

# BROOMLEY & STOCKSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013 in the Community Centre, Stocksfield

**Present:** Mr C Balmer, Mr P Barrass, Mrs A Dale (also present as a County Councillor),  
Mr I Hall, Ms M Hunt, Mrs M Martin, Mr M Parker, Mr K Woods,  
Mrs M Williams, Clerk

**Also Present;** Ms Gemma Brown, Hexham Courant; Ms A Cryer, Environmental & Maintenance Manager  
(West), Northumberland County Council; Mr A Hinchcliffe, Chairman, Newton & Bywell  
Parish Council; Rev. W Rigby, Vicar, St Peter's Church

**Apologies:** Mr R Berg Rust, Mr J Davison, Mr P Duncan

Ms Hunt opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

She went on to draw members' attention to a Board Game Relay Evening which Stocksfield Guides are to hold on 28<sup>th</sup> February, in aid of a girls' education project in Thailand.

**12/104 Declarations of Interest** - none

### **12/105 Closure of B6309 north of Stocksfield Station following a landslip**

Ms Hunt asked Ms Cryer to bring members up-to-date on the situation.

Ms Cryer made the following points:

- The Stocksfield Burn had been eroding the wall for some time
- The Stocksfield Burn will have to be diverted to allow work to be carried out
- The recent poor weather had prevented investigations from being undertaken. However, with the improvement in the weather, it was hoped that this work could be started shortly
- The Stocksfield Burn is classified by the Environment Agency as a main river. Before any repair work can start, approval has to be given by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency will not allow work to start until the fish spawning season has ended – some time in May. The County Council is to bring the date forward. It is thought that there may be badgers in the vicinity of the landslip
- Funding for the repair is not an issue. The work will be carried out in-house by the County Council
- It is expected that the repair work will take 10-16 weeks, but the exact duration is yet to be determined
- The County Council is aware of the concerns of residents and businesses affected by the landslip and road closure
- The diversionary route has now been designated a primary gritting route. The route will be inspected fortnightly by the Highways Inspector and potholes will be repaired. There is no funding to carry out a complete resurfacing of the diversionary route
- Businesses with concerns are welcome to contact Ms Cryer
- For health and safety reasons it is not possible to open one carriageway of the road
- County Council officers have met with the organisers of the Northumberland Show to iron out any problems

It was agreed that a letter to the Environment Agency would be drawn up jointly by Broomley & Stocksfield and Newton & Bywell Parish Councils, urging them to take all the necessary steps to enable the repair to the road to be carried out without delay. It was also suggested that a copy of the letter should be sent to Guy Opperman MP. Ms Cryer is to provide the names of the Environment Agency officers.

Ms Cryer was asked if any work that does not affect the Stocksfield Burn might start before the Environment Agency permission was granted. She replied that she would look into this, but advised that County Council officers still had to carry out soil analysis and Highways engineers had yet to design the work project.

It was agreed that Ms Cryer and the County Engineer would attend the March Meeting of the Parish Council to up-date councillors, and would also be invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

Ms Cryer was thanked for attending the meeting. (She, and Messrs Rigby and Hinchcliffe then left).

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## **12/106 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

Mr Woods proposed, Mrs Martin seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 with the inclusion of one amendment.

## **12/107 Matters Arising**

*Hedge on Meadowfield Road* - Mrs Martin advised that this is to be cut.

*Patients Forum* – There had been no meeting recently. Mr Hall is to find out when the next meeting is to be held.

## **12/108 Public Participation**

Mr Hall raised concerns once again that buses were unable to pull into the east-bound bus stop at Birches Nook because cars were parked in the bus lay-by.

Mr Hall also asked what had happened to the wreaths at the War Memorial. If the handyman had taken them away, he is to be asked to leave them in situ in future years.

## **12/109 Co-option of New Parish Councillor**

No response had been received to date. Ms Hunt issued a further plea for councillors to encourage residents to volunteer as parish councillors and for anyone interested to contact her for more information. Ms Hunt had attended a meeting in Hexham, organised by the County Council, for prospective parish and town councillors. Around 25 people had attended of which only one was from Stocksfield.

## **12/110 Correspondence**

Correspondence received since the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> January was listed on the Agenda and was noted.

## **12/111 Finance**

Mr Woods and Ms Hunt had examined the accounts for January and recommended the approval of the January expenditure. Mr Barrass asked for and received clarification on certain points. It was agreed that the accounts for January should be approved.

Additional cheques were approved as follows:

Allendale Estates – Sportsfield Rent	£575
Steve Gibbon Web Designs – Webmaster	£30
Nicholson Portnell – Asset Transfer – Toilet Block	£293.37

*Expenditure against Budget* – The report was tabled and noted.

## **12/112 Parish Plan Review**

Ms Hunt advised that, following the discussion on this matter which had taken place at the November 2012 meeting of the Parish Council, she and the Clerk had incorporated the recommendations of Advisory Groups, and the points made by individual councillors, into the draft review document which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The intention was that final approval of the revised Plan would be granted in March, and a further review of progress would be undertaken in 12 months' time. Discussion took place on a few outstanding issues, and it was agreed that these should be included in the body of the review document. Ms Hunt pointed out that some of the recommended action points involved other organisations, and said that the final review of the Plan would be passed to these bodies so that the Parish Council could closely liaise with them in order to facilitate progress.

## **12/113 Annual Parish Meeting**

It had been agreed that Ms Vera Baird, Police & Crime Commissioner, should be asked if she would be the Speaker at the Annual Parish Meeting. Ms Baird had, however, declined the invitation, and it was therefore proposed that Dr Alan Maguire be asked to speak on GP commissioning and how it affects residents of Stocksfield. It was further agreed that Ms Cryer should up-date residents on the B6309 road closure at the Annual Parish Meeting.

It was suggested that Ms Baird be asked to speak at the 2014 Annual Parish Meeting.

## **12/114 Local Government Elections – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013**

Councillors were requested to advise the Clerk or the Chair if they intended to stand for election to the Parish Council in May. It was stressed that any indication that they gave now would not be binding. It was announced that the closing date for nominations is 5<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at noon, and there is no flexibility to this time and date.

## **12/115 Community Development**

Mr Woods advised that there was nothing to report.

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## 12/116 Advisory Groups & Council Representatives

### a) Consultations

The Clerk advised that the consultation papers on the County Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options had arrived on 4<sup>th</sup> February. Additional copies of the CD version have been requested. Mrs Dale had attended a briefing meeting for County Councillors, and agreed to forward the presentation slides. The East Tynedale Parish and Town Councils Forum have arranged a special meeting with County Council officers to discuss the Core Strategy Preferred Options. Mrs Dale advised that the tier classification had been removed from the current document, and suggested that questions should be asked about small settlements when reviewing the strategy. The Clerk advised that there were documents on the CD which were not included in the printed version. The Parish Council's response to the consultation must be made to the County Council by 20<sup>th</sup> March. The Planning Advisory Group was asked to bring a recommended response to the March meeting for approval.

### b) Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group

Mr Woods outlined the proceedings of the most recent meeting of the Group, the notes for which were tabled. The Open meeting of the Group had been cancelled due to the bad weather on the date in question. The comments were noted and the following recommendations approved:

*Asset Transfer – Branch End toilets* – it was agreed that, regardless of the outcome of the planning application, the site would be transferred to SCATA as previously agreed.

*Merryshields Playing Fields - Trees* – it was agreed to ask Feral Tree Works to carry out the agreed tree surgery.

*Dispensations for Councillors* – It was agreed that these would be applied for following the May 2013 elections.

*Fire Engine - BEPA* – It was agreed to ask the Handyman to repair the Fire Engine using the parts supplied by the manufacturer.

*BOSS Accounts Package* – It was agreed that the Clerk would look at this and make a recommendation as to which accounts package she felt was most appropriate for the Parish Council.

*Grant Applications:* The recommendations were noted and agreed as follows:

- **Stocksfield Festival**

The Festival Committee had asked the Parish Council to underwrite part of the cost of hiring marquees, up to a maximum of £500. It was agreed to approve this course of action.

- **Stocksfield Community Association**

This grant application had been submitted in September 2012, but referred to the 2013-2014 financial year. It was agreed that the application should be considered at the February 2013 meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Advisory Group.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Stocksfield Scout Group**

This application referred to the 2013-2014 financial year. It was agreed that it should be considered along with other grant applications at the beginning of the new financial year.

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

### c) Transport & Highways Advisory Group

The Group had not met recently due to the recent poor weather.

*Closure of B6309* – following the report by Ms Cryer (see above) it was agreed that no additional action need be taken.

*Yellow lines/Parking restrictions* - it was reported that:

- the residents of Tynedale gardens were happy with the proposals.
- the proposals for Branch End and Guessburn will be considered by the County Council on 5<sup>th</sup> February.

Mrs Dale advised that the railway bridge over the B6309 to Hindley was too narrow to allow the gritting vehicles to cross it.

Concerns were raised about the safety of pedestrians, particularly children, while the pedestrian crossing at the Station was out of order. Mrs Dale is to check the current situation.

### d) Children & Young People's Facilities Advisory Group

The Group had not met recently and a meeting is to be arranged shortly.

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It was agreed that the fence at Branch End Play Area should be repaired by strengthening the top with some kind of rail. The condition of the other fence panels is to be monitored.

## **e) Planning Advisory Group**

The Planning Report had been circulated. The Group's comments were noted and endorsed.

*Hoodsclose Opencast – Whittonstall Action Group* – a report on the public meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January had been circulated. Mr Hall gave a verbal report on this meeting and also on the recent meeting of the Whittonstall Action Group. He reported that 205 letters supporting the proposal had now been received by the County Council. The majority of these were believed to be from UK Coal employees and contractors. It was stressed that any letters of objection to the proposal must include the word "object". Concerns had been raised about the safety of the junction of the A68 with the haul road (C265), and it was suggested that a letter be written to Ms Vera Baird regarding this. It was reported that it is unlikely that the planning application will be debated by the County Council before April. Mrs Dale advised that, despite being in "purdah", County Councillors would continue to consider statutory matters, including planning applications. It is not known who will be able to speak at the Planning Committee meeting, but is assumed that guidance will be issued in due course. The next meeting of the Whittonstall Action Group will be on 11<sup>th</sup> February. Mr Hall was thanked for his report. It was agreed that there was little more the Parish Council could do at present except keep a watching brief.

It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, although there is no clear definition of sustainable development in the legislation.

There were no objections to the planning applications listed on the agenda and recommended in the Planning Report.

*New Ridley Development* – no planning application had yet been received from the County Council, although it was widely reported that an application for 23 houses had been submitted by the developers. It was suggested and agreed that the Planning Advisory Group should research local plans and background information, in order to ensure that the Parish Council is fully prepared and informed to comment on this and future applications of this type.

## **f) Sports Facilities Advisory Group**

The notes on the most recent meeting of the Group had been circulated and were noted. It was agreed that inspection sheets would be drawn up and the Handyman asked to carry out regular inspections of both sportsfields.

## **g) Footpaths & Environment Advisory Group**

Nothing to report.

## **h) Communications Advisory Group**

The scheduled meeting had been cancelled due to the weather, and rescheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> February.

## **12/117 Council Representatives**

Meetings were listed on the agenda.

## **12/118 Any Other Business**

Mrs Martin and Mr Hooks had appeared on BBC TV recently in connection with providing meals and support for the elderly during bad weather.

## **12/119 Date of next meeting**

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

The meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.