had reviewed the consultation and had felt it unnecessary for the PC to respond.

1. *Pharmacy Needs Assessment Consultation*

It was agreed that Cllr. McKenzie would review the documentation and decide if a response was required.

**ACTION: CH/DM**

17/122 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council should be held on Monday 12th February 2018. Venue: Church Cottage.

Meeting closed at 9.47 pm