

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 23 April 2014 in Swarland Village Hall

Present: Cllrs G Anderson, R Brotherton, D Francis, Mrs Handyside, Mrs D Lewney, A Lisle, N Mansfield, (Mrs Richardson for part of the meeting), Mrs E Sells and Mrs S Stanley.
The Parish Clerk in attendance.

ACTIONS

1 **SWARLAND VILLAGE HALL PRESENTATION**

Dr Steve Woolfrey, SVH Chairman and Mr Malcolm Nesbitt, Treasurer presented information on the Village Hall to the Parish Council.

Dr Woolfrey explained the Hall is a Grade II listed timber building which is over 70 years old. It is owned by the Parish Council but is run by the Village Hall Committee which has set itself up as a Charity and submits annual accounts to the Charity Commission. There are a number of regular groups using the Hall along with being available for private hire. The annual contribution from the Parish Council covers the insurance which is quite high with the Hall being a wooden listed building. There have been a number of improvements made to the Hall over the years which started with a legacy of £10k from George Straker. The majority of money for works comes from grants but there have been some SVH fundraising events. The Committee is always planning the next project. The success of the Hall is down to the Committee and the Hall's one employee – Arthur Scott. Mr Nesbitt then circulated the last years' annual accounts and previous accounts. From a Treasurer's perspective the Hall is breaking even and without the PC donation for the insurance the Hall would be struggling. There are some funds held in case of the need for emergency repairs, though these can also be used as matched funding for grants and it is proposed that they should not drop below £10k.

Cllr Brotherton asked if there were any plans to reconnect the Hall to the Club as this has been raised in the Parish Plan. The Hall Committee is happy to discuss this option, it has been discussed in the past and there is the opportunity to reconnect as the door has not been sealed in.

Cllr Brotherton asked if a structural survey has been undertaken and it was confirmed one had taken place recently and the Hall was checked for dry rot and rising damp. A good report was received and some spray treatment work was completed under the floor and more air grates were installed.

Cllr Mrs Stanley thanked Dr Woolfrey and Mr Nesbitt for providing the Councillors with the information on the Hall.

2 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND POLICE REPRESENTATION**

PC Phil Jack from Rothbury Police Station came to the meeting to inform the Councillors that Swarland has had one or two crime issues in the last few months there have been no further issues to report recently.

Dr Woolfrey asked what the situation is with regard to oil thefts in the area and PC Jack stated that this has died off a bit now but there are still rural thefts from farms. Cllr Mansfield asked about the value of locking oil tanks when more damage can be caused by thieves cutting into the tank. PC Jack stated that anything that will deter opportunists is a benefit.

Cllr Mrs Stanley asked if the police patrol the parish and PC Jack confirmed patrols take place, especially at night. There are 5 police in Rothbury and at night the Alnwick station also covers the parish.

Mrs Vaggs asked what the situation was with regard to speeding and PC Jack stated that the Community Speed Watch Initiative has now been rolled out across the force but it is still the case that only the police speed checks can result in prosecution.

PC Jack reminded Councillors that with the lighter nights and people using their garden tools to remember to lock up sheds. Residents should be extra vigilant and if they see anything suspicious should call "101".

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Police reported a burglary in Nile Drive where a cordless drill and cordless screwdriver were stolen from a garden shed. An adult male has been interviewed in relation to this crime. Speed checks were undertaken in March and 4 vehicles out of 10 were caught speeding in Newton on the Moor, 6 out of 23 in Swarland.

Mrs Vaggs stated that in a recent edition of The Column there was a reference to Swarland and Newton on the Moor Parish Council and could the Editor please look out for instances of this and correct them as the Parish Council should only be known as Newton on the Moor and Swarland.

Mrs Vaggs stated she was concerned to hear a member of the Parish Council state there was not a War Memorial in Swarland. Mrs Vaggs stated there is a War Memorial in Newton on the Moor and members need to ensure that they are considering the whole of the parish not just the village or area they reside in.

3 **APOLOGIES** – Cllrs Mrs Fahy, Mrs Preston, Mrs Richardson as they are attending NCC Planning Training.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON THE AGENDA** -

Cllr Brotherton - Planning Application 14/00368/PRUTPO.

Cllrs Lisle and Mrs Stanley – Planning Application 14/01027/FUL – 1 Studley Drive

Cllr Francis – Correspondence - CAN Donation

5 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2014** were agreed as a true record.

6 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 26 MARCH 2014**

- **Speeding of Henzell vehicles through Old Swarland, Park Road and The Avenue** – The Clerk reported the issues to the Police and informed the Police that the Parish Council was going to contact the business however the Police advised against this as it is more appropriate for them to speak direct to the business. The Councillors agreed to monitor the situation and if there were more issues the Parish Council would contact the business direct.
- **Pot Holes at Overgrass** - planings are being provided by NCC once they have undergone a second analytical test to see if they are tar bound or not. The pot holes still need repairing and the Clerk has again put in a request for these works. Clerk
- **Repairs to B6345 from Old Swarland to Felton** – Despite the Clerk chasing this up there has still be no response from NCC on whether works will be undertaken. Clerk
- **Yellow Lines outside the School** – Following circulation of the new proposal a request has been put to NCC to have the lines increased up to the car park entrance. This is now going out to consultation.
- **Coast View Road – request to NCC for costs for making this up to adoptable standard** – Despite the Clerk contacting NCC on this matter again there has been no response. Clerk
- **Percy Wood Golf Course removal of hedgerow along the 10th hole** – The Clerk had no response from the letter written at the beginning of March and therefore contacted Percy Wood by phone. The receptionist has stated she is going to find out what is happening with the hedge and get back to the Clerk. Cllr Brotherton considered that as they had not grubbed out the hedge, they were within their rights to cut it right back Clerk
- **Commemoration of start of the First World War** – It was agreed at the Cemetery Committee Meeting to have the War Memorial in Felton cleaned in time for August and to lay a spray of flowers at the Memorial in commemoration of the start of the First World War. It was agreed to also lay a spray of flowers at the Newton on the Moor Memorial and put a date and time for this event into The Column. Clerk
- **Planning Application Strategy Document** – The revisions agreed at the

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

March meeting were circulated to all Councillors. No comments for changes were received. It was agreed this document be adopted.

- **Freedom of Information Request update** – The email from Mr Howarth stating his surprise at the Parish Council amending the Publication Policy was circulated. The Clerk stated that the policy was not being changed but was just being made clearer in relation to the rate to be charged in more complex requests, stating the hourly rate for the Clerk be recovered in such instances. The councillors confirmed their agreement to this change. Clerk to relay this to Mr Howarth. Clerk
- **Ditch at Vyner Park, flooding of** – Cllr Brotherton has made arrangements to meet with Northumbrian Drainage on Friday morning. It was agreed Cllr Brotherton would invite David Blackshaw, the Equestrian Centre owner, to this meeting; Clerk to provide telephone number to Cllr Brotherton.
- **Parking issues at Springwood** – NCC has responded stating that no signage can be installed here to solve the parking issue in the turning circle however NCC are writing to all residents informing them that parking is prohibited in this area as vehicles parking here cause access issues.
- **Newton on the Moor phone box – storage of panels** – Cllr Anderson agreed to store these panels in his loft and he will liaise with Mr Pettifer.
- **Request for investigation into Planning Application response** – Cllr Mrs Stanley reported under Urgent Items at the March meeting that she had received a request from Mr Howarth to undertake an investigation into the conduct of the Parish Council in the handling of his planning application response. Mr Howarth also raised concerns about one Councillor and the number of emails sent by this Councillor in relation to the application and their attendance at the NCC Planning Meeting. As was stated at the last meeting this matched the criteria for an informal complaint as per the Parish Council complaints procedure and therefore the Chairman, Cllr Mrs Stanley, met with Mr Howarth. This meeting was followed up by a letter from Cllr Mrs Stanley to Mr Howarth stating that a) with reference to the PCs methods of handling planning applications a procedure has now been formalized to ensure consistency when reviewing applications, and b) with reference to Mr Howarth's concerns about the conduct of a member/members of the Parish Council, this cannot be investigated internally but could be referred to the Monitoring Officer at NCC (his contact details were given to Mr Howarth).

Cllr Mrs Stanley then reported receiving an email late today, as Mr Howarth was unable to attend the Parish Council meeting, requesting that the Parish Council retract their comments on his planning application and asking if a particular Councillor could confirm that he had acted without bias. Cllr Mrs Stanley responded to Mr Howarth stating that a possible retraction could not be discussed at this meeting as it was not an agenda item but would be added to the May meeting agenda for full discussion. It was agreed in the meeting that as the PC had not yet received notice of an appeal, then in any case no action could be taken at this time. In relation to the question about a Councillor acting without bias Cllr Mrs Stanley has responded stating the Parish Council must rely on individual Councillors volunteering a Declaration of Interest on any agenda item should they feel there is one. This was confirmed in the PC meeting. Mr Howarth's email was sent also to Cllr Handyside but not to the Clerk so the Clerk requested a copy for the Parish Council files.

Cllr Mrs
Stanley

Cllr Mrs Stanley raised the issue of Councillors comments on other Councillors behaviour. On 20 December a Councillor sensibly said there should have been a meeting about a planning application and that this Councillor was feeling uncomfortable about the emails that had been circulating. This comment then became a feeling of bullying in the January meeting. Cllr Mrs Stanley asked whether concerns about fellow Councillors should be raised in a public meeting format – this is something that should be avoided. The Code of Conduct and the Complaints Procedure should be referred to first.

- **Litter Pick** – Cllr Francis requested thanks go to all residents who helped in the annual litter pick.

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

7 REQUESTED AGENDA ITEMS

- **Grade II listed building** – demolishing of and NCC's response. It was brought to the attention of the Clerk that a Grade II listed building had been demolished without any permissions being granted for this work. The Planning Officers were informed of this at NCC and the response received was that a pre-application about converting the shop to a residential property was submitted last summer. Elaine Gray the Building Conservation Officer did speak to the owner and visited separately to look at the out-buildings only Ms Gray thinks she gave advice about the wrong building. In light of this they can visit the site but cannot take any further action. It was agreed the Clerk would write to Karen Ledger at NCC to request this situation be looked into as this situation should not have been allowed to occur. Also there is scaffolding on the shop building and this is listed and no planning application has been received for any works which is causing concern for the Councillors.
- **Draft Welcome Booklet** – Some amendments have been forwarded to the Clerk and now the Councillors have had an opportunity to review it the Clerk requested any further amendments before the booklet is updated for printing.
- **Web Page information** – The Clerk has requested some background information from all Councillors to put on the web page. To date only Cllrs Francis, Mrs Preston and Mrs Stanley have provided this information.

Clerk

Cllr Mrs Richardson joined the meeting at this point.

- **PC Insurance Renewal** – The Clerk has requested quotes for the insurance renewal for this meeting however one company has yet to submit their quote so this is to be deferred to the next meeting.
- **Sports Club Update** – Cllr Brotherton stated the children's tennis has started. Checks are being made to the building for Health and Safety issues. There is a clean up of the Sports Club taking place on Friday night, all volunteers welcome. Cllr Brotherton then circulated the proposed Governance for comment. A new lease is required. Cllrs Brotherton and Francis are willing to be Trustees. Cllr Francis stated the PC needs to come to a view as soon as possible as to setting up a charity to run the Sports Club as originally the funding for the Sports Club was based on this having charitable status. The ultimate long term plan is for the management of the Sports Club to also incorporate all of Vyner Park. The existing sub-group members are happy to step into the Management Team roles initially. The Parish Council agreed to a start being made on the application for Charitable Status and agreed to adopt the governance model.

8 REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND OTHER MEETINGS

County Councillor Thorne reported the following:

- **Scottish Independence** – NCC has been doing work on this as it does have implications for Northumberland A "borderland" group has been set up and four Councillors have been to Scotland to undertake research.
- **Local Schemes Money** – CC Thorne would like to allocate £10k to Newton on the Moor for a capital scheme if the PC can come up with a project.
- **Meeting to take place of the local access forum** and CC Thorne asked if there was any feedback that can be relayed to the forum re the path in the wood. Cllr Mansfield confirmed the path has been completed and to express the thanks of SWAG to the forum for their support.
- **The litter pick** was very successful, CC Thorne wanted to know how SVA gets so many people coming along – it was a very good village effort.
- **Shilbottle** is commemorating WWI with a new war memorial, church service, a band, funding a planter and a fun day in the village.

Cemetery Committee Meeting – Burial and associated fees have been held at the 2013/14 prices. Parish Councils will be required to pay 100% levy this year and the levy to be reviewed in September for next year. The audited accounts were approved

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

and signed off. A new grass cutter was purchased.

9 **FINANCE**

- a. Bank statements: Lloyds current £8,805.70, Instant Access £3,840.32, Treasury £15,000
- b. Clerks' salary and expenses: Salary £364.16 plus expenses £345.91 (to include payment of npower bill for Sports Club of £313.95) = £701.07
- c. Other receipts and payments:
 - i) Receipts: NCC First Precept Payment £8,000.00, NCC Get Going Grant payment for March £230.80, allotment rental of £55 and £30 donation to bus service, Swarland Village Action towards The Column £62.50, Bank interest £24.05
 - ii) Payments: Ecclesiastical Insurance for Sports Club by Direct Debit £173.31, Felton Parish Council Cemetery Levy £1,397.95, Northumberland Community Enterprise £75.00 for The Column, Mrs S Stanley £102.84 for Jubilee Tree Plaque, Northumbrian Water for Sports Club £230.88 (already paid), Kielder Forest Products Ltd £270.00 play area wood chippings.
- d. Approval of Accounting Statements - They were approved unanimously by the Council.
- e. Approval of Annual Governance Statement - They were approved unanimously by the Council.

10 **PLANNING**

a. To report on any planning decisions:

14/00368/PRUTPO - 3 Low Chesters - Tree works - removing ivy, deadwood trees & crown – APPROVED

14/00426/FUL - The Old School, 20 Newton on the Moor - Conversion of double garage into holiday let - APPROVED

14/00541/FUL - 11 Low Wood - new garden/family & media/cinema room – APPROVED

b. To consider any planning matters:

14/00647/FUL - Newton Hall - convert existing outbuildings into flats and houses – No objections

14/00648/LBC - Newton Hall - convert existing outbuildings into flats and houses – No objections

14/00960/FUL - Land SW 6 Kenmore Road - Bungalow with detached garage and new entrance – No objections submitted however a request has been made for the laurel hedging to be cut back to provide pedestrian access.

14/01027/FUL - 1 Studley Drive - Dormer bungalow with detached single garage – No objections

14/00193/FUL – Ash Cottage, NotM – proposed Mansard Roof – applicant has appealed the refusal decision by NCC.

Cllrs Mrs Handyside and Mansfield requested their names be removed from the hard copy circulation of planning applications.

Clerk

11 **CORRESPONDENCE**

- NCC – Capacity issues within the Planning and Enforcement Team – already circulated. There are a number of staff off sick which is causing problems in planning and enforcement – NCC are also looking at providing short term cover for this area.
- Jubilee Hall – letter of thanks for notice board
- SPARCE - Invitation to join a Rural Sounding Board – it was agreed to circulate to Councillors for a decision at the next meeting. Clerk
- Local Works request for support on proposal under the Sustainable Community Act to give Parish Councils a percentage of business rates – it was agreed to respond stating the PC supports this in principle however it is not very relevant to this PC. Clerk
- NALC Policy Review Survey 2014 – It was agreed the Clerk is not required to complete this survey.

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman of the Council asked the Parish Councillors for agreement to suspend standing orders to enable the completion of the items on the agenda as the Parish Council meeting had been running for 2 hours.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders.

- CAN – Spring Conference – 9 May at 1.30pm in Stannington Village Hall – Councillors to respond to the Clerk by 5 May if they wish to attend.

Cllr Francis left the meeting at this point

- CAN – Donation request – it was agreed to donate £50
- For Circulation - CAN News, Good Councillor's Guide
- Felton in Need – the Clerk informed the Councillors of this Charity and the details of how to submit a grant request will be put up in the doctors surgery.

12 URGENT ITEMS

Member Interest Form – Cllr Mrs Sells has not completed her form and this is an offence under the Localism Act as this requires completion within 28 days of taking office. This is actually classed as a crime and could result in police involvement should a member of public report this issue.

13 REQUESTS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Email from Mr Howarth
PC Insurance Renewal
SPARCE - Invitation to join a Rural Sounding Board

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of Annual General Meeting to be held on **28 May 2014** in **Jubilee Hall** after the **Annual Parish Meeting** to be held **at 7.00pm**

The meeting closed at 9.53 pm.

Dates of Future Meetings: 25/06/14 SVH, 23/07/14 JH, 27/08/14 SVH, 24/09/14 JH,
22/10/14 SVH, 26/11/14 JH