

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 2 April 2012

Present: Councillors Richard Berg-Rust, John Davison, Pete Duncan, Ian Hall, Maggi Hunt, Melna Martin, Keith Woods, Margaret Williams, Clerk

Also Present: County Councillor Anne Dale

Apologies: Pete Barrass, Julia Sayce, Alan Verheyden

Ms Hunt opened the meeting by welcoming Richard Berg-Rust to the Parish Council.

11/124 Declarations of Interest – None

11/125 Minutes

Mrs Martin proposed and Mr Duncan seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes of 5th March were a true record of the meeting.

11/126 Matters Arising

Potholes & Manhole covers – Mrs Dale had taken this problem up with the transport manager of the haulage company, who had agreed to ask the drivers to manoeuvre round the offending manhole covers and potholes in an attempt to reduce the aggravation to residents. The potholes have been reported to the County Council for repair.

Chairman for 2nd July meeting - As both Ms Hunt and Mr Woods are unable to attend, Mr Hall volunteered to Chair this meeting.

Speeding in Broomley Village – Mrs Dale advised that County Highways Officers will review the situation.

Speeding on A695 through Stocksfield – Mrs Dale advised that she is still awaiting a report from the Police and County Council Highways Officers on this issue.

11/127 Correspondence

Correspondence received since the last meeting had been listed on the Agenda.

A response had been received from Her Majesty the Queen in response to our Loyal Address. This is to be displayed.

11/128 Finance

The Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group had met prior to this evening's meeting to consider the accounts for March. Apart from a couple of queries which the Clerk is to resolve they recommended acceptance of the March Accounts.

Additional Signatory for Bank of Ireland account. - Ms Hunt volunteered and it was agreed that she should become a signatory for this account.

11/129 Co-option of new Parish Councillor

An e-mail had been received from Mr M Parker applying to be a Parish Councillor. Mrs Martin proposed and Mr Hall seconded and it was agreed that Mr Parker be co-opted to the Parish Council.

A second person had expressed interest in being a Parish Councillor. He is to be given further information.

Advisory Groups - It was agreed to consider the make-up of the Advisory Groups at the Annual General Meeting in May.

11/130 Reports of Advisory Groups and Council Representatives

a) Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group

The notes of the recent meeting of the Group had been circulated.

Asset Transfer - Further information had been received from the County Council and is to be studied by the Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group at their next meeting.

2012-13 Budget - The Group had considered the Budget for 2012-13 and the revised breakdown of the total had been tabled. Mr Davison proposed and Mr Duncan seconded and it was agreed to accept the revised figures.

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Accounts - it was agreed that in future the Chairman and Vice Chairman would consider the accounts for the month and make the recommendation as appropriate as to their acceptance.

Grants - A letter had been received from Tynedale Sports Council requesting funding. After some debate, Mr Duncan proposed, Mrs Martin seconded and it was agreed (5 votes for, 2 abstentions and 0 against) that a grant of £100 be made.

Olympic Torch - Disappointment was expressed that no-one from Stocksfield had been selected to carry the Torch through the village. It was acknowledged that residents from Stocksfield were carrying the Torch through other communities in Northumberland. Ms Hunt advised that LOCOG had supplied reasons and FAQs which gave the background to the selection. Mr Davison proposed and Mrs Martin seconded that a letter be sent to Guy Opperman MP, registering our disappointment that no-one local is running through Stocksfield.

Annual Parish Meeting - Councillors were urged to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th April, when the main topic will be Neighbourhood Planning. There will be a presentation on the subject by David English of Northumberland County Council.

Annual External Audit – Notice of the timetable for the annual audit had been received and was noted.

b) Transport & Highways Advisory Group

Mr Verheyden was not present.

Parking at Guessburn – Mrs Dale tabled a proposed plan which is to be presented to a meeting of interested residents at a meeting on 16th April. Following that meeting, should the proposals be acceptable, the County Council will instigate formal consultation proceedings prior to implementing the proposals.

Parking at Branch End - Mrs Dale had had a meeting with County Council Highways Officers to discuss and view the parking/traffic problems at Branch End. There is a proposal to install a Vehicle Activated Traffic sign at the entrance to the village. Mrs Dale is to call a meeting of Branch End residents to gather information on their views of the problems and perhaps come up with suggestions as to solutions. This meeting will be held on 30th April.

Mrs Dale was thanked for all her work on these issues.

A letter had been received from the County Council regarding the introduction of Parking Enforcement Wardens from 1st April.

Hedge, New Ridley Road – Mr Davison and Ms Hunt had inspected the temporary repairs to the hedge above nos. 162-178 New Ridley Road and advised that they felt that the temporary fence along one section of the hedge was particularly hazardous as it would not give much protection to anyone who lost their footing whilst using the pavement. It was also felt that the repair to the hedge had not been carried out to a satisfactory standard. It was further noted that the pavement along this stretch was in a poor condition and was falling away. Mrs Dale advised that the County Council had a large file detailing the problems along this length of New Ridley Road. She said that there was a need to find out exactly who owned the hedge and therefore had legal responsibility for its maintenance. She is to attempt to find out more. The Clerk is to look at the Parish Council insurance policy to find out if the public liability cover would apply to repairs to the bank and the back edge of the pavement, should these be carried out by the Parish handyman.

c) Planning Advisory Group

Mrs Dale declared an interest in this topic.

Mr Hall commented on the Refusal of Permission for the building of a sun room at West Oak Farm, Broomley.

There was general concern that the County Council Planning Officers and/or Planning Committee did not always take into account the views of the Parish Council. The Clerk advised that the Planning Authority have to take into account the conditions laid down in the Local Plan (currently this is the Plan drawn up by the former Tynedale Council) when making decisions on planning applications.

It was noted that a Certificate of Lawful Development had been applied for in relation to Redshaw Foot.

Merryshields Quarry ROMP – additional information had been received by the County Council, and the Planning Advisory Group had been requested to look at this and comment on its adequacy.

d) Play Facilities Advisory Group

The Group has not held a meeting.

Replacing "The Twist" at Branch End Play Area - Mrs Dale is looking into forming a group to raise funds to replace this equipment.

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Community Garden – Mrs Martin advised that Churches Together still held funds on behalf of the Community Garden Project. Mrs Martin is to arrange a meeting with Churches Together to clarify what funds are held.

40th Anniversary, Branch End Play Area – The Community Garden Group is to discuss a wild flower planting scheme for BEPA.

Repairs to Footpath at BEPA – The report from Tim Fish (County Footpath's Officer) recommended that an engineer be asked to look at the problem with the path and a possible solution for a repair. It is acknowledged that the problem is probably the settlement of the land to the west of the path. It was recognised that the path has been repaired once but that the problem had re-occurred. It was further recognised that should a repair be effected by patching the surface, then the problem would occur again. It was also suggested that the original contractor should be contacted, through the project manager, Guy Rawlinson. It was, however, acknowledged that the problem may now be seen as being outside the contractor's guarantee, although it was felt that the guarantee should roll over from the time of the original repair.

Following the discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council had two options:

- 1 Patch the path
- 2 Get an engineer's opinion

Mrs Martin proposed and Mr Hall seconded and it was agreed that a professional opinion should be sought. Mrs Williams is to ask Tim Fish for advice about a possible consultant.

Toddler Play Area at BEPA – The handyman had reported that the “wet pour” was damaged and cracking. The Clerk is to obtain quotations for the repair.

Kate's Plain – as reported some months ago, the seats of the swings at Kate's Plain need replacing as a result of wear and tear. It was agreed that the Clerk would obtain quotations for their replacement for consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group.

Provision of Skate Park Facilities – One of the issues related to this project is fund raising. It is possible that the group being established to raise funds to replace “The Twist” at BEPA might also be involved in raising funds to provide skate park facilities. Norman Hooks is to ask Lord Allendale for permission to site skate park facilities on the Eastern sportsfield. Planning permission may be needed to provide this facility.

[Suspension of Standing Orders – Mr Hall proposed and Mrs Martin seconded and it was agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended and the meeting should continue until 10 p.m.]

e) Community Development

Community Development Trust – Following the publication of an article in Stocksfield Community Association News (SCAN), Ms Hunt requested clarification of the position with regard to the Community Development Trust. Mr Duncan confirmed that the Development Trust Steering Group has now become the Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA). This organisation will enable access to funds which will benefit the whole village. The Parish Council is represented on SCATA as are individual residents who do not necessarily represent organisations in the village. Concern was expressed that the ground rules had changed and that clarification was needed with regard to the relationship between the Trust and Stocksfield Community Association. It was felt that the Parish Council should have two representatives on SCATA, and agreed that these representatives should be appointed at the Parish Council AGM. It was also recognised that there was a need for the Parish Council to maintain close links with the Trust, and to this end it was agreed that the Trust and the Parish Council should hold a meeting to bring the Council up-to-date with the development of the Trust. Ms Hunt and Mr Duncan are to liaise on arranging a date for a meeting. All Councillors would be notified of the date of the meeting and were welcome to attend. Mr Duncan confirmed that nothing had changed since he made his last report.

In confidence, Mr Duncan then advised on the position with regard to the potential development of a site in Stocksfield.

2012 Olympic Torch Celebration – see 11/120a above.

2012 Jubilee Celebrations – the arrangements are covered in the article in NE43 News – issue 42.

Focus on Young People – The report on Ms Hunt's consultation meetings with young people had been circulated and was noted. The provision of rugby and football for girls is to be raised at the next Sportsfields Management Group Meeting.

Points for consideration by the Parish Council

- We have already agreed to look into the possibility of establishing a skate park in the village, and of raising with the organisers of the football and rugby teams the feasibility of establishing girls' teams.

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We also funded the Urban Fun Day in February 2012 and are in the process of organising another one which will take place during the Easter holiday. What other action do we need to take?

- Should we make further efforts to consult with young people aged over 14, and, if so, how should we resource this?
- Should we establish an Advisory Group to maintain a focus on work with young people, or incorporate this into an existing Advisory Group (e.g. the Play Facilities Advisory Group)?
- Do we need to involve other village groups and organisations in our discussions about activities for young people, and, if so, which ones?

It was recognised that there is a need to consult the over 14s, but it is difficult to get them together. Concern was expressed about the problem of raising expectations by doing the survey. It was acknowledged that there is a need to find a way of communicating directly with young people, perhaps through social networking sites. It was disappointing that Prudhoe Community High School was apparently unable to arrange a meeting with Stocksfield students. It was clear that some young people would like to have an “indoor street corner” where they could meet.

It was agreed that consideration should be given to the establishment of a Young People’s Facilities Advisory Group when Council Advisory Groups are reviewed at the AGM.

f) Footpaths & Environment Advisory Group

Attracting Pollinators – Mr Verheyden is to look at developing a pilot project for attracting pollinators. Mr Verheyden was congratulated on this initiative.

The next Rights of Way Group meeting will be held on 23rd April.

Footpath by No 7 Welton Close – Mrs Dale had had a meeting with Tim Fish (County Footpaths Officer). He had advised that the County Council does not own the hedge bordering this path – the hedge belongs to Wimpey (the developers of the Birkdene Estate). Mrs Dale is to ask the County Council Enforcement Officer to write to Wimpey. It was noted that the handrail for the footpath is to be restored.

Scaur Steps – Mr Fish had reported that the overall condition of the Scaur Steps was satisfactory. The handrail and some of the treads are to be repaired. The tarmac area at the top of the steps is to be cleaned – the Probation Service workforce is to be asked to do this.

The question of a Memorial plaque near the bridge on Ridley Mill Road has been dropped – suitable planting is to be put in.

Repairs to bank of Stocksfield Burn – a letter of thanks is to be sent to The Tyne Rivers Trust expressing appreciation for the work carried out recently on the bank of the Stocksfield Burn.

g) Communication

NE43 News – Issue 42 – it was felt that the current issue was a good one. It was hoped that future issues would contain more photos, but these had to be good high resolution images. The next issue will be published in late May to carry details of the Jubilee Celebrations and the Olympic Torch Relay.

h) Sports Facilities Advisory Group - nothing to report.

I) Parish Council Representatives

East Tynedale Forum – the next meeting will be on 3rd April. Mrs Dale volunteered to attend the meeting.

Northumberland County Council, West Area Committee – the next meeting will be held on 10th April. Mr Hall volunteered to attend. The report on the previous meeting had been circulated.

11/131 Any Other Business

It was agreed to send flowers to Mrs Sayce.

11/132 Date of Next Meeting

Annual Parish Meeting – 16th April

Parish Council Annual General Meeting – 14th May

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.