



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 13th November 2023.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)

Cllr. Andy Dunhill

Cllr. David Irwin

Cllr. Stephen Lightley

Cllr. Brian Singer

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 23/150)

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

2 members of the public were present

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.25 pm.

23/143 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. Eileen Carew and David McKenzie.

23/144 Notice of Resignation

Cllr. Howe reported that Jill Mills had decided to resign from the Parish Council having served as a member for over fifteen years. Councillors recorded their thanks to Jill for her valuable contribution and for always providing sound and sensible advice. The Clerk would write a letter of thanks from the Council.

ACTION: CLERK

A Notice of Vacancy would be displayed shortly and the Clerk would confirm in due course whether the vacancy could be filled by co-option.

23/145 Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Dunhill declared an interest in Item 7 – the Sports Club.

Cllr. Singer declared an interest in Item 6 – the Allotment Wall, as he was chair of the Allotment Association.

23/146 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 9th November 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. Lightley).

23/147 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 23/131(ii) – Grit bin for the Slaley Road.* It was noted that the request was still to be actioned by the County Council;
- (ii) *Minute 23/132(iii) – Drains/gullies.* Cllr. Dale updated councillors on the continuing problems with the gullies especially around the Slaley Road junction. She noted problems had been

so severe that the fire brigade had had to attend to prevent property flooding at Beauclerc. Some of the issues were the result of fields not being drilled so that water failed to be absorbed and instead ran off onto the roads. She had written to the Executive Director at the County Council to highlight the lack of resources to deal with these matters and to raise the need for the County Council to have a workable policy to deal with landowners who ultimately had the responsibility of managing water on their property. There was also a discussion about Rights of Way which were unwalkable due again to water issues/poor land management;

- (iii) *Minute 23/134 – Weir footbridge.* It was noted that the additional handrail had now been fitted;
- (iv) *Minute 23/141(i) – Next Generation Flood Resilience Event.* It was reported that this event had been postponed due to weather issues and would now be held on Monday 27th November but at a changed venue, Stocksfield Cricket Club;
- (v) *Minute 23/141(ii) – Christmas Event.* It was noted that the Christmas tree lighting event had been arranged for Friday 8th December although Tynedale Lions would not be able to attend.

23/148 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

- (i) *Fix My Street:* The County Council's initiative had proved extremely popular, with residents using it to record many problems. This in turn was generating a lot of work for the officers and, at times, was failing to meet the public's expectations resulting in complaints;
- (ii) *Grants to help install flood prevention measures:* Cllr. Dale was asked if any grants were still available to help properties which could be prone to flooding. Cllr. Dale noted that the grants had ended or were only available to properties which had flooded recently;
- (iii) *Full Fibre rollout:* Cllr. Dale was disappointed to report that the second procurement process to bring full fibre broadband to parts of Northumberland, including Riding Mill, was not proceeding at the current time. Councillors asked Cllr. Dale to express their frustration at this news.

23/149 Allotment Wall

Following earlier discussions, the Clerk had obtained three quotes from contractors to repair the allotment wall which was behind Railway Cottages. All contractors had indicated that they did not consider the wall dangerous although certain sections were in need of repair. It was noted that any lime mortar repairs could not be undertaken over the winter as conditions needed to be above 5°C and therefore, if agreed, this work would be done in the coming financial year. Councillors agreed that they were minded to accept Contractor A's quote but agreed to defer a final decision until after the budget meeting in December when other funding priorities would be considered. The Clerk was also asked to contact a local building surveyor for further advice.

ACTION: CLERK

23/150 Sports Club

- (i) *Inspection of the Pavilion:* Cllr. Lightley confirmed that he and the Clerk had met with a member of the cricket club to inspect the pavilion. Cllr. Lightley noted issues with storage, boundary maintenance and general cleanliness. The club had also been asked to liaise closely with the football club to agree winter safety procedures to ensure that there were no burst water pipes.
- (ii) *Football Club issues:* A request to fund additional maintenance of the football field was approved (Proposed Cllr. Singer, seconded Cllr. Lightley). A request to fund netting in front of a resident's chalet was deferred. The Clerk was asked to establish what insurance cover the football club held and whether the club could raise some of the funds itself.

ACTION: CLERK

23/151 Action Plan

The Clerk presented a draft Action Plan for councillors to consider. The purpose of the plan was to help set medium and long term goals for the council and would include the community actions identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. The document would allow priorities to be tracked and monitored and could help when setting the yearly budget. Councillors agreed in principle to the idea and those councillors who served on the Neighbourhood Plan working groups were asked for their input into the Action Plan to help identify how certain actions could be taken forward.

ACTION: ALL

23/152 Risk Assessments

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's insurer expected it to have prepared a written risk assessment for any land it owned or activities it undertook e.g. tree management, allotment site, play park, grounds maintenance etc. This was in case any claims were made under the Public Liability section of the insurance and so that the Council could show that it had considered risks and done all that it could to mitigate them. The Clerk was working on a suite of documents and it was agreed that Cllrs. Lightley and Dunhill would have delegated authority to work with the Clerk and approve the documents (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Lightley).

ACTION: CLERK

23/153 Climate Change

There were no new matters to report.

23/154 Tyne Valley Traffic Free Cycle Route

Cllr. Irwin reported on recent meetings he had attended to discuss a Tyne Valley cycleway and noted the following:

- A Tynedale bicycle mayor had been appointed – his current focus was to encourage more children to cycle to school;
- The Hexham to Corbridge cycle route along the A695 had been approved and work on it was likely to start in April 2024. An additional cycle route north of the river between Hexham and Corbridge was also still under discussion;
- It had been suggested that Riding Mill might seek to develop a simplified version of a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan to look at possible routes to link with Corbridge. Without a costed plan, funding would be difficult to secure;
- A website had been developed which included information about the possible cycle routes and Cllr. Irwin would include the proposal connecting Riding Mill to Stocksfield which was relatively straightforward (www.hexhamnetzero.co.uk).

23/155 East Tynedale Forum

Cllr. McKenzie had attended the October meeting and the minutes had been circulated.

23/156 Finance

(a) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) *Payments/Receipts*

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

Trevor Bell Horticultural services – grass cutting (football field and parish)	£820.00
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk's salary	£1,025.99 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Nest Pension – Direct Debit – pension contribution for October 2023	£31.94
Transfer to Bridges sinking fund	£3000.00
Royal British Legion – poppy wreath donation	£60.00
Town & Parish Council websites – web hosting fees	£454.00
RM VHT – room hire	£15.00
Neetfleet – additional maintenance/repairs to seat and pavilion	£480.00
Secure-a-Field – additional rails for weir footbridge	£678.60 (inc. VAT £113.11)
4Nature Ltd – installation of extra railings	£564.00 (inc. VAT £94.00)
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (waterproof box for	

Play Park, Mailchimp monthly subs, plants)	£49.39 (inc. VAT £4.40)
Neetfleet – monthly handyman charge (paid in arrears to cover October)	£240.00

The following receipts were noted:

HMRC – VAT refund (01.01.23 – 30.09.23)	£6,861.72
Northumberland County Council –Rights of Way maintenance	£300.00
Triodos – quarterly interest	£49.72

(ii) *Budget reports*

The budget reports were reviewed and approved. No new issues were identified.

(b) *Yearly Budget*

It was noted that the yearly budget would be set at next month's meeting. Ideas for capital expenditure projects should be notified to the Clerk in advance and a preliminary discussion should be held to consider funding priorities for next year.

ACTION: CLERK

(c) *S137 Grants*

- (i) A donation to the Royal British Legion was approved.
- (ii) It was noted that funding requests from other bodies would be considered at the December meeting.

(d) *Pay Award*

It was reported that a national pay award for the financial year 2023/24 had recently been approved and it had been agreed that this should be backdated to April 2023 for the Clerk. This decision, originally taken by email, was retrospectively approved (proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

23/157 General Village Maintenance

- (i) *Handyman:* The Clerk confirmed that the handyman had completed the following tasks during October: swept and strimmed footpaths and cleared leaves, undertaken minor repairs in the play park and cut back hedges and foliage around the edges, cut back hedges along the footpath by the play park including shrubs in the edible garden. He had also cut back overgrown shrubs between Broomhaugh and the sports field to improve access for pedestrians. Finally, he had undertaken repairs to the verandah at the pavilion and replaced timbers on a damaged seat. This work had been identified in the yearly asset review;
- (ii) *Grass cutting contract – 2024-2026:* The Clerk confirmed that the grass cutting contract was up for renewal and she would be advertising it shortly so that an appointment could be made early in the new year;

ACTION: CLERK

- (iii) *Drainage improvements to Marchburn Lane and Millfield Road bridges:* A resident had written to recommend that the Council add additional protection and drainage channels/gutters to the two bridges to prolong their lifespan. Councillors were happy to consider his suggestion and the Clerk was asked to write to him to accept his offer of preparing some suggestions and costing them;

ACTION: CLERK

- (iv) *Dene Terrace – gas sub-station:* It was noted that the gas sub-station on Dene Terrace, which had been in a very poor state of repair, had been replaced with a new fibreglass structure.

23/158 **Planning**

Planning applications - it was reported that:

- (i) the following new planning applications were under consideration:
 - 23/03862/FUL – Woodside, Sandy Bank. Proposed double garage and store. PC – no objection;
 - 23/03809/LBC & 23/03805/FUL – The Hemmel, Broomhaugh. Replacement of single storey extension with new garden room. PC – no objection;
 - 23/03871/FUL – Land east of the Dower Green. Construction of 2-storey dwelling (resubmission of previously approved application). PC – no objection;
 - 23/0364/PRUTPO – 9 Church Close. Tree works. PC – no objection.
- (ii) no planning applications had been granted permission in the previous month;
- (iii) the application to install Tweener fence lighting at the double tennis courts in Millfield Road had been refused permission (23/01947/FUL).

23/159 **Correspondence**

A resident's comments regarding the edible garden were noted and it was agreed that future maintenance of this area would be considered at the budget meeting in December.

23/160 **Minor Matters**

None

23/161 **Date of Future Meeting**

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

Meeting closed at 9.01 pm