



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 9th November 2020.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Jill Mills
Cllr. Brian Singer
Cllr. Eileen Carew

Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Pam Bridges
Cllr. David McKenzie
Cllr. David Irwin

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 20/94)
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
1 member of the public observed the meeting via Zoom

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

20/88 **Apologies for Absence**
None

20/89 **Declaration of Interests**
Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in item 7 – the Sports Club.

20/90 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14th September 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. Irwin).

20/91 **Matters Arising**

- (i) Minute 20/71(i) – Village response to coronavirus. The Clerk reported that the meal delivery and prescription collection services continued to operate and there was now a team of approximately ten people helping with this on a rota basis. Other requests for assistance had decreased but arrangements remained in place should anyone require help;
- (ii) Minute 20/71(iv) – Mill pond. The Clerk confirmed that soil samples had been taken from the mill pond area and analysis showed that there was no hazardous material present. The Regeneration Group now needed to review the costs and prepare a report for the PC outlining its recommendations and suggestions for funding;
ACTION: REGN. GROUP/CLERK
- (iii) Minute 20/75 – Tennis Club sign. It was noted that the club sign had been erected and nearby residents were happy with the outcome;
- (iv) Minute 20/78 – Tree work. The Clerk reported that:
 - she and David Ballantyne, the tree surgeon, had tagged a number of ash trees or groups of ash trees around the pathways in Marchburn Wood and recorded the percentage of dieback so that the rate of decline in the trees could be monitored over the next few years. The worst affected trees were by the mill pond and weir area. Although most of the trees didn't pose an immediate risk, it was likely that a large number of them would have to be removed as the disease progressed and the PC would need to budget for this tree work accordingly;

- there were a number of trees which needed to be removed by the mill pond as previously discussed. The tree surgeon hoped to complete the work in one day using two men at his quoted rate. There was one proviso – he hoped additional machinery would not be required but if it was then there would be an additional charge. The work would actually take longer than a day but as he was able to use the wood for his firewood business he could offer a discounted rate. Councillors were happy to accept his quote and he was asked to proceed (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin);

It was reported that there were two dead alder trees (one by the double tennis courts and one by the weir), and two ash trees which were showing severe leaf loss and would likely need to be removed soon. Councillors were asked to note that these would be a priority in the next financial year;

- Woodland Trust. The Woodland Trust had advertised free tree packs for local communities and the Clerk had secured one of the smaller tree packs for the PC. It would arrive in March and would include tree stakes and protectors.

- (v) Minute 20/86 – Litter bin at the station. The Clerk reported that she had liaised with the County Council and the officer had agreed to empty an additional bin near the westbound platform (Northern had requested a bin on the eastbound platform). The station manager was to contact the Clerk to agree on the final position.

ACTION: CLERK

20/92 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Planning white paper - housing numbers.* There was a shortfall in the number of houses proposed for the Tyne Valley (651 now increased to 1172 per year). The Local Plan had proposed greater housing numbers for the south-east of the region but the inspector had indicated she wished to see planned economic growth throughout the county and the housing distribution would need to be addressed. If the government white paper was approved, large housing developments could be decided by government not by local councils. Cllr. Dale reiterated that it would be a good idea to prepare a local neighbourhood plan so that the village could decide where it would prefer additional housing, if required. Cllr. Howe agreed to circulate a plan showing the local sites in the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment);
- (ii) *Traffic calming work outside the school.* The installation of rumble strips to slow the traffic and safety changes to the entrance to the Spinney had again been delayed. Cllr. Dale had raised her frustration with the delays with senior members of the County Council. The work was now scheduled to be undertaken during February half-term 2021;
- (iii) *Pedestrian Crossing.* Again, this project was delayed but Cllr. Dale had been informed by the relevant officer that the work should be issued to the construction team in December and would be undertaken in the new year. Cllr. Dale reported that due to officers not being replaced, there was a lack of staff to process the LTP programme and she had raised her concerns with the Council;
- (iv) *Covid 19.* Cllr. Dale reported that she received regular updates from the County Council re the current Covid 19 situation. She had supported the decision for the seven local authorities to be treated as one for the tier system as there would always be cross boundary commuting. The numbers of Covid cases in Northumberland was increasing but this ward was currently showing a decline in those affected. Some residents had been asked to shield because of certain health conditions but this was fewer than during the last lockdown and the government were not arranging food parcels etc. this time. She noted the government had reversed its decision on free school meals during the holidays;
- (v) *Highways.* Cllr. Dale reported that a new officer, David Robson, had been appointed for this area;
- (vi) *Trees.* Cllr. Dale reported that two residents had contacted her because of concerns with trees overhanging their gardens. One tree overhung the highway so the relevant officer at the

ACTION: CH

County Council had agreed to inspect the two areas and assess their safety. She also noted that the County Council wished to be proactive at looking at trees on their land and to assist and advise the public but again, the department was understaffed;

- (vii) *Trip Hazards.* Cllr. Dale reported that she had referred trip hazards on Rights of Way to the relevant officer to assess;
- (viii) *Parking at Broomhaugh.* Cllr. Dale noted that she would shortly be circulating a letter to residents at Broomhaugh to seek views on finding a solution to the parking problem;
- (ix) Cllr. Dunhill raised the issue of repairs to various stiles. Cllr. Dale offered to contact the officer to check on the progress of any work;

ACTION: ADa

- (x) *Land opposite the Old Tavern.* It was noted that a skip had now been left in the area although there was no evidence that building work was imminent. Cllr. Dale agreed to ask the enforcement officer to check the site next time they were passing through Riding Mill. The Clerk was asked to contact the owner to let him know that residents were concerned about the site/fencing.

ACTION: ADa/CLERK

20/93 **Neighbourhood Plan**

It was unanimously agreed to ratify a decision taken by councillors via email to apply for the designation of a neighbourhood area (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Bridges). It was noted that the application had been successful.

Cllr. Howe reported that she and Cllr. Irwin had agreed to work together on the neighbourhood plan. They were finalising a questionnaire which would be circulated to councillors for comment before being distributed to villagers after Christmas. Only one resident had come forward to offer to help but Cllr. Howe hoped that more would get involved if the plan was broken down into different elements. It might then be possible to approach individuals with certain expertise and knowledge e.g. environment, transport etc. Cllr. Howe proposed therefore to finalise the questionnaire, establish all costs to cover the printing, collation and analysis of results and then apply for a grant from the Locality team in the hope that results from the questionnaire would be available in February. At this point, there should be a clearer idea of what residents wanted from a neighbourhood plan, if it would be necessary to appoint a planning consultant to advise the PC and if so, to get quotes and apply for a further grant to progress the plan. All councillors agreed that this was an acceptable way forward and endorsed Cllr. Howe's plans.

20/94 **Sports Club**

(a) *Update report*

Cllr. Howe gave the following update report on the sports club:

- (i) Under 'new management' the club seemed to be moving into a more sustainable position. Accounts had now been produced for 2019/20;
- (ii) As previously discussed, the club felt that the best way to move forward was by building the rear extension with toilets which would allow it to expand, pursue other forms of income and improve its links with the village. When planning permission for the scheme expired in May, an extension was sought by making a start on the foundations. The kitchen area was also completed and the container relocated to allow for the second phase;
- (iii) With the onset of Covid all work on submitting funding applications had stopped. Clarification from Kathie Keady as to whether any funders were currently supporting non-Covid related projects was awaited;
- (iv) The sports club had concluded that it was not possible to self-fund Phase 1 of the redevelopment and it was proposed that the Parish Council both project manage and financially manage the redevelopment. This had been discussed previously but it was agreed that it was important that the PC review the tenders before proceeding. It was therefore proposed that an extraordinary confidential meeting be held as soon as possible to review the

tenders and appoint the contractor for the redevelopment so that the project could commence early in the new year;

ACTION: CLERK

- (v) Cllr. Howe gave an indication of possible funding sources for Phase 1 of the project which included contributions from the parish council (funds from the easement agreement with Northern Powergrid and grant (see below)), County Councillor Dale (£6000) and the club itself (£8000).

(b) *Yearly Grant*

As the accounts for 2019/20 had been submitted, the PC was in a position to consider awarding the club its yearly grant of £2,500. The club had undertaken its own grass cutting other than for the football field so it was proposed that the club be awarded £500 to cover these costs and the remaining £2000 to be reallocated to the redevelopment fund plus an additional £1000 which should ensure that there were sufficient funds to commence Phase 1. This was unanimously agreed (proposed Cllr. McKenzie, seconded Cllr. Howe).

ACTION: CLERK

(c) *Memorial tree*

One of the teams had asked for approval to plant a tree with a plaque in memory of one its former players and the PC was happy to approve this.

20/95 **Heritage Group**

It was noted that the Heritage sub-committee of the Regeneration Group had agreed a design for the Heritage Trail. This had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting but it was noted that there were a few minor changes proposed. The costs for different configurations of the board were being sought and the next step for the sub-committee would be to determine its location and apply for planning permission. The group also needed to raise funding for the project once costs had been established.

20/96 **Review of current Policy Document**

It was agreed that the following policy documents be readopted subject to minor spelling corrections or grammar alterations (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Mills):

- General Privacy Notice
- Staff Privacy Notice
- Subject Access Request Guidance
- Subject Access Request Policy
- Documents Retention Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Breach Policy

ACTION: CLERK

20/97 **General Village Maintenance**

- (i) Handyman: it was noted that the handyman had strimmed and swept footpaths. He had also checked the play area and cut back overhanging shrubs.
- (ii) Grass cutting: it was noted that the current 3-year contract would end in December and the Clerk was asked to update the grass cutting schedule of work and prepare an invitation to tender which would be displayed on the website and notice board (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

ACTION: CLERK

20/98 **Finance**

(a) *Monthly accounts*

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

Unity Trust Bank – quarterly charges	£18.00
T Bell Horticultural Services – grass cutting	£440.00

David Ballantyne -tree work Marchburn Lane	£560.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – play park inspection + minor repairs and additional amenity land maintenance	£145.00
Seymour Gardens and trees – maintenance of planters + new plants	£169.00
Catherine Harrison – September salary + home allowance + back pay	£626.29
Stephen Rutherford – bus shelter cleaning	£40.00
Swarco Traffic Ltd – yearly maintenance contract (inc. Stocksfield PC see below)	£848.88 (inc VAT £141.48)
DETS – soil analysis	£702.06 (inc VAT £117.01)
Seymour Gardens and trees – maintenance edible garden	£34.00
Royal British Legion – S137 donation for wreath	£60.00
Parish Council Websites – yearly hosting fees including email storage	£384.00
Catherine Harrison – October salary/home allowance/agreed additional hours	£646.69
Catherine Harrison - reimbursement of expenses (Zoom monthly fee x 2 £28.78, Confidential shredding bags £21, Funnels £7.10, A4 archiving folders, £10.07, Laminating pouches £8.20, USB sticks £9.34)	£84.49 (inc. VAT 9.29)

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (October)	£160.00
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (November)	£160.00

The following receipts were noted:

RM Allotment Association – quarterly rent	£51.63
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of footpath expenses	£300.00
Stocksfield Parish Council – reimbursement of their part of Swarco contract	£353.70
Anon – land valuation report	£1200.00
Triodos – quarterly interest	£2.59

(ii) *Budget report*

The budget report was received and approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. McKenzie). No new issues were identified.

(b) *Yearly Budget*

It was noted that the yearly budget would be set at next month's meeting. Ideas for capital expenditure projects should be notified to the Clerk in advance.

ACTION: ALL

(c) *S137 Grants*

- (i) A donation to the Royal British Legion was approved (proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. Mills).

ACTION: CLERK

- (ii) It was noted that funding requests from other bodies would be considered at the December PC meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

20/99 **Planning**

It was noted:

- (i) that the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:
- 20/02719/FUL – 51 Station Close. Single storey rear extension. PC – no objection;
 - 20/0352/FUL – Beauclerc Lodge. Replacement porch and rear utility extension. PC – no objection;
 - 20/02950/FUL – The Lodge, Shepherds Dene. Retrospective planning permission for ancillary buildings, wall and fencing. PC – no objection;
 - 20/01932/FUL – Fold House. Amendments to original plans. PC – no additional comments;
 - 20/03429/PRUTPO – Land west of Riding Mill. Reduction in size of oak tree. PC – no objection.
- (ii) that the following planning applications had been approved by NCC:
- 20/02537/FUL – Dower Green. Extension to front elevation;
 - 20/02137/FUL – Dene Lodge. Ground and first floor extensions plus raised terrace;

- 20/02201/LBC - 3 Hollin Hill Terrace. New fitted kitchen;
- 20/02392/FIL – Dower House. Timber cabin.

20/100 Meetings

(i) *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities*

Cllr. McKenzie gave an overview of an online meeting he had attended organised by NALC.

Key points to note were:

- He felt it had been a very useful meeting to attend with the main speakers representing Friends of the Earth and The Climate Coalition. In 2019 alone, there had been 364 global temperature records broken;
- There would be a UN Climate Change Conference held in Glasgow in November 2021 and it was likely that some important decisions would be taken at the conference;
- Friends of the Earth representatives spoke on the role of local councils in tackling climate change. They had prepared a climate action plan which highlighted how a council could engage the local community and lead by example. Friends of the Earth also highlighted how councils could play a role in promoting a green agenda through a neighbourhood plan and through the planning process.

(ii) *Tyne Valley Rail Users Group AGM*

Cllr. Dunhill had attended the AGM and had circulated a report to councillors by email. Key points to note were:

- Northern had a significant investment plan to improve stations;
- They would be trialling the use of hydrogen fuelled trains in Teesside in the next few years (all diesel trains would be stopped by 2040);
- They have promised to fix the information display board at the station;
- The TVRUG would be pleased to receive comments on the efficiency or otherwise of the service. Comments could be sent to Cllr. Dunhill and he would pass them on.

20/101 Climate Change

- (i) Councillors discussed whether energy efficiency measures had been considered when planning the new pavilion. Cllr. Howe confirmed that the pavilion was essentially a shed and therefore not subject to the same standards as a house for installation etc. There was no merit in installing solar panels as the government feed-in tariffs had ended. Cllr. Howe agreed to review the building proposals to ensure green issues had been fully considered.

ACTION: CH

- (ii) It was suggested that it would be useful to gauge residents' views on climate issues when consulting about a neighbourhood plan. Ideas to propose could include: a solar farm on fields near the A695 to the roundabout or dimming street lights from 1 am to 5 am.

ACTION: CH

20/102 Correspondence

The Clerk reported that three items of correspondence had been redirected to Cllr. Dale as they concerned tree safety near a highway and a trip hazard, all County Council matters.

A resident had written with concerns about the speed activated sign outside the old shop. The Clerk reported that she had delayed renewing the maintenance contract for the signs in the hope that they would be removed once the pedestrian crossing was installed. As the crossing had been further delayed, she had renewed the contract and Swarco had visited the site to assess the sign. The engineer reported that the batteries in the sign degraded far quicker than they should because of the volume of passing traffic triggering the sign and the poor light levels which meant the batteries never fully charged. The engineer had replaced the batteries and the sign was now functioning. The Clerk had written to the resident to update him.

Councillors discussed the issue of the delays to the pedestrian crossing and rumble strips and noted their appreciation to Cllr. Dale for continuing to raise the issue with the County Council. The likely effectiveness of the rumble strips was questioned but it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to query the proposals at this late stage. Councillors agreed to write to Glen Sanderson expressing their concerns over the delays (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer).

ACTION: CLERK

20/103 Minor Matters

(i) Remembrance Sunday

- Cllr. McKenzie reported that the Church had been asked by the Royal British Legion not to hold any ceremonies at the war memorial this year. The remembrance church service had therefore been brought forward to the preceding Wednesday and the wreaths laid in a low key way at the memorial on the afternoon of Remembrance Sunday, this included the parish council's wreath.
- A resident had discovered that one of the servicemen listed on the World War II plaque had been wrongly attributed as being from the RAF - he was in fact from the Royal Engineers. The resident had offered to pay for a new plaque but it was noted that the memorial was Grade II listed. The Clerk was asked to establish if changing the plaque was allowed and it was agreed she would contact the Conservation Officer at the County Council for advice.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) Christmas Tree

The Clerk reported that she had ordered the tree and hoped to have it erected by Friday 4th December. She was liaising with the scouts who were considering holding a virtual lighting ceremony/Christingle service.

20/104 Date of Future Meeting
Monday 14th December

Meeting closed at 9.24 pm.