

# Broomhaugh and Riding Parish Council



## Minutes of the annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 7 pm, held at the Parish Hall, Millfield Road

**Present:** Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair), Cllr. Andy Dunhill, Cllr. David McKenzie (also representing St James Church), Cllr. Eileen Carew, Cllr. David Irwin, Cllr. Jill Mills, Cllr. Stephen Lightley, County Councillor Anne Dale and Philip Latham (Chair of the Village Hall Trust).

30 members of the public were present.

In attendance:

Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Mark Ketley, Bradley Hall Planning & Design

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### 1. **Apologies**

Ms Jennifer Ainsley, Executive Headteacher, Corbridge & Broomhaugh First Schools, Mrs Elizabeth Charman, Chair of Governors, Corbridge & Broomhaugh First Schools, Reverend Diana Johnson, Cllr. Brian Singer and Cllr. Pam Bridges.

### 2. **Minutes of the 2021 annual Parish Meeting**, which had been displayed on the ridingmill.org website in draft form since June 2021, were agreed to be a true record.

### 3. **Matters arising from the previous Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

### 4. **Broomhaugh CE First School Report, Ms Jennifer Ainsley, Headteacher**

*Written report received and noted with thanks.*

As Executive Head Teacher of Broomhaugh Church of England First School I have been very proud to work with the team of fully dedicated teachers and governors to ensure the best education and social experiences for our pupils, enabling them to flourish and be self-confident, proud members of their community.

I will be leaving the federation in September 2022, but following a thorough appointment process I can announce with pleasure that Mrs Hart will be taking over as Executive Head Teacher of the Federation – leaving both Broomhaugh and Corbridge in a fantastic position to continue to grow and thrive.

Following the difficult challenges we have faced in managing education through the pandemic, I could not be more proud of the team and all that has been achieved for our pupils and families. It is fantastic we are now welcoming families back into school and to our church events safely. We are grateful to be heading back to what we always enjoyed, and we will never take for granted the special events and experiences, which for some time, we were unable to enjoy.

Our Christian Values: Respect, Forgiveness, Truth Thankfulness and Kindness continue to underpin our ethos for ensuring all who are part of the Broomhaugh family can continue to flourish and grow,

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

Below is the most recent school information for our information.

<b>Current number on roll</b>	67	<b>% of SEND pupils</b> (Special Education Need / disability)	16%
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9	<b>% of disadvantaged pupils</b>	4%

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Federation of Broomhaugh and Corbridge Church of England (VA) First Schools officially began in September 2021. The Federation benefits continue to remind us that we are stronger together! Children from both schools have benefitted through additional experiences and shared resources. Specialist teaching has been introduced including; Sports specialists, music specialist, ICT technician support and a dedicated computing teacher at CFS. Some financial savings resulting from joint procurement have also allowed us to focus the little money we have directly to areas which have clear benefit for our children.

A very key strength lies in staff benefitting from working together and sharing skills across the schools. This year secondments between teachers in our schools has enable staff development and strength in both school teams which has led to a great educational offer for our children. The special Educational Needs offer at Broomhaugh is outstanding through the deployment of our SEND leader across the federation. SEND needs have seen a significant raise over the past two years and the provision in place at BFS is now second to none.

Our school development plan has a curriculum has 6 key areas which include exploring expansion of our Early Years provision, further development of character education through continued commitment to Forest Schools and Commando Joe's provision, leadership development and a continued cycle of review which ensures we can always be the best we can be!

### 5. **Village Hall Trust Report, Philip Latham, Chair of Trustees**

The last twelve months have seen a lot of changes at the Trust and I would like to thank the previous chair, Mike Smith, treasurer, Ian Barker, and halls' manager, Suzanne Barker for the work they did. Our thanks also to Val Thompson who stepped up as temporary cleaner and we are delighted to welcome Jen Horton as treasurer, and Ashna Boyers as our new halls' cleaner.

As well as a major change of personnel, the VHT has changed its legal status and is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO. The purpose of this change has several strands but primarily it is to make the Trust more business-like and to attract new trustees who aren't connected directly with the halls but have skills which will help the trust to flourish. We welcome interest at any time. Currently a skill set that includes marketing would be very welcome. We know how attractive our two halls are but we need to compete effectively to attract users from outside Riding Mill.

I must also mention the support from St James's Church and the Parish Council in tidying up the leases of the Parish Hall and the Millennium Hall and transferring them to the Trust.

And finally, I would like to thank all the current trustees for their support.

### 6. **St James's Church Report, David McKenzie, Church Warden on behalf of Rev. Diana Johnson**

*(Rev. Johnson was sorry to miss the meeting but her father's memorial service was to be held on the same day).*

It was with hope that I came to Riding Mill in the middle of last year, and encountered great joy in the wonderful welcome that I had at the licensing in July. To all who took part, attended, offered or donated furniture, or smoothed the way socially and practically: thank you. I feel well and truly settled now.

Reports like this can focus on what has been done. And much has been done: we have introduced Bibles to all the pews and have a new lectern edition to match; there is a modernised audio visual system enabling us to reach out and open up our services to those at home and we can complement our lovely choir and organ by making greater use of the senses of sight, touch and hearing in our worship; a nave altar has appeared to allow more intimate worship in small groups; and the hymnbooks have been updated so that more choice is possible while retaining that which is well-loved. Thanks be to those whose donations made possible the Bibles, hymnbooks and nave altar. We found time to equip the Station Coffee House so that their tartes de Santiago are even more authentic – Saint James (Sant Iago) would approve!

I prefer, though, to centre on the amazingly positive evolution of thinking made possible by faithful work done by our vision group over the past two years. My part has been to bring a lens to focus our attention on where their ideas will take us. Lent has provided the opportunity to do just that and to share a vision throughout the congregation. So, we have talked about the context of our Parish; the ethos we have; the vital part played by our links to the community; how best to support the School and groups like the Cubs and Scouts; stewarding God's creation (and our heating system); and about what might make us distinctive. We are considering how best to use our buildings, too.

So now we are looking to the future, in order that with hope and faith in Jesus Christ we may better build a corner of God's kingdom here in Riding Mill. And then next year's report will be even more interesting, I trust.

I close my report to you this year with a remark heard in a bookshop in Corbridge: "There has been a rush of orders for Bibles from Riding Mill residents". It seems that St James has prepared wonderful good soil, indeed!

*Cllr. McKenzie informed the meeting that the congregation were delighted to have Reverend Johnson as their Priest in Charge and that she was a huge asset to the village.*

## **7. County Councillor's Report, Cllr. Anne Dale**

When I review the last year since my last Annual Parish report, I just wonder where the time has gone. It only seems like yesterday when the local elections were called during Covid last May. I am privileged to be elected to continue to serve you and I look forward to working with you over the coming years. During Covid we missed out on so many meetings and chats together but hopefully we will now be able to meet up again in person and get back to normal.

The following is a brief update.

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (PLANNING) AND THE LOCAL PLAN.**

The new County Council Local Plan has now been agreed by the County Council. This new plan brings together all the previous District Council local plans and hopefully we will see better and more consistent planning decisions made. Neighbourhood plans are so important in delivering how you want the future of your village to develop over the coming years ahead.

I commend the Parish Council for taking forward the development of your own Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Government guidelines and everyone's contributions. I hope this will be signed off over the coming year.

Planning Applications are sometimes quite contentious and I would like to thank residents for taking time to respond to the Fold planning application in such detail. This application was refused by the County Council and the Appeal against the decision was dismissed.

Even as I write this report the Government is considering further changes to their Planning policies!

## **HIGHWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY**

### **New Pedestrian crossing.**

Following various setbacks during the planning of the pedestrian crossing, I am delighted to report that at last the new pedestrian crossing is now in place and working. I would like to thank all the residents, but in particular the school and parents of children in the village, for their support and patience for this project.

### **Highways Maintenance and utility works.**

The maintenance and utility works on the A695 throughout the village has just been ongoing for over the last two years and there is still more in hand. The renewal of the main gas pipes had been planned for some time. However there have been intermittent leaks in the water and gas mains too which have hindered the renewal work. Blocked gullies continue to be an issue in various areas. Storm Arwen has caused a lot of extra work for the Council highways services and this is ongoing.

### **ROW**

The County Council Rights of Way (ROW) officer continues to work with the landowners on the changes required to the ROW between Farnley and Riding Mill. The legal issues surrounding this type of work are quite difficult and although headway is being made unfortunately there is no certainty that the route will be re-established. There are concerns that the land is still falling away and there is concern that people are still using the route. Other concerns raised are taken up with the ROW officer who works with the various landowners in the area.

### **Street scene.**

Now that the pedestrian crossing is in use I will be working with the Parish Council to ensure that all unnecessary road signage is removed.

### **MEMBERS' SMALL SCHEME ALLOWANCE.**

I was delighted to be able to fund the new Heritage Boards for the village from my Member's Small scheme allowance. They are attractive and my thanks must go to the Parish Council and Clerk for their hard work in delivering the project.

Funding is now available from the County Council for Climate Change initiatives.

## **BROADBAND PROVISION**

There is still uncertainty as to which company will provide the ultrafast full fibre broadband to the village. I will give an update this evening.

I continue to work closely with the Parish Council and would like to thank them together with the Clerk for their help over the last year. My workload continues to increase and is very varied. In particular I am having more concerns raised by the elderly. At County Council level I am now back on the Audit Committee.

*Questions to Cllr. Dale following her report:*

- *Status of donations given to the Ukraine Appeal. Has the County Council distributed the aid?*
- *Has the County Council any plans to provide grants to village halls to assist with the enormous increases in heating costs?*
- *Footpaths – can the idea of a path along the A695 be explored further as it seems unlikely the riverside path will reopen?*

*Cllr. Dale would liaise with the appropriate officers at the County Council before responding directly to the residents.*

## **8. Chairman's report, Cllr. Christine Howe**

This has been another strange year as we move back towards normality (whatever that is!), but work within the parish has been continuing.

We finally finished the sports pavilion - we now have toilets, a kitchen and showers and can accommodate disabled customers. This is our village sports club and we look forward to more groups enjoying the new facilities - other than the football and cricket teams, who continue to thrive.

You will have noticed our new heritage trail boards financed with the help of our local councillor, Anne Dale. We hope many of you have tried the trail.

The Church has refurbished the graveyard and has linked it to our Spinney, which has also undergone a refurbishment with new bug hotels and bird boxes. We hope to be underplanting more bulbs soon, for next year

We continue to monitor the Mill Pond area and it seems probable that we have the start of a decent water area that we can adapt for pond dipping and encouraging further wild life. This next year we hope to put together a scheme for this and look for the requisite funding.

Ash die-back has been a prominent feature of the Marchburn woods this year and unfortunately, we have had to remove further trees. On the plus side we have planted replacement trees with the help of the Woodland Trust and the local Rotary club, and will continue to do more to increase the tree cover in Riding Mill. Our 3 yearly tree survey is due shortly and we will then be in a better position to plan for the future, in terms of our trees.

Unfortunately, this year has seen some minor vandalism within the village – the bus shelter adjacent the Wellington was damaged twice, also one of the seats and we have had to use parish funds for their repair.

Our play park continues to be very well used and whilst we don't have the funds to replace items entirely, this next year will see the refurbishment of the area with some replacement items.

You will have noticed that the precept has gone up this year. Along with inflation, this is due to the fact that our very hardworking parish clerk has been doing far too much voluntary work and we will now be paying her the salary that she is due. Many thanks go to Catherine, without whom we could not function – she is a great asset to the community.

And last but not least the work to the Neighbourhood Plan has been ongoing.

Last month saw the completion of the pre submission draft neighbourhood plan; the culmination of 12 months research and investigation into the village needs from now until 2036. So, thank you to all those parish councillors and volunteers who freely gave their time to help.

The Broomhaugh and Riding Neighbourhood plan sets out a vision, a set of objectives and policies for our neighbourhood area for the period to 2036. It builds on the parish plan of 2002, the survey of 2021 and addresses the challenges and opportunities we face as a community in terms of sustainability and climate change, protecting and enhancing our natural environment, ensuring continuation and improvement of our facilities and services, includes accessibility and transport and a commitment to provide housing to achieve a more balanced demographic.

Since the community engagement last November, our teams have been working hard to put together information for our planning consultant to compile the NP.

We are currently finalising the pre-submission draft neighbourhood plan. This current draft is undergoing strategic environmental impact and habitats regulations assessment screening by the Local authority. This current draft will be put on the website and during this time we welcome informal comments on the plan and its evidence base (the main policy document, the local green space background paper, and the Housing background paper). However, there will be a further, formal consultation for the whole parish in the coming months where the local community and other consultees will be asked for comments.

This neighbourhood plan is more than a planning document, as it includes a set of proposed community actions that sit alongside the policies and reflect issues identified by local residents during the consultation work. We hope that many of you will get involved in turning our new community actions into reality too. This information will be submitted to the local authority neighbourhood planning team for screening and consultation with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. Once this is complete then we will carry out the formal statutory 6 - 8 week consultation with the parish. Any comments will be taken on board before the plan is submitted to the county council who will arrange an independent examination. The local community and others will again be able to submit comments which will be sent to an independent examiner.

Once the plan has passed examination it will be the subject of a referendum where all of those registered to vote within the parish will be able to participate. The referendum will be organised by Northumberland County Council. If it is approved by the community and adopted by the County Council, it will become a formal part of planning policy for our parish.

[Copies of the draft Neighbourhood Plan and supporting papers are now available on our website: <https://ridingmill.org/neighbourhood-plan/>].

## 9. Financial Statement

The unaudited financial statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was received and noted. The Clerk highlighted the increased spending over the last financial period which was mainly due to the refurbishment of the sports pavilion. The PC accounts would be available from 6<sup>th</sup> June until 15<sup>th</sup> July for public scrutiny and anyone wishing to view them could make an appointment via the Clerk.

## 10. Minor Matters

There were no additional matters raised by residents.

After closing the formal part of the meeting, Cllr. Howe gave a more detailed update on the Neighbourhood Plan:

I've already outlined where we are with the neighbourhood plan, but it's worth just recapping on why we started the process.

In the last few years there has been pressure on communities to allow a proportionate increase in housing. This inevitably leads to a trade -off, in our instance between green belt and housing needs. The best way of having any sort of control over this was felt to be by way of a neighbourhood plan.

Since the parish plan in 2002 there has been a desire to have some affordable housing in the village, and in recent years the demand for smaller houses both for families and for the aging population to downsize and remain in the village, has grown. This has been backed up by the Housing Needs Assessment which was independently carried out by Aecom.

After the initial filtering process for sites, 8 were considered worthy of a full assessment:

- the site at the west end of the village adjacent & to the north of Riding Grange
- south side of Long Rigg
- Land above Oaklands Rise
- land west of Wentworth Grange
- land east of Wentworth Grange
- land at the south of Broomhaugh, east of Ford terrace
- land southeast of the Manor House
- Riding Grange farm

Of these only three were found to be suitable (Broomhaugh, land SE Manor House and Riding Grange farm) and one a possibility i.e. land above Oaklands Rise. All possible sites come with a specific planning policy which sets out the requirements that would need to be met. Although the Manor Close site is already with the planners for an application of 12 large houses, it does not have the support of the PC due to access and heritage problems. It is however, a good infill site, and subject to detailed matters around design, access and impact on the significance of adjacent heritage assets, it is considered that the site could be appropriate for residential development. The 'possible' site is the one above Oaklands Rise- this is because the owner suggests the land could be available for development, but has no specific scheme, currently.

The papers have been submitted to the LA and are undergoing strategic environmental impact and habitats regulations assessment screening. During this time, we are inviting comments on the current draft of the plan and its evidence base, but there will be a further, formal consultation in the coming months where the local community and other consultees will be specifically asked for comments.

As part of the search for appropriate sites within the parish, we were approached by Bradley Hall acting for clients who own the land at the south end of Broomhaugh. This is one of the sites that we are considering allocating for development within the local plan. One of the requirements would be that the site would deliver smaller properties and affordable housing. Bradley Hall are willing to work with us to provide a small amount of affordable and smaller housing on this site.

Mark Ketley, the Planning Director at Bradley Hall Planning and Design then gave a presentation of the conceptual scheme which can be accessed here: <https://ridingmill.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Search-for-Sites-Representations-1.pdf>

**Particular points to note or issues raised by residents:**

- *It was felt that the design supported proportional housing growth and it was stressed that growth in settlements helped to sustain schools, shops and public transport;*
- *The design allowed for 12 -15 houses which would be a mix of small affordable homes and smaller family homes;*
- *There was no housing developer on board for the scheme as the plans were purely conceptual at this stage. The owners of the land were happy to work with the PC, the NP team and nearby residents;*
- *There was a need for bungalows or flats so that those in larger homes could downsize;*
- *Some residents believed the greenbelt was sacrosanct and that there had been enough new developments within the village;*
- *If this land was removed from the greenbelt, what guarantee could be given to ensure it was used for social housing? Could a restrictive covenant be placed on the land?*

Mark Ketley was thanked for attending the meeting and it was agreed that the presentation would be added to the ridingmill.org website so that those unable to attend the meeting could view the information.

***Cllr. Howe closed the meeting at 8.25 pm.***