

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 1st December 2008

Present: Councillors Pete Barrass, John Davison, Pete Duncan, Steve Gleadhill, Ian Hall, Diane Hinchcliffe, Norman Hooks, Melna Martin, Dave Porter, Katharine Russell (left at 8.30 p.m.) Julia Sayce, Mrs M Williams, Clerk.

Also present: County/District Councillor Mrs Anne Dale, Mrs G Brown (Hexham Courant), Ms Helen Morris.

Apologies: District Councillor Colin Argent

Not having been at the November meeting, the Chair, Ian Hall, welcomed Mrs Russell and Mr Duncan to the Parish Council and asked if they would like to join one of the sub-groups.

08/68 Declarations of Interest

Mr Duncan declared an interest in the discussion on the proposals for the development at Stocksfield Hall. Mrs Dale advised that she had an interest in this discussion. Mrs Martin declared an interest in one of the planning applications.

08/69 Minutes

The Minutes were agreed with some minor amendments and signed by Mrs Martin.

08/70 Matters Arising

Double Yellow Lines - Mr Hooks requested that a letter be written to the County requesting that the double yellow lines at the corner of the A695 and Mount View Terrace be refreshed.

Branch End Toilets - Mrs Dale clarified the statement made at the November meeting by advising that under "Quirk" rules the Branch End Toilets could have been transferred to the Parish Council but that as Government Funding under this scheme is now exhausted no money to support its development would follow the transfer. She further said that under such a scheme there would have been no restrictions on future use. Steve Gleadhill pointed out that the Parish Plan had identified this site for community use. Mr Davison asked why we need the toilet site. Mrs Dale advised that under the rules governing the change to the new Unitary Authority Tynedale had severe restrictions on how existing funds can be distributed prior to the end of March. Mr Gleadhill advised that the proposed Charter currently being drawn up between local councils and the new Northumberland Unitary Authority contained a clause on the transfer of community assets which needed clarification.

Mrs Dale advised that the County has to find £29m cutbacks in next year's budget and that these will mean a 20% reduction in expenditure across the board in all departments. She said that she will continue to fight for services to be delivered.

08/71 Proposal to develop office accommodation at Stocksfield Hall

(Mrs Dale left during this discussion)

The Council had received notification of a proposal to build office accommodation at Stocksfield Hall for the Engineering Business. Although a planning application had yet to be submitted, a public consultation event had been on the proposal. In addition an event had been held for the current occupants of Stocksfield Hall. The proposal had also been discussed at the Newton & Bywell Parish Council meeting at which members of Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council Planning Group had been present.

A letter had been received from Prof. Madeley commenting on the proposals.

Dave Porter briefly outlined the position as he saw it:

No formal planning application on the proposals had as yet been submitted.

The Engineering Business has its main office at Broomhaugh, Riding Mill where it employs around 80 people. It also already employs around 75 at Stocksfield Hall. It has outgrown its current office space. The Engineering Business wishes to expand and move its business to Stocksfield. Over the next five years it would hope to increase the number of employees (largely young engineering graduates) to around 300.

There are a number of issues to consider

It is thought that currently only a few of the employees live in Stocksfield.

Extra traffic coming from the A69

Large increase in office space

New car park will hold 260 vehicles and is on the green belt.

Suggestions have been made to the architect to build a second entrance to the site north of the current entrance.

Perhaps the Engineering Business would pay their employees to use the trains.

Other comments made in the meeting:

The proposed new car park will be landscaped and "hide" the cars and will have a permeable surface.

New buildings will be lower than the existing buildings

Mrs Morris said that she was keeping an open mind on the proposals but that as yet she cannot see the pluses for the area. She advised that she had been told that the new building will be higher than the current ones but was unsure whether this would block the view from her property.

Mr Duncan said that the Engineering Company is now part of an international business. He said that the directors have roots in Tynedale. He went on to say that this was a world class, highly prestigious company and that it could be argued that its presence would be a "feather in Stocksfield's cap". He said that at present one would not know that there were 75 people working in the current office. He felt that most people would not be aware of the new build as it is tucked away from the main envelope of the village. He said that personally he supported the proposals in principle and felt that Stocksfield as a community could benefit from the development. He acknowledged that increased traffic and access was a problem.

Mrs Sayce said that she felt that pupils from Prudhoe Community High School would benefit from the presence of such an employer in the area. She said they already benefit from the presence of the Specials Laboratory. Such companies provide opportunities for high calibre employment for our young people.

08/72 Public Participation

Drains & gullies - Mrs Dale said that she had received a lot of complaints about the current state of the drains and gullies. She had contacted the chief Executive of the County Council and asked what the County's liability was. She pointed out that funding for repairs has been cut.

Mr Hall advised that the junction of Meadowfield Road and Cade Hill Road was in a particularly poor condition (the original cobbles are showing through the surface and there is a bad dip next to the entrance to Harnham House).

Parking - Mr Hooks raised concerns about cars parking on the footpath near the School and the Sportsfield. He said that this was a particular problem on Saturdays and that parked cars made it difficult for pedestrians, particularly those with push chairs or mobility scooters to use the pavements. It was noted that only the police can prosecute the offenders. It was also noted that this was a problem outside Branch End Play Area. It was agreed to put an item in the next issue of NE43 News asking residents not to park on the pavement.

Development at Burnside Yard - Notification had been received that the most recent planning application had been withdrawn. It was however felt that there will be a new application in due course. Concern was raised about the current condition of the site and it was agreed to write to the Planning Department Enforcement Officer regarding the fact that the road has not been surfaced, with the result that the kerbs

are very high and drains our standing proud of the surface. It was felt that this was causing inconvenience to residents.

It was also agreed to write to Building Control pointing out that the former joiners workshop was now in a dangerous condition and that this was affecting the property adjoining it.

08/73 Freedom of Information Act

Correspondence had been received from the Information Commissioner's Office on 1st December. This required parish councils to accept a new model publication scheme and to publish the details of the Guide to Information available under the scheme by 1st January 2009.

The documents were tabled at the meeting.

Steve Gleadhill proposed and Norman Hooks seconded and it was agreed that the recommendations be accepted, and the Model Publication Scheme be adopted.

It was also agreed that a letter be sent to the Information Commissioner commenting on the short notice given to implement this adoption.

08/74 Correspondence

The correspondence received had been listed on the Agenda and was noted.

Tynedale - a letter had been received regarding the Site Allocations Options. It was agreed that the Parish Council should write to Northumberland and register the fact that we wish to be consulted on future planning applications.

Tynedale Sports Council - an invitation had been received to the Awards evening. Stocksfield Netball Club and two other residents had been nominated for awards. Mrs Sayce volunteered to attend the ceremony.

Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership - a letter had been received advising that it was proposed to erect a Railway Service Information Board in the east bound bus shelter near the Station. It was noted that there were no costs to be incurred by the Parish Council. It was agreed to write accepting the proposal and stating that there should be a second board in the west bound shelter in due course.

08/75 Finance

The accounts for November were accepted.

The Bank Reconciliation for October was noted.

Additional Cheques -

It was agreed to pay:

B Stewart	£229.00
SRC (Parish Plan)	£402.81
Guy Rawlinson (BEPA)	£1,686.62
Neat Ideas (Colour Printer)	£234.99

08/76 Auditors Report

The Finance & General Purposes Group had examined the report from the Auditors and accepted the recommendations.

It was however, agreed that the Fidelity Guarantee should stand at its current level.

Steve Gleadhill suggested that the Finance & General Purposes Group review the accounts quarterly and warn the council on over/underspend against budget.

It was also agreed that the Financial & General Purposes Group should review the effectiveness of the Internal Audit as per the "Pegswood" model which they had studied.

Councillors accepted the Finance & General Purposes recommendation which had been circulated.

08/77 Parish Plan

All those who were involved in the development of the Parish Plan were congratulated on their work so far and thanked for their efforts.

Mrs Martin said that the interviewers who had conducted the survey for the Plan had been very courteous.

Mr Duncan gave the background to the paper which had been circulated. He said that statistically the survey was as good as if everyone resident had been interviewed. He said that members of the Lower VI at Prudhoe Community High School had been interviewed and that they were quite keen on having a gym provided.

Mrs Dale pointed out that the new ICT suite at Broomley School had now been opened.

The full details of the survey and the recommendations of the plan will be published in the final report which will make up the Parish Plan.

08/78 Community Development & Village Show

A letter had been circulated in November outlining SICA's suggestions to hold a Village "Show" in 2009. Mr Hooks said that there would be costs involved in setting this up and asked the Parish Council to underwrite these. It was hoped that the eventually cost to the Parish Council in staging such an event would be NIL. It was stressed that there would be an initial public meeting to gauge interest in arranging such an event, but that should residents not support the idea then it would not happen. Mrs Sayce pointed out that Churches Together had already booked a "Freshers' Fair" in Sept. 2009.

08/79 Youth Service Agreement

A letter had been received from the County regarding the provision of Youth Services in Stocksfield.

At present it does not appear to be a Youth Club operating at SICA. The youth engagement strategy in Stocksfield appears to have failed. Mr Duncan said he had spoken to young footballers who were not aware that the Youth Project operated in Stocksfield. Young people should be asked what they want. It was agreed to ask the County Officer to attend the meeting in January and to write to him in the meantime saying that Councillors did not believe that the youth service was currently delivering the expected service in Stocksfield.

[Suspension of Standing Orders - it was agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended and the meeting should continue until 10.00 p.m.]

08/80 Rifle/Snooker Club

Councillors had met with the representative of the Rifle/Snooker Club and a paper on these discussions was tabled and accepted.

08/81 Cricket Club - Water Supply

A paper outlining the current problems at the Cricket Field and Cricket Club with regard to field drains and drainage had been circulated and was noted.

08/82 2009/10 Precept.

The changes made to the Precept document had been circulated. It was suggested that the precept should be increased by 5% on that agreed for 2008/09. This would set the precept for 2009/10 at £54,400. Pete Barrass proposed and Steve Gleadhill seconded and it was agreed that the Precept for 2009/10 should be £54,400.

08/83 Brief Reports from Advisory Groups and Council Representatives

a) Sports Facility Group

MUGA Management Agreement - a draft of this agreement had been circulated Norman Hooks proposed and Steve Gleadhill seconded that this be accepted with the addition of a clause concerning issues of concern which might affect forward planning.

b) Finance and General Purposes Group

The Finance & General Purposes Group Report had been circulated and was accepted.

Requests for funding by Stocksfield Scouts and the Methodist Church had been received and recommendations would be made to the January meeting.

c) Transport & Highways

Station Car Park - nothing to report

Railway Masts - nothing to report

Drains & Gullies - Mrs Dale said that the County cannot keep cutting services back and said that this issue would come up when the County was discussing its budget.

d) Footpaths, Gardens & the Environment.

Nothing to report.

New Walks Leaflet - it was suggested and agreed that the £200 share of the Calor Village of the Year prize be used as a contribution towards the cost of the new walks leaflet.

(Pete Barrass left the meeting)

e) Local Government Re-organisation

A meeting had been organised in Hexham by NALC and a brief paper was circulated.

Proposed Charter between the new Unitary Authority and Parish Councils - this had also been discussed at the meeting in Hexham. Mrs Sayce and Mr Gleadhill had looked at this and their comments were circulated. Mr Gleadhill felt that overall this proposed Charter was a good document. It was agreed that Mrs Sayce and Mr Gleadhill should finalise their comments and that they should be returned to County.

f) Planning

The Planning Report for November had been circulated.

It was noted that the most recent planning application for the development at Burnside had been withdrawn. It was agreed that letters should be written to Tynedale Building Control and Planning Enforcement regarding the delays to the development of this site. Of particular concern were the condition of the former joiners shop and the road surface which has left very high kerbs and "proud" drains.

It was agreed to ask Colin Argent to up-date councillors at the January meeting on flooding on New Ridley Road. It was noted that Tynedale is negotiating with landowners over this problem.

g) Communication

The draft of the latest edition of NE43 News was tabled. This will be returned from the printers by 10th December and will be distributed week commencing 14th December with the Parish Christmas Card.

h) Play Facilities

Branch End Play Area - complaints had been received about parking on the pavement outside BEPA.

John Davison is to look at possible solutions to this problem.

Contact is to be made with Kompan regarding the provision of goal posts.

Kate's Pain - tyre - as no response has been received from Stanleys regarding the removal of the tyre, other scrap merchants are to be contacted.

i) Sensory Garden - nothing to report

j) Policy Group

The Clerk is to draft a response to the Dept. for Communities & Local Government confirming the adoption of para. 12b in the revised Code of conduct.

k) Council Representatives

l) Parish Plan - see 08/77 above

08/84 Other business - None

08/85 Date of Next Meeting - 5th January 2009 in the Mary Clayton Room at SICA

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.