



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 14th September 2020.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)

Cllr. Jill Mills

Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. Andy Dunhill

Cllr. Pam Bridges

Co-opted at the meeting:

Cllr. David Irwin

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 20/77)

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

4 members of the public observed the meeting via Zoom

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.46 pm.

20/67 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. Eileen Carew and David McKenzie.

20/68 Co-option of Councillor

Mr David Irwin offered to serve on the Parish Council and gave an overview of the experiences and skills he could bring. A vote was held and it was unanimously agreed to co-opt him on to the Council. He signed the requisite form and was welcomed to the meeting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Bridges).

ACTION: CH

20/69 Declaration of Interests

The following councillors declared an interest in item 8: Fold House, having registered a personal objection to the planning application during the County Council consultation:
Cllrs Singer, Bridges and Irwin.

The Clerk had informed councillors prior to the meeting that she did not believe that their interests were pecuniary and therefore they could speak on the item during the meeting should they wish and could vote.

NB. County Cllr. Dale had previously declared an interest in this matter as she was a member of the County Council planning committee.

20/70 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13th July 2020

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Bridges).

20/71 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 20/52(i) – Village Response to Coronavirus.* The Clerk reported that the assistance phone line was still in use and a group of volunteers continued to deliver prescriptions and meals on a Friday morning. The caterer, Virginia Steer, had kindly agreed to keep making meals and although fewer residents were currently using the service, two or three households were very reliant on it. The volunteer system remained in place should it be needed over the coming months;
- (ii) *Minute 20/52(iv) – Styford Estate Woodland Management plan.* It was noted that Cllr. Howe and the Clerk had met with the land agent for the Styford Estate and had had a useful discussion with him on tackling invasive species by the River Tyne;
- (iii) *Minute 20/54 – Play Park.* It was noted that the Play Park had reopened following the closure due to Covid 19. Signage had been installed and the Play Park thoroughly inspected before reopening. Reports of the Play Park being excessively busy had been received. Signage clearly stated the maximum number of children who should use the park at any one time and it was agreed that it was not for the parish council to enforce these numbers; parents and carers must use their judgement and if the park was busy should return later;
- (iv) *Minute 20/55 – Mill Pond restoration.* It was noted that soil sample testing would be undertaken shortly;
- (v) *Minutes 20/59(ii) – Footpaths.* It was noted that Cllr. Dunhill had met with Cllr. Dale and the County Council Footpaths Officer and had discussed the issue of the broken stiles. Cllr. Dale offered to contact the Footpaths Officer to obtain an update on their possible repair;
ACTION: ADa
- (vi) *Minute 20/64(iii) – Himalayan Balsam.* The Clerk reported that she had been in contact with Jenny Elliott, the Volunteer Coordinator at the Tyne Rivers Trust. Jenny had organised a volunteer group to treat the Japanese Knotweed problem by the Tyne at Broomhaugh. She had also offered to organise volunteer sessions next year to tackle Himalayan Balsam along the March Burn although this would need coordination with other parishes and landowners. The Clerk would contact her again in March 2021;
ACTION: CLERK
- (vii) *Minute 20/65(i) – Newsletter.* It was noted that the yearly newsletter had been delivered to all households in the village;
- (viii) *Minute 20/65(ii) – Local Plan.* It was noted that councillors had decided not to make any comments on the additional evidence requested by the Local Plan Inspector.

20/72 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) Coronavirus – Cllr. Dale noted that any further lockdowns would likely be by area rather than a national lockdown. Currently, she was aware of five local cases and she reported that local care homes had been closed to visitors;
- (ii) Highways – Cllr. Dale had again raised the issue of the pedestrian crossing and full installation of the 20 mph scheme outside of the school, with officers at the County Council. The work to install the rumble strips near the school and changes to the Spinney entrance were now provisionally scheduled to be undertaken over half-term. Due to the delays, the likely costs of these projects had increased and she had asked the officers to ensure that these additional costs were not passed on to the parish;
- (iii) Signs – Cllr. Dale confirmed that enforcement action had been taken to remove a sign in the village which had been installed without planning permission;
- (iv) Sports Club – Cllr. Dale had been able to set aside some funds for the Sports Club to help with development of the pavilion. She planned to pass the funds to the parish council to administer on behalf of the club but the money could only be released once the parish council was satisfied that the club's accounts were in order;
- (v) County Council meetings – Cllr. Dale reported that council meetings had resumed. There were lots of issues at the County Council at the moment which had been reported in the press. She hoped that a proper investigation would be held to establish the facts;
- (vi) Litter pick – Cllr. Dale noted that there was a government campaign to hold a litter pick between 11th – 27th September. In view of Covid, she didn't think residents would want to take part in anything formal but noted that many residents collected litter on their daily walks and

therefore she didn't see litter as a particular problem. She did advise these residents to take care when picking up any rubbish;

- (vii) Ash tree dieback – Cllr. Dale reported that the County Council was aware of the problem which was widespread throughout the county but that it had no revenue available to deal with it. Cllr. Dale should be informed if there was a public safety concern.

20/73 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Howe introduced this item by explaining that a new White Paper from government had suggested a simplified form of planning which left councils out of the procedure and with very little influence on planning matters in their area. A Village Plan was last completed in 2002. It was very good and many of the issues it identified had been actioned. However, Cllr. Howe wondered whether the time was now right to do a new plan. To begin with the parish council would have to sign up to become a neighbourhood and apply to the planners for a grant before forming a committee and working with a local planner to develop the ideas.

Cllr. Dunhill explained how he had explored developing a neighbourhood plan previously but had had difficulty recruiting volunteers from the village and the two-year timescale to complete the plan had been off-putting.

Cllr. Dale recommended that the village develop a neighbourhood plan as it would give residents a chance to say how they would like the village to grow. Long term, more housing would be required and by developing a neighbourhood plan, residents would have more say in where this would be built.

Cllr. Howe suggested that an article be prepared for the Parish News and website to gauge the general level of interest. Cllr. Dale offered to ask the County Council's planners to prepare a suitable statement. Cllr. Howe agreed to circulate the summary of the previous Village Plan and its outcomes to councillors.

ACTION: ADa, CH, CLERK

20/74 **Fold House**

Prior to the meeting, a paper outlining the planning sub-group's response to the planning application 20/01932/FUL – erection of a single dwelling with an annex and ancillary accommodation to the rear, had been circulated with the agenda.

In the pre-meeting discussion, Neil Turner, a Riding Mill resident and also the architect of the development asked to speak on behalf of Mr & Mrs Sweeney, the applicants. He reported that Cundall, the planning consultants, had written to the parish council responding to comments raised by residents during the consultation. They had not yet had a chance to respond to the parish council's paper but he recorded his belief that the paper was factually incorrect and contained a host of subjective and unsubstantiated commentary and that it was not representative of the majority of the residents in the village. Councillors noted his comments.

Cllr. Howe confirmed that the planning subgroup's response had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. She noted that Cllrs. Carew and McKenzie had confirmed that they endorsed the paper. She therefore proposed that the paper be approved and submitted to the County Council as the parish council's response to the planning consultation. This was seconded by Cllr. Singer and unanimously agreed.

ACTION: CLERK

20/75 **Tennis Club sign**

It was reported that the Tennis Club had received planning approval to erect a club sign on Millfield Road and a banner on the netting by the double courts.

In the pre-meeting discussion, Mrs Stephenson had read a statement regarding the sign and banner and in anticipation the Clerk had contacted the Tennis Club to confirm that the sign would be double sided and would be sited perpendicular to the road, something nearby neighbours had previously requested. Councillors therefore unanimously agreed to approve the sign as per the design submitted as part of the planning consultation (Proposed Cllr. Bridges, seconded Cllr. Mills). The sign did not mention the amenity land which could be accessed over the bridge and it was agreed to install a small sign on the bridge indicating this.

ACTION: CLERK

20/76 Local Transport Plan Programme 2021-22

Councillors considered priorities to be submitted to the County Council for consideration as part of the Local Transport Plan Programme for 2021-22. Feedback had been given on last year's submission together with a note of requests the County Council had received from members of the public. It was agreed to support the following proposals:

- Installation of a short section of footpath connecting existing footpaths between Riding Mill and Stocksfield;
- Reinstatement of the riverside footpath between Riding Mill and Corbridge
- Installation of a footpath from the junction of the A695 to Beauclerc along the C275.

ACTION: CLERK

20/77 Climate Change

The Local Electricity Bill.

The Clerk reported that the PC had been asked to support the Local Electricity Bill which would allow consumers to purchase electricity from local community energy groups. The PC resolved the following (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill):

Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

(a) noted that the Local Electricity Bill

- *aimed to address the current situation, whereby the very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers resulted in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,*
- *if made law, would make these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation and empower councils, together with their communities, to sell locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, and*
- *would result in revenues received by councils or community organisations that chose to set up local renewable electricity companies, which could be used to help fund local greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures and to help improve local services and facilities;*

(b) accordingly resolved to support the Local Electricity Bill, supported by a cross-party group of MPs; and

(c) further resolved to write to our MP asking him to support the Bill in Parliament and to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People expressing our support.

ACTION: CLERK

20/78 Tree work

- (i) The Clerk reported that the tree surgeon had removed two trees by Marchburn Lane bridge. One was badly rotted at the base and the other was heavily undercut by the burn. He had also cut back and thinned trees at the Spinney which were overhanging Church Lane. Other work had been identified and the Clerk was asked to obtain a quote.

ACTION: CLERK

- (ii) It was reported that ash tree dieback had been identified throughout the village. On land which belonged to the parish council, the area around the mill pond was worst affected. The tree surgeon had suggested recording all ash trees overhanging roads and footpaths and assessing them on a yearly basis. He suggested one ash tree, which was very close to telegraph wires, was removed as soon as possible as it was already badly affected and, if left, would become difficult to climb.

ACTION: CLERK

- (iii) It was reported that a resident had written asking that sapling trees be removed from the boundary of the allotments near to Railway Cottages. Cllr. Singer offered to inspect the area and report back.

ACTION: BS

20/79 General Village Maintenance

- (i) Handyman: It was reported that the handyman had strimmed and swept a number of footpaths. He had tidied the area around the bench on the old road to Broomley and had undertaken checks of the play park, cutting back foliage around the perimeter. He had also re-sited the broken finger post and litter bin at Broomhaugh. The Clerk noted that footpath to the station from Broomhaugh was badly affected by overgrowing ivy. This was on the allotment wall and therefore the PC's responsibility. It was agreed to ask the handyman to cut it back. A discussion was also held regarding overgrowing hedges and it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the homeowner.

ACTION: CLERK

- (ii) Litter Pick: it was agreed that it was still not appropriate to organise a group litter pick at this time. Litter picks and other equipment could be borrowed from the Clerk and could be left for collection at the Parish Hall should any residents wish to tidy a particular area. The Clerk would mention this in the next Parish News article.

ACTION: CLERK

20/80 Review of current Policy Documentation

Review of GDPR documents was deferred to the November meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

20/81 Finance

- (i) Yearly Audited Accounts
- (a) It was reported that the External Auditor had raised no issues with the accounts and it was therefore resolved to approve the final yearly accounts for 2019/20 (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill). The confirmed accounts and External Auditor Certificate would be displayed on the website and notice board.

ACTION: CLERK

- (b) It was resolved to re-appoint Mrs Margaret Weatherley as Internal Auditor (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Mills).

(ii) *Monthly accounts*

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

Seymour Gardens and Trees – edible garden maintenance	£34.00
Catherine Harrison – July salary + home allowance	£491.89
Neetfleet – playground inspection and repairs	£90.00
Tyne Rivers Trust – invasive species control donation	£150.00
RM VHT – room hire	£12.00
Office Depot – ink cartridges / laminating pouches	£96.38 (inc. VAT £16.06)
Seymour Gardens and Trees – edible garden maintenance	£34.00
Data protection fee – yearly fee (direct debit)	£35.00
Trevor Bell Horticultural Services – grass cutting	£440.00
Robson Print – yearly newsletter	£362.00
Office Depot – ink cartridges / envelopes	£113.77 (inc. VAT £18.96)
PKF Littlejohn – external auditor fees	£360.00 (inc. VAT £60.00)
Neetfleet – re-site broken finger post / dog bin	£40.00
Catherine Harrison – August salary + home allowance	£491.89
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses	
(NALC training course £38.93, phone top up £10, Zoom subscription	
x 2 £28.78, photocopying annual reports £53.77,	
sign for Play Park £22.99	£154.47 (inc. VAT £10.32)
Transfer to the Bridges Reserve account	£2500.00

David Ballantyne – tree work at Spinney	£275.00
Seymour Gardens and Trees – edible garden maintenance	£34.00

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (August)	£160.00
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (September)	£160.00
RM Village Hall Trust – Covid emergency payment (August)	£500.00
RM Village Hall Trust – Covid emergency payment (Sept)	£500.00

The following receipts were noted:

Sandy Bank Residents Association – contribution to Nick maintenance	£65.00
RM Tennis Club – yearly rent	£25.00
NCC – yearly contribution for use of Old Playground for school buses	£50.00
Northern Electric – wayleaves	£61.05
NCC - Precept – 2 nd instalment	£21,000.00
Unity Trust (Bridge fund): transfer from current account	£2,500.00

(b) *Budget report*

The budget report was received and accepted (proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. Howe). There were no issues to note although the Clerk asked councillors to give some thought to capital expenditure projects; some funds had been set aside for new pieces of equipment for the play park but just over £4000 had been earmarked for 'green projects' which had yet to be identified.

20/82 **Clerk's Appraisal**

It was agreed to approve the Clerk's yearly pay award following the outcome of her recent appraisal (Proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. Bridges). A new pay scale had recently come into effect which was to be backdated to April 2020. It was also agreed that she should be paid for additional hours she had worked when coordinating the village response to Covid.

ACTION: CLERK

20/83 **Planning**

It was noted:

- (i) that the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:
 - 20/02137/FUL – Dene Lodge. Ground and first floor extensions. Construction of a raised terrace. PC – no objection;
 - 20/02121/FUL – Hazel Rigg, Millfield Road. Single storey extension. Removal of entrance porch. PC – no objection;
 - 20/02293/FUL – Brookside, Millfield Road. Single storey garden room. PC – no objection;
 - 20/02393/FUL – Dower House West. Erection of timber cabin in garden. PC – no objection;
 - 20/02201/LBC – 3 Hollin Hill Terrace. Listed building consent for new fitted kitchen and removal of old. PC – no objection;
 - 20/01932/FUL – Land south of Church Lane. Erection of single dwelling with annex and ancillary accommodation. See Minute 20.74;
 - 20/02102/FUL – Galena House, Main Road. Rear extension and alteration to garage. PC – no objection;
 - 20/02537/FUL – Dower Green. Construction of extension to front elevation. PC – no objection.
- (ii) that the following planning application had been approved by NCC:
 - 20/01237/ADE – Tennis Club, Millfield Road. Tennis Club signage.

20/84 **Meetings to attend**

Representatives to attend the following meetings were sought:

- NALC AGM – to be held via Zoom. 10 am, Saturday 3rd October. No one available.
- Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership AGM – to be held via Zoom. 4 pm, Tuesday 20th October. Cllr. Dunhill would attend if possible.

20/85 **Correspondence**

Residents' correspondence was noted and actioned as follows:

Kuldip Chexal – dog fouling: Article had been included in the yearly newsletter;

Anne Jones – Ash tree dieback: Article had been included in the yearly newsletter;

Neil Turner – Bridges sinking fund: The Clerk had replied and had provided the most recent figures;

Eddie Nickson – saplings at the allotments: Cllr. Singer to assess and the Clerk would update the resident;

Ann Gerrish – village maintenance: Councillors thanked Mrs Gerrish for her efforts in keeping roads and pavements free from weeds and encouraged all residents to maintain the area in front of their homes. An article would be written for the Parish News.

ACTION: CLERK

20/86 **Minor Matters**

Litter bin: it was reported that Northern had removed the litter bin from the westbound platform at the station as their cleaning contractor refused to empty it as it was always filled with dog waste. They had asked if the parish could install a dog waste bin instead. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate whether the County Council would be prepared to empty an additional bin if the parish council paid for its installation.

ACTION: CLERK

20/87 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council should be held on Monday 9th November 2020.
Venue to be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 9.06 pm.