

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 3rd September 2007

Present: Councillors Sayce, Pete Barrass, Ian Hall, Diane Hinchcliffe, Barbara Gravenor, Norman Hooks, Melna Martin, Dave Porter, Mrs M Williams, Clerk

Also present: County Councillor Ray Thompson, Rebecca Dixon, Hexham Courant

Apologies: Councillors Lizzie Clark, John Davison, Steve Gleadhill, Tracy Warhurst-Walker, District Councillors Argent, Dale and Drew.

Mrs Sayce welcomed members back after the summer break and also welcomed Rebecca Dixon, the new reporter from the Hexham Courant.

07/38 Declarations of Interest – None

07/39 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2007 were agreed as a true record subject to the following amendments:

Page 4 Eastern Parishes to read SCA Forum

07/40 Matters Arising –

Yellow lines – County Councillor Thompson reported that the relevant County Committee is due to discuss this matter on 4th September.

Branch End Play Area – Councillor Thompson advised that he expected that his application to make a grant of £3000 towards Branch End Play Area Regeneration from the Small Capital Works Scheme will probably go through.

The hedge at the Old Forge has been cut.

The Holly Hedge bordering the Scaur steps needs cutting.

Meadowfield Road – Councillor Thompson advised that the work on Meadowfield Road had been completed. He had received two complaints – one that the length between Painshawfield Road and Cade Hill Road had not been resurfaced and the other that the improved surface meant that motorists were speeding down the road. It was also noted that in order to allow the contractors to carry out the work they had cut back many of the hedges.

Bus along New Ridley Road – regarding the alleged variation in the fares being charged, Councillor Thompson confirmed that there is a fixed price schedule for journeys.

Eastern Parishes Forum – Mrs Gravenor asked for clarification on the status of this body and Dave Porter offered to seek further information at the meeting on 4th September.

07/41 Public Participation - none

07/42 Correspondence

The correspondence received during July and August had been listed on the agenda and was noted.

Tynedale – Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme – request for items to be discussed. It was agreed to write requesting that the following topics be included:

Confusion over what can be put into household recycling bins

Weight of traffic using A695

Lack of transport interchange at Stocksfield Station

Lack of late night train service on Tyne Valley line

Difficulty of access to recreation facilities in Tynedale especially for younger and older people

Lack of affordable housing for young people and sheltered housing for older people

Lack of a footpath along the River Tyne between Prudhoe and Corbridge

There was some discussion about the problem of recycling cardboard and what can and cannot be put in recycling bins. It was felt that Tynedale's brown bin scheme for composting waste should be expanded more quickly. The Parish Council should consider developing a green composting scheme. It was agreed to seek clarification of bulky waste collection charges. It was also agreed to ask Ian Douglas, Director of Environmental Services at Tynedale, to come to a Parish Council meeting to answer councillors' queries on re-cycling.

Northumberland County Council – Development of Parish Transport representatives –

It was agreed to respond by advising the County that Mrs Gravenor would provide feedback on the adequacy or otherwise of current public transport services.

Mrs Gravenor would receive up-dates of service timetables

Arrangements can be made for these to be distributed.

Parish Councillors were not willing to be responsible for changing the bus timetable case liners, nor was it felt appropriate for parish councillors to keep these clean

Tynedale - Review of Statement of Licensing Policy – no comment

Tynedale – Review of Polling Districts & Polling Places – no comment

NALC – Notice of AGM – Julia Sayce and possibly Norman Hooks will attend.

Northumberland County Council – Local Government Re-organisation – it was generally felt that before any meaningful discussion could take place there is a need to find out more about the proposals and then form a working group to discuss the consultation papers and the implications to the Parish Council and the local community.

(County Councillor Ray Thompson left the meeting at this point and advised that he would not be able to attend the October meeting)

07/43 Finance

The accounts for July and August had been circulated and were agreed.

The report on Spend v budget for the year to 31/08/07 had been circulated and was accepted.

The conditions for increasing the Fidelity Guarantee were noted.

The Bank Reconciliation form had been included with the cheques/invoices and was signed.

Additional cheques – it was agreed that additional cheques should be signed:

Post Office

£106.00

BDO Stoy Haward (Auditor) - £699.13

Branch End Play Area Regeneration Phase I – a paper had been circulated proposing that £3486 be moved from the Recreation Areas Development Fund to the Branch End Play Area Phase I fund to clear the deficit, to bring this latter fund to zero. It was noted that Tynedale had been unable to give a grant to clear this fund as they were unable to pay retrospective grants. It was agreed to move these monies.

Audit 06/07 Accounts – The amendments requested by the auditor had been circulated and were noted. The final auditor's report had been received. There were no matters of concern to report. The report was accepted.

Precept 08/09 – A draft of the 07/08 budget had been circulated. Councillors were asked to consider this and to advise the Clerk of any changes they would like to make, particularly in relation to proposed expenditure in 08/09. This matter would be discussed further in October/November.

07/44 Brief Reports from Advisory Groups and Council Representatives

Mrs Sayce advised that Mr Gleadhill had agreed to join the Sportsfield Management Group.

Mrs Gravenor agreed to join the Transport & Highways Group and it was suggested that Mr Gleadhill might also be happy to join this group.

Parish Plan Group – Mrs Gravenor to join this group.

a) Footpaths & Environment Group

South Bank Footpath – no response had been received from Allendale Estates or SITA to earlier letters and these are to be chased.

Mr Hooks advised that the next meeting of the Footpaths & Bridleways Group would be held on 8th October. He proposed and it was agreed that this group and the Environment Group should consider merging. It was noted that a representative from Allendale Estates was invited to attend meetings of the Footpaths & Bridleways Group because of their ownership of and interest in the Community Woodland.

b) Play Facilities Group

The Play Facilities Report had been circulated.

Kate's Plain – it was agreed that the tyre should be refilled with soil and planted. Mr Porter was not happy that it had not proved possible to remove the tyre.

It was noted that the fence at Kate's Plain had been damaged again and repaired again. It was felt that there were two problems –

Firstly, balls were going over the fence and had to be retrieved

Secondly that persons unknown were taking a short cut from the A695 through

Kate's Plain and were "unknitting" the fence in order to achieve this.

It was agreed that Mrs Sayce would look into the cost of increasing the height of the fence by 3/4 feet over 3/4 panels to try to prevent balls going into the field.

Branch End Play Area

New Access - over the summer the Clerk had contacted up to a dozen potential project managers for this part of the regeneration. Quotations had been received from three and Mr Hall and Mr Hooks had met one – Guy Rawlinson – and recommended that his quotation of 11% of the cost of the work, plus the cost of a topographical survey should be accepted. This was agreed. Mr Rawlinson will liaise with Kompan and the Sensory Garden Group over this project. It was noted that the old gate and steps to the play area will eventually be removed.

Phase II – As reported earlier County Councillor Thompson has offered £3000 towards this project. An anonymous resident has also made a donation of £1000. This means that funds to cover the entire cost of Phase II have now been received or promised and that there may be sufficient to provide a basket ball post in addition. The Hexham Courant had published an article which had been very helpful.

Play Area Inspections - The annual report from RoSPA had been received. The Play Facilities Group is to liaise with the Clerk on instructions to be given to the Handyman and others to carry out the work required by the inspector.

c) Sensory Garden

It was noted that work on the Sensory Garden would not be able to start until the completion of the work on Phase II and the new access of Branch End Play Area. It was thought therefore that work on the Sensory Garden would have to be put back until early spring 2008.

d) Sports Facilities Group

Mrs Sayce reported that the Rugby and Cricket Clubs had agreed to a 5% increase in rent for the 2007/08 season. Further discussions are to be held with the Football Club.

MUGA Regeneration – Notification of a grant from SITA of £50,000 had been received over the summer. News of the success of the application for funding from the Football Federation was still awaited.

Cricket Field Grass Cutting – Mrs Sayce is to have a meeting with the Head Teacher of Broomley School to try to resolve this issue.

Football Club – a request had been received from the Football Club for a new pitch to be created at the southern end of the Sportsfield. This would involve earth moving and ground levelling and permission would have to be sought by the Parish Council from Allendale Estate. This new pitch is required as the senior football team has been promoted to a higher league and because of this new regulations come into force and the pitch would require some kind of fencing for crowd control. Councillors were concerned that the Sportsfield should also include an area for casual play and occasional use for special events. It was also agreed that football should be encouraged. It was agreed that before any further discussion could take place on this topic some additional information should be sought:

A scale plan of the Eastern Sportsfield as it is at present

A scale plan of the proposed new pitch development

Consideration to be given to the creation of the new pitch at the northern end of the field.

The requirements of other users of the field must be taken into consideration.

How many residents of Stocksfield will benefit from the creation of this new pitch.

Cricket Field Birds Eye Fencing - the Birds Eye Fencing at the edge of the Cricket Field had been damaged and is to be replaced.

e) General Purposes

Clerk Leave of Absence – the Clerk had requested leave of absence from 18th October until 10th December. This was agreed to. The Chair and Vice Chair are to find a temporary Clerk for this period. Dave Porter offered to collate an edition of NE43 News for issue in December – a decision on this to be taken in October. It had been suggested that a Parish plan questionnaire might be published in December rather than NE43 News. It was however felt that a response to a questionnaire issued at this time of year was likely to be poor.

Code of Conduct – Mrs Gravenor had attended the meeting in Tynedale on this subject and summarised the discussion and points of concern. It was agreed to adopt the revised Code of Conduct noting in particular para. 12.2

Para 12 (2) The new code make it difficult for parish councillors who sit on other local bodies to take part in informed debate. You can get round this if you allow public participation throughout the meeting because then the councillor is able to express themselves as a member of the public. However they still have to leave the room while voting on the issue takes place. However our standing orders may not allow public participation throughout the meeting (we have public participation as an agenda item at the beginning of the meeting) David Francis (NALC) suggests as an alternative approach to adjourning the meeting to invite the councillor with prejudicial interest to answer questions or give evidence relating to the business and you may do so provided you do not remain in the meeting for the subsequent deliberation of that business, and that you do not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.

Christmas Trees – A quotation had been received for the supply of Christmas Trees, one for the School and one to be located at the Dr Syntax at New Ridley. Mr Porter felt that as a commercial organisation the Dr Syntax should pay for this tree. It was however pointed out that the owner of the Dr Syntax paid for the lights and electricity on this tree. It was also pointed out that there was no obvious alternative site for a tree at the south eastern part of the village.

A vote was taken and the result were:

In favour of siting a Christmas Tree at Broomley School - All those present

In favour of siting a Christmas Tree at New Ridley - For 3, Against 1, Abstentions 4

It was finally agreed that as the supply of trees had been budgeted for in the Precept then two Sitka Spruce trees would be purchased at a cost including delivery of £480. The question of the provision of Christmas Trees is to be debated when considering the 08/09 budget/precept. Research is to be carried out as to whether any other supplier might be cheaper.

f) Planning

The Planning Report - had been circulated and was accepted.

Railway Masts – Mrs Sayce and Mr Barrass brought the meeting up-to-date on this subject. Notes on recent meetings and recommendations emanating therefrom had been circulated and were endorsed.

Tynedale Local Development Framework – Site Allocations Proposals – the notes on the public meeting held on 30th July to discuss this issue had been circulated and were accepted. The parish Council's draft response to Tynedale had been circulated and was endorsed with the proviso that paras. 4, 7 and 9 be moved to the end of the section.

g) Transport & Highways

A draft letter to SCA and Thompsons regarding reducing traffic levels on the A695 is to be discussed by the Transport Group and brought back to the October meeting.

Provision of Vehicle Activated Signs – meeting at Slaley. Mrs Gravenor volunteered to attend. It is hoped that John Davison will also attend.

Vehicle Activated Signs – Mr Barrass is researching these and it was agreed that the preferred option for the wording would not include the vehicle registration number.

A request for 30 mph signs to be installed at Broomley had been passed to County Councillor Thompson.

h) Policy Group - Nothing to report.

Public Toilet Provision - Councillors had received a number of requests for provision of public toilets at Branch End. The majority of these were from elderly men who instead of walking to Branch End were forced to drive as they could not be certain of getting home without needing to use the toilet. It was also pointed out that there was no public facility available for users of Branch End Play Area. Councillors were reminded that the toilets at Branch End had been closed because at the time they were not well-used and the cost of bringing them up to the standards required by the DDA were prohibitive. It was agreed to ask Tynedale Council to approach Branch End Service Station to see if they could make their toilets available for public use and then publicise the fact.

i) Communication – drafts of the next issue of NE43 News and the Parish Information Card had been circulated and Councillors were requested to advise the Clerk of any amendments.

j) Parish Plan – contact is to be made with Community Action Northumberland with regard to funding.

k) Council Representatives

Planning Forum – the Minutes of this meeting had been circulated.

Parish Council Forum – nothing to report.

07/45 Other business - none

07/46 Date of Next Meeting - Parish Council 1st October

The meeting closed at 10.30p.m.