

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 7 September 2015 at Stocksfield Community Centre

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

Apologies: Mr M Parker, Mrs J Robson, Mr J Roy, Professor R Thompson

Also present: Ms G Brown (Hexham Courant)

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed those present.

15/102 Declarations of Interest

Mrs Dale (as a County Councillor) declared an interest in discussions on planning applications. The Chair, Mrs Dale and Dr Vickers declared an interest on matters in relation to Stocksfield Community Association as members. Dr Vickers also declared an interest in Merryshields Quarry. Mrs Pollock declared an interest in relation to the Cricket Club as a member.

15/103 Public Participation

Signage – New Ridley

The Chair read out an email from a new resident in New Ridley who complains about the speed of vehicles entering the village from Apperley Dene. She proposed a number of potential solutions. Mrs Dale is progressing installation of a Vehicle Activated Traffic Calming Sign (VATCS) at the west end of New Ridley together with new signage for both ends of the village to indicate New Ridley. The costs for both items need to be identified and proposals placed formally before the Parish Council. Mrs Dale also reported that New Ridley Road is being considered as a 20 mph speed limit although there has been no decision. The Parish Council questioned the effectiveness of 20 mph restrictions and the legal enforceability. Mrs Dale AGREED to report to a subsequent meeting. The Clerk and Mrs Dale AGREED to reply to the author of the email.

Action: Mrs Dale, Clerk and B Fd

Seat at Upper Ford

Mrs Dale reported that damage has been caused to the plaque at the upper ford on Stocksfield Burn and flowers have been thrown around. The Clerk AGREED to inspect the seat.

Action: Clerk

20 mph Speed Restriction - Guessburn

Mrs Dale said that Northumberland County Council (NCC) is to introduce a 20mph speed restriction on Guessburn and Mount View Terrace although the matter is subject to consultation.

DISCHARGED

15/104 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2015

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2015 were a true and accurate record (proposed Mr Parke, seconded Mrs Pollock).

15/105 Matters Arising

a) Bus Shelter at Branch End (previous item 15/90)

The Clerk reported that NCC has provisionally approved the installation of a bus shelter at Branch End but there are aspects of the quote received that need clarification. It is anticipated this will be available before the next General Governance Advisory Group meeting on 21 September. It was AGREED to defer the matter to the GGAG. **Action: Clerk**

b) Fly Tipping at Stocksfield Burn (previous item 15/90)

The Clerk reported that a letter has been distributed to all houses in Mount View Terrace, South Parade and Guessburn identifying the issue and encouraging residents to report those seen fly tipping. Despite being reported to NCC and subsequent reminders, the slates remain on the bank of the burn. Mrs Dale asked for email correspondence to be forwarded to her.

Action: Clerk DISCHARGED

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15/106 Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA)

The Clerk said that following completion of Branch End Cottage, a photograph of the new residents with Pete Duncan is to appear in the next NE43 News. The Chair reminded members that SCATA is being considered for a national award later this week and that Prof Thompson is the Council's representative on the SCATA board. The Parish Council will continue to work with SCATA, particularly in the area of energy conservation.

DISCHARGED

15/107 Finance

a) Approval of July and August Payments

It was AGREED that the payments for July and August be approved as detailed in the previously circulated schedule (proposed Dr Vickers, seconded Mr Parke) and the summary of receipts and payments was noted.

b) Budget Allocation – proposed revision

The proposed revised budget had been previously circulated and was discussed at the most recent GGAG. It takes account of savings and under-spend in some areas and the need to increase allocations for others such as play areas and seats. It was AGREED (proposed Mrs Pollock, seconded Mr Parke) to adopt the revised budget allocation. It was also AGREED to receive quarterly budget monitoring reports at the full Council and to review reserves annually.

c) Budget Monitoring

Members noted the budget monitoring report that had been prepared based upon the revised budget allocation agreed at item 15/107 (b) and the likelihood of a budget surplus in some areas.

15/108 Consultations

NCC – Local Transport Plan Programme 2015-16

The proposed Council response was discussed. Existing priority 1 (not in prioritised order) related to 'disabled access on footpaths between Tynedale Gardens and Branch End via the installation of dropped kerbs'. It is unclear precisely what this relates to. Mrs Dale AGREED to research the information held by NCC and to update the Clerk accordingly. Existing priority 2 related to the provision of a footpath on the north side of New Ridley Road between New Ridley Farmhouse and Lead Road (that leads to the fords). This priority is to be retained. A new priority 3 concerned the need for proactive support and advice from NCC on identifying and implementing appropriate measures to control speeding traffic on the A695 and on New Ridley Road. Members AGREED priorities 2 and 3 and that priority 1 should be determined by the next GGAG meeting.

NCC – Planning Protocols Response

The response had been previously circulated and submitted.

NCC – Charter Action Plan 3.6 – Satisfaction with NCC Consultations

Members AGREED that, overall, the Parish Council is unsatisfied with NCC consultations for the following reasons:

- Insufficient notice considering the deadline for submission
- Often received during or immediately before a holiday period
- Sometimes very lengthy documents with no attempt to ensure they are understandable – poor use of plain English and no executive summary
- Lack of regard for the public view expressed giving the impression that consultation is a token exercise.

Action: Clerk

15/109 Advisory Groups

a) General Governance Advisory Group (GGAG)

i) Notes of GGAG meeting 20/07/15

Members noted the previously circulated notes.

ii) Sports Fields Advisory Group (SFAG)

The constitution and remit of the SFAG had been discussed and it was seen as inappropriate that the SFAG made recommendations direct to the Parish Council as its members had a clear interest in matters discussed. It was recommended that changes should be made so that the SFAG becomes a liaison group and that its deliberations are then considered by the GGAG. In turn the GGAG would make recommendations to the Parish Council. It was AGREED

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(proposed Mr Parke, seconded Mrs Pollock) to amend the remit of both groups accordingly and that the Chair and Clerk should redraft the terms of reference for subsequent approval. A request from Prudhoe Youth Club FC to use the Sports Fields as part of the Northern Alliance Senior League had been considered and approved by GGAG members with an annual rent of £450. Members noted the decision.

DISCHARGED

iii) Grant Application - Stocksfield Community Association (SCA)

The Chair reminded members that the first part of a grant application for SCA had been approved at the previous meeting. Further information has been received from SCA and, after discussion, it was AGREED (proposed Mr Parke, seconded Mrs Dale) to approve a grant of £2300 to refurbish the kitchen, being mainly for the supply of materials.

Action: Clerk DISCHARGED

iv) Local Transport Plan Programme 2015/16

Discussed at Item 15/108.

v) External Audit 2014/15

The report of the external auditors had been received with no issues. Members approved and accepted the content of the report.

DISCHARGED

b) Planning Advisory Group (PAG)

Members noted the contents of the planning schedule. It was AGREED to endorse the planning applications as outlined:

15/02018/FUL 09/07/15 56 Birkdene	Bedroom and ensuite over existing garage and front porch extension	29/07/15 No objections
15/02480/FUL 31/07/15 High Barn 25 Meadowfield Rd	Replacement of existing flat roof to small single storey extension to principal elevation with hipped roof covered with clay pantiles to match existing	20/08/15 No objections
15/02646/FUL 14/08/15 Gallow Hill Farm Riding Mill	Proposed construction of an agricultural building for general storage and livestock.	27/08/15 No objections
15/02687/FUL 21/08/15 Sandilaw, 9 Birches Nook Rd	Proposed demolition of existing garage and utility room and construction of new garage and front porch.	07/09/15 No objections

c) Communications Advisory Group (CAG)

i) Notes of the CAG 18/08/15

Members noted the notes of the meeting, including discussions in respect of website developments, social media, NE43 News and the Parish Local Information Card.

ii) Appointment of Webmaster

Members AGREED (proposed Dr Vickers, seconded Mrs Dale) to appoint Steve Gibbon as the webmaster on a rolling 12 month contract subject to satisfactory performance and periodic review of costs.

Action: Clerk DISCHARGED

15/110 Parish Council Representatives

East Tynedale Town and Parish Council Forum

The Chair attended the above meeting on 14/07/15 and updated members on presentations by NCC's Neighbourhood Services and Sports Tynedale and issues relating to Ovingham Bridge and the opencast development at Pont in County Durham.

15/111 Merryshields Quarry

The Chair explained that Thompsons of Prudhoe had circulated a leaflet to houses bordering the quarry which set out their intentions. The leaflet, together with the current planning conditions had since been circulated to all members. As a result, an invitation was extended to the company to attend tonight's meeting to speak to councillors. The Clerk reported that the invitation was declined and instead a written statement was prepared by Thompsons

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with a request that it is read at the meeting. Thompsons are happy for councillors to attend a drop in session planned for September or October. The Chair read out the statement in full which is appended to these minutes.

Members reinforced the need to work with Thompsons of Prudhoe both in respect of the immediate plans and those for the ultimate reinstatement of the land but the co-operation should be through the formal process of local government. They expressed concern that the company refused to attend a formal meeting of the Parish Council and that attendance of councillors at a drop in session would be as individuals not as councillors.

After discussion it was AGREED that the Clerk will confirm the date of the drop in session with a view to publishing it and the Chair will write to Thompsons reiterating the invitation to attend a Parish Council meeting with the purpose of developing a close working relationship.

Action: Chair and Clerk

15/112 Any Other Urgent Business

Play Area Regeneration Group

Mrs Dale confirmed that properly constituted groups can apply to NCC's Community Fund for funding of projects owned by Parish Councils.

DISCHARGED

Co-opted Councillor – Mrs Dale

Mrs Dale said that she had been co-opted on to the Parish Council when councillor numbers were very low and there was a real risk the council would be non-quorate. The situation has changed and her current responsibilities at NCC risk conflicts between the two roles. Mrs Dale said that, as a result, she is resigning as a Parish Councillor but would continue to attend meetings as a County Councillor. The Chair recognised the role Mrs Dale played in maintaining the effectiveness of the Council and thanked her for her efforts. The Parish Council now has three vacancies and members noted the need to co-opt further councillors.

DISCHARGED

Parish Council Insurance

The Clerk informed members that the insurance renewal premium for 2015/16 (the last of a three year 'tie-in' deal) is now known and payment is due before the next meeting. It was AGREED (proposed Dr Vickers, seconded Mr Davison) to pay the premium of £2967.81.

Action: Clerk

DISCHARGED

15/113 Date of Next Meeting

7.30pm 5 October 2015 – Stocksfield Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 9.19pm.

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Text of statement issued by Thompsons of Prudhoe and referred to at item 15/111 above, presented unedited as received by the Parish Council.

Thompson's of Prudhoe have now completed the purchase of Merryshields Quarry in Stocksfield from SITA. As I am sure you are aware the quarry has permission for the extraction of sand and gravel with the restoration of the site with waste materials (planning permission reference 11/01479/MINREV). Thompson's intention is to take out the remaining reserves of sand and gravel and to complete the restoration of the quarry using restoration soils and clay type material, not with household waste or any other putrescible type waste.

Thompson's are fully aware of the concerns in the local community at the re-commencement of activities at Merryshields and in particular the wagon movements backwards and forwards through the village. In addition, there is obviously a general interest in the site and the restoration scheme that will take place. As you are aware a leaflet was put through the doors of properties overlooking the site and along the road through the village by John Thompson Senior and Ryan Molloy of Thompson's of Prudhoe. John Thompson Senior took the opportunity to delivery these leaflets and to speak to people in the village about the proposed activities at Merryshields. Thompsons have also always intended to hold a 'drop in' session in September or October at a venue in Stocksfield, and it is anticipated that this would run from 3.30pm through to 7.30pm to allow local people to view plans and discuss with representatives of the company the operations that will take place. This type of 'drop in' session ensures that we try to reach as many members of the community as possible. The timing is such that we try to reach anybody out and about after picking children up from school but also those coming home from work in an evening. This type of session allows people, who may not be happy speaking in a public forum, to raise any concerns or make comments to the people who are involved. If answers cannot be given straight away there is an opportunity to leave details to allow a representative of the company to come back to them at a later date. As stated in the leaflet, we will also be seeking to ask people their views on the restoration of the site. This is because the existing restoration scheme does not take account of the existing pond and, in our view, it would be a shame to loose this landscape feature but we would be interested in the local communities view on this. We therefore intend to formally apply to Northumberland County Council to alter this restoration scheme following the receipt of any views local residents in Stocksfield may have on this matter.