



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Supper Room, Parish Hall, Millfield Road, on Monday 14th February 2022.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Brian Singer
Cllr. David Irwin
Cllr. David McKenzie

Cllr. Jill Mills
Cllr. Stephen Lightley
Cllr. Eileen Carew
Cllr. Andy Dunhill

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 22/12)
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
5 members of the public were present.

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.40 pm.

22/01 Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Pam Bridges

22/02 Declaration of Interests

- Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in item 9 – the Sports Club.
- Cllr. Singer declared an interest in item 13 - the Allotment Association lease and rent, as he was the chair of the Allotment Association.
- Cllrs. Irwin and Lightley declared an interest in item 7– the Tennis Club, as both were members.

22/03 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13th December 2021

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting, and of the Confidential Council meeting, were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Main meeting and Confidential meeting: proposed Cllr. Howe seconded Cllr. Carew).

22/04 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 21/119 – Heritage Trail.* It was noted that the two heritage trail noticeboards had been installed by the Spinney and the Parish Hall and had elicited favourable comments from a number of residents. It was also noted that the bird boxes and bug hotels had been installed in the Spinney – this completed all the planned works to the area.
- (ii) *Minute 21/124– Defibrillator at High Plains.* It was noted that this was still to be discussed.

22/05 Meetings & Procedures

Due to the increased workload of the Council, it was agreed that it should move to monthly meetings and the decision be ratified at the AGM in May as stipulated in Standing Orders. It was also agreed to instigate a new procedure for the Clerk to use when circulating emails which needed a response from councillors. The Clerk would allow 48 hours for councillors to respond after which, if a majority of councillors favoured a particular course of action, she would follow this instruction rather than wait for everyone to reply (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

Councillors also discussed their hope that the government would change legislation and allow hybrid meetings although it was noted that this would require the purchase of better audio-visual equipment.

22/06 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Fold House Appeal*: Cllr. Dale noted that the appeal hearing had appeared to go well and she felt residents, and officers of the County Council had acquitted themselves creditably. It would be several weeks before the appeal decision was known;
- (ii) *Pedestrian Crossing*: Cllr. Dale was delighted to see that the pedestrian crossing had been installed although she was not sure when it would be commissioned as some signage and line markings still need to be added;
- (iii) *Network Rail*: Cllr. Dale continued to deal with issues raised by residents relating to proposed fencing works although she noted that as Network Rail had permitted development rights, there was very little the County Council could do about these matters;
- (iv) *Heritage Trail*: Cllr. Dale was pleased to note that the new heritage trail noticeboards, which she had sponsored, had been installed;
- (v) *Planning*: Cllr. Dale noted that the planning department at the County Council was experiencing long delays in determining applications due to staff shortages;
- (vi) *County Council*: Cllr. Dale noted that a number of key staff members had resigned from the Council leaving interim staff in charge. She also noted that the government was currently conducting a review into the governance of the County Council;
- (vii) *Parking*: As previously promised, Cllr. Dale shortly intended to send letters to residents in Broomhaugh to canvass their opinions on possible solutions to alleviate parking problems.

22/07 **Proposal to install lighting at the double tennis courts**

It was reported that the Tennis Club had circulated a leaflet to residents outlining their plans to install lighting at the double tennis courts. The proposals had generated a large response, mostly from residents opposed to the plans. Three councillors had met with representatives from the Club and with those residents living closest to the courts. The main arguments from local residents were:

- **Setting**: it was felt that this was an inappropriate place to have a development of this type and went against the character of the village;
- **Impact**: the impact on residents living close to the courts and on the environment. Residents would be subjected to increased light, noise and disturbance. This area was known to be a wildlife corridor;
- **Demand**: a relatively small number of people from the village actually played tennis on an evening and were seeking this change. Alternative facilities were available in Corbridge;
- **Lack of Consultation**: The Club had promised to liaise with nearby residents but the leaflet appeared to indicate a decision had already been taken.

Councillors agreed that they could not make a final decision on this matter until the planning application had been submitted. However, in light of the responses received, the Council unanimously agreed to write to the Club and ask it to reconsider its intention to install court lighting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill). It was noted that legal advice would be required in the event of a planning application being received.

ACTION: CLERK

22/08 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Howe reported that a draft plan had been prepared by the Consultant which the sub-groups were currently reviewing. Once agreed, a community consultation would be held, probably towards the end of March. It was clear that the grant set aside for Phase 2 of the plan would not be spent in this financial year and the Parish Council would be obliged to refund it (approximately £4,500). In previous years, the Council would have simply made a new grant application but the government had not confirmed a future funding policy for Neighbourhood Planning and as such there was uncertainty about how the process could be funded. Cllr. Dale offered to raise the matter with the County Council and see if it could provide funding to ensure that any plans currently under development were completed. Cllr. Howe agreed to write to her.

ACTION: CH

22/09 Sports Club

Cllrs. Singer and Lightley reported on a constructive meeting which they had held with the members of the Sports Club committee. There appeared to be an understanding that the current lease was not fit for purpose as the intention was to use the ground for multiple sports. Further discussions would centre upon running costs and a new management structure with possible sub-leases/licences for different groups. It was agreed that further legal advice should be sought before meeting again with the Club.

ACTION: CLERK

Decking: The Cricket Club had submitted a request to extend the veranda by creating a viewing area made from decking beside the home changing room. The current plans showed access to the outside toilet could only be achieved by crossing the veranda. It was suggested that the viewing area be made slightly smaller so that the toilet could still be accessed directly from the sports field. The Club was also asked to check with the Planning Department as the pavilion was within the greenbelt and these changes might require planning permission.

ACTION: CLERK

22/10 Mill Pond / Planting of new hedge

It was noted that a letter had been received from the Marchburn Lane Residents' Association regarding the hedge recently planted beside the mill pond. Some residents felt that the hedge was planted too close to the road and had requested that it be moved. A number of councillors had inspected the new hedge and did not agree that it presented a problem; residents did not currently walk on the verge, it was not a heavily trafficked area and cars were not moving at speed. The Parish Council would therefore not move the hedge but it was agreed to write and give assurances to the Residents' Association that the hedge would be maintained and prevented from growing over the road. It was noted that Cllr. Howe was willing to attend a meeting of the Residents' Association to outline the reasons for this decision.

ACTION: CLERK

22/11 Landslip opposite Cartref

The Clerk reported that she and Cllr. Dunhill had held a meeting with Brian Bell from BT Bell Consulting Engineers and David Green from the County Council's Lead Local Flood Authority team to inspect the surface slip on land opposite Cartref. Reports were expected from them and would be shared with councillors shortly. Brian Bell had noted the open drain at the top of the slope and whilst he did not consider it to be connected to the surface slip, he did feel it was a trip hazard and should be filled – he suggested a porous pipe be fitted and the cutting filled with pea gravel. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate the cost of this with local contractors.

ACTION: CLERK

22/12 Village Hall Trust

Cllr. McKenzie reported that the Village Hall Trust had been granted a change of status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and the assets from the previous Trust would now be transferred to the CIO. This was a simple process in the case of the Parish Hall but slightly more complicated for the Millennium Hall where the Parish Council acted as a Custodian Trustee.

It was agreed that now the CIO could hold the title deeds for the Millennium Hall, the Parish Council should withdraw as a Custodian Trustee as its involvement was no longer necessary. It was agreed that Cllr. Howe should send a letter to the Charity Commission to instigate this process. (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Mills).

ACTION: CLERK

22/13 RM Allotment Association

- (i) *New lease:* It was agreed to defer this item to a future meeting as some items within the Heads of Terms still needed to be agreed;

- (ii) *Rent*: A paper was received calculating the rent for 2022/23 in accordance with the method laid out in the lease. This was approved and it was agreed to raise the rent to £55.13/quarter (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Mills).

ACTION: CLERK

22/14 Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The Clerk outlined various plans for the Jubilee weekend including a jubilee picnic/sports day to be held at the sports field on Sunday 5th June. The Parish Council may be asked to make a small contribution towards items such as bunting or medals and it was agreed that a budget should be submitted by the organisers. It was also noted that it was possible to apply to the County Council for a grant.

A discussion was held about ways the village could mark the occasion with a lasting commemorative feature. Cllr. Dunhill suggested that the stump of an elm tree planted in the Old Playground to mark Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887 be removed and a new tree planted. Commemorative plaques for both occasions could then be displayed. The Clerk was asked to canvass the idea with nearby homeowners and to investigate possible costs of removing the tree.

ACTION: CLERK

22/15 Climate Change

The Clerk reported that she had written to the County Council about EV charging points but had not had a response. She would follow this up through Cllr. Dale and see if any progress could be made.

ACTION: CLERK

22/16 Finance

Monthly accounts:

(i) Payments/Receipts

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

Parkinson Partnership – VAT advice	£300.00
Acorn Workshop – heritage trail noticeboard and leaflet dispensers	£2046.00 (inc. VAT £341.00)
Unity Trust Bank – quarterly bank charges	£18.00
NEST Pension – December pension	£23.85
Tyne Rivers Trust – Arrangement and supervision of volunteer sessions	£600.00
Robson Print – Heritage trail leaflet printing	£191.00
Riding Mill Village Hall Trust – S137 grant payments for the Garden Invaders and the Tuesday drop-in group	£300.00
Sports Tynedale – S137 donation	£150.00
Great North Air Ambulance – S137 donation	£150.00
Tynedale Hospice at Home - S137 donation	£150.00
Riding Mill Outdoor Preschool - S137 donation	£150.00
St James PCC – S137 donation to cover RM Play School room hire costs	£101.00
Northumberland County Council – salary payment Sept, Oct and back pay	£3779.35 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Northumberland County Council – salary payment November	£902.06 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Northumberland County Council – salary payment December	£902.06 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Northumberland County Council – salary payment January	£902.06 (inc. VAT £2.50)
NEST Pension – January pension	£23.85
RM Allotment Association – reimbursement of insurance	£80.63
M E Stewart/Neetfleet – additional charges: dismantle Christmas tree, work to improve spinney entrance (inc materials), repairs to fencing, tidy area, removal of saplings from area by double tennis court, quarterly play park inspection	£350.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Zoom subscription Dec & January £28.78, NALC training course £5, Manhole keys for sports ground £9.05,	
Baby play mat – donation to playgroup £58.95)	£101.78 (inc. VAT £16.14)
Jo-Anne Garrick Ltd – NP consultancy fee	£1800.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (January)	£160.00
Martin Stewart/Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (February)	£160.00

The following receipts were noted:

Northern Powergrid – easement fee	£5775.00
RM Allotment Association – quarterly rent	£52.13
Triodos – quarterly interest	£0.60

(ii) *Budget report*

The budget reports were received and approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley). The following points were noted: the staff budget showed an expected overspend due to the Clerk's salary increase; the maintenance budget showed an overspend but the grant earmarked for the Sports Club had not been paid and instead had been used for works at the sports field which accounted for the overspend.

22/17 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman*: The Clerk reported that the handyman had undertaken his usual duties: sweeping the pavements along the main road and other areas, cleaning signs and the bus shelters. He had also dismantled the Christmas tree and lights, carried out work in the Spinney to prevent soil displacement and had tidied the area behind the fence on Millfield Road. He had also completed his quarterly play park inspection. The Clerk was asked to request that the Handyman sweep the path from Broomhaugh to the station as a priority;

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Asset Review*: It was noted that Cllrs. Howe and Dunhill had carried out the yearly asset review. There were some minor issues to address which the Clerk would ask the handyman to action. Of particular note was the condition of the planters at either end of the village, all three would need replacing soon;

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Storm damage to trees*: The Clerk reported that there had been some minor damage to trees including a tree which had fallen into the Burn close to the double tennis courts. The tree surgeon was aware and would deal with the problems shortly;

(iv) *Quarterly play park inspection*: The Clerk reported that no new issues had been identified however bushes on various swings would need replacing. It was agreed that a full review of maintenance issues would be undertaken shortly.

ACTION: CH/CLERK

22/18 **Planning**

(a) *Planning applications*

(i) It was reported that the following planning applications were under consideration by the County Council:

- 21/02267/FUL & 21/02268/LBC – Dower House East. Construction of a heritage style greenhouse. PC – no objection;
- 22/00042/LBC – Broomhaugh Farm. Replacement of 6 windows. PC – no objection.

(ii) It was reported that the following planning application had been approved by the County Council:

- 21/02027/FUL – Wentworth Grange Nursing Home. Renovations to dementia unit.

(b) *Planning Appeal Notification – Land south of Church Lane (Fold House – 20/01932/FUL)*

It was noted that the Appeal Hearing had been held in January and the Inspector's decision was awaited.

22/19 **Correspondence**

- A letter from a resident concerning the state of trees along the March Burn had been referred to Cllr. Dale as it was a County Council matter.
- The letters sent regarding the Tennis Club proposals had been circulated to councillors and noted.

22/20 **Minor Matters**

(i) *Annual Parish Meeting*. It was agreed to hold the annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 12th May (subject to securing a suitable room). Councillors were asked to give some thought to a possible speaker.

ACTION: ALL

(ii) *Litter Pick*. It was agreed to hold a village litter pick on Saturday 26th March. The Clerk would draft posters and highlight the event in the Parish News;

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Operation London Bridge*. It was agreed that the plans were satisfactory for this event and no additional changes to the website were necessary;

(iv) *Gas works along the main road*. Councillors recorded their frustration with the continuing work by Northern Gas Networks. There had been multiple emergency roadworks along the main road and councillors questioned the state of the infrastructure in the village.

22/21 Date of Future Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council should be held on Monday 14th March 2022 (Venue to be confirmed).

22/22 Handyperson Services

Confidential Matters: Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item: The award of the Handyperson contract for the period April 2022 – March 2026.

After reviewing tender submissions, it was unanimously agreed to reappoint Martin Stewart of Neetfleet Services to the role of handyperson for the period April 2022 to March 2026 (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer)

ACTION: CLERK

Public meeting closed at 9.20 pm