



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 17th April 2023.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)

Cllr. David Irwin

Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. David McKenzie

Cllr. Jill Mills

Cllr. Stephen Lightley

Cllr. Pam Bridges

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

2 members of the public were present.

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.35 pm.

23/39 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. Eileen Carew and Andy Dunhill.

23/40 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. McKenzie declared an interest in Item 16(ii) – King's Coronation – grant request from the Scouts.

Cllrs. Irwin and Lightley declared an interest in Item 9 – The Tennis Club as both were members.

23/41 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13th March 2023

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

23/42 Matters Arising

(i) *Minute 23/29 – Civility and Respect Pledge.* The Clerk confirmed that she had registered the PC and Cllr. Howe duly signed the official pledge document which would be displayed on the website.

23/43 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Planning* – Cllr. Dale noted that there were severe delays in the planning process at the County Council due to staff shortages in Planning, Highways and Conservation;
- (ii) *Speed Signs* – Cllr. Dale was pleased to report that the replacement 20 mph flashing sign for Broomhaugh would be installed shortly;
- (iii) *Speed survey at Beauclerc* – Cllr. Dale had referred the survey comments to the Highways Team and was waiting for a response which she would share in due course. She also reported that current revenue budgets were insufficient to meet all the demands and it was not always possible for lines and signs on roads to be renewed when first reported. As with potholes, there was a hierarchy for dealing with issues starting with the A roads and working through to minor roads;
- (iv) *Winter Services* – the Clerk reported that a number of people had praised the winter services team this year as they had not only gritted the road to the school but had ensured that the smaller estate roads were ploughed and gritted too. Cllr. Dale was asked to pass these comments to the officers concerned.

23/44 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Howe reported that Northumberland County Council neighbourhood team had at last sent the neighbourhood plan for independent examination and that our website had been updated to include a link to the relevant final documents (<https://ridingmill.org/neighbourhood-plan/>), which were all on the NCC website.

The delay has been due to discussions regarding the housing element in the plan. As councillors were aware, the Broomhaugh site had had to be removed due to the impossibility of adjusting the green belt. The Manor House site was then removed because NCC felt that a Strategic Environmental Assessment would be necessary before agreeing to its inclusion. This would have meant a significant additional cost and a delay of up to 9 months so it had been agreed to proceed with an amended plan in order to at least get the design code included.

This had been extremely disappointing as it meant there were no housing allocation sites in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, our planning consultant had prepared a report which pulled together all of the relevant information that could be used to support a minor change to the Green Belt boundary through the local plan should the opportunity arise. The County Council were aware of the issue regarding housing and it was hoped that further discussions could be held with them to due course.

23/45 Weir Footbridge

At the previous meeting, a discussion had been held about the condition of the weir footbridge and the actions the PC should take. It had been agreed to explore installing a new bridge made from galvanised steel beams and recycled plastic parapets and boards as this was considered to provide the best value for money when considered against the likely longevity of the bridge (estimates had been considered for bridges manufactured from various components – timber, recycled plastic and polymer/fibre glass). A manufacturer had been identified that provided a suitable bridge in a kit form and quotes had been sought for its installation. It was noted that this project was unlikely to fulfil the requirements for most grants as it was not providing a new facility and could be considered maintenance and repair. Also, the PC might wish to apply for lottery grants within the next few years for other village projects. The Clerk therefore provided a review of the funds held in the Reserves together with a suggestion of how certain monies could be reallocated to fund this project. It was unanimously agreed to proceed with the project as a matter of urgency as material costs were likely to increase regularly. Only one installation quote had been received but a second quote was expected imminently. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the quotes by email as soon as both were received so that councillors could appoint a contractor and the decision ratified at the May meeting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

ACTION: CLERK**23/46 Play Park Update**

The Clerk presented a paper detailing the costs of the repair work to date and the likely expenses still to be incurred. In light of the work needed on the weir footbridge, it was suggested that the PC should forgo re-edging the wetpour surfaces which weren't considered essential and instead reallocate these funds to the bridge. Sufficient funds were available to allow for the installation of two new springers, especially with the offer of financial assistance from Cllr. Dale. After reviewing the costs, councillors unanimously agreed to proceed as outlined in the paper and to install the new play items (the preferred supplier had been identified at a previous meeting when quotes from various companies had been considered: Minute 22/120). This was proposed by Cllr. Howe and seconded by Cllr. Bridges. The PC expressed its thanks to Cllr. Dale for offering financial assistance from her Members Local Improvement Scheme fund.

ACTION: CLERK**23/47 Tennis Club**

The PC had recently written to the Tennis Club regarding two matters – parking on Millfield Road and a sign which had been installed asking residents not to feed animals. The Tennis Club had written in response and had requested a meeting with PC representatives. In relation to the feeding of animals, councillors agreed

that the Countryside Code should be followed and feeding wild animals should not be endorsed. To resolve these issues it was agreed that the Clerk should arrange a meeting with the Tennis Club.

ACTION: CLERK

23/48 **Defibrillator Provision in the Parish**

- (i) It was reported that the Clerk had explored defibrillator funding opportunities offered by the Football Foundation and the English and Welsh Cricket Board. The Club Cricket Charity working with the ECB were willing to offer a free defibrillator to the cricket club which the PC could apply for if it took on the maintenance responsibilities and paid for an external storage cabinet and arranged for it to be fitted to the outside of the sports pavilion. The deadline for the application had been the 31st March so councillors had agreed to accept the offer via email and the decision was ratified at the meeting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. McKenzie). The Clerk would work with the Sports Club to arrange the installation of the defibrillator and to encourage their members and residents to take part in an online CPR training session.

ACTION: CLERK

- (ii) It was reported that a letter had been received from two residents who hoped to install a defibrillator on Sandy Bank. This had been discussed previously and the PC had identified other locations where installation of a defibrillator was considered more beneficial for the wider community. The residents had then contacted the Community Heartbeat Trust which could install and manage a defibrillator on behalf of the residents but they requested the PC to take on the yearly maintenance responsibilities. Following discussion, councillors were unable to agree to this request as they felt that it was setting a financial precedent. The Clerk was asked to convey this decision to the residents.

ACTION: CLERK

23/49 **Climate Change**

- (i) It was noted that Northumberland County Council were still considering the three possible village locations for EV charging points;
- (ii) The guest speaker at this year's annual Parish Meeting worked for Community Action Northumberland and had been invited to speak on domestic carbon reduction.

23/50 **Finance**

(a) *Monthly accounts:*

(i) Payments/Receipts

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

Jo-Anne Garrick – Prep of NP for submission	£800.00
Jo-Anne Garrick – NDO supplementary work	£800.00
Mark Robinson – reimbursement of expenses for maintenance of football field	£170.00
Jo-Anne Garrick – Final work pre submission of NP	£400.00
Jo-Anne Garrick – final NDO work	£200.00
Groundwork UK – refund of unspent NP grant	£284.40
Unity Trust – quarterly bank charges	£18.00
Nest Pension – March pension contribution	£30.69
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk's March pay	£1,006.37 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Playdale Playgrounds – purchase of platforms and materials	£1,447.85 (inc. VAT £241.31)
Geosphere Ltd – subscription to Parish Online	£60.00 (inc. VAT £10.00)
Lance Mallinson – repair of water heater, sports pavilion	£300.00
Neetfleet – replacement of fence post on footpath at Broomhaugh £40,	
Installation of new net at Play park £320	£360
Online playgrounds – materials for play park refurb	£1,138.56 (inc. VAT £189.76)
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (stationery, bulbs for defibrillator	
Cabinet, plants)	£36.31 (inc. VAT £4.73)
NALC – yearly subscription	£229.92
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (paid in arrears to cover March)	£240.00

In approving these payments, special note was taken of the payment to Lance Mallinson for repairs to the sports pavilion. The PC insured the pavilion and these costs were equal to the excess figure the PC would have to pay if it made a claim. It was agreed that on this occasion the PC would pay the costs but it expected the Club to take all necessary precautions to deal with cold weather and would look to see that better arrangements were in place next year (Proposed Cllr. Lightley, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

The following receipts were noted:

Nationwide – yearly interest	£128.18
Triodos – quarterly interest	£31.11
Unity Trust (Bridge fund) – yearly interest payments	£294.49
Northumberland County Council – 1 st instalment of Precept	£23,625.00

(ii) *Budget reports*

The Clerk provided an overview of budget spending but at such an early point in the financial year there was nothing to note. She also presented a draft of last year's financial accounts. The accounts still had to be reviewed by the internal auditor and would therefore be considered formally at the May meeting.

23/51 **General Village Maintenance**

- (i) *Handyman* - The Clerk confirmed that the handyman had swept footpaths and bridges, repaired a fence at Broomhaugh and replaced the rope bridge on the large playground climber.
- (ii) *Dene Terrace Project*. The PC had identified the area by Dene Terrace as somewhere it wished to improve the general streetscape. Two quotes were received to renew and extend the paving and to rotavate the adjacent area ready for planting. It was agreed to accept the lowest quote which used sandstone paving. Councillors also agreed to install a black self-watering planter which would be in keeping with other street furniture.

ACTION: CLERK

23/52 **Planning**

(a) *Planning applications*

- (i) It was reported that the following planning application was under consideration by the County Council:
 - 23/01004/FUL – Wentworth Grange Nursing Home. Conversion of existing roof space into 6 assisted living apartments. PC – no objection.
- (ii) It was reported that no planning applications had been granted permission by the County Council in the previous 4-week period.

23/53 **Correspondence**

- (i) *Feeding of animals on PC land*: an email from a resident highlighting the Countryside Code for feeding wild animals. Comments were noted – see Minute 23/47;
- (ii) *Request to use the triangular area of land on Marchburn Lane for a Coronation tea party*. Request granted;
- (iii) *Request for information from Guy Opperman's office regarding residents' experiences of train cancellations and the failure of following services to stop*. The Clerk noted a large response to her email with a number of residents very unhappy with the current service from Northern;
- (iv) *Dog poo bags left in Broomhaugh Woods*. A resident made a request for a bin to be installed near to the entrance to the woods. It was known that NCC were not able to empty a bin at this location and the PC had recently installed a new bin in the station car park instead. Cllr. Dale offered to discuss the problem with the local environmental enforcement officer and suggested installing a sign directing dog owners to use the bin in the car park.

ACTION: ADa/CLERK

23/54 **Minor Matters**

- (i) *Annual Parish Meeting* – the Clerk confirmed that Brian Watson of Community Action Northumberland would be the guest speaker at this year's APM. He was the Domestic Carbon Reduction Officer and would provide practical advice on improving the energy efficiency of homes.

- (ii) *Village Plans to mark the Coronation in May.* Cllr. McKenzie updated councillors on events being organised to mark the Coronation. On Monday 8th May, the Scouts planned to organise an event for children and families working in conjunction with the school PTA and the pre-school. A grant of £320 had been received by the Scouts from the County Council and Cllr. McKenzie asked if the PC could provide a further £180. Councillors were unclear how these funds were to be spent and asked Cllr. McKenzie to submit a copy of the event budget. It was agreed that this would be circulated by email so that a grant decision could be made quickly and be ratified at the May meeting.

ACTION: DM/CLERK

23/55 Date of Future Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 15th May 2023.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm