



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the annual Parish Council meeting held virtually via Zoom on Monday 10th May 2021.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Jill Mills
Cllr. Brian Singer
Cllr. David Irwin

Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Pam Bridges
Cllr. Eileen Carew
Cllr. David McKenzie

Co-opted at the meeting:

Cllr. Stephen Lightley

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 21/53(b))
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
1 member of the public observed the meeting via Zoom

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.45 pm.

21/37 Declaration of Acceptance of Office

As this was the first meeting of the Council, following an uncontested election, councillors were asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form. They were also reminded of the need to complete the election expenses forms showing nil expense and to complete a new Declaration of Interests form. The Clerk would collate the forms and submit them to the County Council.

ACTION: CLERK

21/38 Apologies for Absence

None.

21/39 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Cllr. Howe as Chair of Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council in 2020/21 called for nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2021/22, indicating that she was prepared to stand as Chair again. Cllr. Carew proposed that Cllr. Howe remained as Chair and Cllr. Singer as Vice-Chair. Both proposals were seconded by Cllr. Irwin and agreed unanimously. Cllr Howe was therefore duly elected as Chair and Cllr. Singer as Vice-Chair.

21/40 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in Item 13 – Sports Club, as he was a member.

21/41 Co-option of Councillor

Mr Stephen Lightley 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 onto the Council (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

ACTION: CH

21/42 **Delegation of responsibilities**

It had previously been agreed that the Chair could delegate to councillors the Chair's authority to take decisions, subject to approval at future PC meetings and working in conjunction with the Clerk, in specific areas. The areas of responsibility were reviewed and the following highlighted changes were agreed:

- Planning Sub-Committee – Cllrs. Dunhill, Howe, Singer & Mills (3 from 4 would review each planning application)
- Legal/FOI/GDPR matters – Cllr. Mills + Cllr. Dunhill
- Appraisals – Cllrs. Carew & Singer
- VHT representatives – Cllr. Bridges (the PC reserved the right to appoint a second representative, as was its right, if it felt it appropriate in the future)
- Website monitoring/development – Cllr. Dunhill
- Handyman/ Amenity matters/ Play park inspection – Cllrs. Howe & Dunhill
- Accounts – Cllr. Lightley
- Sport & Recreation – Cllrs. Singer, Howe and Lightley
- Edible Riding Mill/Spinney – Cllrs. McKenzie and Dunhill
- East Tynedale Forum representative – Cllrs. McKenzie & Singer
- RM Play & Regeneration Group – Cllr. McKenzie + vacancy
- Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership representative – Cllr. Dunhill
- Marchburn Lane Residents' Association representative – Cllr. Howe
- Footpaths Group – Councillor Dunhill
- Children/Youth issues – Cllrs. McKenzie & Singer
- Village maintenance sub-group – Cllrs. Dunhill, Carew and Howe

21/43 **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. Howe, seconded Cllr. Mills). The Clerk was asked to remove the reference note to paragraph 5:5:5 as it had been previously deleted.
- Financial Regulations (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer);

ACTION: CLERK

A new Code of Conduct document had been issued by the Local Government Association and after review it was unanimously agreed to adopt it for the parish council (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Mills).

ACTION: CLERK

21/44 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 8th March 2021**

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).

21/45 **Matters Arising**

- (i) *Minute 21/12(vii) – Cars parking on grassed areas.* It was noted that a resident had again started to park their car on the grassed area close to the old shop. Cllr. Dale confirmed she would take the matter up with Karbon, the owners of the bungalows;
- (ii) *Minute 21/26 – Footpath 5.* Deferred to a future meeting as the query was still outstanding;
- (iii) *Minute 21/28 – the Spinney Entrance.* The Clerk confirmed that the work to install the gate at the Spinney had been completed by the handyman. He had also used the old gate to make a new entrance via the cemetery which would connect to the Quiet Space being created by St James Church.

ACTION: ADa

Funds had been set aside for Spinney improvements and approximately £1300 remained in the budget. Cllr. Carew suggested that these funds be transferred to the play park as it was such a well-used facility and needed some repair. Cllr. McKenzie argued that the Spinney did need further work including thinning of the trees and the paths renewed with bark. He would

also support the installation of bug houses and nest boxes to enhance the Spinney and improve the learning resources for the school who often used it. It was agreed that the Clerk would produce a summary of the costs for the different elements and councillors would decide at the next meeting how to allocate it.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr. McKenzie also mentioned the idea of creating a village memorial to those who had suffered during the Covid pandemic. He suggested that a number of flowering cherry trees be planted and wondered if the parish council would meet the costs if the Church provided the land in the cemetery. Councillors asked for a fully costed proposal to consider at a future meeting;

ACTION: DM

(iv) *Minute 21/29 – Review of Policy Documents – Business continuity plan.* This item was deferred to a future meeting;

(v) *Minute 21/32(ii) – Planters.* The Clerk had circulated a document outlining a number of planters available made from recycled plastic. Each would cost approximately £350 plus installation costs and it was agreed that she would mention the opportunity to purchase one as a memorial to a loved one in a future issue of the Parish News.

ACTION: CLERK

(vi) *Minute 21/32(iii) – Survey of trees/ community tree planting.* The arborist had completed a survey of the two high risk areas and had made a number of recommendations including the removal of two beech trees in Marchburn Woods and the pollarding of birch trees behind the tennis club house. The written report was awaited and would be circulated to councillors when received.

ACTION: CLERK

Tree planting: The Clerk reported that a number of residents had taken part in the tree planting event. 60 trees had been planted over the weekend with a further 40 due to be planted shortly by the Scouts.

(vii) *Minute 21/35 – Website.* It was noted that that changes had been made to the website and statistical information could now be obtained.

21/46 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Dale reported that having been in touch with many residents during the election period, she now had a large list of things to do. Some would be dealt with by the County Council but others she would pass on to the parish council.

She also reported on the following issues:

- *FACTCO:* Cllr. Dale reported that FACTCO would be contacting residents asking them to sign up to full-fibre broadband. The company had already agreed to install full-fibre in Stocksfield and would expand this in the coming months to Riding Mill. By signing up at this initial stage, homeowners and businesses would be able to offset the cost of installation by claiming a grant which would be paid to FACTCO. Residents deciding to install full-fibre later would be liable to pay the full installation costs. FACTCO would be holding information events shortly;
- *Acknowledgement of grants:* Cllr. Dale reported that having supported the redevelopment of the sports pavilion by making a grant from her Members Small Allowance scheme, she had been disappointed that these funds had not been acknowledged in a news article which the Sports Club had contributed to. She reminded everyone that the grants were audited and given on the understanding that they were acknowledged correctly. On occasion, a grant could be rescinded if correct procedures were not followed;
- *Planning application for houses on land adjoining the Manor House:* Cllr. Dale had held a meeting with residents to discuss the consultation re the proposed development. The application had yet to be submitted but Cllr. Dale had raised the residents' concerns with the relevant officers at the County Council, particularly in relation to access to the site;

- *Maintenance of stiles:* Cllr. Dale offered to speak to the Footpaths Officer to see if any progress had been made;

ACTION: ADa

- *Heritage Trail:* Cllr. Dale confirmed that she had been able to help with the costs of providing the information boards from her Members Small Allowance scheme. The Clerk confirmed that the funds had been received and Cllr. Dale was thanked for her support;
- *Pedestrian crossing:* Cllr. Dale confirmed that the order for the pedestrian crossing would be placed by the end of the month and she hoped that the installation would follow shortly thereafter;
- *Drains on Church Lane/Flooding of old graveyard:* Cllr. Dale confirmed that the issue of drainage had been notified to the County Council. Unfortunately, there were many similar problems elsewhere and she had been given no timescale for its repair. She also noted that removing the dropped kerb was not a solution as it was required to assist those in wheelchairs or pushing prams.

21/47 Finance

a) *Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/21*

- (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 2020/21 (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin)
- (iii) the draft Annual Accounts for 2020/21 (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill)
- (iv) the Accounting Statement for 2020/21 (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill)
- (v) the Explanation of Variances (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill)

It was noted that the period for the Exercise of Electors' Rights to view the accounts would be from 7th June until 16th July. A notice to this effect would be displayed on the notice board.

b) *Monthly accounts*

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

Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of voucher cost for prize winner NP survey	£50.00
Northumberland County Council – planning fees	£168.00 (inc. VAT £28.00)
S Rutherford – bus shelter cleaning	£40.00
Groundwork UK – reimbursement of unspent grant for NP initial work	£1,346.00
Transfer to reserves as agreed at March's meeting	£17,000.00
Unity Trust - bank charges (stop cheque)	£8.00
Citizens Advice – yearly donation. Donation re-issued via BACS as cheque lost	£200.00
Communicorp – Clerks and Councils Direct subscription	£12.00
St James PCC – additional pages in Parish News re NP	£100.00
Geoxphere – Parish Online subscription	£48.00 (inc VAT £8.00)
Unity Trust – quarterly bank charges	£18.00
Catherine Harrison – March salary	£514.29
Nicholson Construction – 1 st phase of work at sports pavilion	£10,008.00 (inc VAT £1668.00)
Office Depot – stationery	£102.90 (inc VAT £14.12)
Jackson's Timber – fencing and gate for Spinney	£248.02 (inc VAT 341.34)
Parish Council Websites – addition to ridingmill.org website	£50.00
NALC – yearly subscription	£246.48
Jackson's Timber – additional fencing materials	£113.91 (inc VAT £18.99)
Gleam Team – power washing of Play Park	£487.00
Neetfleet – installation of Spinney Gate £320, New gateway to cemetery £205,	
Play Park inspection £70	£595.00
M Weatherley – internal auditor fee	£100.00
Arthur J Gallagher – yearly PC insurance	£1639.95
St James PCC – contribution to felling of tree by war memorial	£500.00

Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership – yearly membership fee	£10.00
Village Hall Trust – contribution to water used when cleaning Play Park	£50.00
Nicholson Construction – 2 nd payment re sports pavilion	£17508.00 (inc VAT £2918)
Catherine Harrison – April salary + home allowance	£514.29
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Zoom monthly subs £14.30 x 2,	
Village phone top-up £10.00, Litter picks £20.55, Travel expenses £11.70)	£71.03
David Ballantyne – tree works	£1320.00

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (April)	£160.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (May)	£160.00

The following receipts were noted:

Nationwide – yearly interest	£14.31
Triodos - quarterly interest	£1.60
Unity Trust (Bridge fund) – yearly interest	£1.92
Unity Trust (Bridge Fund) – transfer from the current account	£17,000.00
Local Members Allowance – Contribution to Sports Pavilion	£6000.00
RM Cricket Club – contribution to sports pavilion	£8000.00
Northumberland County Council – 1 st instalment of precept	£21,000.00
Local Members Allowance – Contribution to Heritage trail signage	£2000.00
Allotment Association – quarterly rent	£52.13

(ii) *Budget report*

The budget report was received and accepted (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin). No particular issues were identified at this early stage of the financial year. It was agreed that Cllr. Lightley would review the accounts with the Clerk as he had some queries as to why parish councils recorded their accounts as simply cash in/cash out rather than producing a balance sheet.

ACTION: SL/CLERK

c) *Annual Grant to the Village Hall Trust*

After consideration, it was unanimously agreed to award the Village Hall Trust a grant of £3000 (£2500 normal yearly grant + £500 towards unexpected expenditure). This was proposed by Cllr. Howe and seconded by Cllr. Singer. The Clerk was asked to write to the VHT informing them of the award.

ACTION: CLERK

d) *Insurance*

It was noted that the insurance premium for 2021/22 would be £1,639.95 (last year £1,593.64). The Parish Council had signed up to a 3-year agreement through Came & Company and this was the 2nd year of the agreement.

It was agreed that once the sports pavilion renovations were completed, the Clerk should arrange for a reinstatement/rebuild valuation of the building so that the policy could be adjusted accordingly.

ACTION: CLERK

21/48 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Howe reported that the neighbourhood sub-groups had now all met at least once and identified who would serve on the Steering Group (some groups would have rotating membership due to work commitments of members). She proposed that the next stages were to have the first meeting of the Steering Group and to appoint a planning consultant having conducted a tendering process which the PC would be asked to ratify. Following this, a grant application would be submitted. Cllr. Howe confirmed that funding was available and there would be no need for a financial contribution from the

Parish Council. The Housing group had also identified that a Housing Needs Assessment would be required but, again, funding should be available.

Cllr. Howe also confirmed that the plan was to work towards having an open meeting/display in the autumn to update residents and a draft plan ready for the end of the financial year (March 2022). In discussions, it was acknowledged that it was important to keep the momentum going with the sub-groups and that it might be possible to bring the timescales forward especially with the input of a planning consultant.

Councillors supported the proposals outlined and unanimously agreed to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

21/49 **Sports Club**

Cllr. Howe confirmed that the internal works of Phase 1 had been completed and the toilets were now installed and working. This had been especially important as the All Stars Cricket coaching programme had commenced. Cllr. Howe did not have the current completion schedule as the builder had taken a few days of leave but noted that there was still a fair amount of work to do. She also raised a concern about the drainage. It had always been assumed that the pavilion was connected to the main drainage network but as work had progressed it appeared that it could be connected to a septic tank. Investigations were required to establish if this was the case and whether the tank could cope with the additional capacity. If not, then a new connection might need to be made to the drains which run alongside the chalets. Cllr. Howe agreed to update councillors in due course.

ACTION: CH

Cllr. Singer raised concerns that he was not always aware of issues at the Sports Club and he asked that in future he was kept informed of all developments. Cllr. Howe confirmed that she would be arranging a meeting with him and representatives of the cricket club and football club to discuss some of the outstanding issues.

Lease: The Clerk confirmed that she had been in touch with the PC's solicitor who had confirmed a price for preparing a new lease. She had contacted representatives of the Sports Club to ask if they were happy with the terms of the current lease or if there was anything they would like to request was changed. They had confirmed they were happy with the current lease. The Clerk asked if Cllrs. Mills and Dunhill would draft the instructions for the solicitor. She also queried whether the Parish Council could have any say in who was proposed as the new trustees as currently the four new trustees were all cricket club members and there was no one representing football. Cllr. Dale suggested that the lease needed to be aligned with the Club's constitution. Cllr. Irwin suggested that the Club might wish to become a CASC (a Community Amateur Sports Club). The Club would be able to claim Gift Aid on donations and it would put it on a much sounder legal footing as it would be a legal entity in its own right. The Club would be run by directors and within the lease, the Parish Council would be able to insist that it was able to nominate a certain number of directors. The Clerk was asked to find out more information about forming a CASC and pass it on to the Sports Club for consideration.

ACTION: JM/AD/CLERK

Yearly grant: The Clerk noted that she had not received a copy of the Club's accounts so councillors were unable to consider awarding the yearly grant and it would have to be deferred to a future meeting.

21/50 **Heritage Trail**

A paper was received outlining the plans for the heritage trail and councillors were asked to ratify the proposals and agree on the preferred supplier. It was agreed that the signs should be located near the notice board on Millfield Road and by the Spinney entrance and that The Acorn Workshop should be asked to supply the signs (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew). The signs would require planning permission and the Clerk would now submit a planning application.

ACTION: CLERK

21/51 Mill Pond

The Clerk confirmed that there was still one tree to be felled at the mill pond but all the other tree work had been completed. The Tyne Rivers Trust planned to arrange for volunteers to help clear the area and pond but this work would not now begin until after the bird nesting season, probably in the early autumn.

21/52 General Village Maintenance

- (i) *Handyman*: it was noted that the Handyman had removed the broken mirror by the turning to Wentworth Grange, cut back the footpath leading to the bus stops at Riding Grange to expose the tarmac surface, cleaned the weir footbridge and re-secured the anti-slip mesh. He had also cleaned two gullies, swept various footpaths and undertaken a playground safety assessment;
- (ii) *Play Park*: The Handyman noted that one of the platforms on the large climber was deteriorating and needed to be monitored;
- (iii) *Fence repairs – Station to Broomhaugh*: Cllr. Dunhill noted that NWL had not secured the fencing on completion of works to the water pipe. It was agreed that rather than call back NWL, the handyman should be asked to readjust the wire and, if necessary, a fence post;
ACTION: CLERK
- (iv) *Repairs to stiles*: see Minute 21/46
- (v) *Bulb planting*: A resident had written to the Parish Council suggested that residents plant bulbs along the roadside later in the year. Councillors agreed it was an excellent idea but would need County Council permission. As 'Streetscape' was an area being considered by one of the Neighbourhood planning sub-groups, it was suggested that this idea be passed to them for their consideration.

ACTION: EC

21/53 Planning

- a) *Proposed development of 12 new houses by the Manor House*: It was reported that a consultation exercise had recently been conducted by Hedley Planning. This was a precursor to submission of the full planning application. A pre-app had been submitted to the County Council but this had not been shared with the Parish Council on the grounds of confidentiality. The PC submitted comments as part of the consultation exercise and had made a request to meet with the clients and their planning team to discuss various issues but the request had been refused. It was noted that no further action could be taken until the planning application was submitted.
- b) *Planning applications*
It was reported:
 - (i) that the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:
 - 20/00807/FUL – Land south of Tudor Mount. New dwelling – 3-bed detached bungalow. No objection but comments made suggesting improved energy efficiency measures;
 - 21/01362/FUL – Land east of East Rigg, Long Rigg. New two-storey dwelling. No objection but comments made suggesting improved energy efficiency measures.
 - (ii) that the following planning applications had been approved by NCC:
 - 20/00384/FUL – East Rigg, Long Rigg. 1st floor extension
 - 21/00600/FUL – Wentworth Grange Nursing Home. Changes to kitchen and orangery.
 - 21/00181/PRUTPO – Coniston, Sandy Bank. Tree work
 - (iii) that the following planning application had been refused by NCC:
 - 20/02719/FUL – 51 Station Close. Single storey rear extension.
 - (iv) that the following planning application had been withdrawn:
 - 20/03252/FUL – Beauclerc Lodge

21/54 Climate Change

Cllr. McKenzie confirmed that the Renewable and Climate Change sub-group had met and a number of interesting ideas had been put forward. He also highlighted that St James Church had applied to become an eco-church and would be measuring the church's carbon footprint and would look to set targets to improve e.g. looking for a greener energy supplier, reducing paper usage, etc. The Church also planned to support wildlife initiatives such as the installation of bird boxes and insect houses in the cemetery, sowing of wild flower seeds, together with not cutting the grass in the old churchyard until the autumn to allow flowers to bloom. All the ideas would be incorporated into a 'St James Parish Environmental Policy'.

Cllr. Irwin highlighted some information he had found from a government website which showed the village's energy consumption. He discovered that electricity usage was 1.5 MWh/year whereas the gas consumption was 9 MWh/year so an important element to consider in the future was how to encourage a reduction in gas consumption.

He also reported on a webinar he had attended run by National Powergrid aimed at parish councils. One of the participants was from the Rural Design Centre. It had recently received a grant from the Rural Community Energy Fund. Although it was too late for the Parish Council to apply, there might be some scope to join in with the work the Centre was doing e.g. solar systems on community buildings to generate electricity for charging points. Cllr. Irwin would keep the council updated of any progress.

21/55 **Correspondence**

No additional correspondence to note.

21/56 **Minor Matters**

Himalayan Balsam: The Clerk reported that the Tyne Rivers Trust had offered to organise a volunteer session to remove Himalayan Balsam along the March Burn. This had been scheduled for Wednesday 30th June and an article prepared by TRT had been submitted for the next issue of the Parish News.

21/57 **Date of Future Meeting**

Monday 12th July 2021 to be held at the Parish Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.54 pm.