



# 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 14<sup>th</sup> December 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 20/118)

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

1 member of the public observed the meeting via Zoom

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.40 pm.

## **20/108 Apologies for Absence**

None

## **20/109 Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in item 7 – the Sports Club.

## **20/110 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November & 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Bridges).

It was agreed that the minutes of the extraordinary Council meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew).

## **20/111 Matters Arising**

- (i) *Minute 20/91(i) – Village response to Coronavirus.* The Clerk reported that the weekly meal service had now ended as the number of residents partaking had declined. Some residents had made a private arrangement with Virginia Steer, the caterer, and she would be delivering meals directly to them. Volunteers would continue to run the prescription service each Friday.
- (ii) *Minute 20/97(ii) – Grass cutting.* The Clerk had advertised the grass cutting tender and seven companies had responded and asked for further details. The closing date for tenders was 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and these would be considered at the February meeting.
- (iii) *Minute 20/103(i) – Correction to plaque on War Memorial.* The Clerk had contacted the Conservation Officer at the County Council who had indicated that she would prefer the plaque amended rather than renewed as the memorial was Grade II listed. A cost for this had been obtained from a metal conservator and the resident had been informed. He hoped to approach the Royal Engineers and the Royal British Legion to see if they could contribute to the costs.

## 20/112 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Highway issues* – Cllr. Dale reported that there were widespread problems throughout the County with the delivery of highway projects so Riding Mill was not alone. She had been in correspondence with senior officers who had confirmed that the work to complete the 20 mph scheme and changes to the Spinney entrance would be undertaken over the February half-term. There had been minor design changes to the pedestrian crossing but the work was to be issued to the area office before Christmas and programmed for early next year. A start date would be notified once it was known.
- (ii) *Sports Club* – Cllr. Dale was pleased to confirm that she had authorised £6000 to be released to the PC from her member's allowance as a contribution towards Phase I of the redevelopment of the pavilion;
- (iii) *Land opposite the Old Tavern* – Cllr. Dale confirmed that there was no enforcement issue with the land opposite the Old Tavern;
- (iv) *Neighbourhood Plan* - Cllr. Dale was pleased to see the PC progressing with its plans for a neighbourhood plan;
- (v) *Covid-19* – Cllr. Dale received regular county reports concerning the Covid infection rates. This area's infection rate remained low but other areas in the Tyne Valley were currently experiencing a peak and she reminded residents to remain alert and take precautions;
- (vi) *Fold House* – Senior planning officers had attended the Tynedale Local Area Council meeting to guide councillors in their decision regarding Fold House. The application had strategic implications for the County and it was important that officers conveyed very clearly the planning issues. Cllr. Dale felt satisfied that this had been done and that the correct decision had been made in refusing the application. She commended the parish for working together to put a very well argued case against the development.

## 20/113 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Howe reported that the background paper from the neighbourhood planning team had now been completed and was awaiting sign off from the chief planner. It would then be displayed on the website as public information. The survey had been circulated to all councillors for comment and she requested that responses were sent to her and Cllr. Irwin as soon as possible. Cllr. Irwin would be creating an online version of the questionnaire and would circulate it to a small focus group to gain feedback. He also planned to obtain costs for transcribing and analysing the responses. Once finalised, the PC would have to decide how it was distributed. Online would make it easier to transcribe but the PC held a relatively small number of email addresses. Distribution via hard copies was therefore inevitable. Costs would need to be calculated and a grant obtained for the work, which would include distribution, transcription and analysis.

**ACTION: CH/DI**

## 20/114 Sports Club

Cllr. Howe reported that Phase 1 of the redevelopment should begin in the new year. It was especially timely as the cricket team had been promoted a league and better facilities were therefore imperative. The football team was also going from strength to strength. Funds for Phase 2 were actively being pursued, in the hopes of running the contract on.

At the pre-meeting budget discussion, it had been noted that £4150 had been set aside for 'green projects' but would likely remain unspent as no projects had been identified. It was therefore proposed to reallocate these funds to the Sports Club redevelopment to cover any unforeseen expenses during Phase 1 or to be used as match funding for Phase 2. This proposal was unanimously agreed by the councillors (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew). [N.B. £1000 had been allocated at the last meeting to the project. This would now be included within the additional award of £4150].

**ACTION: CLERK**

## 20/115 Mill Pond

Cllr. Howe reported that the Regeneration Group had reviewed options for progressing the mill pond project now that it had been confirmed that there was no soil contamination and recommended that the first stage should be clearing up both the pond and the leat and to see what happens naturally. This work would include the removal of one or two diseased trees (included within the PC's yearly tree maintenance programme); and the clearing of the pond itself and the leat. For the latter, the Tyne Rivers Trust had provided initial costs in their report but they planned to visit the area in the next few weeks to assess the extent of the work and provide a more robust costing. Possible funding sources had been identified.

Councillors were happy to endorse the suggestion by the Regeneration Group. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact local residents to update them before any volunteers began work.

**ACTION: CLERK**

## 20/116 Budget for next Financial Year

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

Budget Category	Proposed budget for 2021/22	Last year's budget
Staff Costs	£6200	£6050
Insurance	£2200	£2700
General Admin	£2200	£1900
Professional Fees	£1900	£1900
Donations/Grants	£6600	£6500
Maintenance	£11,500	£10,500
Capital Expenditure	£7,500	£9150
Miscellaneous	£800	£800
Bridges sinking fund	£3100	£2500
TOTAL	<b><u>£42,000</u></b>	<b><u>£42,000</u></b>

### Points to note:

- The following budget categories would either remain static or marginally increase: Staff costs; Professional fees, Grants and Donations and Miscellaneous;
- General admin and maintenance budgets would increase. The admin budget was increased because of online meeting hosting fees and web hosting fees. The maintenance budget was increased to cover extra tree works – a large number of ash trees were experiencing dieback and might need removing;
- Insurance – a new three-year insurance deal had resulted in savings and the budget was therefore lowered;
- Capital expenditure projects – the PC agreed to set aside a further £5000 towards new play equipment. (£5000 had been earmarked in this year's budget so altogether there would be £10,000 which would hopefully allow both sets of swings to be replaced). £2000 was allocated for changes to the Spinney so that it could be connected to the Quiet Garden being developed in the graveyard. £500 was allocated towards signage for the Heritage Trail.
- The PC agreed to continue to set aside money for the sinking fund for future bridge replacement and raised last year's figure by £600;

### Precept Calculation

It was agreed to set the Precept at £42,000 (an identical precept to last year's). This was proposed by Cllr. Irwin, seconded by Cllr. Dunhill and unanimously agreed.

**ACTION: CLERK**

## 20/117 Climate Change

- (i) Cllr. Dunhill asked if Cllr. Dale could enquire if it was possible to dim or switch off streetlights during the early hours of the morning. Cllr. Dale confirmed that the County Council had a policy to cover such matters and agreed to find out further details.
- ACTION: ADa**
- (ii) Cllr. McKenzie gave a report on a virtual meeting he had attended organised by Power for People. The group was campaigning for the Local Electricity Bill, something the parish council had previously agreed to support. Useful information sources and links identified during the meeting would be added to the ridingmill.org website.

**ACTION: DM/CLERK**

Cllr. Dunhill reported that Cumbria had set up a very good organisation – Cumbria Action for Sustainability and wondered whether Northumberland County Council had a similar strategy. Cllr. Dale agreed to highlight it to the County Council.

**ACTION: ADa**

## 20/118 Finance

### (a) *Monthly accounts*

- (i) The following payments were authorised (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer):
- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Box-it North – storage of archive boxes – initial fee  | £3.08 (inc. VAT £0.51)  |
| Marchburn Land Residents' Association – yearly subs  | £80.00                  |
| Box-it North – storage of archive boxes – yearly fee   | £24.00 (inc. VAT £4.00) |
| Trevor Bell Horticultural Services – grass cutting   | £440.00                 |
| ME Stewart / Neetfleet – quarterly play park inspection  | £70.00                  |
| SLCC – yearly subscription   | £112.00                 |
| Sports Club – contribution towards grass cutting – part of yearly grant                          | £500.00                 |
| Catherine Harrison – November salary + home allowance  | £514.29                 |
| Catherine Harrison – reimbursement ( Zoom subscription £14.39, Village phone line top up £10.00) | £24.39                  |
| <b>Standing Orders/Direct Debits:</b>  |                         |
| Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (December)                                   | £160.00                 |

There were no receipts to note.

### (ii) *Budget report*

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

### (b) *S137 Requests*

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

- Tynedale Hospice at Home (£60)
  - CAN (£60)
  - Sport Tynedale (£60)
  - Citizens Advice (£200)
- Councillors agreed to double the normal amount given to Citizens Advice due to the increased need for their assistance due to Covid
- Age UK (£60)
  - Great North Air Ambulance (£60)
  - The Stephen Carey Fund (£60)
  - Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services (£60)
  - Betel (£60) – Nominated by St James's Church
  - Charlotte Straker Project (£100) – this was a one-off request to help with a specific project.

**ACTION: CLERK**

It was also agreed to award Riding Mill Pre-school £100 and the Tuesday dementia drop-in group £60. Unfortunately, on this occasion, the parish council were unable to support the Tennis Club or make an award to help with the upkeep of Church Cottage.

**ACTION: CLERK**

It was agreed that before next year's awards, a review would be undertaken of the grant award system.

**ACTION: CLERK**

#### 20/119 **Policy Review**

The following policy document was received and approved with minor updates:

- Health & Safety Policy – Play Park

• **ACTION: CLERK**

#### 20/120 **General Village Maintenance**

- (i) Handyman: it was noted that the handyman had swept footpaths and cleared leaves. He had also checked the play area and carried out a quarterly inspection.
- (ii) It was noted that the gullies had been cleared along the main road and a road sweeper and cleared leaves from a number of streets. Councillors identified other areas of the village which still needed to be cleaned.

**ACTION: CLERK**

- (iii) The Clerk reported that Trevor Bell, who cuts the grass, had found a wire brush which could be attached to a trimmer and could potentially remove moss from a pavement. She suggested that Trevor purchase two of these brushes so that he could try them out and see how effective they were at cleaning the pavements. Councillors were happy to endorse the proposal.

**ACTION: CLERK**

- (iv) The Clerk reported that the footpaths officer was aware of the hole by the drainage pipe on the footpath from Broomhaugh to the station and he had informed her that he would arrange for the footpath to be repaired.

#### 20/121 **Planning**

It was noted:

- (i) that the following planning application was under consideration by NCC:
  - 20/03693/FUL - 1 Riding Grange. Side extension. PC – no objection;
- (ii) that the following planning application had been approved by NCC:
  - 20/02121/FUL – Hazel Rigg, Millfield Road. Ground floor extension.
- (iii) that the following planning applications had been refused by NCC:
  - 20/02201/FUL – Galena House, Main Road.
  - 20/01932/FUL – Land south of Church Lane (Fold House)

#### 20/122 **Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence to note.

#### 20/123 **Minor Matters**

- (i) *Assessment of March Burn bankside opposite Cartref*  
The Clerk reported that the owner of Cartref was worried about the state of the bankside opposite his home. Ceri Gibson from the Tyne Rivers Trust had agreed to assess it. The cost for this work was awaited.
- (ii) *Flood Warden Meeting.*  
Cllr. Dunhill reported that he had attended an online meeting of local flood wardens although it had not been that relevant to Riding Mill. The Environment Agency was working with

Northumbrian Water at Kielder to produce flood plans. Northumbrian Water was also in the process of producing a Drainage and Wastewater Management plan.

(iii) *Hexham Courant Correspondent*

Cllr. McKenzie asked all councillors to give some thought to who could take over as the village correspondent for the Hexham Courant as Pam Pryor had stepped down and no one had come forward to take over. He felt that the information column was a big miss for local residents.

**ACTION: ALL**

20/124 **Date of Future Meeting**

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm.