

BROOMLEY & STOCKSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 3rd February 2014 in the Community Centre, Stocksfield

Present: Ms M Hunt (in the Chair), Mrs A Dale (also present as a County Councillor),
Mr J Davison, Mr P Duncan, 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 D Parke
Mr P Combe and Mr J Landale (Allendale Estates)
Mrs Gemma Brown, Hexham Courant

Apologies Dr M Mansour

Ms Hunt opened the meeting by welcoming Mr Combe and Mr Landale of Allendale Estates to the meeting.

13/105 Declarations of Interest

Mrs Dale, as a County Councillor, declared an interest in matters relating to planning applications and to Prudhoe Community High School and also to the Grass Cutting contracts. Mr Duncan declared an interest in issues relating to SCATA and the proposed developments at Branch End and Guessburn.

13/106 Allendale Estates

Mr Landale opened the presentation by tabling a handout. He explained that, as part of the consultation on the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy, the County Council had approached land owners to submit their proposals for development of their sites up to 2030. The County Council is proposing that an additional 24,500 houses will need to be built during this period. With this in view, Allendale Estates had submitted concept proposal for the provision of 250-300 houses on the 40 acre field opposite Broomley First School.

Mr Combe said he felt that Allendale Estates had a good relationship with the Parish Council and this was something they had borne in mind when asking for the opportunity to make this presentation. He said that since 1998, through the development of commercial premises on former farm sites, the Estates had created 250-300 jobs, many of which were highly skilled. The thinking behind this current proposal was to provide these employees with the opportunity to live close to their place of work.

Mr Landale said he believed that the original plan for the Painshawfield Estate had been to develop this particular field but that this had not happened.

He said that of the 250-300 houses, it was expected that 50+ would be affordable housing. It was stressed that the proposal was very much in its infancy at this stage.

Mr Davison suggested that everyone in Stocksfield would be against the proposal.

Ms Hunt said that the Parish Council appreciated that the Estate had come to make a presentation at this early stage in the planning. She advised that at the end of 2013 the Parish Council had carried out a Housing Needs Survey, and also pointed out that the County Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) had identified this site as being potentially available for development.

Mr Duncan said that the development would be a huge change for Stocksfield, and once worked up would need to be considered carefully both by residents and the County Council. He asked if there was a rough timescale for the development.

Mr Combe said that the timetable would be led by the Local Plan. If the Local Plan does not include this site, then the proposal would probably not be considered at present. He went on to acknowledge that the proposed site was in the Green Belt, but he was of the view that Green Belt was largely intended to stop settlements merging, and thus he felt that this site was more akin to infill.

Prof. Thompson asked how many houses were proposed in total. Mr Combe advised that the initial concept was for 250, and added that the Estates had yet to discuss the proposals with the Highways Department or the infrastructure providers.

Prof. Thompson asked if the proposed new school would be a First School. Mr Combe said that the school would possibly be a replacement for the existing First School.

Mr Duncan raised the issue of the 50 affordable homes. Mr Combe advised that at this stage it had not been decided if these would be for rent or shared ownership.

Mr Davison said that he understood the current norm for development was for 20-30 houses to the acre, which would equate to c800 on this site. Mr Combe advised that the Estates were looking at medium to low density housing, in keeping with the rest of the village.

Mrs Dale welcomed the fact that the Parish Council was being kept informed about the proposals, and asked if this was the only site being put forward in the area. Mr Combe said that Allendale Estates were exploring the possibility of other sites in the area, but that none was as large as this one. He went on to say that the Estates would continue to develop other sites, as had happened at Stocksfeld Hall, but nothing of this type was proposed for this parish.

Mr Combe offered to update the Parish Council on the progress of the development of this site on a quarterly basis, and his offer was welcomed.

Ms Hunt thanked Mr Combe and Mr Landale for attending the meeting, and giving what she felt had been a very useful presentation.

After Mr Combe and Mr Landale had left the meeting, Mr Duncan suggested that it would be useful for the Parish Council to debate this proposal at some future date.

13/107 Public Participation

Prof. Thompson raised the issue of an overgrown hedge on Cade Hill Road, and is to advise the Clerk of the number of the house in question so that a letter can be sent to the occupier.

Prof. Thompson also raised the issue of the gullies on Cade Hill Road and is to advise the Clerk of the location of those he feels are in need of clearing.

13/108 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th January 2014

Mr Duncan proposed and Dr Vickers seconded and it was agreed that, subject to the addition of the phrase, "with the exception of the 0755 which has four carriages" under item 13/101d on page 4, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th January 2014 were a true record of the meeting.

13/109 Matters Arising

Prudhoe Community High School – Dr Vickers advised that parents of students of the school had received a letter informing them that the Head Teacher, Dr Iain Shaw, had left the school by mutual agreement on 31 January 2014. Mrs Dale advised that the County Council is working with the school to resolve the current problems.

Patients' Forum – Dr Mansour had had a meeting with representatives of the Surgery. Prof. Thompson tabled discussion notes on the Forum dated July 2013, along with copies of the guidance and audit requirements for the patient participation directed enhanced service (DES) for the General Medical Services (GMS) contract. Mrs Dale had brought this issue to the attention of the County Council.

Nuisance Telephone Calls – The Clerk advised that she had received further information from Guy Opperman MP. Mrs Dale suggested that at least some of the calls were promoting Government sponsored projects. She stressed that it was distressing for everyone, and particularly elderly and vulnerable residents, to receive calls in the middle of the night. She felt that the Government had to do something about nuisance calls. It was agreed to continue to monitor this problem.

13/110 Correspondence

Correspondence received since the January meeting had been listed on the agenda and was noted. Ms Hunt drew members' attention to an item in the January edition of CAN (Community Action Northumberland) E-news regarding an e-petition on safeguarding the Green Belt. Although the Parish Council as a body could not sign this, councillors may wish to do so as individuals.

Ms Hunt also drew members' attention to a forthcoming Conference to be held at Seaton Burn, hosted by Youth Work Northumberland, a partnership of the statutory and voluntary youth services in the county. Mrs Pollock expressed an interest in attending this event.

13/111 Finance

The financial reports had been circulated with the agenda.

Bank Reconciliation – it was noted that there was a difference of -£618.99. The Clerk said that she was unable to explain this and hoped that it would right itself next month. Mr Davison asked for and was given an explanation of the layout of the report.

Summary of Accounts for January – these were noted. The summary for the Unity Trust Bank account was queried, as it apparently only applied to the end of October 2013. The Clerk advised that there had been no movement in this account since that date.

Spend v Budget – the spend v budget to the end of January was noted. It was agreed that, when drawing up the final budget for 2014-15, care should be taken to ensure that actual expenditure in 2013/14 was taken into account.

Expenditure for January – Mr Duncan proposed and Mrs Dale seconded and it was agreed that the Expenditure for January be approved.

Additional Cheques - Payment of £575 to Allendale Estates was approved.

13/112 Community Development

Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA) Development – Letters to the Parish Council from SCATA and Isos Housing had been circulated and a letter from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) was tabled.

Mr Duncan said that completion of the purchase of the sites had been expected to take place in January, but this had not happened. On Friday, 31st January, SCATA had been informed that their solicitors Swinburne & Jackson had ceased trading, and all of their files had been locked away awaiting transfer to another solicitor. He said that SCATA had an appointment with Isos during the coming week, but obviously time was short, and a contractor had been appointed and was ready to start on the building work.

Ms Hunt asked if there was any opportunity for an extension to the timeline for the grant from HCA. Mr Duncan replied that there was almost certainly not, as 31st March 2015 was a nationally agreed date for the conclusion of this particular project and a new one would be inaugurated on 1st April 2015. He said that the funding for this particular project comes to an end on 31st March 2015.

Transfer of Branch End Toilet block to SCATA – Mr Duncan gave the background to the current situation with regard to the transfer of the toilet block, and explained the issue with regard to changing the terms of the title deed. He said that SCATA will own the site and will enter a 60 year lease with Isos Housing. At the end of the lease term, the bungalow which will be built on the site reverts to SCATA. He stressed that the building can only be let in accordance with the terms of the lease. He also pointed out that the Guessburn and Branch End schemes are financially dependent on each other.

Mrs Dale asked what would happen if no suitably qualified potential tenants applied. Mr Duncan said that he was not aware that this would cause a problem either with the Section 106 agreement or with the business plan.

Ms Hunt said that one of the concerns expressed by County Hall was the removal of the restriction from the Title Deed. Although the terms of the Section 106 agreement and the conditions of the HCA grant should ensure that the property was made available in perpetuity for rent to an elderly, vulnerable or disabled tenant, a Section 106 agreement was a planning document and did not form part of the Title Deed. In her experience, as time moved on, the terms of Section 106 agreements and the conditions attached to grants could be lost or forgotten about.

Dr Vickers asked, as this is a community-led project, if a change to the restriction in the Title Deed would affect local consent to its development. Mr Duncan responded that the change to the restriction would make no change to the development and its management. It was agreed that there is need to ensure that the Section 106 agreement is kept in the forefront over the next 60 years.

Ms Hunt pointed out that the Branch End site is a valuable asset which at present was owned by the Parish Council. Mr Duncan stressed that the bungalow to be built on the site cannot be sold, and added that, unlike private development companies, Isos Housing is subject to regulation by Government.

Mr Davison said that Mr Duncan should be thanked for all his work in bringing the project thus far.

Ms Hunt advised that to date the Parish Council's solicitor had received no formal notification of the request to change the restrictive clause.

Mr Davison proposed and Dr Vickers seconded that

subject to further advice from the County Council and the Parish Council's solicitor, the restricted user clause in the Title Deed should be amended from

“The Property may be used for the providing of affordable housing to persons who are:

- (a) older (in this instance over the age of 55); or
- (b) vulnerable; or
- (c) disabled”

to

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“Not to use the Property for any purpose other than for residential development and uses and all purposes ancillary thereto.”

A vote was taken and the motion was agreed.

Of those eligible to vote:	In favour	8
	Against	0
	Abstention	1

Energy Saving Group – Councillors were reminded that the inaugural meeting will be held on 10th February with the main speaker being Mrs Alison Vipond of Newton.

Community Flood Plan – Notes of the meeting of 13th January had been circulated. Mr Parker advised that a meeting had been arranged with Mr Samuel of the Environment Agency (EA), and that he and Mr Roy would keep the Parish Council informed of progress.

(Suspension of Standing Orders – Mr Parker proposed and Prof. Thompson seconded and it was agreed that Standing Orders should be suspended and the meeting should continue after 9.30pm)

Carers' Information Card – the Clerk had arranged a meeting with a representative of Carers Northumberland.

Provision of a new Burial Ground – a meeting has been arranged for 7th February.

13/113 Consultations – nothing to report

13/114 Advisory Groups and Council Representatives

Review of Advisory Groups

Rights of Way & Environment Advisory Group – Mr Young volunteered to join this Group. A proposed remit for the Group had been circulated. Mr Roy proposed and Mrs Pollock seconded and it was agreed that this be accepted.

Appointment of Parish Council representative to SCATA Board – Mr Duncan advised that SCATA was currently undertaking a Governance review, and once this had been completed the Board would consider Parish Council representation. He proposed, and it was agreed, that SCATA should give a presentation on this matter to the March meeting of the Parish Council.

a. Finance & General Purposes Advisory Group

The notes of the meeting held on 20th January had been circulated.

NE43 News – Issue 50 - Mr Parker proposed and Mrs Pollock seconded and it was agreed that Issue 50 should be an eight page issue and would incorporate the Annual Report.

Grass Cutting – An analysis of the quotations received for the 2014-17 grass cutting contracts had been circulated. Mr Parker proposed and Mr Roy seconded and it was agreed that the quotation received from Northumberland County Council be accepted. It was noted that this contract did not include grass cutting on the estates, which would continue to be cut by the County Council at no cost to the Parish Council.

Litter Bins/Dog Waste Bins – it was also agreed that the County Council should be awarded the contract for servicing litter and dog waste bins.

Hexham Bus Station – residents had raised concerns about the proposals for Hexham Bus Station. It was noted that these proposals would now be consulted upon. Mrs Dale stressed the need to consider the needs of bus passengers from outside Hexham.

Purchase of a Defibrillator – it was suggested that talks about this matter should be held with the Ambulance Service and with North East Heart & Gold before making a final decision.

Children's & Young People's Facilities - Mrs Dale said that she had contact details for several people who are willing to join a regeneration group, and a meeting is to be arranged. It was suggested that the group might consider the provision of some adult fitness equipment.

Branch End Play Area – it has been suggested that hitching posts for dogs might be provided outside the play area. Concerns were expressed that these may cause a health hazard and that there might be problems with driving posts into the grass verge. The Clerk is to discuss this with the Parish Handyman.

Kate's Plain – It was agreed to put a spring on the pedestrian gate.

Communications – Website – Comments on the new site are welcomed.

Tynedale Visitor – The proposed entry in the 2014 Hexham Courant Tynedale Visitor had been circulated and was agreed.

Environment & Rights of Way

Hanging Baskets – It was agreed to provide hanging baskets using the same system as in 2013, which had worked well.

Litter Pick- It was agreed not to hold a formal litter pick this spring, but to put an item in NE43 News requesting residents to spring clean around their own properties.

Mr Davison said that in certain areas of Broomley Woods litter was being left. It was agreed to contact Allendale Estates about this in the first instance.

Rights of Way Group – The Minutes of the most recent meeting of the Group had been circulated and were noted.

b. Planning Advisory Group

Hoodsclose Surface Mine – A draft response to the latest amendments to the planning application for this project had been circulated. This was endorsed with the addition of the phrase that the amendments do not materially affect the Parish Council's original views of this development.

Planning Applications

14/00148/FUL 20/01/14	Construction of single storey rear extension to provide new sunroom. It was agreed to make no objections.
8 Halton Close 14/00157/LBC 21/01/14	Listed Building Consent for alteration to roof truss to provide access door to roof space – see 13/03629. It was agreed to make no objections.
Apperley Farm	

c. Sports Facilities Advisory Group

The minutes of the recent meeting of the Sportsfield Management Group were tabled and noted.

Sportsfield Car Park – It was noted that it will be necessary to request an extension on the planning permission for this project.

Rabbit Proof Fencing – The Sportsfield Management Group had recommended that Neetfleet's price be accepted for the provision of this fencing. Mr Duncan proposed and Ms Hunt seconded and it was agreed that this recommendation be endorsed.

Moles- Mr Duncan proposed and Ms Hunt seconded and it was agreed to purchase 6 mole traps.

Football pitches – There had been a certain amount of damage to the football pitches which had rendered the senior pitch unplayable. It was agreed that repairs and re-seeding would be undertaken as soon as possible at the Parish Council's expense.

Mini Soccer Tournament – The proposals for this Festival were supported.

Multi Use Games Area – The Accounts for 2013 had been circulated and were noted.

American Football – An approach had been received from a resident who wishes to set up American Football at the sports fields. Discussions were being held with sports field users, particularly the Cricket Club, to see if this new sport could be accommodated.

13/115 Council Representatives

East Tynedale Forum – Ms Hunt and Mrs Dale represented the Parish Council at the meeting of 8th January, and minutes of the meeting had been circulated. The next meeting of the Forum will take place on 2nd April.

Northumberland County Council – West Area Committee – Mrs Dale will represent the Parish Council at the next meeting at Ovingham on 11th February.

13/116 Any Other Business

The Clerk had attended a Conference in Retford, organised by the Rural Services Network, entitled "Rural Communities: development and organising....state of play in 2014". Her report on this event had been circulated.

Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) is arranging courses for new councillors, one of which will take place at Newton on 4th March.

13/117 Date of next meeting **3rd March 2014**

The meeting ended at 9.50 p.m.