

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
Held on Monday 1st September 2014
In the Community Centre, Stocksfield**

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

Mrs S Eden (taking minutes of the meeting), Mr N Spencer (Clerk to the Council)

Also Present: Ms K Moore, Hexham Courant
Mr P McManus, Assistant to MP Guy Opperman

Apologies: Mr P Duncan

Ms Hunt opened the meeting at 7:30pm and introduced Nick Spencer adding that it was his first day so usual questions of the Clerk should not be expected. Ms Hunt also introduced Mrs S Eden (employed by Prudhoe Town Council) who would be taking the minutes of the meeting.

Ms Hunt advised that Mr Duncan had asked for the item at agenda item 4 to be deferred until the October meeting as elements of the Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA) presentation, with reference to a new project, remained confidential at this time. Ms Hunt passed around an article from the Journal on the current SCATA housing project.

Finally Ms Hunt passed around a thank you card from Mrs Margaret Williams.

14/46 Declarations of Interest

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

14/47 Public Participation

The Ford

Ms Hunt advised that two patio chairs had been found discarded at The Ford. The chairs have been removed and are currently stored by the handyman, being both a health and safety hazard and inappropriate street furniture. It was AGREED that the chairs would be held for 28 days and if not claimed by this time they would be disposed of. Mr Davison offered that they could be sold on a charity stall on 27 September if not claimed. Members AGREED to pass word of the chairs around, to liaise with the Clerk accordingly and to the proposed means of disposal. **DISCHARGED**

Park Estate

Ms Hunt raised the issue of path cleansing on the Park Estate. It was discussed that Tim Fish of Northumberland County Council (NCC) had been contacted in relation to this and Mrs Dale confirmed that this was in hand. Ms Hunt asked that the Clerk be copied into any agreement. **DISCHARGED**

14/48 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 July 2014

Mr Davison proposed and Dr Vickers seconded and it was AGREED that the minutes of the Meeting held on 7 July 2014 were a true record of the meeting.

14/49 Matters Arising

Patients' Forum

With reference to the Patients' Forum, Ms Hunt advised that following an item in NE43 News, it was hoped that those interested would contact the surgery. To date there has been no feedback but the Clerk was asked to follow this up. Prof. Thompson advised that there has been a change in Management at Branch End surgery. **ACTION: Clerk**

Branch End Play Area (BEPA)

Ms Hunt reported that following a resident's concern about trees and the copse encroaching on their property from BEPA, Mr Duncan and Mrs Dale had visited and were now in possession of all correspondence to follow this up. Further details would follow in time. **ACTION: AD**

Development at New Ridley

Ms Hunt reported that since planning permission for 16 houses had been granted, there has been great concern from residents. In the main the concerns arise from an inconsistency in the views of Councillors. Ms Hunt advised that many residents and Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council have written to Councillor Horncastle, the Chair of the West Area Planning Committee, but no reply has been received. It was also noted that the July West Area Planning Committee Meeting did not include any mention of correspondence in relation to this application. Ms Hunt described a 'still furious' resident of New Ridley who had contacted her about Councillors changing their minds on this application and the lack of public transport serving the development. Ms Hunt reported that the resident has written to Guy Opperman MP with questions about the decision making process and a reply had been received that was available. In brief, Mr Opperman has agreed to take these questions back to NCC and has stressed that protection of the green belt is very high on his agenda and will continue to be raised. Ms Hunt concluded that although the Parish Council has no right of appeal, it would be common courtesy for Councillor Horncastle to reply to their letter.

Mrs Dale reported that she had met with residents and discussed in detail the legal protocol and the appeals process, and it was agreed that there was no way an appeal could be brought. Mrs Dale reiterated that this was a green field site for affordable housing, as in Mickley and Hexham, describing it as 'consistent with Government policy'. Mrs Dale agreed that there was an issue with reference to a lack of services. Mrs Dale concluded that there was a tremendous amount of work being carried out behind the scenes looking at building on the green belt and it was known that the housing figures first produced were incorrect, as the population in Northumberland has declined.

In summary Ms Hunt stated that everyone was unhappy about the decision, but that she and Mr Parker had a meeting scheduled with Two Castles Housing Association and ESH Developments take things forward positively with the residents of New Ridley.

Mr Davison made two suggestions; the first being that the Parish Council write to Guy Opperman supporting the questions raised in the resident's letter, and secondly that Councillor Horncastle be reported to the Standards Board for failure to reply to correspondence. The questions in the letter were reviewed and it was AGREED that these should be asked directly of NCC Planning officers. It was also AGREED that the Clerk would write to Councillor Horncastle reminding him of their unanswered correspondence; if no reply was received within 10 days it was AGREED that further action would be taken. **ACTION: Clerk**

Prof. Thompson raised concerns over the management of tenancies. Mrs Dale replied that housing at New Ridley would be given to people with links to Stocksfield as a priority and that she had been working with residents to ensure they were registered with Northumberland Homefinder.

14/50 Appointment of New Parish Clerk

It was formally noted that Mr Nick Spencer was appointed as Clerk to the Council, after a good field of candidates. **DISCHARGED**

14/51 Co-option of New Parish Councillor

It was AGREED that this item would be deferred to the end of the meeting and taken as a confidential item

14/52 Correspondence

Correspondence received since the meeting of 7 July was listed on the agenda and was noted.

Northumberland Town & Parish Councils Conference on 25 September – Ms Hunt and the Clerk will attend.

Northumbria Police Strategic Assessment Workshop on 18 September in The Spetchells Centre – it was recorded that no-one was able to attend. Ms Hunt stated that there were no policing issues noted over the last 6 months, other than Neighbourhood Watch, for which a meeting was scheduled that Sgt. Stephenson would be attending.

14/53 Finance

The financial papers for July and August had been circulated and were noted.

July and August Income & Expenditure

Mrs Pollock proposed and Prof. Thompson seconded and it was AGREED that the Accounts of Income and Expenditure for July and August be accepted. Donations for the defibrillator should be noted as such for clarity.

Spend v Budget

Ms Hunt gave the following reports in relation to Spend v Budget:

Staff Costs that are 47% presently will be over budget; this is due to the hand-over period for the Clerk's role.

The Children and Young People's Facilities budget appears over-weighted due to early maintenance carried out in the play areas.

Grants have been issued to Stocksfield Community Association (SCA) and the Scouts under the Community Development budget.

Funds have been taken from the Contingency budget to pay for the position vacant advert and overtime for Mrs Williams to bring the Parish Council website up-to-date.

Annual Audit

Ms Hunt advised that there remained some queries with the External Audit but that Mrs Williams would be finalising this.

Additional Cheques

Ms Hunt asked for endorsement of a cheque for £284.42 to pay for stationery items. This was AGREED.

14/54 Community Development

Carers' Information Card

Ms Hunt advised that the card had been finalised with information from Carers Northumberland and was ready to be printed. The card will be delivered to residents with the next issue of NE43 News, and will be made available on the Parish Council website.

DISCHARGED

Provision of Burial Ground

Mrs Dale advised that a further meeting was required with Rev. Bill Rigby and an update would be given when possible.

ACTION: AD

Transfer of Toilet Block

Ms Hunt advised that finally the transfer of the toilet block was complete. Presently BEPA has not been transferred; however Ms Hunt confirmed that as soon as it was, the Parish Council would apply for 'Fields in Trust' (FiT) status.

DISCHARGED

Provision of Defibrillator

It was discussed that the Parish were exceptionally lucky to be able to house a defibrillator at Stocksfield Cricket Club and at Stocksfield Golf Club. Ms Hunt advised that there were recurring maintenance costs to be considered. Mrs Pollock suggested a public meeting to alleviate any fears about using a defibrillator. Training was not required and members of the public should be confident to pick up and use the equipment in the event of an emergency. It was AGREED that the maintenance costs would be

incorporated into the budget and some form of public announcement would be required when the equipment was in situ.

Memorial Garden at BEPA

Ms Hunt reported that Rev. Bill Rigby would carry out a dedication at the Peace Garden at BEPA on 20 September at 11.30am. This would be followed by tea and coffee in the Baptist Church, served by Stocksfield Guides. Ms Hunt confirmed that the plaque for the garden had been designed by 2B Graphics and would cost in the region of £300, ready to fix. Members AGREED unanimously to endorse the spending. **DISCHARGED**

Parish Plan Review

Ms Hunt apologised that no progress had been made on this item, but explained that she hoped to convene a meeting of the group as soon as possible. **ACTION: Chair**

14/55 Consultations

Community Rail Designation

It was AGREED to send the draft response circulated with the papers.

Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

It was AGREED not to respond as most of the information in it was already known.

14/56 Advisory Groups & Council Representatives

a) General Governance Advisory Group

The notes of the meeting of the General Governance Advisory Group held on 11 August had been circulated.

Grass-cutting – Ms Hunt advised that she would be asking the Clerk to look into the grass-cutting tenders and timesheets to determine that the Parish Council were getting what they are paying for. It was discussed that a rebate was given last year and with this in mind, all complaints/concerns should be directed through the Clerk. Mr Davison stated that if the contract has not been fulfilled the Parish Council should be compensated. **ACTION: Clerk**

Transport & Highways – A resident of New Ridley has carried out a signature head count of the passengers using the 613 Bus along New Ridley Road over a period of four weeks and an average of 14 people are using this service. Mrs Pollock described that it was difficult to ascertain numbers any other way as no ticket is given or bus pass registered. Mrs Dale advised that NCC will only subsidise a 'value for money' service, but confirmed that this would be investigated. **DISCHARGED**

Local Transport Programme 2015-16 – It was AGREED that Mrs Dale would amend the draft response circulated with the papers to fit with the LTP remit, and would liaise with the Clerk to send before the deadline of 26 September. Dr Vickers raised concerns with respect to narrowing the pavement at Birches Nook (opposite Whitelaws Butchers) as stated at 2, iii). He stated that a wider highway would exacerbate the problem of speeding traffic past the Baptist Church. Mrs Pollock added that it was already difficult for school children, and others, to cross the road safely here. It was AGREED this section would be removed from the draft response. **ACTION: AD**

Northern Rail Franchise – the response previously circulated to Councillors has been submitted. **DISCHARGED**

Children & Young People

Mrs Dale and Mr Duncan had visited BEPA in response to concerns over the footpath running through the play area, as cracks were beginning to appear. Ms Hunt confirmed that this had not been highlighted on the ROSPA Play Safety Report but that it may appear next year. Mrs Dale said she would ask NCC to assess the footpath situation. **ACTION: AD**

BROOMLEY & STOCKSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Ms Hunt reported that drainage on Kate's Plain remains an issue. It was AGREED that the Clerk would continue to raise this issue with the landowner, Allendale Estates. **ACTION: Clerk**

Ms Hunt reported that repairs have been carried out to the fence at BEPA; it was found that fixings had come loose. It was AGREED to raise this with the contractor in case it happens again. **ACTION: Clerk**

Communications

Ms Hunt confirmed that the Summer 2014 issue of NE43 News had been delivered and the next issue was due at the beginning of December which is scheduled to be delivered by Churches Together.

Ms Hunt agreed that the website had not recently been a priority and a lot of work was required. It was AGREED that when the Clerk was settled into the role the website should be looked at with a view to updating the content, uploading councillor photographs and establishing a password protected section for councillors which could be used to view documents.

Rights of Way & Environment

Mr Roy reported that "balsam bashing" was still high on the agenda and would be for some years to come, and that the Burn was doing exceptionally well with lots of different species. Mr Roy also reported that planting and gravelling at the Station was complete, and the area looked much tidier.

It was confirmed that the habitat survey was on the agenda of the next meeting of the Group.

Mr Davison proposed and Dr. Vickers seconded and it was AGREED that Standing Orders should be suspended to allow the meeting to progress past 9:30pm if necessary.

b) Planning Advisory Group

The response to the following planning applications was endorsed.

14/02065/FUL 38 Apperley Road, Stocksfeld	Demolition of single storey side extension. Raising of ridge at front roof slope with two new roof lights. Alteration of front elevation material from facing brick to render. Erection of three storey rear extension, one and a half storey side extension with three dormer windows and rear extension to existing single story garage with new pitched roof over garage and extension.	It was AGREED there were NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal, however it was also AGREED to query that there was no 'family' bathroom. It was also AGREED to urge that all construction traffic was kept off the road during building work as situated on a narrow corner of Apperley Road.
14/02309/FUL 17 Birches Nook Road, Stocksfeld	Construction of two storey extension including first floor balcony to south side of property.	It was AGREED there were NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal.
14/02404/FUL 22 Apperley Road, Stocksfeld	New front porch and replacement garden room to the back.	It was AGREED there were NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal.
14/02204/FUL Redshaw Foot, Stocksfeld	Proposed demolition of existing single storey offshoot and construction of two storey side extension and open porch (resubmission).	It was AGREED there were NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal.
147/02386/VARYCO Apperley House, Stocksfeld	Variation of conditions (2 materials) and 3 approved plans of planning PERMISSION 13/01659/FUL – Modification of the north gable and the construction of a double garage, orangery and a link room to the main house.	It was AGREED there were NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal.
14/02531/FUL 1 Guessburn, Stocksfeld, Northumberland, NE43 7QP	Demolition of existing single storey extension, construction of two storey side extension and porch refurbishment.	It was AGREED there were NO OBJECTIONS to the proposal.

Mr Parker proposed and Mr Davison seconded and it was AGREED that the above decisions be endorsed.

Mr Parker gave apologies for the next Planning Advisory Committee meeting, it was AGREED that Dr Vickers would convene the meeting, with Prof. Thompson and Mr Roy in attendance.

c) Sports Facilities Advisory Group

The notes of the most recent Sports Facilities Advisory Group had been circulated.

Sportsfield Car Park Funding – It was noted that the planning application for an extended club house with a function room, new changing rooms and additional car parking was almost ready for submission. It was also noted that the Cricket Field needs to be registered with the Land Registry before FiT is applied for, after which time the field would be dedicated to community use in perpetuity. Mrs Pollock advised that there appeared to be no plan of maintenance for the football pitches and that seeding of the goal mouth should have been carried out before now. It was AGREED to follow this up. **ACTION: PD**

Request to set up Bootcamp – Ms Hunt advised that, following a request to set up a boot-camp at the sports fields, it had been discovered that a bootcamp was already operating under a casual agreement with the Cricket Club. Ms Hunt confirmed that it was important that the Parish Council have an official agreement with anyone using the land, as the Parish Council is liable in the event of any insurance claim. Ms Hunt advised that she had written a draft response to the operator of the bootcamp that had been operating 'unofficially' for the past three years but was waiting for Mr Duncan's agreement before sending it. It was confirmed, as had previously been agreed, that businesses using the facility should pay a fee, but that this should be set to encourage not deter. With reference to the business making the enquiry in the first instance, it was noted that they had not responded.

Clerk's note: In view of Mr Duncan's annual leave the letter referred to above has been sent.

14/57 Council Representatives

East Tynedale Parish Council Forum: report of 14 July

Prof. Thompson reported on the issues/benefits pertaining to 'Fracking' as presented by Richard Davies, Durham University.

Next NCC West Area Committee Meeting: to be held 9 September at 6pm in Bellingham; Mrs Dale will be attending.

NCC West Area Planning Committee Meeting: 17 September at 6pm, Prospect House, Hexham.

NCC Joint Parish Meeting: to be held on 14 October in Hexham, still to be confirmed.

14/58 Any Other Urgent Business

None

14/59 Date of Next Meeting:

6 October 2014 – 7:30pm Community Centre

CONFIDENTIAL

Members approved a motion that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded for consideration of the following items, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders:-

14/60 Co-option of New Parish Councillor

Ms Hunt advised that there were 3 vacancies and 2 people had expressed interest as potential candidates.

It was AGREED to co-opt Mr Dennis Parke, who currently attends meeting of the Whittonstall Action Group on behalf of the Parish Council, and Mrs Julia Robson, who was described as having an interest in play facilities.

The meeting closed at 9:26pm.