



## Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

### Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)

Cllr. Jill Mills

Cllr. David Irwin

Cllr. Stephen Lightley

Cllr. Eileen Carew

Cllr. David McKenzie

### In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 23/134)

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

2 members of the public were present

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.40 pm.

### 23/128 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. Andy Dunhill and Brian Singer.

### 23/129 Declaration of Interests

None

### 23/130 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> September 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. Mills).

### 23/131 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 23/114(i) – Defibrillator at the sports field.* It was noted that the defibrillator was now fully operational and linked to the North East Ambulance Service database. The Clerk and Alan Fletcher, the Vice-Chair of the Cricket Club, would act as community guardians for the device and check it weekly;
- (ii) *Minute 23/114(iv) – Grit bin for the Slaley Road.* It was noted that a request to install a grit bin at the bottom of the Slaley Road had been submitted to the County Council;
- (iii) *Minute 23/119 – Sports Club.* This item was deferred as a meeting had yet to be arranged;
- (iv) *Minute 23/125 – Stone wall repairs at allotments.* It was reported that potential contractors had been identified and Cllr. Howe agreed to write a specification for the work which the Clerk could then distribute;

**ACTION: CH**

- (v) *Minute 23/126(i) – It's Your Neighbourhood Award.* It was reported that the Garden Invaders had been awarded 'Outstanding' in the It's Your Neighbourhood category of Northumbria in Bloom. Councillors recorded their congratulations to the group.

### 23/132 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Sandy Bank Litter picking group.* Cllr. Dale had attended a recent Residents' Association meeting where a group of residents had indicated their desire to set up a litter picking group. She had offered to provide litter picking equipment from the County Council and had suggested that the group be affiliated with the Parish Council. Whilst the idea was welcomed, the Clerk indicated that the group would have to meet the conditions stipulated by the PC's insurer for community events i.e. risk assessment, named supervisor etc., and it was agreed that she would send examples to Cllr. Dale to pass on to the residents.  
**ACTION: CLERK/ADa**
- (ii) *Digital Phone Switchover.* Cllr. Dale reported that by 2025, analogue phones would be switched to new landline services using digital technology from home routers. This was likely to be unpopular with older residents some of whom might not use mobile phones or broadband although phone companies had promised that special arrangements would be made for such customers. Further information would be circulated to residents as more information became available.  
**ACTION: CLERK**
- (iii) *Drains/gullies/footpaths.* In the pre-meeting discussion, Cllr. Dale and councillors discussed the state of the drains, in particular, near Riding Grange and the Slaley Road. Cllr. Dale confirmed that officers were investigating water issues and land drainage in this area. The state of the footpath was also discussed as councillors felt it was dangerous as it was covered in gravel and stones. Cllr. Dale indicated that such matters should be reported to the County Council via Fix My Street and if the work was not done to improve matters then a complaint could be made. She discouraged the Parish Council from using its own handyman to sweep the path as this was not its responsibility.  
**ACTION: CLERK**

### 23/133 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr. Howe confirmed that residents had voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan and it would now be adopted by Northumberland County Council and would be taken into account when future planning applications were determined. Councillors recorded their appreciation to Cllrs. Howe and Irwin for all their hard work over the last three years in developing the Plan. Cllr. Howe noted that 45 people had voted to reject the Plan and she was keen to find out why so that their concerns could be addressed. The Clerk was asked to raise this in the next news article in the Parish News. Cllr. Howe also confirmed that the Parish Council still intended to look at how it could deliver the identified housing needs of the village and would be holding a meeting with County Council representatives shortly. The Plan had listed a number of community actions and these would be considered at a future meeting so that councillors could decide which to prioritise and how to take them forward.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### 23/134 Weir Footbridge

The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted the County Council's Footpath Officer for advice about the bridge. He had recommended that to meet new Outdoor Accessibility guidance, as a minimum, a toe board should be installed although he also questioned the drop height of the boardwalk as it approached the bridge and felt that it might be significant enough to cause concern. Various cost scenarios were considered and after a split vote, Cllr. Howe used her casting vote to decide that additional rails to match the opposite side should be installed.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### 23/135 Local Government Boundary Commission Review

It was reported that the Local Government Boundary Commission had produced its final report and had confirmed that it intended to recommend that Broomhaugh & Riding be reallocated to the

Corbridge ward. The full report could be read on its website <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/northumberland>. If approved, these changes would be implemented at the local elections in 2025.

### 23/136 Climate Change

Cllr. McKenzie had attended the Town and Parish Council Conference organised by Northumberland County Council (NCC) and one of the sessions had covered climate change. Of particular note were the following:

- NCC were currently writing a new climate change plan which would cover the period 2023-30
- 6 District Heat networks were to be created – Berwick, Alnwick, Ashington, Prudhoe, Blyth and Hexham. District heat networks distributed heat to a variety of buildings such as public buildings, shops, offices, hospitals, and homes from one source, such as waste heat generated from factories or by capturing heat from the ground or rivers, avoiding the need for individual boilers or electric heaters in every building e.g. heat/energy from the manufacturing process at Egger could power a new district heat network in Hexham;
- Electric Vehicle charging – NCC were keen to receive suggestions for locations for on-street residential chargepoints. They were also developing charging solutions for those in e.g. terraced housing where the energy capacity was an issue. This involved gulleys through the pavement to the meter in the residential property and would be more economical than a commercial point;
- NCC reported that solar panels provided nearly all the electricity needs of County Hall;
- The Great Northumberland Forest was a plan to plant huge numbers of trees across the county to contribute to carbon capture.

The Clerk also reported on discussions with the team responsible for installing EV charging points. After reviewing the possible sites in Riding Mill, they believed the best location for an EVC point was at the bottom of Whiteside Bank, adjacent to the A695. NCC owned the land and power cables were close by, making it the most cost effective location. Grant funding to install further charging points was currently being sought by the County Council.

### 23/137 Finance

#### (a) *Yearly Audited Accounts*

- (i) The final audited accounts for 2022/23, including a copy of the External Auditor Certificate and accounting statement were received and accepted (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley). The final accounts had been displayed on the noticeboard and were available on the website. The comments made by the external auditor were noted but not considered significant.
- (ii) The re-appointment of Mrs Margaret Weatherley as Internal Auditor was confirmed (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley).

#### (b) *Monthly Accounts*

##### (i) *Payments/Receipts*

The following payments were agreed (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley)

Robson Print Ltd – newsletter printing	£392.00
S N Crook t/a Selec – electrical installation of defibrillator cabinet	£200.00
Unity Trust Bank – quarterly bank charges	£18.00
Nest Pension – Direct Debit – pension contribution for September 2023	£31.94
Bells Waste Disposal – removal of telegraph poles from wood	£150.00 (inc. VAT £25.00)
Natural Ability – maintenance of edible garden	£54.00
Mazars – external auditor fee	£378.00 (inc. VAT £63.00)
Neetfleet – £300 maintenance of RoWs (to be refunded by NCC) + materials	£315.00
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk’s salary	£1,025.99 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Garden bulbs for	£119.09 (inc. VAT £19.85)

Dene Terrace area, Ash dieback warning signs, Mail Chimp monthly subs)  
David Ballantyne – tree work £485.00  
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (paid in arrears for September) £240.00

The following receipts were noted:

None

(ii) *Budget reports*

The budget reports were reviewed and approved. No new issues were identified (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley).

### 23/138 **General Village Maintenance**

- (i) *Handyman*: The Clerk confirmed that the handyman had swept footpaths and trimmed amenity areas. He had also trimmed hedges, cut back growth around signs and mirrors and had treated moss on the bridges on Millfield Road and Marchburn Lane;
- (ii) *Improvements to Rights of Way*: The Clerk reported that various improvement works had been undertaken by the County Council including: repairs to a stile in Shilford Wood, cutting back of gorse bushes to widen paths, replacement of beams crossing a stream and the installation of steps to help access between Whiteside Bank and the Wentworth Grange field. Councillors recorded their thanks to the Footpaths Officer and his team;
- (iii) *Drains/gullies*: This item was covered in Cllr. Dale's report;
- (iv) *Trees*: The Clerk reported on current progress with removing trees suffering from ash dieback and those identified in the tree report as being dangerous. She also noted that there were two ash trees on The Nick which showed signs of the disease and would likely need removing at some stage;
- (v) *Mare's Tail and tree saplings on Marchburn Lane*: Despite treatment in previous years, there were small Mare's Tail plants now growing in the area of land owned by the PC. Nearby residents had confirmed that they would like the PC to continue to treat the plants although, if possible, avoiding killing off other nearby plants. They also asked if some of the nearby sapling trees could be cut back. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the secretary of the Residents' Association to confirm exactly what work was to be done.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### 23/139 **Planning**

*Planning applications* - it was reported that:

- (i) there were no new planning applications under consideration;
- (ii) the following planning applications had been granted permission:
  - 23/02308/FUL – Lea Grange, Beauclerc. Timber conservatory to replace existing conservatory;
- (iii) the application for Tweener fence lighting at the tennis courts was to be considered at a meeting of the Local Area Council – Tynedale on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October.

### 23/140 **Correspondence**

None

### 23/141 **Minor Matters**

- (i) *Next Generation Flood Resilience*: The Clerk reported that the Environment Agency and the County Council had been awarded funding to develop innovative solutions for flood resilience in six pilot communities, which included Riding Mill. The project aimed to improve flood warnings for communities in fast responding catchments through the development of a new

system using rain gauges, water level sensors and soil moisture sensors to capture data in real time which would then feed AI models and produce flood warnings. The team hoped to explain the project to residents and proposed to hold a drop-in event on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November from 3.30 pm at the Millennium Hall

- (ii) *Christmas event:* Councillors agreed that a Christmas tree lighting event should again be held in conjunction with the Scouts. The Clerk was asked to contact Tynedale Lions to see if there was a possibility of Santa visiting the village on that evening;

**ACTION: CLERK**

- (iii) *Osbit Open Day:* Councillors who attended the Open Day felt it had been a useful event and found it very informative. Osbit had shared details of its hoped-for expansion which would require a further extension to the building;

- (iv) *Town & Parish Council Conference report:* Cllr. McKenzie concluded his report on the Conference and amongst the issues covered he highlighted the following: priorities for the County Council which included maintaining free car parking in town centres; a new Environmental Policy Action plan would be unveiled shortly; kerbside glass and food waste collections were in development; introduction of Fix My Street was proving a useful tool for residents; Northumberland Rail Line was on target; a car park improvement programme was in train; Hexham to Corbridge cycleway had received funding; improvements to public toilets throughout the County were underway.

#### 23/142 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm