

# **Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council.**

## **Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4th January 2010**

Present: Councillors Pete Barrass, Pete Duncan, Steve Gleadhill, Ian Hall, Diane Hinchcliffe, Norman Hooks, Melna Martin, Helen Morris, Katharine Russell, Julia Sayce, Mrs Margaret Williams, Clerk. Also Present: County Councillor Anne Dale, Gemma Brown, Hexham Courant, Mr R Dryden

**Apologies:** Dave Porter

The Chairman opened the meeting by wishing everyone present a Happy New Year.

### **09/70 Declarations of Interest - None**

### **09/71 Minutes**

It was proposed by Norman Hooks and seconded by Julia Sayce and agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December be accepted with typographical errors being amended.

### **09/72 Matters Arising**

The sign for the Sportsfield is still to be ordered.

### **09/73 Public Participation**

Mr Dryden raised queries about the level of gritting provided for the properties at Apperley. He accepted that it was not possible for the gritters to clear this road but said that in previous years grit heaps had been provided and that despite promises to provide grit none had been forthcoming. It was also said that the level of gritting on New Ridley Road was poor. Mrs Dale advised that she had numerous complaints in the last few days and that she had had a meeting on 4th Jan with the County Highways. She went on to say that gritting and snow clearance had always been the responsibility of the County. She said that it was alleged that the County did not know where all the grit bins were and that an inventory would have to be taken. She also advised that the County will keep strategic routes open and that the A695 is not classed as a strategic route. She said that there were 12 vacancies in highways which the County is not able to fill at present and that the staff are working hard in extreme circumstances. Mrs Dale said that she believed that residents believe that highways maintenance and snow clearance should be classed as priorities. She is to draw up a report on the snow clearance situation in the west. Mr Duncan asked if there was national directive on keeping roads open. Mrs Sayce said that on Day 19 of the current "snow event" there were roads around Stocksfield which had still not received treatment. Mrs Martin said that in all parts of the district carers were unable to reach clients and several had had minor accidents. Councillors stressed that they were not criticising the staff on the ground but that they were critical of the County Council's structure and policies. They felt that there was no fall-back position and that the County was not using all possible alternatives. It was felt that refuse collectors had been taken off regular duties and put on winter duties. Mr Dryden said that until the road was clear, refuse collection would be unable to be carried out at Apperley. Norman Hooks reported that it was alleged that the County was unable to grit and clear the yards at Prudhoe Community High School. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of the County Council pointing out the parish council's concerns. It was also agreed to bring the concerns to the next meeting of the Eastern Parishes Community Forum. It was noted that once the snow had cleared there would be massive maintenance costs to repair frost and snow damage to the road surfaces.

Mr Dryden also brought up the question of the road passing his house. He believed that notification had been received that this would be a restricted by way but that the definitive map shows it to be a road. It was felt that the route should carry adequate signage. Mrs Dale offered to contact Tim Fish, the Footpaths Officer on this matter. Norman Hooks will also raise it at the forthcoming meeting of the Rights of Way Group.

Mr Dryden further went on to say that he understood that the County is proposing to sponsor a horse competition at Morpeth. He felt that this was “money down” the drain as no horse show makes a profit. It was felt that public money should not be used in the commercial sector. Mrs Dale will raise this question with the County.

Mr Dryden thanked the Council for listening to him.

Mrs Dale raised the question of the County Council budget to 2010/11. She said that the County was currently going through the public consultation process and stressed that it was important to take part in the process. She said that the Executive’s budget proposals are available on line and that she will let the Clerk have a copy of the conservative group’s alternative proposals.

### **09/74 Correspondence**

Correspondence received since the December meeting had been listed on the agenda and was noted.

Replies to earlier queries had been delayed as those who had offered to draft them had been involved with family issues. Julia Sayce, Ian Hall and Pete Duncan are to look at these issues.

A response is to be sent to Northumberland Fire & Rescue raising concerns about the short notice for public consultation on proposals for Prudhoe Fire Station.

### **09/75 Finance**

November Accounts: The Accounts for December had been circulated and were agreed.

The Bank Reconciliation to 30th November was noted.

It was agreed to ask the internal auditor Peter Basnett to talk to the Parish Council about accounts prior to the February meeting. The Clerk would also explain the workings of the parish council system.

2010/11 Precept/Budget - A paper was tabled with amended suggestions for the precept/budget for 2010/11. These amendments were accepted. It was proposed by Julia Sayce, seconded by Pete Duncan and agreed that the precept for 2010/11 should be set at £56032. This would incorporate the suggestions in the paper tabled this evening.

One of the suggestions covered in the paper was that a coherent plan for youth work should be considered by the parish council which would include consulting with neighbouring parish councils and statutory bodies.

Additional Cheques - it was agreed that the following be paid

Northumberland County Council - servicing dog bins - £1,570

(Mr Dryden left the meeting)

### **09/76 Brief Reports from Advisory Groups and Council Representatives**

#### **a) Transport & Highways**

Station Car Park - it was noted that the work had not started due to the inclement weather conditions. It was hoped that the meeting planned for 7th January would go ahead. It was agreed that once the work started the contractor would be asked to submit a pro forma invoice so that the claim could be made in time for funding from the DfT.

#### **Drains & Gullies**

Mrs Dale said that the problem near the Baptist Church had been sorted. The problem at the junction of New Ridley Road and the A695 is on the list to be repaired. Baliol Road is to be resurfaced. The problem at Charlton’s farm is still being investigated. It was reported that the drain at the junction of Welton Close and Birkdene needs looking at. Mrs Dale said that a lot had been done in Stocksfield recently and will be done in the next year.

(Mrs Dale left the meeting at this point)

VATS - The handyman is to rotate the sign at Welton Close. Dambach are to be advised of the response from Dorman Varitext with regard to the sign on New Ridley Road.

b) Footpaths Gardens & Environment

Repairs to Ford It is hoped that the repair to the Ford will be carried out before the end of the current financial year. Norman Hooks advised that River Watch Group and the Tyne Rivers Trust would like to include a fish pass in the work to see if the southern reaches of the burn would be suitable as a spawning ground for sea trout. It was thought that the Environment Agency is not too keen on this suggestion.

Supply of Dog Bin at Guessburn - It had been brought to the attention of the Parish Council that dog walkers were hanging bags of dog waste on trees and hedges. A request had been received for a dog waste bin in Guessburn. It was agreed to purchase a further bin and site it on the triangle of land half way up Guessburn. It was felt that dog walkers should be educated about disposing of waste and it was agreed to request an article in the Courant and NE43 News highlighting the problem.

Spring Tidy Up - it was agreed in principle to arrange this and to involve community groups. It was felt that this should take place at the end of April in order that the school and young people's groups might be involved.

c) Community Development - nothing to report

d) Sports Facilities

It was reported that the Football Club is making progress towards becoming one organisation as opposed to a collection of teams.

e) Proposal to set up a Development Trust

SICA had been offered a grant from the Community Chest towards the cost of a feasibility study. This would not nearly cover the suggested costs of this study. Norman Hooks had been in touch with FONDT who had suggested that there was no need to do such a study. He is to arrange a meeting with FONDT and the Group and perhaps visit other trusts. The Group needs to look at the sort of things that we would like to do.

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

f) Parish Plan Action Group

The Group had met and drawn up a simplified plan which will be sent to councillors for discussion at the February meeting

g) Planning

The planning report had been circulated.

The County officer is to be contacted about arranging a planning training session for 15th February. At 7.00 p.m.

h) Communication

Parish Information Card - Local businesses are to be contacted - only commercial organisations are to be asked to make a payment for their entry.

i) Policy Group - Nothing to report

j) Play Facilities - Nothing to report

Community Garden - the number of sponsorship pledges for plants is growing. .

k) Finance & General Purposes Group. - The group had not met.

l) Council Representatives -

Eastern Tyndale Community Forum - the next meeting, an open meeting, will be held at Stocksfield on 12th January.

**09/77 Any Other Business -**

A letter is to be written to the Scouts expressing appreciation of the Scout Post this year.

The new seats are both in place. Tim Fish was thanked for his help in installing the seat on the Round Hill. A plaque is to be provided saying that this seat was in memory of Ruth Robson. SICA is to contribute £170 towards the cost of the seat in memory of Ruth Robson.

The Chairman reminded councillors that it is custom and practice for the Chairman to stand down after two years and asked them to consider who might be Chair from May onwards.

**09/78 Date of next meeting: 1st February 2010 at 7.00 p.m.**

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.