



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 February 2021.

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 21/13)
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
1 member of the public observed the meeting via Zoom

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.35 pm.

21/01 **Apologies for Absence**
None

21/02 **Declaration of Interests**
Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in Item 7 – the Sports Club.
Cllr. Singer declared an interest in Item 11(b) – Allotment Association rent review

21/03 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14th December 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).

21/04 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 20/111(i) – Village response to Coronavirus.* The Clerk reported that the village assistance number was still in operation although rarely called but volunteers continued to collect weekly prescriptions. Volunteers with 4-wheel drive vehicles had recently been identified to ensure older residents could be helped to vaccination appointments in wintry conditions;
- (ii) *Minute 20/111(iii) – Correction to plaque on War Memorial.* The Clerk reported that the Royal Engineers had agreed to make a donation towards correcting the plaque on the war memorial. Further funding was still required. The resident requesting the alteration to the plaque was happy to help publicise an appeal for funding but asked that the parish council set up and administer a crowdfunding site and this was agreed by councillors (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

ACTION: CLERK

- (iii) *Minute 20/123(iii) – Hexham Courant Correspondent.* It was reported that Carole Craig-Gilby had offered to write the weekly village news article for the Courant and the parish council thanked her for taking on this role.

21/05 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Covid-19*: Cllr. Dale continued to receive briefings relating to the pandemic and recommended that councillors and residents view the County Council website which provided useful statistical information which was updated daily and which she found very useful. She felt that the County Council was sending out clear messages to the public but unfortunately some people were not listening. Any breaches of the regulations reported to her were being referred to public protection bodies or the police;
- (ii) *Local Plan*: Cllr. Dale noted that the Planning for the Future White Paper had been amended by the Government in December 2020 with changes made to the standard method for calculating housing need. She also noted that councils would need to have a Local Plan in place which would have to be updated regularly;
- (iii) *Highways Maintenance*: Cllr. Dale reported that there were issues with potholes, flooding and drainage on roads throughout the County. Dealing with flooding to properties had to be the priority but she noted the issues on Church Lane and had asked officers to investigate;
- (iv) *20 mph scheme*: Cllr. Dale reported that, weather permitting, the works to Church Lane including the rumble strips and new Spinney entrance, would be undertaken over half-term (week commencing 15th February 2021);
- (v) *Grit bins*: Cllr. Dale continued to receive reports of additional grit bins being required. One in particular at the Slaley Road junction, was considered a priority and she would again discuss it with the County Council;

ACTION: ADa

- (vi) *Sports Club*: Cllr. Dale confirmed that the £6000 donation from her Member's Allowance Scheme would be paid shortly to support the redevelopment of the pavilion;
- (vii) *Heritage Signs*: Cllr. Dale reported that she hoped to support the installation of signs displaying a history trail around the village. The proposals were currently being assessed by the County Council and she would report back shortly;
- (viii) *Flood and Coastal Erosion*: Cllr. Dale noted that via the Environment Agency, the County Council had secured £1.061M to help undertake flood and coastal erosion risk management. Some of these funds would be used to assess and mitigate flooding along the Tyne and its tributaries at Stocksfield and Riding Mill;
- (ix) *Rights of Way*: Cllr. Dale was working with the new land agent for the Allendale Estates and was in discussion about maintaining Rights of Way including stiles across their land;
- (x) *Local Transport Plan*: Cllr. Dale reported that the work to install a small section of footpath to connect existing footpaths between Riding Mill and Stocksfield had been removed from next year's LTP. She had made a complaint and was hopeful that the work would be reinstated;
- (xi) *Broadband upgrade*: Cllr. Dale was working with FACTCO to deliver superfast broadband in Stocksfield and this project would roll out to Riding Mill in due course;
- (xii) *County Council*: Cllr. Dale noted that the County Council was having a difficult time at the moment with leaked documents relating to well-publicised cases of staff bullying. She felt staff were working tirelessly and she offered them her support.

21/06 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Howe began by thanking those councillors who had helped deliver the neighbourhood plan questionnaire. She also thanked Helen Plaskitt who had delivered the questionnaires to Broomhaugh residents. All residents had now received a copy which they were asked to complete by 28th February.

Cllr. Irwin confirmed that so far approximately 250 responses had been received from around 150 households which equated to around a third of the village. From his analysis tools he could compare responses against various demographics and criteria. One such analysis showed that there was very little support across all age groups for further larger houses to be built in the village but some residents would support other types of housing. He noted that further emails and publicity would be made in the

coming days to encourage more people to take part. The Clerk was asked to arrange for further information to be shared via the Hexham Courant correspondent. Councillors recorded their thanks to Cllr. Irwin for the impressive analysis work he had begun.

ACTION: CLERK

21/07 **Sports Club**

Cllr. Howe began her report by thanking the cricket club for the recent improvements to the clubhouse. In particular replacing the broken windows with new French doors as per the planning permission; the PC was very appreciative of all their efforts. She also noted that the cricket club had painted some of the external walls in order to lighten the appearance. As this was neither the tendered finish, nor the one that was part of the planning approval, the final finish would need to be discussed and agreed.

Funding: Since December, when the costs were agreed for phase 1 of the refurbishment, Kath Keady of Active Northumberland had donated £5000 to phase 2. Using this and the phase 1 funds as match funding, an application had been submitted to the Football Association for the remainder of the phase 2 costs. Work would not be able to start until the FA had reached a decision but this was expected before the end of the month.

Building work: Cllr. Howe confirmed that work on phase 1 should commence by 1st March in order that it was completed prior to the start of the cricket season. A pre-start meeting would be held shortly. The vinyl signs on the entrance doors, which were incorrectly attributed to just the cricket club, would now be adjusted to include the football club. These would be paid for and fitted by the cricket club.

Lease: the cricket club was making some progress in organising new trustees and was waiting for a response from a solicitor, having tracked down all previous trustees and/or their families. Once new trustees were appointed, the parish council could begin the process of negotiating a new lease in the name of Riding Mill Sports Club.

Councillors commended Cllr. Howe for her work in helping the Sports Club and felt that progress was now being made.

21/08 **Mill Pond**

It was agreed to ratify a decision taken by email to ask the Tyne Rivers Trust to supervise and coordinate two volunteer sessions costing £600 in total, to allow the mill pond area to be tidied (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer). The volunteers would remove sapling trees and brambles from the area and create a pathway lined with branches leading to the pond. It was agreed to delay submitting any funding applications until the parish council decided whether or not to progress the project and install a dipping platform which was the costlier element of the earlier proposals.

21/09 **March Burn bankside opposite Cartref**

Cllr. Howe noted that the resident of Cartref had informed the parish council that there had been a landslip on land owned by the council and he was concerned for the stability of the bank. Ceri Gibson from the Tyne Rivers Trust had viewed the area and felt that it was simply natural erosion but that she couldn't give any further advice and suggested the parish council contact a geotechnical engineer. BT Bell Engineers were therefore instructed to view the bankside and the engineer made the following comments following his visit:

- *The small rockfall was likely attributed to erosion from the river over time, and was a natural process that would continue over hundreds of years. The weak rock collected was likely due to surface weathering, and the rock behind was likely intact and much stronger.*
- *The small landslip, maybe 1m in diameter, was most likely due to a heavy rainfall event where the rain water permeates into the soil and reduces cohesion.*
- *Both were common and natural events within this type of landscape.*
- *Both instabilities were not necessarily signs of a deep seated failure i.e the type which could lead to a major and sudden landslip.*

- *Signs of deep seated failures in this case could be horizontal cracks across the slope, typically towards the top of the slope, and trees which have changed their angle/verticality.*
- *It was unlikely that ground investigation and modelling of the slope was appropriate at this time, given there was no evidence of significant movement.*

The owner of Cartref, who had been present during some of the site visit, had asked if there was any other method to monitor the bankside rather than simply viewing it regularly. The engineer had suggested it was possible to survey the hillside using a Total Station with targets placed on several areas of the bank. Readings could be taken every 6 or 12 months to check for movement. The cost to install such equipment would be around £575 and subsequent site visits would be £460.

Councillors considered whether it was appropriate for the parish council to install such equipment given that the advice received was that there was no evidence of significant movement and that the request seemed to be purely to provide peace of mind. After much discussion, councillors decided that the parish council should not install monitoring equipment but would give permission for the resident to install the equipment on the land should he wish to bear the expense but that this would have to be subject to indemnities in case the pins caused instability to the bankside (Proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. Howe). The Clerk would draft a letter for councillors to approve.

ACTION: CLERK

21/10 **Climate Change**

Cllr. McKenzie noted the need to do more than simply declare a climate emergency and that there needed to be an action plan. St James Church was consulting about climate change and about a proposal to become an eco-church and he hoped this would be a stimulus to widen the debate in the village. Cllr. Irwin highlighted that the neighbourhood plan, via a small climate change working group, would look at this issue and make recommendations re future housing such as only building passive houses etc.

21/11 **Finance**

(a) *Monthly accounts*

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

| | |
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| Unity Trust – quarterly bank charges | £18.00 |
| Northumberland County Council – planning fees re sports pavilion | £168.00 |
| David Ballantyne – tree work | £400.00 |
| ME Stewart/Neetfleet – erection of Christmas tree / installation of signs | £150.00 |
| Catherine Harrison – December salary + home allowance | £514.29 |
| Community Action Northumberland – S137 donation | £60.00 |
| Sport Tynedale – S137 donation | £60.00 |
| Charlotte Straker project - S137 donation | £100.00 |
| Stephen Carey Fund = S137 donation | £60.00 |
| RM Outdoor Pre-school - S137 donation | £100.00 |
| Tynedale Hospice at Home - S137 donation | £60.00 |
| Age UK Northumberland - S137 donation | £60.00 |
| Great North Air Ambulance - S137 donation | £60.00 |
| North East Domestic Abuse Service - S137 donation | £60.00 |
| Betel UK - S137 donation | £60.00 |
| Citizens Advice – S142(2A) donation | £200.00 |
| RM Allotment Association – reimbursement of insurance expenses | £78.63 |
| Martin Stewart /Neetfleet – dismantle Christmas tree | £40.00 |
| Office Depot – ink cartridges | £86.83 (VAT 14.47) |
| Mrs C White – Christmas tree | £90.00 |
| Robson Print – parish questionnaire printing | £535.20 (VAT £89.20) |
| Riding Mill Village Hall Trust – S137 donation to be held on account for the | |
| Tuesday Drop in Group | £60.00 |

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|--|---------|
| Catherine Harrison – January salary + home allowance | £514.29 |
| Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Zoom subscription Dec & Jan £14.39 x 2, Village assistance phone top-up £10) | £38.78 |
| Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (January) | £160.00 |
| Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (February) | £160.00 |

The following receipts were noted:

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|---|----------|
| RM Sports Club – yearly rent | £25.00 |
| RM Allotment Association – quarterly rent | £51.63 |
| Northumberland County Council – Sport development grant | £5000.00 |
| Groundwork UK – grant from Locality to assist with Neighbourhood Plan | £2312.00 |
| HMRC – VAT refund | £789.10 |
| Triodos - quarterly interest | £2.60 |

(ii) *Budget report*

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

(b) *Riding Mill Allotment Association – Rent Review*

A paper was received calculating the rent for 2021/22 in accordance with the method laid out in the lease. This was approved and it was agreed to raise the rent to £52.13/quarter (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew). The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Allotment Association's lease would need to be renewed in 2022 and discussions with the association should be opened shortly.

ACTION: CLERK

21/12 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman:* it was noted that the handyman had swept footpaths and cleared leaves, he had also installed some new signs in the play park and dismantled the Christmas tree. A discussion was held about the merit of sweeping footpaths as they so quickly became covered in stones again. Generally, it was felt to be useful and should continue. The Clerk would ask him to tidy the footpath to the west of Riding Grange along to the crossing point for the bus stop;

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Bus stop sign at Riding Grange/Slaley Road:* The Clerk had reported that the bus stop sign had been knocked over some time ago but no action had been taken by the County Council. Cllr. Dale asked the Clerk to send her the reference number relating to the report and she would follow it up.

ACTION: CLERK/ADa

(iii) *Ice issues - Old Playground:* Cllr. Dunhill reported that there were springs appearing through the surface of the Old Playground and ice had been an issue in the preceding weeks. He was gritting the area regularly and thanked the County Council for keeping the grit bins topped up almost daily;

(iv) *Slaley Road junction - grit bin:* see Minute 21/05(v);

(v) *Poor state of road leading to Riding Hills:* Cllr. Dale had referred the query to the County Council. See also Minute 21/05(iii);

(vi) *Lack of repairs to stiles –* See Minute 21/05(ix);

(vii) *Cars parking on grassed areas:* The Clerk was asked to send a note to the resident to ask him to refrain from parking on the grass as complaints had been received and would have to be referred to the County Council;

ACTION: CLERK

(viii) *Rubbish bags by bin:* Councillors were asked to watch out for whoever was leaving bags by the bin and ask them to stop.

ACTION: ALL

21/13 Planning

It was noted:

- (i) that the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:
 - 20/04039/FUL - Land to the rear of East and West Glade, Marchburn Lane. Proposed 1.5 m wooden boundary fence. PC – no objection although minor comments made re discrepancy between form and drawings;
 - 21/00181/FELTPO – Coniston, Sandy Bank. Reduce canopy of Horse Chestnut tree. PC – no objection.
- (ii) that the following planning applications had been approved by NCC:
 - 20/03441/VARYCO – Dower House, West Riding. Garden cabin;
 - 20/03429/PRUTPO – Land west of Riding Farm. Tree work;
 - 20/03693/FUL – 1 Riding Grange. Side extension.

21/14 Correspondence

A letter had been received from a resident concerned about the conditions of the trees in a field by Whiteside Bank which overhung the road. The comments had been referred to the landowner.

21/15 Minor Matters

- (i) *Yearly litter pick*: it was agreed that it was not appropriate to hold a litter pick at this time although it could be re-scheduled later in the year. The Clerk was asked to highlight the issue of dog dirt again to residents;
ACTION: CLERK
- (ii) *Misuse of the Nick by commercial vehicles*: councillors noted the incident at the Nick caused by a large vehicle. The parish council would wait for recommendations from the Residents' Association although on first consideration, the councillors were not keen on the idea of installing physical barriers to prevent access by larger vehicles.
- (iii) *Local elections*: councillors noted that local elections would be held in May. The Clerk would circulate further details when they became available.
ACTION: CLERK
- (iv) *History Trail*: in the pre-meeting discussion, Mrs Stephenson had asked if the History Trail could be revised so that it didn't start at the Parish Hall as she felt that this was a further burden on residents living on Millfield Road which was a private road. It was agreed to pass her comments on to the Regeneration Group which was leading on this project.
ACTION: CLERK

21/16 Grass cutting contract

In a confidential section of the meeting, the tenders received for the grass cutting contract were reviewed and it was unanimously agreed to reappoint Trevor Bell Horticultural Services for the coming three years (Proposed Cllr. Mills, seconded Cllr. Singer).

ACTION: CLERK

21/17 Date of Future Meeting

Monday 8th March 2021.

Meeting closed at 9.16 pm.