



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in St James Church, Church Lane, on Monday 13th September 2021.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)

Cllr. Jill Mills

Cllr. Pam Bridges

Cllr. Stephen Lightley

Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. Eileen Carew

Cllr. David McKenzie

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 21/82)

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

5 members of the public were present.

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.50 pm.

21/77 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. Dunhill and Irwin.

21/78 Declaration of Interests

None

21/79 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 12th July 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. Bridges).

21/80 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 21/61(i) – Cars parking on grassed areas.* Cllr. Dale confirmed that the Enforcement team at the County Council were dealing with the matter and she would provide an update in due course. Cllr. Carew mentioned the standard of the grass cutting in the village. Although hampered by the cars parking on grassed areas, she felt that the standard of cutting had been poor this year. Cllr. Dale asked the Clerk to write to her formally about this matter and she would raise it with the relevant officer;
ACTION: CLERK/ADa
- (ii) *Minute 21/61(ii) – Survey of trees.* The Clerk reported that the tree arborist had yet to submit his report. She was aware that he was experiencing some health difficulties and he had already indicated that he would not be able to undertake the full tree inspection next year. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk should begin the process of seeking a new arborist with the intention of making an early appointment;
ACTION: CLERK
- (iii) *Minute 21/66 – Financial Risk assessment –adherence to grant conditions.* A discussion was held regarding the requirement to meet grant conditions when third party organisations were involved. It was agreed that should a breach occur because of a third party and were the parish council obliged to refund a grant, it would be difficult to make any legal claim against the third party and therefore the risk identified by the Clerk was valid and would need to be monitored;
- (iv) *Minute 21/73(ii) – Offer of donation of oak trees from Hexham Rotary Club.* The Clerk confirmed that she had accepted the offer of the oak trees but the trees had already been allocated for this year. The Rotary Club hoped to have further trees to allocate in future years.

21/81 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Flooding* – After the heavy downpour on Friday 10th September, a number of flooding issues had been reported to Cllr. Dale which she had referred on to the relevant officers or external bodies and the problems were being addressed;
- (ii) *Comex* – Cllr. Dale reported that the cable installed by Comex last year might not have been sited deep enough and there was a possibility that the work might have to be redone;
- (iii) *Pedestrian Crossing* – Cllr. Dale continued to monitor the progress of the pedestrian crossing and noted that it was still scheduled to be installed in late September/early October;
- (iv) *Signs on the public highway* – Cllr. Dale reported that she had received complaints about new signage on the highway. She had referred the complaint to the Enforcement Team but noted that the team could not just look at one particular sign in the village but rather would review all signs for their legality;
- (v) *Manor House Development* – Cllr. Dale had written to express her concern regarding the requested S106 funding provision for education. No claim had been made to support Broomhaugh First School should this development go ahead. Cllr. Dale felt that this decision was wrong and had taken up the matter with the relevant officers and hoped that the parish council would support her;
- (vi) *FACTCO: community broadband* – Cllr. Dale reported that plans for FACTCO to install ultrafast broadband were progressing well. A community meeting had been held in Stocksfield which a number of Riding Mill residents had attended. It was important to inform as many residents as possible about this project and Cllr. Dale offered to obtain a statement from FACTCO which the Clerk was asked to circulate via email. The deadline for registering for a government voucher to help fund the scheme was Friday 24th September;

ACTION: ADa/CLERK

21/82 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Howe reported that at the next meeting of the steering group on 22nd September, each sub-group would provide a report outlining their aspirations which would then be combined to create a parish 'vision'. Once prepared, the details would be shared with local residents at a community event. Also, the Housing Needs Assessment was expected by 24th September. Once all the information was received it was hoped that the group would be in a position to begin drafting the plan.

21/83 **Sports Club**

Building Work: Cllr. Howe reported that the building work was almost complete. There were minor works to complete in the original changing rooms which were the responsibility of the cricket club as they had installed electrical cabling and still needed to complete their refurbishment works. They were also responsible for mending fences around the perimeter.

Cllr. Howe reported that the concrete path to link the gateway with the disabled ramp had been installed as per the building inspector's request together with a new inspection cover for the septic tank. This work had been additions to the original building programme and councillors had had to approve the work via email. She therefore asked councillors to ratify the decision to spend £840 on the path and £300 on the new cover and this was duly agreed (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley).

The Clerk informed councillors that a skip lorry had knocked over a sandstone gatepost belonging to Osbit and she was seeking either a stone mason to repair the post or obtaining a replacement from an architectural salvage firm (the skip company refused to accept liability). Depending upon the costs, an insurance claim might need to be agreed with Osbit. Some asbestos insulation boards had also been abandoned by the builder's skip and she was arranging for a firm to remove it.

It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange for a re-instatement valuation, now that the work was complete.

ACTION: CLERK

Request to install decking: the club had requested permission to install decking outside the home changing room. Consideration needed to be given to maintaining access to the outside toilet and the club had been asked to provide detailed plans. It was agreed to defer this matter to a future meeting.

Report from Sports Club meeting: Cllr. Singer gave a report outlining discussions held at a sports club meeting held in July which he had attended along with Cllr. Lightley via Zoom. Some positive decisions had been reached i.e. an agreed membership fee for footballers but discussions regarding the status of the club i.e. changing to a Community Amateur Sports Club or remaining as an unincorporated body with trustees still had to be decided (It was agreed that if trustees were appointed not all could be from the cricket club – a fairer representation was one from football, one from cricket, one member of the village plus possibly the local county councillor). The current club rejected the idea of reforming the sports club committee which Cllr. Singer proposed and future discussions on this issue would have to be held. Unfortunately, no formal minutes had as yet been received for this meeting.

Maintenance of the football field: it had been established that no yearly maintenance of the football field had been undertaken in the last couple of years despite this being a condition of the grant from the parish council. A quote of £700 had been received from a local firm to aerate, roll and fertilise the field and it was proposed to undertake the work and deduct it from the money set aside for this year's grant.

Application for a Club certificate to serve alcohol: Cllr. Singer explained that he had been assured by the club that although the certificate requested extensive hours when alcohol could be served, this was unlikely to be the case and had been included to cover the few occasions when the club held an evening social event such as an end of season party. The club had been asked to write to all nearby residents to reassure them on this point. Councillors had agreed via email not to object to the application for a club certificate as it was felt that the current arrangement for serving alcohol whilst not illegal, was certainly undesirable. If a club certificate was issued, the club would be subject to inspections by the police and there would have to be proper accountability by the members.

Yearly accounts/ PC grant: the parish council remained unhappy with the accounts as they were not sports club accounts, simply cricket club accounts. The parish council needed the clubs to work together to form a coherent sports club. As the cricket club showed a positive balance and had had a successful fundraising year, it was decided that no grant would be awarded at present and instead the funds would be used for maintenance and grass cutting of the football field and reimbursement of the builder as, on one occasion, he had had to change the locks to gain entry to the pavilion.

ACTION: CLERK

Lease: it was agreed that Cllrs. Singer, Howe and Lightley should meet with the Clerk to review the new lease in regard to its implications for the operation of the sports club and management of the field and take legal advice if required (Proposed Cllr. Lightley, seconded Cllr. Howe).

ACTION: CLERK

21/84 **Climate Change**

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

21/85 **Local Transport Plan Programme 2022-23**

It was noted that the Leisure and Recreation neighbourhood plan sub-group had suggested a number of improvements to cycleways in the parish. It was agreed that Cllrs. Howe and Lightley should review the suggestions and agree the three priorities to the County Council before the deadline in October. Cllr. Lightley highlighted one project in particular he would like to propose – the enlargement of the footpaths to Stocksfield to create a safe cycle route.

ACTION: CH/SL/CLERK

21/86 Review of current Policy Documents

The following policies were reapproved subject to a minor amendment which related to changes to the way the payroll would be administered in the future (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley):

- *Internal Control procedures*
- *Internal Audit policy*

It was agreed to defer the review of the Grant Award Policy until the November meeting so that the Clerk could amend it to include the policy for donations as well.

ACTION: CLERK

21/87 Finance

(i) Yearly Audited Accounts

- (a) The final audited accounts for 2020/21, including a copy of the External Auditor Certificate were received and approved. It was noted that the auditor had requested that the accounts were amended to exclude two items for which the parish council had been refunded. Councillors therefore received an updated accounting statement which they approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew).

ACTION: CLERK

- (b) The re-appointment of Mrs Margaret Weatherley as Internal Auditor was deferred to a future meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) Monthly accounts:

Cllr. Lightley reported that he had reviewed the bank accounts and bank reconciliation and confirmed that records were being maintained satisfactorily.

The following payments were then authorised (Proposed Cllr. Lightley, seconded Cllr. Singer):

Shotton Waste service – cleaning of septic tank and inspection	£435.00 (inc. VAT £25.00)
Nicholson Construction – Sports Pavilion building work – Inv 5	£11,400.00 (inc. VAT £1900)
Playdale Playgrounds – equipment spares	£88.61 (inc. VAT £14.77)
M E Stewart/Neetfleet –strimming of footpaths (to be reimbursed by NCC), Play park inspection	£390.00
T Bell Horticultural Services – grass cutting	£445.00
Catherine Harrison – July salary + home allowance	£514.29
David Ballantyne – tree work (Marchburn Woods)	£1560.00
M E Stewart/Neetfleet – play park repairs/ restrain pavilion veranda	£360.00
PKF Littlejohn – audit fees	£360.00 (inc. VAT £60.00)
Catherine Harrison – August salary + home allowance	£514.29
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Zoom subs x 2 – £28.78, new defibrillator pads - £103.08, Ink cartridges £90.05	£221.91 (inc. VAT £36.99)

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (August)	£160.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (September)	£160.00
Information Commissioner's Office – data protection fee	£35.00

The following receipts were noted:

Football Foundation – part payment of Sports Pavilion grants	£5292.00
HMRC – VAT reclaim (01.01.21-30.06.21)	£6892.90
Northumberland County Council – 2 nd instalment of precept	£21,000.00
Northern Electric plc – wayleaves	£61.05
RM Allotment Association – quarterly rent	£52.13

(ii) Budget report

The report was received and noted.

- (iii) *VAT reclaim*: The Clerk had highlighted to Cllr. Lightley some possible issues relating to reclaiming VAT for the sports pavilion project. He suggested that the Clerk approach a VAT

accountant recommended by NALC for more detailed advice and this was agreed (Proposed Cllr. Lightley, seconded Cllr Howe).

ACTION: CLERK

21/88 Tennis Club entrance

In the pre-meeting question session, a resident, on behalf of other members of Millfield Road, had raised a number of issues with the proposed changes to the entrance and claimed that they had not been properly consulted. In the meeting, councillors agreed that some of the issues raised relating to drainage and disposal of possibly contaminated soil needed to be addressed before work began. The Clerk was asked to inform the Tennis Club not to proceed with the works until the residents' concerns had been considered and to report back to the parish council to show what consultation they had undertaken and what actions they proposed.

ACTION: CLERK

21/89 Mill Pond

Cllr. Howe reported that volunteers from the Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT) had held a session at the Mill Pond to clear the leat and remove scrub from the pond area. The day had been very successful with at least 20 volunteers including a number from the village. A second session was planned in November when TRT proposed to remove snowberry bushes and brambles and plant a new native species hedge. The overall plan was now to monitor the pond and assess water levels over the winter months.

21/90 General Village Maintenance

- (i) *Handyman:* The Clerk reported that the handyman as part of his monthly contract had swept and strimmed footpaths, watered and tidied planters, and cleaned play equipment. In addition, he had made safe and then repaired a piece of play equipment, cleared loose gravel from the Old Playground and stained the veranda on the cricket pavilion.
- (ii) *Natural Ability Handyman Services:* The Clerk reported that she had met the organiser of the charity and they would be happy to take on the maintenance of the edible garden and scout garden. It was agreed that two sessions would be arranged to begin with as there was lots of work to be done after which the gardening supervisor would assess how often the group would need to visit in order to maintain the area. Natural Ability worked with adults with disabilities and was the only local charity which paid them for their work. Councillors agreed that they would like to support this worthy local charity. The Clerk was asked to write to the scout leaders to check that they still wished to use this garden area as they had allowed it to get very overgrown;

ACTION: CLERK

- (iii) *Repairs to play park:* The Clerk reported that a section of the rope bridge on the large climber had broken and had had to be repaired;

- (iv) *Area behind the paling fence on Millfield Road:* The tennis club had requested that the parish council tidy the area behind the paling fence. This area was cordoned off because of previous Japanese Knotweed plants and the parish council had been advised to leave the area alone. It was suggested that sapling trees be cut down which would improve the area slightly and possibly some wildflower seeds scattered. It was also agreed that the area outside of the paling fence should be tidied;

ACTION: CLERK

- (v) Request to install a litter bin near Broomhaugh roundabout: Cllr. Dale had forwarded a request by a resident asking for a litter bin to be installed in the lay-by near Broomhaugh roundabout. If the County Council were agreeable then it was confirmed that the parish council should fund a bin; (proposed Cllr. Lightley, seconded Cllr. Carew);

ACTION: CLERK

- (vi) Trees: The Clerk reported that free trees were available from both the County Council and the Woodland Trust. She suggested that consideration should be given to planting a hedge between the football pitch and the chalets which might reduce sounds carrying and disturbing the residents. Hedging packs were available but planting a hedge would have an ongoing maintenance cost. The Clerk was asked to consult with the residents for their views.

ACTION: CLERK

21/91 **Planning**

(a) *Planning applications*

- (i) it was reported that the following planning applications were under consideration by the County Council:
- 21/03331/FUL – Horndon House, Long Rigg. 1st floor side extension, replacement porch, rear single storey extension, rendering of all walls; PC – no objection but made comments re parking following the change of use of the garage and a request to include energy efficiency measures within the scheme;
 - 21/03054/FELTPO – Wentworth Grange Nursing Home. Tree works. PC – no objection but would encourage the planting of replacement trees.
- (ii) it was reported that the following planning applications had been approved by the County Council:
- 21.02321/FELTPO – The Vicarage. Tree works.
 - 21/00807/FUL – Land south of Tudor Mount, Church Lane. Construction of a 3-bedroomed bungalow.
- (b) *Manor House development*: Cllr. Howe noted that the Building Conservation Officer at the County Council had objected to the housing development. A copy of the report could be found on the planning website.

21/92 **Correspondence**

Correspondence had been received regarding the application for an alcohol club certificate. Cllr. Singer had spoken to one of the residents and the Clerk would respond to the other;

A resident had written regarding the works to the Mill Pond to which the Clerk had responded. Councillors suggested that the earlier consultation information be displayed on the website as residents might find the details useful.

ACTION: CLERK

21/93 **Minor Matters**

It was noted that the East Tynedale Forum had arranged a meeting with Nick Johnstone from the County Council Climate Change programme team on 6th October at 7.30 pm at Newton Community Hall. The Forum had extended an invitation to other councillors to attend this meeting and the Clerk was asked to circulate the details.

ACTION: CLERK

21/94 **Date of Future Meeting**

Monday 8th November 2021 – to be held in the Methodist Chapel, Broomhaugh.

Meeting closed at 9.47 pm.