

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held at **7.00pm** on
Wednesday 22nd May 2019 in Swarland Village Hall.

1. Present:

Cllr D. Francis, Cllr N. Mansfield, Cllr D. Rixon, Cllrs G. Anderson, Cllr Ms E. Clark and Cllr Mrs K. Howard-Row.

The Clerk was in attendance and two members of the public.

2, Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd May 2018:

These were agreed as a correct record.

3. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman gave a summary of the financial position of the Parish Council. The Parish Council's overall spend had been about £23,000 but it received about £21,000 the deficit was mainly due to the unplanned allocation of funds to the Vyner Park Charity which hadn't been transferred in previous years. It is planned to address this deficit over the current financial year.

The Parish Council has two ways of helping the Village Halls in the Parish, through the annual grants that are made and also through the Community Fund it has set up in case extra cash is needed.

The PC is also responsible for minor assets such as the bus shelters and seats and over the past year carried out a review of all assets and adjustments have now been made to insurance cover. The PC has interests in assets outside the Parish such as the Felton Cemetery, the war memorial at Felton and Davison's Obelisk.

Our Parish has been without a detailed planning policy for nearly 10 years while Northumberland County Council have been working on new planning policies. The PC has been pleased to work with NCC and are pleased they have re-introduced village boundaries that the PC is fairly happy with.

Over the years, the PC has won some applications and lost some but there are still some uncertainties in planning. The PC flags up issues with the overloaded Swarland sewerage system. The other problem is the unadopted road network inherited from the original settlement. Onus was put on the owners of plots to improve the roads but a lot of the Swarland roads need upgrading and are not adopted. The PC has had some success in the previous year, and has a copy now of an 1994 letter from NCC giving a commitment to upgrade part of Kenmore Road. NCC are being pressed for a meeting to discuss this.

One problem in the Parish is a lack of affordable housing. The PC has been making the case to NCC Planning either for a financial contribution or to have some affordable housing included on the larger developments.

The Parish Council has been conserving the environment in the area and is proud of the protected tree belts but can't afford to be complacent. The PC has been active in asking for the clarification of what Tree Preservation Orders mean and publishing information via The Column. Hopefully, the PC has reached a pragmatic conclusion with NCC re: TPO's.

The PC has reminded NCC Planners of the Conservation area status of NotM, and of the listed buildings in Swarland and this has been reflected in planning decisions made in recent times.

The Chairman thanked Jan Anderson (the Clerk), fellow Parish Councillors who come to meetings and contribute outside meetings as well. He also thanks all the volunteers in the Parish in running the village halls, litter picks, Swarland Show and the Firework night. He

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

thanks in particular Suzanne and Bryan Stanley who do so much in the community especially in producing and delivering The Column.

4. Committee and Representatives' Reports:

- a. Vyner Park Charity Management Committee (see page 1388).
- b. Jubilee Hall Committee (see page 1389).
- c. Swarland Village Hall Committee (see page 1390).
- d. Felton Cemetery Report (see page 1391).
- e. Any other reports – None.

5. Any Questions, Comments or Resolutions:

a. Swarland Estate – A member of the public pointed out that references to Swarland Village should really be 'Swarland Estate' its proper name.

b. Planning/Road surfaces – A member of the public said that NCC Planning should make developers responsible for repairing the roads. He referred to his wife who is unable to travel 200 metres using a mobility scooter because of the road condition. In particular the bottom of Kenmore Rd joining to Nelson Drive is churned up by vehicles.

The Chairman responded that Planning had put conditions on some roads which had been completed, but in others the developers went into liquidation so conditions were unenforceable. The PC flagged the need for comprehensive works in its Local transport Priorities for 2019/20 but this was unsuccessful. The PC is hoping to meet with the relevant officers at NCC to help resolve situation of some roads being adopted, others unadopted, and some owned by NCC though not adopted. He referred to a useful document explaining the situation on the PC website.

A member of the public said that Nelson Drive was developed by different developers – as long as it's not finished, the road is not completed. On a similar note, it was asked if something could be done about the pot holes and surface damage etc on Old Park Road which are now so bad it was impossible to walk on the road. They have been told that the road will be repaired when the Cussins development is finished – but when will that be as there is potential for further development. Lots of pedestrians use the road. The complainant had taken this up with County Cllr Trevor Thorne but had no response. It was felt that NCC had failed on its stated aims and a temporary surface could go on the road. The Chairman responded that the PC had raised the issue with NCC and some potholes had been patched up. The complainant has asked NCC four times if a risk assessment had been produced by Cussins [on the road usage] and had no response.

It was agreed the Clerk would contact NCC to ask if the road surface could be improved in Old Park Road.

Cllr Rixon said that there was a condition on the Cussins development that a risk assessment should be produced before the work was commenced. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask NCC Planning about risk assessment.

c. Vyner Park Charity Report – Cllr Rixon asked if parking by Cussins site visitors affected Nelsons/Vyner Park users over Easter. There is a problem with large groups parking at Vyner Park but Nelsons hadn't raised any particular problems. One of the members of the public present said that he had noticed cars parked all the way down the road.

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

It was asked if the PC would consider asking for Old Park Road to be made one way. The Clerk responded that the PC had asked NCC for advice on this issue and it has been agreed that this will be reconsidered once the Cussins development is completed and the road repaired.

d. Felton Cemetery Report – It was asked if there was still space in the Cemetery to which Cllr Anderson responded that the Cemetery Cttee were looking at an extra area but not needing to use it yet.

e. 'Tank Turning' pads – A member of the public said that there was only one pad left and would the PC get in touch with the appropriate authority to ensure its retention as she felt the PC was in charge of things in the Parish and the pads are 'nationally important' according to English Heritage offering to give PC copy of letter/other correspondence. Liz Williams in the Archaeology Dept had been contacted and she was going to contact Heritage England to try to save the remaining pad. Clerk to scan the supplied information and share with PC. The Chairman said the pc would need to consult the owner of the land the pad was on.

f. Old Park Road/Rosetta Gardens - A member of the public said the Rosetta Gardens homes will have the address 'Old Park Road', and pointed out that there may be a conflict over numbering as there is already a No2.

g. Northumberland War Memorial - A member of the public brought to the PC's attention that the parkland which commemorates the Battle of the Nile has been registered as a 'Northumberland War Memorial'.

The meeting closed at 20.10.

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

THE VYNER PARK CHARITY 5th Annual Report 2018 – 2019

There have been changes to the membership of the Management Team during the last year. Andy Ferguson joined the Parish Council, so became a PC rather than Community representative, and in December he took on the role of Treasurer after Stephen Gallico left the PC and VPC team. Elizabeth Hilton stood down because of an increased work load, and was thanked for her active commitment and input (particularly, with husband Wayne, for the excellent new coordinated signage around the Park). David Blackshaw, Andrew Hastie and Elliot Smith became community members over the course of the year. We thank Park Steward Greg Anderson for his continued conscientious and energetic maintenance and repair work, Jan Anderson in her role as Charity Secretary, and all team members for their input. A financial report has been prepared by the Treasurer. Despite increased expenditure on Park maintenance, our finances were sufficiently healthy, as a result of a very successful Bonfire Night, a donation from the Show Committee for the use of the Park, and sundry amounts from bookings and other donations, for us to be able to request a smaller grant from the PC for 2019-20.

Thanks to the regular firing and bonfire teams, all the additional volunteers who helped with the bar, the raffle and stewarding, plus Nelson's popular catering, Bonfire Night was again a well-attended, good-humoured and successful event.

We've continued to make improvements to the wider parkland, but don't want it over-manicured as it is a valuable wildlife site where a good range of birds and insects are spotted. We also came across a very large toad in the roots of a tree while planting more hazel and hawthorn hedging to fill the gaps at the east end of the Park. The semi-natural grassland was cut twice during the year at the appropriate times to allow the flowering plants to seed. A Kenmore Road resident had concerns about the silting up of the Mere Burn at the bottom of his garden where drains from the Park discharge, and also about trespass into his garden by Park users. The VPC has cleared the drains and taken responsibility for the riparian management on its own side of the Burn, and has erected a 'No access beyond this point' sign at the appropriate point, which we hope will help resolve the trespass issue. The Management Team also took the opportunity to look afresh at access into the Park, and updated a previous letter from the Parish Council reminding residents whose gardens back onto Vyner Park that they have no automatic right of access from their gardens.

We also had a complaint from a resident who had been monitoring car park use and careless parking on the access road. The Management Team had no objection to the number of cars using the car park, but have agreed that parking could be more orderly, so defining and marking out parking bays is now on the 'to do' list. It was agreed that we have no power to control parking on the public highway, but can use various methods (The Column and notices on the pavilion notice board) asking Park users to park responsibly.

The sports facilities are gradually improving simply through the efforts of team members; the lines on the tennis courts were repainted in time for Easter after regular brushing and moss treatment, and the sports field is benefitting from regular cutting in the growing season and the application of additional soil to level the drier areas over the drains that sink in dry weather. We do pay for a mole contractor – it needs a professional to follow and keep up with their movements. Unfortunately however, John Stewart resigned from his role as an under-10s coach just before he was due to start training in Swarland, and tennis coach Phil Barron warned us that he'd need to give up coaching here this year because of changed work and family commitments. We hope there will be replacements if the interest from residents is also there. But football team manager Sam Palin, resident in the village, has approached us about

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

starting a North Northumberland Football League team in the Parish, and would use Vyner Park on a regular basis.

In September, Nelson's licence was renewed for a further year, with the agreement that they would now pay a monthly licence fee rather than just a peppercorn rent. The Nelson's team agreed to take on the responsibility of costing and finding funding for the badly-needed upgrading of the kitchen fittings and equipment; the continued popularity of the café means they struggle to cope with the current provision. The Management Team supports them in their efforts, as they continue to provide a much-needed focal point and social hub for the community.

This is my final report as member and Chairman of the Vyner Park Charity Committee, as I'm standing down at the VPC AGM in June, having been Chairman of the old Parish Council Vyner Park Sub-Committee for two years, Vice-Chairman (under Robert Brotherton's Chairmanship) of the then newly-formed Vyner Park Charity Management Committee since 2015, and Chairman since 2016. We now have clearly defined aims, objectives and routines, and a very strong team to carry them forward. It has been a pleasure to work with past and present members.

Suzanne Stanley (Chairman)

May 2019

Report from Jubilee Hall, Newton-on-the-Moor 2018/19

The Trustees of the Jubilee Hall are very appreciative of the support given annually by the Parish Council in the form of a grant. This has ensured that the fabric of the building has continued to be well maintained. In the past year a considerable amount of pointing and replacement of stones at the front of the building has been done as well as pointing at the back and tying in the toilet block to the main building. Inside, the floor in the main hall has been sanded and revarnished. Repointing of the wall in front of the Hall, where the Parish Council noticeboard is, is due to be done shortly .

The Hall plays an important part in village life. The monthly coffee mornings are very well supported, with numbers attending increasing and regular visitors coming from Shilbottle, Swarland and Felton as well as further afield. The income generated goes a long way towards the annual running costs.

There are a number of regular groups who meet in the Hall either weekly or monthly - bowls club, Pilates class, art group, fiddle group, accordion club and pipers' group as well as a monthly church service.

The musical evenings which are held regularly throughout the year have proved to be very popular and, again, attract a considerable audience from the wider area. There are a number being planned for the remainder of this year.

The Hall does have a number of one-off bookings from local residents, such as birthday parties & christening parties, and we would like to increase these.

The Trustees have plans for making further improvements to the Hall. It is hoped to upgrade/improve the lighting in the main Hall, and it would be helpful if the £2000 promised by the Parish Council could be put toward that. We are currently putting together grant bids towards replacing the chairs which are reaching the point when they are becoming brittle and could become unsafe. The major improvement that we would like to undertake is to alter the kitchen which is badly in need of modernising to meet current regulations and is poorly laid out. This will obviously be a long term project and will be subject to being able to attract grants which we are currently looking into.

We would again like to thank the Parish Council for their assistance and look forward to a continued good relationship.

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

Kate Ferguson
Chair, Jubilee Hall Committee

Swarland Village Hall Charity. Chairman's Report for Year Ending 31st March 2019

I am happy to report that 2018/19 has been another successful year for the Hall, but also one that has seen a lot of change to the fabric of the building and some growth in income from hall hire.

Overall, this financial year has been largely devoted to implementing repairs to the stage area and dealing with the consequence of the repair. In March 2018 we discovered a serious infestation of woodworm under the stage and spent the beginning of the financial year assessing the cost and getting quotations. We were unsuccessful in getting a grant to help cover the cost of the stage repairs, but decided to continue anyway, using about half the Hall's reserves. During Summer 2018 we had work carried out to the stage and found not only woodworm, but also a significant level of wet-rot, caused by buried airbricks. The Hall floor under the original stage was replaced in August and September, along with the supporting floor joists. The stage itself was not reinstated. Instead the Hall canvassed User Groups and the local community to gauge interest in replacing the stage and, if wanted, in what form. The over-riding view from the survey was that a temporary stage was needed, but one that could be erected as needed. Most of the time it would be limited to a small area. The Hall is currently working out how to cost-effectively implement a movable stage system, while at the same time maximising storage space for User Groups.

Late in the summer of 2018 and with the permission of Swarland Club, the Hall committee had the soil behind the back wall of the stage area removed to expose the 3 airbricks (previously buried) discovered during the floor replacement. It would appear that water had seeped through them underneath the stage floor, which in turn had caused the wet-rot.

Having had the stage removed, the stage curtains were found to be a metre short of the Hall floor. With the help of one member of the Committee, the curtains were cleverly lengthened, using the last remaining matching material. In a different area, another member took on the responsibility for moving the fire exit signs and other fire-fighting equipment to ensure we could provide a safe environment for users. All of this was done in Autumn under some time pressures, so the Hall was ready for its main fund-raising activity of the year, the annual Winefest. Finally, at the end of the financial year, the stage area walls and floor were stripped and stained to match the existing.

The Hall had a very successful Winefest, organised by a dedicated band of volunteers. Over 70 people attended, raising around £400 for Hall funds. It was nice to see some newcomers joining the event, as well as regular attendees.

At the suggestion of one Committee member, the Hall ran a coffee morning on Saturday 3rd November, which was well attended by both old and new residents of the village. The event lasted a couple of hours and provided an opportunity for the Committee to canvas views of local people on what they would like to see the Hall used for. Other User Groups also used the event to publicise their own activities. Much interest was shown in running a similar event again, particularly including a display about the history of the village.

The financial year 2018/19 has been a difficult year for the Hall due to the large amount of remedial work required to the stage end. We have spent about 50% of our reserves on this project and have yet to implement a temporary stage. As a Committee however, we have all worked together to achieve a cost-effective way forward in a short period of time. The improvement will ensure the Hall can continue to act as a focal point for the community for many years in the future.

NEWTON on the MOOR & SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

MAY 2019

I would like to thank every member of the Committee for their help and support during the year. A lot of work is done outside of the Committee meetings, which is vital for the functioning of the Hall. Without it, progress would be very slow and probably unacceptable to our customers – the people of Swarland and Newton-on-the-Moor.

I would also like to formally acknowledge and thank the Parish Council for its continued financial support. Without its annual grant, the Hall would struggle to survive.

Finally, I would like to thank whole heartedly the volunteers and members of our community that help raise funds and use this facility and attend events. It is after all their Hall.

Steven G Woolfrey , Chairman Swarland Village Hall Charity –2018/19

FELTON CEMETERY JOINT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2018/19

The Joint Committee consists of five Parish Councillors, two from Felton, one from Thirston and two from Newton on the Moor and Swarland.

Basic funding comes from the three Parish Councils, in proportion according to numbers on the electoral roll. The last few years have seen high levels of income from burials and other Cemetery services. It has therefore been agreed to reduce the parish council contributions for the financial year 2019-20. Fees for Cemetery services have been increased in line with inflation.

St Michael's and All Angels in Felton hosted the Remembrance church service in November 2018. The service at the War Memorial was extremely well attended. The changes made to the running times worked very well and the service ran very smoothly: the Committee would like to thank all those involved in preparation and running the service on the day.

As always, the Cemetery Clerk has received a number of compliments on the appearance and upkeep of the cemetery during the year. This is in no small part thanks to the effort put in by the Cemetery Clerk, Mrs Hazel Hood, and the groundsman, Mr Peter Brown, and the Committee would like to express their appreciation. The troughs at the entrance to the Cemetery have been replaced with attractive stone troughs thanks to the generosity of three local residents in providing materials and labour. The waste disposal area has been emptied and the Committee will schedule regular reviews of this to keep it in check.

Thanks are offered to everyone involved in the running of the Cemetery for all their hard work.