



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Parish Hall, Millfield Road, on Monday 10th July 2023.

Councillors present:

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

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

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 23/100)
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
17 members of the public were present for all or part of the meeting.

The meeting was preceded by a discussion about the proposed lighting at the Tennis Club. The Chairman of the Tennis Club gave a statement on behalf of the Club following which residents highlighted their concerns.

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 8.18 pm.

23/94 **Apologies for Absence** None

23/95 **Declaration of Interests**

Cllrs. Irwin and Lightley declared an interest in item 7 – the Tennis Club, as they were both members.

23/96 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 12th June 2023**

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

23/97 **Matters Arising**

- (i) 23/81(ii) – *Defibrillator provision within the parish.* The Clerk confirmed that all the necessary paperwork had been completed for the new defibrillator at the sports pavilion. The equipment was expected within the next few days and an electrician was ready to fit it as soon as it arrived. She also noted that the residents' group had installed a community defibrillator on Sandy Bank;
- (ii) 23/81(iv) – *Weir Footbridge replacement.* The Clerk reported that there had been no further changes to the schedule and she expected the work to install the new bridge to commence the week beginning 14th August. The bridge kit manufacturer had submitted an invoice for part payment of the order and it was agreed that this should be paid with the balance paid on delivery;
- (iii) 23/85 – *Northumberland Electoral Boundary Review.* It was noted that the comments received about this matter have been submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission as part of their consultation;
- (iv) 23/86 – *Heritage Trail board.* It was noted that the repairs to the board had been completed and overall, they were considered acceptable;
- (v) 23/92(v) – *New access points on road to Riding Hills.* A query had been raised about new access points onto the road near Riding Hills. One access road led to a new barn and this was actually within

Corbridge parish. The other access point had not been observed although changes had been made to a gateway entrance. The Clerk was asked to double-check and report back to a future meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

23/98 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Electoral boundary review*: Cllr. Dale reported that she had made her own submission as part of the consultation and had suggested possible alternatives which would allow Broomhaugh & Riding to remain within the Stocksfield ward. She had sent a copy of her submission to the Clerk which could be shared with councillors;
- (ii) *Parking issues*: Cllr. Dale reported that she had taken advice on a parking matter which had been referred to her. The advice was that the car, although parked inconsiderately, was not illegally parked and no enforcement action could be taken;
- (iii) *Crop gun*: Cllr. Dale had received numerous complaints from residents reporting a crop gun which was sounding from early in the morning and more often than legally allowed. She had tracked down the source and a message had been conveyed to the tenant to readjust the timer;
- (iv) *Beauclerc traffic issues*: Cllr. Dale had met with the highways officers on site to review the issues raised in the resident survey and she awaited their suggestions which would likely include the installation of additional 30 mph signs. She had also arranged for a broken illuminated sign on Sandy Bank to be repaired;
- (v) *Obstruction on the highway*: A resident had made a complaint about a new entrance encroaching onto the highway. As the road was not adopted, the Highways Department could not pursue the complaint and instead it had been referred to planning enforcement.

ACTION: CLERK

23/99 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Howe confirmed that the independent inspection of the Neighbourhood Plan had been completed and that the Inspector had recommended that it go forward to the referendum stage subject to a few minor amendments. The County Council was responsible for arranging and promoting the referendum and the Parish Council awaited the schedule for this. A further meeting would be held shortly with the Neighbourhood Planning and Housing teams from the County Council to consider how the housing needs of the parish could be addressed in the future.

23/100 Tennis Club

In opening the debate, the Clerk confirmed that no parish councillor had a pecuniary interest in the matter. She did however warn councillors that they must be openminded during the debate and be willing to hear new information and should not have predetermined their decision. If unable to agree to this, then they should recuse themselves from the vote which Cllr. Lightley subsequently did.

The Planning sub-group had met to discuss the application and had circulated their notes to councillors in advance of the meeting and had prepared a draft statement which could be submitted to the Planning Department. The sub-group recommended that the Parish Council should take a neutral stance on the lights as there were clearly potential harms from the proposals but also some benefits. Cllr. Lightley did not dispute the stance but asked for additional information to be included in the response to the Planning Department. A vote was taken and a majority agreed that the Parish Council should submit a neutral stance (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer. Cllr. Carew abstained, Cllr. Lightley recused). It was agreed that the wording would be approved via email after councillors had reviewed Cllr. Lightley's suggestions. It was also agreed to make mention of possible flooding issues and to highlight the relevant sections of the Neighbourhood Plan.

ACTION: ALL

23/101 Local Transport Plan

A discussion was held about possible priorities for next year's LTP. It was noted that the Parish Council had been unsuccessful in its submission for the last few years, with the projects refused due to cost or because they were considered to be general maintenance issues rather than capital projects. It was agreed, that

despite the cost, the Parish Council should continue to promote improved footpaths and cycleways and the priorities were agreed as follows:

1. Cycle route connecting Riding Mill with Stocksfield;
2. Cycle route/footpath alongside A68 from the top of Whiteside Bank to the Healey Road. This would help create circular walking routes for residents and provide a safe footpath alongside the A68 as currently residents walked on the uneven verge;
3. Creation of parking bays (grasscrete rather than tarmac) on the verge on Church Lane opposite the school which would help ease traffic congestion at school times. The Parish Council would be keen to install an EV charging point on this land which would be accessible for school staff during the day but could be used by residents or visitors at other times.

ACTION: CLERK

23/102 **Mill Pond Project**

A report was received from the Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT) following a full survey of the mill pond area. TRT had suggested the possibility of reflooding the pond by way of a restricted flow pipe along the route of the old mill leat. The water would then leave the pond by way of an oversized outflow pipe back into the burn downstream of the footbridge. On investigation, TRT decided that it would be extremely costly to route the outflow pipe near to the footbridge because of the heavily reinforced bankside. More concerning was the consequences should the outflow pipe block. When the pond was last in operation there had been no nearby houses. Now, if the pipe blocked, the pond could overtop and risk flooding two properties. There were also concerns that the clay lining of the pond had been compromised by roots which could lead to water seeping out and causing subsidence to the road and footpath. As TRT could not guarantee the water management aspects of re-flooding the pond, it was agreed that the project could not be pursued and that the area would need to be left natural. TRT suggested ongoing management of the trees and shrubs within the former pond so that its shape and identity could be maintained and recognised. They also recommended installing an interpretation board to share the history of the area.

ACTION: CLERK

23/103 **Climate Change**

The Clerk had contacted the County Council and the team hoped to survey the suggested EV charging sites soon.

23/104 **Finance**

(a) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

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

The Play Inspection Company – yearly playground inspection	£89.94 (inc. VAT £14.99)
Matthew Charlton (Stark Building Materials) – Dene Terrace building materials	£679.67 (inc. VAT £113.28)
T Bell Horticultural Service – parish grass cutting and football field	£620.00
Nest Pension contribution for June	£30.69
Unity Trust Bank- quarterly bank charges	£18.00
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk's June salary	£1,006.37 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Calibre Metalwork – war memorial plaque correction	£1,158.00 (inc. VAT
£193.00)	
David Ballantyne – ash tree removal / emergency removal of birch tree	£1,330.00
St James Church PCC – room hire (Jan – Jun)	£150.00
Neetfleet – repairs to play park £860, Rotavate Dene Terrace planting area	£920.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Light bulbs for defib, Plants, Glue to fix signs to planter, courier and insurance for memorial plaque, Mail Chimp monthly subs, Google One account yearly subs)	£148.74 (inc. VAT £14.46)
Shotton Waste Services – emptying of septic tank, sports field	£320.00
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (paid in arrears to cover June)	£240.00

The following receipts were noted:
None

Transfer from the Reserves: it was noted that £10,000 had been transferred from the Reserve account to the Current account to meet the costs of the new weir footbridge.

(ii) *Budget reports*

The Clerk provided an overview of budget spending. No issues were identified and the reports were received and approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

23/105 General Village Maintenance

- (i) *Handyman* - The Clerk confirmed that the handyman had strimmed some Rights of Way, restocked the flower planters, swept footpaths and cut back the roadside verge on Millfield Road which fronted the tennis courts as well as cleaning out the gully. In addition, he had rotavated the new flower bed and was continuing with the repairs to the play park;
- (ii) *Dene Terrace project* – The Clerk confirmed that the work had been completed and the handyman only needed to reinstall the seat. There was a small overspend on the project. Councillors were unhappy that the area was still being used for parking and the Clerk was asked to contact the County Council to see if a low chain fence could be installed;
ACTION: CLERK
- (iii) *Rights of Way* – The Clerk reported that she had received a number of complaints about the poor state of the Rights of Way, with some reported as almost impassable. These paths were not on the handyman's contract with the County Council. She had forwarded the complaints to the County Council but was aware that other parishes were now managing the ROW network themselves as the County Council was so under-resourced in this area. Councillors agreed to consider this option when setting next year's budget and the Clerk was asked to seek possible contractors/quotes.

ACTION: CLERK

The Clerk also noted that there were many dead ash trees along the ROW network and she had asked Cllr. Dale to find out how the County Council planned to deal with this;

- (iv) *Yearly Play Park inspection* – The yearly play park inspection report was received and the comments noted. Most recommendations had already been actioned with the replacement of the ropes and the platforms. There were a few items to consider – there was a split in one of the wooden columns which passed through the fixings. The Clerk would investigate if this one column could be replaced or if some type of brace could be fitted. The report also queried the risk assessment for the boulder and the Clerk would review this.

ACTION: CLERK

23/106 Planning

Planning applications - it was reported that:

- (i) there were no new planning applications for consideration;
- (ii) no planning applications had been granted permission;
- (iii) the following planning application had been refused permission:
23/01525/LBC – 7 Hollin Hill Terrace. Partial removal of internal walls. Councillors expressed their surprise at the refusal of this work and were concerned that the conservation officers were unduly strict. Cllr. Howe, who would be attending the next meeting of the East Tynedale Forum, was asked to raise this matter to see if other parishes had seen similar refusals;

ACTION: CH

- (iv) that the following planning application had been withdrawn:
23/01399/LBC – 2 Hollin Hill Terrace. Works to roof. Ditto concerns above.

23/107 Correspondence

Issues raised had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

23/108 **Minor Matters**

- (i) *Overhanging hedges and branches* – Councillors were asked to politely encourage neighbours to trim back any hedges and branches beside footpaths which were causing an obstruction. Requests could also be passed to Cllr. Dale for action by the County Council;
- (ii) *Obstruction of highway* – see Minute 23/105(ii)
- (iii) *Newsletter* – The Clerk reported that she planned to start working on the yearly newsletter with the aim of circulating it in September and would welcome ideas for articles.

ACTION: ALL

- (iv) *War memorial plaque* – The Clerk reported that the plaque had been returned from the metal conservator and she was liaising with the fundraising group and the vicar about its unveiling;
- (v) *Grit Bin* – Cllr. Dale had passed a request to the Parish Council for an additional grit bin at the bottom of the Nick. The County Council would install it but wished to know if the Parish Council would fund it. The Clerk was asked to establish the costs and report back to a future meeting;

ACTION: CLERK

- (vi) *Closure of Hexham Ticket Office* – the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership had contacted councils to ask if they would take part in a consultation regarding the closure of ticket offices at stations. After a discussion, it was agreed by majority vote to write to object to the closures.

ACTION: CLERK

23/109 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 11th September 2023.

- 23/110 **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 Clerk's yearly appraisal and pay award.

Summary of discussion: Cllr. Singer reported that he and Cllr. Carew had held the Clerk's yearly appraisal and on the basis of it were recommending that the Clerk should receive an incremental pay award backdated to 1st April 2023 as laid out in the Clerk's contract. This proposal was unanimously agreed (Proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. Howe). The Clerk's yearly objectives would be circulated to councillors.

ACTION: CLERK

Meeting closed at 9.50 pm