

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council.

Minutes of the of the Parish Council held on Monday 5th September 2011

Present: Councillors Pete Barrass, John Davison, Pete Duncan, Ian Hall, Maggi Hunt, Norman Hooks, Melna Martin, Helen Morris, Julia Sayce, Alan Verheyden, Keith Woods. Mrs M Williams, Clerk. Also present: Mr & Mrs M Cummings, Mrs D Gilbert, Mrs F Nicholson.

Apologies: Diane Hinchcliffe, County Councillor Anne Dale

11/38 Election of Chairman

The Clerk, Mrs Williams opened the meeting by saying that she had had a letter from Mrs Sayce tendering her resignation as Chairman of the Parish Council. Mrs Williams requested nominations for the post of Chairman.

Mrs Martin proposed and Mrs Sayce seconded and it was duly agreed that Ms M Hunt be elected as Chairman.

Ms Hunt took the Chair.

Mrs Sayce thanked councillors for their support for her as Chairman over the past few months.

11/39 Election of Vice Chairman

As a result of Ms Hunt being elected to the Chair this created a vacancy for Vice Chairman. Mrs Sayce proposed and Mr Verheyden seconded and it was agreed that Mr Keith Woods be elected as Vice Chairman.

11/40 Merryshields Quarry - 11/01479/MINREV

Review of Old Minerals Permissions in respect of sand and gravel extraction

Mr Verheyden declared an interest in this topic.

Firstly it was stated that as this was a Review of an extant Planning Permission we could not object to the application.

Mr Hall opened the discussions by stating that the response to the County had been drawn up and highlighted areas of concern which had arisen as a result of contact by nearby residents and the fact that awareness of environmental considerations had changed since the application for this site had first been considered and the site had last been worked.

The discussion highlighted:

Particular reference to the quality of life of the residents

It was asked if the effects on children at Broomley School should be made more explicit in the response

It was noted that no blasting was involved

Clarification is to be sought on the difference between "minerals" and "sand and gravel" in the application documentation.

It is understood that SITA are keeping the application "on the boil" but that work on the site would be market driven.

Extraction from the part of the site under discussion was last undertaken over 25 years ago.

Restoration - the suggestion in the application that restoration might include a golf course was felt to be inappropriate at present.

It was suggested that none of the species of birds listed in the Environmental Report would use nest boxes were they to be provided. A resident of Stocksfield has a survey of the birds on the site covering the last ten years and it was suggested that this might be included with the response to the application.

It was felt that there was a need to watch the aftercare of the site from the point of view of County supervision - it was alleged that the aftercare of the new ponds by the river was not enforced as stock is allowed to graze to close to the ponds in contravention of the conditions.

Community Infrastructure Levy - can we get funding for the village from this?

The proposals for the site do not accord with the current Parish Plan.

It was agreed that with the inclusion of the extra points then the proposed response to the County should be sent.

The debate then moved on to consider

The need to ask a representative of SITA to meet with the residents.

It was felt that a better approach would be for a representative of SITA to meet with the Rights of Way Group.

It was finally agreed to write to SITA listing queries and concerns and eventually publishing their response.

Mrs Nicholson expressed concern about vehicles leaving the site and joining the A695, with particular concern about the speed of the vehicles using the A695.

It was also agreed to write a press release on the debate.

11/41 Declarations of Interest - None

11/42 Public Participation

Whittonstall Opencast - Mr & Mrs Cummings had attended the meeting to discuss this topic. They said that one resident had said the coal was going out of the site by rail and another had suggested that the Parish Council was sitting on the fence on this issue.

It was confirmed that the proposal is to take the coal to a rail head but that this rail head is proposed to be at Wolsingham and not Stocksfield.

Mrs Williams was asked to give the Parish Council's position as she understood it and advised that the Parish Council had made no objections on PLANNING grounds but had in their response outlined concerns regarding traffic and site restoration.

Mrs Sayce confirmed this and went on to say that very few residents had approached the Parish Council to express opinions on the proposals. It was confirmed that we had given our support to the Whittonstall Action Group and that one councillor had been to Shotton opencast site with the Action Group. Alan Verheyden also referred to the possibility of further sites around Hedley being developed in the future. He advised that County officers are working on a traffic consultation which will come back to consultees for comment.

It was also confirmed that the topic had been debated by the Eastern Parishes Forum and that the Parish Council had put money aside for possible legal representation.

Mr & Mrs Cummings suggested that the Parish Council should have publicised its position better.

Mr Cummings said that property prices are sticking because of the proposal.

It was noted that Whittonstall School governors are not concerned about the application.

It was noted that because of tighter regulations both dust and noise problems are likely to be less than for previous workings of this type.

Mr and Mrs Cummings were thanked for attending and bringing the issue to the attention of the Parish Council's attention.

It was agreed that the Parish Council needs to make its position clear.

Mrs Gilbert asked if some type of seating could be put in the bus shelters - it was agreed to look into this.

She also suggested that a sign be put on the gate at Kate's Plain requesting that it be kept closed - it was noted that the Council had already agreed to fit a spring on the gate.

Mrs Nicholson advised that the film company which had been using the sportsfields had been very considerate.

County Councillor Mrs Dale had submitted a written report which had been tabled at the meeting.

Access to Transport on New Ridley Road - Alan Verheyden is to get in touch with Mrs Dale and if appropriate Pete Barrass and Helen Morris might be involved in the meeting.

Dog Barking - Mrs Dale had received two anonymous letters concerning dogs barking in the area of New Ridley Road. The Community safety officer has been out with her and the offending dogs have been identified. She will be delivering leaflets around the area

The other items in her report were noted.

11/43 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th July

Ian Hall proposed, Julia Sayce seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th July 2011 were a true and correct record.

11/44 Matters Arising:

Mrs Sayce reported that the item about cycling on the pavements had been squeezed out of the current issue of NE43 News. It was also noted that the Police Rapid Response number was not working and that PC Joanne Tennant was not contacting residents. It was agreed to clarify if PC Tennant was still in post.

The furniture from the County Council for the Parish Office is now in place.

Stone gatepost at Birches Nook - Mr Hall had spoken to Dennis Harding who had suggested that this was originally an entrance to Stocksfield Farm but that no one knows who owns the gate post now.

It was agreed to chase the owner of the oak tree overhanging the Scaur Steps as no action had apparently been taken to rectify the problem.

Stocksfield River Watch Group was congratulated on winning an award in the Love Northumberland Scheme.

11/45 Public Participation

This had been covered above. No other items were raised.

11/46 Correspondence

Correspondence received since the July meeting had been listed on the Agenda and was noted.

11/47 Finance

The Accounts for July/August 2011 and were approved subject to further discussion by the Finance and General Purposes Group.

The Bank Reconciliation for July 2011 was noted and Pete Barrass proposed and Pete Duncan seconded and it was agreed that it be accepted.

Expenditure for July/August had been circulated, and Julia Sayce proposed and Pete Barrass seconded and it was agreed that it be approved..

The Finance & General Purposes Group is to look at the presentation of the accounts.

Additional Cheques - were approved as follows:

Robson Print

£264.00

Northumberland County Council	£808.41
Robson Print	£312.00
Robin Watson Sign & Design	£160.38

11/48 Resignation of Norman Hooks

Heartfelt thanks were expressed for Norman Hooks for the work he had done on behalf of the Parish Council and hope was expressed that he would not "disappear" completely.

11/49 Co-option of New Parish Councillor

To-date no one had come forward expressing interest.

11/50 Convenor of Footpaths & Environment Group and a new representative to the Community Rail Partnership

It was agreed that Norman Hooks would continue to Chair the Rights of Way Group and that Helen Morris would report back to the Parish Council on the proceedings of this group. There is a need to consider who will liaise with the County Footpaths Officer, and others on behalf of the Parish Council.

11/51 Advisory Groups & Council Representatives

a) Finance & General Purposes Group

The report of the previous meeting of the Group had been circulated.

The Tenancy Agreement between Stocksfield Community Association and the Parish Council for the new parish office had been signed.

The question of the repairs to the fence at Kates Plain was referred back to the F&GP.

Pete Duncan is to refer the problem of the Football Club leaving equipment etc. lying around and thus impeding the grass cutters back to the Football Club.

insert "It was agreed that Pete Duncan would liaise with the football club on the matter of the old and broken equipment which had been left on the pitches and was impeding grass cutting.

The paper on Vexatious Communications was referred back to the F&GP.

Christmas Tree - the proposal to provide a Christmas Tree at the Dr Syntax and lights at the school was agreed.

Football Club Grant

Julia Sayce proposed and Pete Duncan seconded and it was agreed that:

The Parish Council purchase the Mini-soccer goals and footballs at a total cost of £780 (inc VAT).

The Parish Council then claims back the VAT

The Parish Council invoices the Football Club for the cost less VAT

The Parish Council grants the Football Club £500

The Football Club repays to the Parish Council the difference between the cost of the equipment and the grant.

Total Cost of the equipment £780. Less VAT - £650

Invoice to Football Club £650. Less £500 grant £500. Total Cost to Football Club £150 plus coaching costs of £250.

Ian Hall proposed and it was agreed that this grant come from the Youth Work Fund.

Remembrance Sunday

It was agreed to ask Dr T Trapp, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, to lay a wreath again this year.

It was agreed to ask representatives from Albemarle to attend

It was agreed to ask the Guides to provide refreshments at SCA

Request for funding from At Home in the Community - referred back to the F&GP

Revised Standing Orders - Maggi Hunt is drafting these and they will be circulated to councillors for comment and approval in October.

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

b) Parish Plan Action Group - the group is to hold a meeting shortly and it was suggested that one member from each advisory group should also attend the meeting, Discussions on a Neighbourhood Plan would be built into the meeting.

c) Sports Facilities - The report from the Sports Facilities Group had been circulated and was noted.

Snooker/Rifle Club - councillors were up-dated with regard to the position regarding this site, including the suggestion that housing associations may be willing to put in a planning application.

Usage of SMUGA - a report on the usage had been circulated and it was noted that usage was continuing to increase.

d) Transport & Highways - The report on the recent meeting regarding care of the station car park had been circulated. It was agreed that there is a need to get residents involved with a "Friends of ..." and it was suggested that the Plants & Gardens members might be willing to give advice and that the school might also be interested in being involved. It was reported that Mr Reisner had expressed an interest once again and it had been suggested to him that he might become involved with a "Friends" Group. It was agreed to find out more about setting up a "Friends" group. It was suggested that the main area of the car park be looked after by adults rather than children and it was also agreed that the proposed Friends Group would not care for the planting on the bank behind the north platform. It was suggested that daffodils might be planted on the bank round where the cross is planted in Easter week.

The repairs to the wall along the A695 are to be chased.

The comments on the future franchises on the West line were noted and it was asked if anyone would be willing to look at this in due course.

Local Transport Plan - The Transport & Highways Group are to meet to discuss priorities.

New signage on junctions around the Fords. Alan Verheyden, Norman Hooks and Stefan Bell (County Officer) were congratulated on achieving the installation of new signs. A letter of appreciation is to be sent to Stefan Bell.

Road Safety issues - as requested by County Councillor Anne Dale, it was agreed that Alan Verheyden would meet with her and a County Officer to look at the issues.

e) Community Development - Pete Duncan advised that matters were moving quite quickly. Meetings had been held with ISOS who have produced an outline plan for the site at Branch End which might include elderly persons' flats, community space, a community cafe, a new surgery and the Quaker Meeting House. Agreement with the owner of the site is still needed. There may be funds from the Homes & Communities Agency for such a project. There will have to be a parish housing needs survey carried out - the last survey was carried out by the County Council - there is not enough information in the Parish Plan.

The Development Trust has still to be constituted. There is a desire to bring the Community Association and the Development Trust together.

Pete Duncan was thanked for his efforts and requested to continue to up-date the Parish Council.

Olympic Celebrations - the plans for the Eastern Parishes event continue to be formulated.

Diamond Jubilee - We need to consider what we might do - Melna Martin and Helen Morris expressed an interest in organising something - further discussion was deferred to October.

Stocksfield Festival - plans are well in hand.

Focus on Youth - Maggi Hunt has had a meeting with the Chief Executive of Northumberland Clubs for Young People who have the licence for the Key Fund which young people can apply to for funds. Ms Hunt is to go to schools to discuss what young people want.

Pete Barrass is to chair the meeting on the setting up of a cycle club.

Skate Park - discussion deferred to October.

f) Play Facilities - Branch End Play Area - noting the comments in the recent RoSPA inspection report, it was agreed in principle to replace the "Twist". It was felt that young people should be involved in choosing a replacement for this equipment.

It was further agreed in principle that a new regeneration group for BEPA should be set up. It was noted that the Community Garden group had not yet set up a bank account and that their funds were still held in the Churches Together Account.

It was reported that children are still being allowed to "do their business" at BEPA. Signs are to be put up and the Nursery contacted requesting that this practice be discontinued.

BEPA had been very well used during the summer holidays. The usage summary was noted.

Community Garden - is continuing to be cared for. The Group needs the Handyman's assistance to clear and weed kill the banking - it was agreed that they could contact him.

Kate's Plain - following the incident in the summer when a tree had come down, the fence had been damaged and a bullock had got into Kate's Plain and then into Guessburn, it was agreed to fit a spring to the pedestrian gate.

RoSPA Play Area Inspections - defer to October

(Messrs Barrass and Hall left the meeting)

g) Planning - The Planning Report had been circulated.

A report on the Planning Training events held by the County had been circulated.

Draft National Planning Policy - Mrs Sayce offered to look at this and Pete Duncan offered to help.

Ms Hunt is to come off the Planning Group and Mrs Sayce will go back on.

It was felt there was a need to check on the plans for 2 Apperley Road to see that what was being built was what had been agreed.

Mrs Sayce requested a list of Tree Preservation Orders.

h) Communications - It was agreed that a group would be set up to look at policy guidelines for future editions of NE43 News and that for each edition there would be an editorial group.

An e-mail had been received from Dave Porter and consideration would be given to how best to respond. It was agreed that a lot of people do not have access to the internet and that therefore the Parish Council would continue to publish NE43 News as a hard copy. Mr Porter's contribution to raising the standard of NE43 News was acknowledged and it was agreed that future issues would need to be of a similar standard. It was agreed to ask 2B Graphics for advice. Costs of preparation and printing the newsletter need to be considered. The policy group would consist of Pete Duncan, Keith Woods and Julia Sayce.

It was agreed that Dave Porter should continue to look after the website and that residents should be encouraged to make more use of it.

i) Footpaths Gardens & Environment - The next meeting of the Rights of Way Group is on 19th September.

It was agreed to provide a new litter bin at the Fords.

County Councillor Dale's report - it was felt that the litter bin referred to here was the responsibility of the County Council.

Flooding/sewage on Ridley Mill Road - Norman Hooks is continuing to pursue a solution to this problem.

j) Council Representatives - The next meeting of the West Area Committee of the County Council is at Ponteland on 13th September.

On 11th October the County Council is to hold a meeting with parish councils. This will be held at Stocksfield. Ms Hunt and Mr Hall are to attend.

Ms Hunt is to attend a meeting of the Northumbria Police Strategic Assessment Group - councillors were requested to advise her of items they wished to raise.

k) - Policy Group - nothing to report

11/52 - Any Other Business:

Mrs Martin brought up the subject of the new service being contemplated to replace the Meals on Wheels Service. Ms Hunt proposed and Pete Duncan seconded and it was agreed to give a grant of £100 as pump priming to this new service and that they should then make formal application for more funding if required.

Meeting length - Ms Hunt said that it was her aim to reduce the length of meetings to two hours.

11/53 - Date of Next Meeting - 3rd October 2011

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.