

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
held on Monday 5th March 2012**

Present: Councillors Pete Barrass, John Davison, Pete Duncan, Maggi Hunt, Melna Martin, Alan Verheyden, Keith Woods

Mrs M Williams, Clerk

Also present: County Councillor Anne Dale

Apologies: Ian Hall, Julia Sayce,

Ms Hunt opened the meeting by paying tribute to Mrs Joyce Simpson who had died the previous week. Mrs Simpson had been one of the first women to serve on Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council and had been one of the founder members of the Community Association. Ms Hunt said that the community was very grateful for the contribution that Mrs Simpson had made to the life of the village for well over 50 years.

Ms Hunt also congratulated Ian Hall and his wife Joan who had celebrated their Golden Wedding the previous weekend.

Ms Hunt advised the meeting that neither she nor the Vice Chairman, Mr Woods, could attend the July meeting of the Parish Council and she asked for a volunteer to Chair this meeting.

11/114 Declarations of Interest – Mr Duncan declared an interest in the request by Josie's Dragonfly Trust for a grant.

11/115 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th February 2012.

Mr Barrass proposed, Mr Woods seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting.

11/116 Matters Arising

Mrs Dale advised that the County Council had swept the Bywell Road.

Concern re Doctors' Appointments - the Patients Forum had not yet met. It was noted that appointments could now be made on-line.

Remembrance Sunday – the report on the meeting to discuss the arrangements had been noted and was accepted.

11/117 Public Participation

A complaint had been received about the noise that Thompson's wagons make when going through the village empty early in the mornings. Mrs Dale is to ask that the potholes and manhole covers be inspected.

11/118 Correspondence

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

11/119 Finance

The Accounts for February 2012 had been reviewed prior to the meeting by three members of the Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group and their acceptance was recommended and agreed. It was reported that there were two discrepancies and that the Clerk would look into these and report back to the F&GP Group. She suggested that the problem had arisen as a result of running two accounting systems.

Year End - authorisation was given to sign the majority of cheques by the middle of March in order that they could be cleared through the bank before the end of the financial year.

11/120 New Parish Councillors

An application had been received from Richard Berg-Rust to be a Parish Councillor and it was agreed to co-opt him to the Council with effect from April 2012.

No other applications/nominations had been received although it was thought that two other residents had expressed an interest in being parish councillors. They are to be encouraged to put in an application to the Clerk.

11/121 Advisory Groups & Council Representatives

a) Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group

The report of the most recent meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group had been circulated and was noted.

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Parish Clerk's post – Mr Duncan proposed and Mrs Martin seconded and it was agreed that all of the documents relating to the Parish Clerk's post be approved and adopted with immediate effect. It was further agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Peter Kemp for his invaluable assistance as a member of the Job Evaluation Task Group.

Grants - Mr Verheyden proposed and Mrs Martin seconded and it was agreed that the recommended payments be made.

A request had been received to fund a lunch for all WRVS Meals on Wheels volunteers to mark the end of the volunteer service in Stocksfeld. It was proposed and agreed that a grant of £100 be made.

A request had been made by the Tyne Rivers Trust to make a grant towards the stabilisation of the bank of the Stocksfeld Burn. Since the application had been made, however, the County Council had agreed to fund this work in total. The work will be carried out in May.

Chairman's Allowance – Mr Duncan proposed, Mr Woods seconded and it was agreed that the practice of paying allowances to the Chairman and Convenors of Advisory Groups be ended with immediate effect.

Annual Parish Meeting – this will take place on 16th April. The main topic will be Neighbourhood Plans and the speaker will be David English of the County Council Planning Department who will give a presentation. Councillors were asked to encourage residents to attend.

Parish Council Meeting Agendas – It was agreed that an attempt would be made to streamline the agendas. As a first step it was agreed that items in the pending column would be deleted where appropriate.

b) Transport & Highways Advisory Group

Parking at Guessburn – Mrs Dale had held a meeting today with residents of Mount View Terrace, South Parade and Guessburn, at which Mr J Long of the County Council was also present. Mrs Dale advised that she had had 25 responses to her questionnaire and that the main purpose of the meeting had been to gather information. The meeting had noted that residents of South Parade required access at all times to both the front and back lanes. Mr Long had gone away from the meeting with a number of suggestions as to how the problems might be addressed. He is to look at the proposals and comments and come back to a further meeting with suggestions as to a way forward. Following that, the proposals would become part of a formal consultation. Mrs Dale was thanked for organising the meeting.

Parking Enforcement – Mrs Dale advised that from 1st April the County Council would be employing Parking Enforcement Wardens who would be able to issue enforcement notices to residents who were infringing parking regulations.

Hedge on New Ridley Road - it was felt that the repair carried out recently was "neither use nor ornament. Flooding some years ago had resulted in holes in the hedge, and there is some dispute about its ownership. To ensure the safety of pedestrians, it was agreed that there should be a retaining fence at the top, as the pavement bordered by the hedge is very narrow. Mrs Dale offered to ask the County Council to acknowledge ownership of the hedge, and in the meantime Ms Hunt and Mr Davidson would make a site visit.

The view was expressed that the work carried out on behalf of the County Council in this instance could be described as shoddy.

Speeding through Broomley village – a resident had raised concerns about the speed of traffic through Broomley village. Mrs Dale advised that this matter had been considered last year. She agreed, however, to ask the County Council to look at this again in view of the fact that the number of properties and residents had increased. It was noted that, to date, no accidents had been reported on this stretch of road.

Horses – a resident had raised concerns about the number of horses using New Ridley Road and the Estate roads. She had concerns both about the manure being dropped on the highway, and the possibility of the horses being "spooked" and causing an accident. It was felt that, as horses were legally allowed to use the roads, there was little that could be done.

Speeding on the A695 – Mrs Dale reported that she had received a list of accidents/incidents on the road through Stocksfeld. The list was felt to be inaccurate, particularly as it only covered the period from July 2011 to the present day.

Community Rail Partnership – Mr Verheyden volunteered to attend the Stakeholders meeting on 17th April.

c) Planning Advisory Group

In Mr Hall's absence there was nothing to report.

Whittonstall Action Group – the Group's report had been circulated and was noted.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – due in part to other commitments by the members, the meeting had been poorly attended. The report had been circulated and was noted. The general feeling of those present had been that there was currently nothing much to proceed on, as the Government had yet to develop detailed guidance on the Localism Act 2011. Mr English of the County Council's Planning Department had advised that the Parish Council should be looking out for forthcoming consultations on planning matters, and should make comments on them as appropriate. It was noted that all councillors would be circulated with these documents when they are published and that the views of all parish councillors will be sought. There are at present no further funds from either central government or the County Council for parishes to draw upon to develop neighbourhood plans. In Broomley & Stocksfield's case, "person power" would be the major problem, although it was thought that clusters of parishes working together on a plan might be a way forward. It was noted that the Painshawfield Estate Committee would like the plan which they have drawn up for the Estate to become part of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Woods asked if the effort put into developing a Neighbourhood Plan was likely to be worthwhile. It is not clear what extra powers the Parish Council would have if a Neighbourhood Plan were in place. Before going too far down the road towards developing a plan, councillors needed to know what the benefit of a Neighbourhood Plan would be to the community.

d) Community Development

Olympic Torch Relay – Ms Hunt and Mrs Williams had attended a meeting with County Council officers regarding the route of the Olympic Torch Relay through Stocksfield on 16th June. The route and the times are confirmed although the details are embargoed until 19th March. The relay will be accompanied by a cavalcade of 30 vehicles. At the meeting Ms Hunt and Mrs Williams had pointed out that parking was restricted, particularly at the eastern end of the village, and also that the pavement does not go right through the village on both sides of the road.

Diamond Jubilee – The notes of the most recent meeting of the Committee had been circulated and were noted.

Focus on Youth - Ms Hunt had attended both recent events and the reports on these had been circulated and were noted. Ms Hunt reported that girls were keen to take part in drama and dance activities, and strongly felt that girls' football and rugby should be available. Ms Hunt has spoken to over 100 young people over the past months and will make a full report on their views to the April meeting of the Parish Council. It was agreed to write to Northumberland Clubs for Young People and thank them for their input into the "Urban Fun Day".

Mr Duncan proposed, Mr Davison seconded and it was agreed to organise a similar event in the Easter holidays if possible.

[Suspension of Standing Orders – Mrs Martin proposed and Mr Barrass seconded and it was agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended and the meeting should continue until 10.00 p.m.]

Regeneration Group – A report on the meeting held to discuss this proposal had been circulated and was noted.

e) Communications Advisory Group

NE43 News – it was reported that too much copy had been submitted and therefore major editing was in process to reduce the content to 8 sides.

Website – the Communications Group had met to discuss the five tenders for the post of webmaster and for the re-design of the website. The Group recommended that the tender be offered to Steve Gibbon Web Design, subject to a satisfactory pre-contract meeting, and their recommendation was unanimously approved.

f) Sports Facilities Advisory Group

The notes of the meeting of the Sportsfield Management Group held on 13th February had been circulated and were noted. The next meeting of the Sportsfield Management Group will be held on 23rd April. A planning application for the proposed Sportsfield Car Park and applications for funding the project are to be submitted as soon as possible. In order to make realistic funding bids, it was agreed that formal quotations for the work should be sought.

SMUGA Usage – the latest figures on usage and income had been circulated and were noted.

g) Footpaths & Environment Advisory Group

Attracting Pollinators – following a recent series on TV, the Clerk had circulated a suggestion regarding planting to attract pollinators. Mr Verheyden had received literature on this topic and offered to bring it to the attention of Mr Norman Hooks and the Rights of Way Group.

Bedding Plants – it was agreed to obtain these from Wylam Nurseries this year.

Hanging Baskets - it was agreed to ask those who wished to take hanging baskets to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost (e.g. £10).

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Stocksfield Sewer Capacity – a report on the recent work on the sewer on Ridley Mill Road had been circulated and was noted.

Footpath between Meadowfield & Apperley Roads (past St John's Church) – it was reported that Norman Hooks and Tim Fish of the County Council had looked at the surface of the path. It was agreed that the problem was a build up of leaves on the surface and no action was required.

Path by Welton Close – this path is steep and narrow and requests have been made in the past to provide a handrail at the top. Mrs Dale offered to discuss this problem with Tim Fish of the County Council, and to arrange for the path to be swept.

Scaur Steps – it was noted that the handrail is damaged, and agreed that this should be reported to the County Council.

Fish Pass – it was noted that a fish pass is to be built on the first ford to allow migratory fish to access the upper reaches of the Stocksfield Burn.

Spring Clean – this will be held during the week commencing 16th April. Mr Verheyden asked for 12 tabards to be requested from the County Council for use by the volunteers.

Hindley to New Ridley footpath – it was noted that the footpath past Craghead Cottages had been re-opened.

A request had been made for a small plaque to be installed in memory of a resident's late son. Mrs Dale and Mr Verheyden are to look into this and will make a recommendation to the Parish Council.

h) Play Facilities Advisory Group

Replacement of the Twist at Branch End Play Area - Mrs Dale offered to look into the possibility of convening a group of local people who would be willing to raise funds for the replacement of this piece of equipment.

Willow tunnel – Mrs Martin advised that this was being repaired.

An article on the 40th anniversary of the start of development of Branch End Play Area is to be included in the edition of NE43 News currently being prepared.

Spring planting of the Community Garden is being undertaken.

Path at BEPA – Mrs Dale is to ask Tim Fish of the County Council if anything can be done to repair the path.

Provision of Skate Park – the owner of Urban Myth, the company which provides portable skate ramps for events and activity days, would be happy to discuss the options with the Parish Council and other interested parties. Ms Hunt offered to arrange a meeting.

i) Parish Plan Action Group – nothing to report.

j) Policy Advisory Group - nothing to consider.

k) Council Representatives – nothing to report.

11/122 Any Other Business – none

11/123 Date of Next Meeting 2nd April 2012

Annual Parish Meeting 16th April 2012

The meeting closed at 9.40p.m.