

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council  
held on Monday 2 March 2015  
at Stocksfield Community Centre**

**Present:** Ms M Hunt (Chair), Mrs A Dale (also present as County Councillor), Mr J Davison, Mr M Parker, Mrs K Pollock, Mrs J Robson, Professor R Thompson, Dr. P Vickers  
Mr N Spencer (Clerk to the Council)

**Also Present:** Ms K Moore (Hexham Courant)

**Apologies:** Mr D Parke, Mr J Roy

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm and welcomed those in attendance.

**15/27 Declarations of Interest**

Mrs Dale (as a County Councillor) declared an interest in discussions on planning applications.

**15/28 Public Participation**

*Stocksfield Community Association (SCA) Play Group.*

The Chair referred to previously circulated correspondence from a resident complaining about the grant paid by the Council to SCA in the light of the closure of the Play Group. The Parish Council has no influence over matters connected with the daily operation of the SCA and the grant to SCA during 2014/15 was made in the light of the circumstances at the time. The reply to the resident from the Clerk was noted and members considered that no further comment was necessary.

**DISCHARGED**

*A 695 Verge*

Prof Thompson had been contacted by a resident reporting a deep hole in the southern verge of the A695, 45 metres west of the junction with the B6309. Mrs Dale agreed to contact Northumberland County Council (NCC) Highways Department in relation to the matter.

**ACTION: Mrs Dale**

*Hindley Road Safety Measures*

Mrs Dale reported that the above measures have been approved and will be installed in due course.

**DISCHARGED**

*New Ridley Development – Name Proposals*

Mrs Pollock had been approached by a resident in relation to the name for the development at New Ridley. The Chair reminded members that an item is to be included in the next issue of NE43 News, inviting residents to make suggestions. Any names proposed will be considered at a future Council meeting.

**DISCHARGED**

*Broadband Access in outlying areas*

The Clerk had been contacted by a resident at Kipperlyn who had no access to high speed broadband, despite the recent introduction of fibre optic cabinets. Mrs Dale said that NCC is working with local parishes to identify the areas where high speed broadband is not available with a view to addressing the situation.

**DISCHARGED**

**15/29 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 February 2015**

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015 were a true record of the meeting (proposed Dr Vickers, seconded Mrs Pollock).

**15/30 Matters Arising**

**a) Branch End Play Area – Western Footpath (previous item 15/17(a))**

The Clerk reported that work had been completed by the contractors and the footpath will be fully open on 3 March, once final work to the edge of the footpath is undertaken. It was AGREED that, in view of the six week gap until the next meeting, payment for the work of the contractors should be made, provided it does not exceed the original quote.

**DISCHARGED**

**b) Defibrillators** (previous item 15/17(d))

The Clerk reported that both defibrillator cabinets are fully operational and are registered with the Ambulance Service. The Chair welcomed the coverage of the defibrillators in the Hexham Courant, recognising the generous donations of local residents and organisations. **DISCHARGED**

**15/31 Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA)**

The Chair updated that the handover of the Guessburn properties is scheduled for 27 March 2015 and there have been 63 bids for the six homes. Branch End will not now be completed until late spring due to issues with the relocation of power supplies. SCATA is also establishing a small working group to develop community energy schemes. The Chair and Prof Thomson will represent the Council on the group.

**15/32 Finance**

**a) Approval of February Expenditure**

It was AGREED that the expenditure for February, as listed, be approved (proposed Mr Parker, seconded Prof Thompson).

**b) Additional expenditure**

Members AGREED that additional cheques for £1231.88 in respect of staff costs and £137 in respect of postage should be paid. The Clerk circulated an amended monthly summary, taking account of the additional cheques, which was noted.

**b) Spend v Budget to February 2015**

Members noted the current position.

**15/33 Consultations**

*NCC - Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Update*

The proposed response had been circulated previously and had been submitted without amendment. The Chair noted that Durham County Council's plan had been criticised by inspectors for its overambitious employment and housing projections, something which may affect the NCC plan. Mrs Dale explained that NCC will scrutinise its figures to ensure they are appropriate.

*NCC – Future Funding of Subsidised Bus Services*

Mr Parker has completed an online questionnaire on behalf of the Council. He said that the higher cost services are vulnerable although none appear to be within the Stocksfield area. Mrs Dale said that NCC is looking at the subsidised services that are unused. It was agreed that there is potential for considerable savings by arranging transport from remote areas to connect to the existing transport services.

*NCC Review of Planning Service*

The proposed response had been circulated and submitted without amendment. David Francis (Northumberland Association of Local Councils) has arranged a meeting with NCC and will ensure that Parish Councils are kept up to date with developments.

*NCC Flood Risk Strategy*

This item has yet to be examined.

**15/34 Advisory Groups**

**a) General Governance Advisory Group (GGAG)**

*i) Notes of GGAG meeting 16/02/15.*

Members noted the previously circulated notes of the meeting.

*ii) Banking and financial arrangements.*

Members noted the following decisions of the GGAG in respect of the banking arrangements:

- Open a current account with the Unity Trust Bank to operate alongside the existing 30 day notice deposit account, using e-banking (as previously agreed by the Council)
- Arrange a pre-paid debit card with the Unity Trust Bank for £1,000 (to be reviewed in September 2015)
- The Clerk will research appropriate organisations with which to deposit reserves and report to the Council
- Until the report of the Clerk is received, the existing accounts with the Co-operative Bank and the Bank of Ireland should be retained.

In order to facilitate the decisions made at a previous Council meeting and at the GGAG, it was unanimously AGREED that the bank mandates be amended to the following five signatories: the Chair, Mr Davison, Mr Parker, Mr Parke and the Clerk. **ACTION: Clerk**

*iii) Grant Award Policy 2015/16*

The Chair referred to the previously circulated proposals to amend the Grant Award Policy. GGAG members viewed the proposed policy as providing a clearer and more robust process than the existing guidelines but felt that it would not deter smaller groups from applying for grants. It was AGREED to adopt the policy as presented and undertake a review in November 2015. The policy will be published on the Council's website and a short item written for inclusion in NE43 News.

**ACTION: Clerk      DISCHARGED**

**b) Planning Advisory Group**

Members noted the contents of the planning schedule and AGREED to endorse the planning applications as outlined:

<b>15/00373/FUL</b> 17/02/15 <b>Fairfield</b> <b>38 Apperley Road</b>	Demolition of single 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 half storey side extension with three dormer windows and rear extension to existing single storey attached garage with new pitched roof over garage and extension – Resubmission.	02/03/15 No objections
<b>15/00390/FUL</b> 18/02/15 <b>Leaholme</b> <b>4 Painshawfield Rd</b>	Proposed two storey side extension	02/03/15 No objections
<b>15/00393/LBC</b> 24/02/15 <b>South Cottage</b> <b>Broomley</b>	Listed building consent for demolition of modern extension, alterations and extensions to cottage and outbuilding.	02/03/15 No objections
<b>15/00428/FUL</b> 24/02/15 <b>Broomley First</b> <b>School</b>	Proposal for 2 small extensions. Timber platform with lean-to roof cover exterior class area and flat roofed hall store. Separate locations	02/03/15 No objections

**15/35 Parish Council Representatives**

*Internet safety presentation*

Dr Vickers had attended the presentation by Bryan Wade with seven other attendees. The session was professionally prepared and delivered and was very well received. Whilst attendance was somewhat disappointing, Mr Wade said he is happy to deliver the presentation periodically. Dr Vickers highlighted the potential to identify practical solutions to problems and the need to consider how they are to be communicated, perhaps through the Council's website and Facebook.

**ACTION: Dr Vickers, Clerk**

**15/36 Review of Sports Fields Rental Criteria**

The Clerk reported that work undertaken to date had identified some inequality in the rents charged to differing groups. Identifying the appropriate criteria was not simple and is likely to lead to a disproportionate effect on one or more groups. Whilst it had been the intention to adopt a new regime for the next financial year, any changes are likely to be introduced in stages. After discussion it was AGREED for the financial year 2015/16 to continue using the existing criteria to determine rental charged by reference to the increase in the Consumer Price Index. The matter will be considered further by the Sports Fields Advisory Group (SFAG) and brought before a future meeting of the Council. The Chair reminded members that a vacancy exists on the SFAG and asked any interested members to contact the Clerk.

**ACTION: Clerk to BFd**

**15/37 Any Other Urgent Business**

*New Ridley Development*

The Clerk reported that a recent update from Two Castles Housing Association had been received. The start date of the development is still unknown due to the delay in moving overhead cables. Work will commence this month to remove a section of hedgerow to allow access and provide suitable visibility splays. **DISCHARGED**

**15/38 Date of Next Meeting**

7.30pm 13 April 2015 – Stocksfield Community Centre

*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 remaining items, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.*

*Whilst the item was considered after the exclusion of the press and public, the minutes and the subsequent resolutions of the Council are not confidential and are reported below.*

**15/39 Award of Parish Groundsman Contract 2015/18**

The Chair referred to discussion at the GGAG and its recommendation to award the above contract to Neetfleet as the most competitive tender of the tenders received. It was AGREED unanimously to approve the award of the contract to Neetfleet. **ACTION: Clerk DISCHARGED**

**15/40 Amended Budget 2015/16**

The Clerk presented an amended budget for the year 2015/16 which took into account the revised cost of the Groundsman's contract and the services provided by the Groundsman which are the responsibility of NCC and which NCC has agreed to reimburse the Parish Council. It was AGREED to accept the revised budget. **DISCHARGED**

The meeting closed at 8.54pm.