



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

As permitted by the *Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392, this meeting was conducted "online".

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held virtually via Zoom on Monday 8th June 2020.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Andy Dunhill	Cllr. Jill Mills
Cllr. Brian Singer	Cllr. David McKenzie
Cllr. Pam Bridges	Cllr. Christine Howe
Cllr. Eileen Carew	Cllr. Janet Padgett

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 20/40)
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
6 members of the public observed the meeting via Zoom

Cllr. Dunhill opened the meeting at 7.42 pm.

20/31 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Pauline Mulholland.

20/32 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in the Sports Club item;
Cllr. Padgett declared an interest in all VHT matters;
County Cllr. Dale declared an interest in the Tennis Club matters as she was a club member.

20/33 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2020

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Dunhill (proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. McKenzie).

20/34 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 20/22 – Tree survey.* It was noted that the additional surveys had been undertaken and the report received. One tree by Marchburn Lane bridge had been identified as needing to be removed urgently (see Item 20/36(v)). Other work would be completed over the next three years although some had already been undertaken at the sports field. It was also noted that the tree surgeon had completed planting a mixture of small trees behind the tennis club pavilion to replace trees that had had to be removed;
- (ii) *Minute 20/25 – Finance.* It was noted that the bank mandate had been amended and Cllr. Howe had replaced Cllr. Mills as a bank signatory.

20/35 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

Covid-19 had meant that meetings with officers were being held by Zoom using Google maps during the daytime and evening. The officers were in the main working from home and therefore working under different and sometimes difficult conditions. Cllr. Dale could not fault the support they had given her over the last few months. The West Area Committee was not being held and all planning

applications that would have been considered by the West Area committee were being dealt with by a central committee.

Further matters:

- (i) 20 mph speed limit scheme – the scheme had been finalised together with the work required on the Spinney and had been agreed. Officers were aware of Cllr. Dale's and the Parish Council's frustration that the work had not been completed;
- (ii) The Pedestrian Crossing was going through the final risk assessment stage and then should be agreed;
- (iii) Signage in the Village. Cllr Dale had received formal complaints about some signs in the village and these had been passed to the relevant Enforcement officer who deals with these matters. They had only just begun to visit sites because of Covid-19 and action would be taken where required. Once the work has been completed on the 20-mph scheme and the pedestrian crossing, Cllr. Dale had arranged to audit the signs with the County and Parish Council to ensure that all unnecessary signage was removed;
- (iv) Concerns were raised at the last meeting about the number of wagons travelling through the village. Cllr. Dale had contacted Thompsons and they have informed her that they were working on the new Hexham High School site. They had received Government permission to progress the work as quickly as possible;
- (v) Over the last few years considerable work had been undertaken by both Comex and Northern Powergrid (npg) on the verges, roads and pavements. All defects were held on record by the Streetworks team at the County Council. Unfortunately, both Comex and npg need to return to rectify the defects and this was being organised with the County Council. Covid-19 had delayed the work being undertaken by npg but at the moment there was no timeframe as to when Comex would return. The npg work included the grassed area at Broomhaugh and other works in the pavement area. The Council officer was also in contact with residents where npg had crossed their land and further work was required;
- (vi) Local Transport Plan - pavement between Riding Mill and Stocksfield. This had been reviewed and it had been agreed that funding should be found to ensure that the pavement between the two villages was complete;
- (vii) Covid-19. Cllr. Dale reported that we have been living through difficult times since March and she would like to thank everyone who was helping in the village especially those who had taken the lead. Residents continued to raise concerns with her about certain issues however. In particular, she was receiving complaints about the number of rats in the area. These were passed to the relevant officer and any infestation was dealt with accordingly. The Officer advised residents that feeding the birds does attract rats;
- (viii) Northumbrian Water (NWL) Pumping station. Cllr. Dale had received the following information from NWL: The large crane had returned to assist with the installation of the final two fish and eel screens as per their work with the Environment Agency. The £12 million investment project was still due to be completed by November 2020. This would leave the site with four new fish friendly eel screens on the inlet, as well as four new refurbished pumps and a refurbished building.
- (ix) Cllr. Dale continued to receive complaints about potholes, etc. and these were dealt with accordingly.

Cllr. Dale was happy to be contacted by residents via email (Anne.Dale@Northumberland.gov.uk) or phone: 01434 673326.

20/36 **Review of actions take since the last meeting and ratification of decisions**

Cllr. Dunhill explained that councillors had had to make some decisions via email whilst it had been impossible for the Council to meet. These now needed to be ratified.

- (i) Coordination of a village response to Coronavirus – Cllr. Dunhill explained how the PC, working with the VHT and church organisations, had arranged a meeting as the coronavirus situation worsened, to agree a village response. Further to this meeting, leaflets had been delivered to all homes in the parish, volunteers sought to help those residents who had to

shield and a central assistance helpline created, manned in the main by Suzanne Barker, VHT Manager. Cllr. Dunhill felt that residents appreciated the response and that the volunteer response would continue until lockdown measures had eased;

- (ii) Award of an additional grant of £500/month to the Village Hall Trust following the closure of the halls. The grant was to be for a maximum of 6 months and would be used by the VHT to help provide village assistance during the coronavirus pandemic and to support the running costs of the halls. It was unanimously agreed to ratify this decision (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Carew). Cllr. McKenzie asked that the grant should be reviewable after six months as further assistance might be required, and Cllr. Dunhill agreed to the request. Cllr. Padgett as Chair of the VHT, confirmed that current government advice indicated that the halls might be allowed to reopen from July but she anticipated a vastly reduced income for some time to come;
- (iii) Tennis Club planning application for signage. Agreed response: no objection. It was unanimously agreed to ratify this decision (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Howe).
- (iv) Fold House proposal: It was reported that councillors had decided not to respond collectively as the Parish Council to the community consultation undertaken by Cundalls to this proposed new home although councillors were encouraged to submit their own views should they wish. The Parish Council would instead wait for the formal planning process and would respond to the County Council with its comments;
- (v) Acceptance of the arboriculturist survey report and agreement that a tree designated as high risk be removed from beside Marchburn Lane bridge. It was unanimously agreed to ratify this decision (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Bridges);
- (vi) Review of three insurance quotes and acceptance of the lowest quote offered by Pen Underwriting Ltd., yearly premium £1593.64. It was unanimously agreed to ratify this decision (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Singer). It was noted that the PC had agreed to enter into a three-year long-term agreement which had lowered the premium. The war memorial had also been included within the cover and the PC had still managed to obtain a saving of over £600 when compared to last year's premium.

20/37 **Review of Policy Documents - Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Code of Conduct**

It was unanimously agreed to re-adopt the following documents:

- Standing Orders (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. McKenzie);
- Financial Regulations (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Mills);
- Code of Conduct issued by NALC (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Howe).

One minor amendment was made to Standing Orders, Item 3.2 – agenda papers would be distributed by email rather than by post or by hand.

20/38 **Finance**

a) *Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/20*

- (i) It was noted that the Internal Auditor, Mrs Margaret Weatherley, had raised no issues of concern after auditing the accounts.

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

- (ii) the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 (proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Carew)
- (iii) the draft Annual Accounts for 2019/20 (proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Singer)
- (iv) the Accounting Statement for 2019/20 (proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Carew)
- (v) the Explanation of Variances (proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Singer)

It was noted that previously there was a requirement for all smaller authorities to have a common period for the exercise of public rights, being the first 10 working days of July. Under the new regulations* there was no requirement for a common period for the exercise of public rights. Smaller

authorities were still required to set a period for this purpose, but the only requirement was that **the** 30-working day period for the exercise of public rights should start on or before the first working day of September, i.e. on or before 1 September 2020. NALC planned to issue further advice and the date had therefore yet to be agreed but would be displayed on the notice board and website once decided.

ACTION: CH

b) *Monthly accounts*

The following payments were authorised (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Carew):

Robson Print – village information leaflet re coronavirus	£165.00
Office Depot – ink cartridges and paper	£111.97 (inc. VAT £18.66)
Unity Trust quarterly bank charges	£18.00
Savills – land valuation	£1440.00 (inc. VAT £220)
Office Depot – ink cartridges	£41.24 (inc. VAT £6.87)
GeoXphere – Parish Online subscription	£42.00 (inc. VAT £7.00)
M E Stewart/Neetfleet – playpark repairs	£25.00
East Tynedale Community Forum – yearly subscription	£30.00
Catherine Harrison – March salary + home allowance	£491.89
RM Village Hall Trust – yearly grant	£3000.00
Tyne Valley Woodlands – tree survey	£360.00 (inc. VAT £60.00)
NALC – yearly subscription	£241.78
Seymour Gardens & Trees –edible garden/pruning of shrubs	£58.00
M E Stewart/Neetfleet – add. maintenance / playground inspection	£140.00
Catherine Harrison – April salary + home allowance	£491.89
Came & Company – yearly insurance	£1593.64
Sandy Bank Residents' Association – contribution to insurance	£204.44
Margaret Weatherley – internal auditor fees	£100.00
David Ballantyne – tree works	£740.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – replace timbers on footbridge/ treat play surfaces	£100.00
Seymour Gardens & Trees – edible garden maintenance	£34.00
Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership – yearly subscription	£10.00
Trevor Bell Horticultural Services – grass cutting	£450.00
Seymour Gardens & Trees – maintenance of planters / new plants	£153.00
Catherine Harrison – May salary + home allowance	£491.89
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Zoom monthly subscription £14.39, sim card and credit £10.99, plants for edible garden £3.00)	£28.38
Christine Howe – reimbursement of planning fees	£142.00
Office Depot – ink cartridges	£49.23 (inc VAT £8.21)

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (April)	£160.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (May)	£160.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (June)	£160.00
RM VHT – emergency payment to help during Covid 19 (April)	£500.00
RM VHT – emergency payment to help during Covid 19 (May)	£500.00
RM VHT – emergency payment to help during Covid 19 (June)	£500.00

The following receipts were noted:

Nationwide (yearly interest)	£146.13
Triodos (quarterly interest)	£9.82
Unity Trust (Bridge fund) (interest paid yearly)	£7.63
NB: £2000 reserve transfer (Nov 2019) to Unity Trust (Bridge Fund account)	
Northumberland County Council – 1 st instalment of precept	£21,000.00
RM Allotment Association – quarterly rent	£51.63

(ii) *Budget report*

The budget report was received and accepted (proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. McKenzie). No particular issues were identified at this early stage of the financial year but it was agreed to adjust the Grants and Donations budget to £9,500 from £6,500 to allow for the emergency donation to the Village Hall Trust (proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Bridges).

ACTION: CH

20/39 **Sports Club**

(i) *Update report.*

Cllr. Howe presented a written report outlining current developments at the Club including committee changes, adoption of a new constitution and plans to appoint four new trustees. She also confirmed that the Club had installed a new kitchen in the pavilion and had ordered replacements for the four openings in the front elevation (as per the current planning permission) but their fitting had been delayed due to Covid-19. She had asked the Club to provide the PC with a copy of the final installation certificate for the electricity connection. Cllr. Howe confirmed that planning permission had been granted to relocate the container adjacent to the pavilion and this would be done once the ground at the proposed new location had been levelled. Planning permission for the pavilion's refurbishment expired on 25th May 2020 but it was hoped that the digging of the foundation trenches would be enough to comply with a substantive start to the development. Confirmation was awaited from the County Council.

Cllr. Howe explained that grant applications had fallen foul to the pandemic and both the FA and Sport England submissions were closed until September. The new committee were not however in agreement with the previously agreed plan and wanted to see team showers otherwise they would not be able to expand the club as they hoped. New plans were therefore being developed with Cllr. Howe. The Club had decided that they would be able to self-build phase 1. This was acceptable as long as there was no public money involved although the PC would have to give approval as landlord. Cllr. Howe had asked to see a copy of the quote and build details and had informed the committee that she would have to oversee the project on behalf of the PC. As this information was not yet available, permission of the PC would have to be deferred to a future meeting.

Finally, the Club wished to install a practice wicket/nets which would allow them access to ECB All Sports backing. This would not require landlord consent and the Club would carry out the work once the PC had minuted its intention. Currently, ECB guidance allowed them to practice outdoors as long as social distancing was in place.

(ii) *Award of grant 2020/21.*

It was reported that the accounts for 2019/20 were not available although the new treasurer was seeking to address this. Any award of a grant was dependent upon accounts being received and was therefore deferred to a future meeting. However, a request was made for the PC to meet all current grass cutting costs as the ground could not be used for matches and was instead being used by residents for general exercise. The Club had made new arrangements for grounds maintenance and was now hiring grass cutting equipment and volunteers were cutting the field. The Clerk was asked to seek clarification on the suggested amount per cut and frequency of cut before the councillors could decide whether the amount was acceptable.

ACTION CH

20/40 **Planning**

It was reported:

(i) that the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:

- 20/00853/FUL – 5 Dene Terrace. Single storey flat roof extension to rear. PC – no objection but further details required re drainage;
- 20/01237/ADE – signage at tennis courts. PC – no objection

- (ii) that the following planning applications had been approved by NCC:
- 20/00759/FUL – High Shilford Cottage. Erection of porch
 - 20/00181/FUL - Spellbound, Whiteside Bank. 4 single storey extensions
 - 20/00255/FUL- relocation of container at cricket field

20/41 Climate Change

This agenda item was deferred to a future meeting.

20/42 Correspondence

- (i) *Request to install a memorial bench.* The Clerk reported that a request for a memorial bench had been received. The suggested location would not be possible as there was another bench already installed nearby. She had suggested that a bench above Oaklands Rise on Whiteside Bank might be a possibility and was waiting to hear back from the family with their views;
- (ii) *Tennis Club signage application.* A resident had written to express their concerns regarding the signage proposed by the Tennis Club. The Clerk had responded after consulting the Councillors.

20/43 Minor Matters

- (i) *Request for assistance with the maintenance of the Nick from the Sandy Bank Residents' Association.* The Association normally asked residents to help with maintenance of the Nick once a year, however, this year, no group activities would be possible. The Association had therefore written to ask whether the PC could arrange for its handyman to undertake the work. The handyman had submitted a quote of £130, and it was agreed that if the Association would meet half the costs, the PC would pay the other half (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Singer).

ACTION: CH

- (ii) *Removal of Himalayan Balsam.* Mrs Stephenson had written to ask that the PC encourage residents to continue the work she and others had done last year in removing Himalayan Balsam from the March Burn. The PC was happy to support this and would display posters Mrs Stephenson had designed. Cllr. Dunhill confirmed that he had inspected areas of PC land along the Burn and had found few plants but would continue to inspect over the summer months.

ACTION: CH

- (iii) *Styford Estate.* Cllr. Dunhill reported that the PC had been asked to comment on a woodland management plan prepared by the Styford Estate. The PC was pleased to see the woodland being managed and, in its response, would make mention of the need to deal with invasive species by the river.

ACTION: CH

20/44 Date of Future Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council should be held on Monday 13th July 2020 (If possible the PC would meet in one of the halls. If this was not possible, it would be held virtually again).

20/45 Confidential Matters:

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was unanimously agreed 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:

- the terms for a release of covenant to allow the building of an additional dwelling in the grounds of a property.

Meeting closed at 8.37 pm