

BROOMLEY & STOCKSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 2nd December 2013 in the Community Centre, Stocksfield

Present: Ms M Hunt (in the Chair), Mrs A Dale (also present as a County Councillor),
Mr J Davison, Dr M Mansour, Mr M Parker, Mrs K Pollock, Mr J Roy,
Prof. R Thompson, Dr P Vickers, Mr G Young,

Mrs M Williams, Clerk to the Council

Also Present: Mr Dennis Parke,
Ms Kathleen Moore, Hexham Courant

Apologies Mr P Duncan, Ms C Jonas

Ms Hunt opened the meeting by welcoming Dr Mansour and Mr G Young as new parish councillors and asked those present to introduce themselves.

13/83 Declarations of Interest

As a County Councillor, Mrs Dale declared an interest in discussions on planning applications.

13/84 Public Participation

Patients' Forum – a resident had raised concerns that the Patients' Forum had been disbanded. Ms Hunt stressed that the administration and work of the Branch End Surgery were not the business of the Parish Council, but said that she felt that the Patients' Forum was a concern of the Parish Council. Currently the only way for patients to raise a concern with the Surgery is through the Patient Reference Group, which is an on-line facility for patient feedback, and does not offer the same dialogue with the Surgery as was available via the Forum.

Prof. Thompson, as the recent Chairman of the Forum, advised that the Forum had not met since January 2013, as the Surgery had apparently not been able to send a representative to the meetings. He stressed that the Forum met on an ad hoc basis. Recently, the Forum had held a meeting, at which the Surgery had not been represented, and had agreed to disband. The Surgery had been advised, but to date no response had been received, nor had an explanation been received as to why a representative had not been able to attend meetings.

Mrs Dale offered to raise the general issue of Patients' Forums at a forthcoming meeting at County Hall with the Clinical Commissioning Group. Ms Hunt suggested that the main issue is the lack of opportunity for residents to raise concerns.

Dr Mansour said that everyone, both Surgery and patients, benefits from the Forum. He offered to approach the Surgery informally.

Prudhoe Community High School – Ms Hunt advised that, following an Ofsted inspection, the High School had been placed in "special measures". She said that no further information was available until the Inspection Report was published. She added that, as a former parent and governor of the High School she was concerned that the reputation of school would be seriously damaged. Once the report is available to the public, the Council and residents will be in a better position to comment and raise queries and concerns with the current governors. Ms Hunt said that, as a large proportion of the secondary school students in Stocksfield attend the High School, the Parish Council should be concerned about the report and its consequences.

Snooker Club – Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA) Development – Prof. Thompson advised that the Tennis Club had allegedly lost its access to the courts as a result of the proposed development at Guessburn. Ms Hunt said that this was not a matter for the Parish Council, and suggested that the Tennis Club should liaise with SCATA (via Mr P Duncan) and also possibly with the Scouts.

13/85 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th October 2013

Prof. Thompson proposed and Mr Parker seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th November were a true record of the meeting.

13/86 Matters Arising

All matters arising were included on the Agenda.

13/87 Dispensations

Ms Hunt explained why Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council was being asked to consider adopting a similar policy to that adopted by Northumberland County Council (Standards Committee 29/7/13). The

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proposal would grant a dispensation to those members of the Parish Council who have a disclosable or other non-pecuniary interest in setting the Council budget.

Ms Hunt proposed and Dr Mansour seconded and it was agreed unanimously to

Grant a dispensation to all Members of the Authority to enable all Members to participate in full in all decisions relating to the setting of Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council's budget and to approve the dispensation for four years until May 2017

13/88 Correspondence

Correspondence received since the meeting of 5th November 2013 was listed on the Agenda and was noted.

13/89 Finance

The financial reports had been circulated with the agenda.

Bank Reconciliation - noted.

Summary of Accounts - noted.

Expenditure for November – Prof. Thompson proposed and Mrs Dale seconded and it was agreed that the Expenditure for November be approved.

Spend v Budget – the spend v budget to the end of November was noted.

Precept – it was noted that the non-recurrent grant which was given by the County Council for 2013/14 (£1887) would not be repeated for the 2014/15 financial year. It was also noted that, although currently county authorities were able to choose whether or not to give the grant in the next financial year, the National Association of Local Councils is continuing to lobby the Government to ensure that the grant is passed on by all local authorities.

Banking – a press release issued by the Society of Local Council Clerks regarding the Co-op Bank had been circulated and was noted. It was agreed to continue to monitor the situation with regard to the Bank.

13/90 Community Development

Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA) – As far as the Council is aware, all the transfers are now complete and it is expected that the building on the Branch End Toilet Site and at Guessburn will start shortly.

Energy Saving Group – The inaugural meeting will be held on 10th February 2014, with the main speaker being Mrs Alison Vipond of Newton.

Carers' Event – The revised notes of the meeting held on 11th November were tabled. Ms Hunt explained that, as a result of the discussion at the meeting, rather than organising an "event" for carers, it might be more useful to produce an information card based on the format of the Parish Information Card but focusing on both information for carers, and more generally on what was available in Stocksfield. It was agreed to go ahead with the production of the card.

It was noted that the RVS in Northumberland is currently setting up a pilot befriending scheme. More information on this is needed and the Parish Clerk was asked to investigate.

East Tynedale Action Plan – this had been produced by Guy Opperman MP and had been circulated to councillors. Ms Hunt gave the background to the production of the Plan, and suggested that the Parish Council should comment on it. She asked Councillors to review the document so that a response could be drawn up after the January meeting. Mr Davison said that he had returned the MP's survey and had made comments on it. He had received a response to his comments from Mr Opperman.

Flood Planning – Ms Hunt advised that the Stocksfield Burn had been identified by the Environment Agency as a "high or very high risk" area for flooding. To this end, in partnership with Mr Andrew Samuel of the Environment Agency, a meeting had been arranged in the Community Centre on 13th January to discuss the drawing up of a Flood Plan for Stocksfield. This will be publicised by letter to residents in the immediate area and by posters throughout the village. Mr Samuel was reported to be happy to work with local flood wardens to draw up the plan. Mr Roy and Mr Parker volunteered to be flood wardens.

Mr Davison was concerned that New Ridley Road was not included, and it was explained that the Environment Agency was only looking at rivers and burns and not areas of flash flooding like New Ridley Road.

13/89 Advisory Groups and Council Representatives

a. Consultations

The current consultations had been listed on the agenda

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Northumberland County Council Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – Mr Duncan, Ms Hunt, and Dr Vickers had met to draw up a response to the consultation document. Ms Hunt had also attended a meeting of the East Tynedale Forum when an officer from the County Council had been present to explain the thinking behind the document and to answer questions. A second draft of the response has now been drawn up and will be circulated to members. It is proposed to discuss this draft at the meeting of the Combined Finance & General Purposes & Planning Advisory Groups on 9th December. Ms Hunt asked members who were attending the meeting to be ready to comment on the response.

Ms Hunt said that the current document was a “strategic” document and delivery of the Strategy would be discussed at a later date at individual parish level.

It was reported that the Painshawfield Estate Committee would be responding separately to the consultation.

b. Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group

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

Policy Reviews

The following policies had been circulated:

Vexatious Communications Mr Davison proposed and Mrs Pollock seconded and it was agreed that this should be accepted without change and reviewed in 12 months’ time.

Criteria and procedures for awarding grants Prof Thompson proposed and Mr Young seconded and it was agreed that this should be accepted without change and reviewed in 12 months’ time.

Nuisance Telephone Calls – The Clerk had drawn members’ attention to a Bill that was currently being considered in Parliament which would attempt to control the number of “nuisance” telephone calls received by residents. It was agreed to write to Mr Opperman MP and urge him to support this Bill.

“Super” Authority for the North East – The DCLG had issued a consultation on the proposal for a strategic “super” authority for the North East. It was pointed out that this would not be an elected body but that membership would be drawn from existing councils and authorities. It was agreed to consider whether or not to respond to this consultation at the meeting on 9th December. A response is required by 2nd January 2014.

Proceedings of the Combined Finance & General Purposes and Planning Group – the notes of the meeting had been circulated and the Parish Council was asked to endorse the following decisions:

Grants:

Mr Roy proposed and Mr Young seconded and it was agreed to endorse the recommendation to make a £100 grant to the North East War Memorial Project.

Planning

13/03375/FUL 5/11/13
Thornwood, 49 Meadowfield Road
Garage Extension

Mr Parker proposed and Mr Davison seconded and it was agreed to endorse the recommendation that the Parish Council make no objections to this application

13/03379/FUL 07/11/13
20 Apperley Road
Conservatory Replacement

Mr Parker proposed and Mr Davison seconded and it was agreed to endorse the recommendation that the Parish Council make no objections to this application

Provision of new Burial Ground – It was pointed out that the Parish Council had the “power” rather than a “duty” to provide a burial ground. It was felt that this put a different complexion on the matter, and that a working group should be set up to look at the issues. Mrs Dale was concerned about the legislation and insurance issues that might be involved. The following councillors volunteered to be members of the working group:

Mrs Dale, Mr Davison, Mr Roy, and Mr Young.

Rabbit Proof Fencing on the Sportsfields – The Council endorsed the proposal to obtain estimates for the erection of the fencing. Mr Roy offered to consider the estimates when they were received.

(Suspension of Standing Orders – Mrs Dale proposed and Dr Vickers seconded and it was agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended and the meeting should continue after 9.30pm)

c. Planning Advisory Group

Hoodsclough Surface Mine – the decision on this application by the County Council's Planning Committee had again been deferred and it was now expected that the issue would be debated at the January or February meeting of the Committee. It has been suggested that this application may be the subject of a special meeting of the Committee.

Northumberland Local Development Plan – see above.

d. Transport & Highways Advisory Group – nothing to report.

e. Children & Young People's Facilities Advisory Group – nothing to report.

f. Communications Advisory Group – the comments in the papers for the meeting were noted. Members will be notified when the new website goes live and are urged to look at it and pass on comments to the Parish Clerk.

g. Sports Facilities Advisory Group – the report in the papers for the meeting was noted.

h. Rights of Way & Environment Advisory Group – Mr Roy said that he had had a meeting with Mr Hooks who is to resign as Chair of the Group in due course. Mr Roy had agreed to take over the chairmanship of this group once he was more familiar with the workings of the Parish Council and the Group. His offer was welcomed, and the comment was made that it would be good to have the Parish Council formally represented on the Group once again.

13/91 Council Representatives

East Tynedale Forum – the notes of the meeting held on 2nd October had been circulated.

Northumberland County Council – West Area Committee – the next meeting will be held on 10th December. It is expected that the agenda will include a "State of the Area" debate.

13/92 Any Other Business Mrs Dale advised that on Bonfire Night the Fire Brigade had been called to a bonfire on a play area, which had been put out.. She asked that, if bonfires were authorised on public spaces, the Fire Brigade be advised so that they were aware of where such events were taking place.

There being no other business, Ms Hunt closed the meeting by wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

13/93 Date of next meeting **6th January 2014**

The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.