

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL JANUARY 2014

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 22 January 2014 in Jubilee Hall, Newton on the Moor

Present: Cllrs G Anderson, R Brotherton, Mrs L Fahy, D Francis, Mrs Handyside, Mrs D Lewney, A Lisle, N Mansfield, Mrs Preston, Mrs Richardson, Mrs E Sells, Mrs S Stanley.
The Parish Clerk in attendance.

ACTIONS

1 COOPTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS

It was agreed unanimously to co-opt Claire Preston and Alan Lisle onto the Parish Council. The Clerk ensured the relevant paperwork was completed.

2 PAUL MCKENNA – NCC RE SPEEDING ISSUES IN THE PARISH

Mr McKenna gave his apologies and this item to be deferred to the February meeting.

3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND POLICE REPRESENTATION

Police Report included a burglary at The Avenue, Swarland in December where a chainsaw was stolen from a shed at an empty property. It was also reported that a motorbike and drill were stolen from a property on Park Road.

Mrs Rogerson reported that the sign at Overgrass Road end has still to be replaced by NCC and also the pot holes at Overgrass are in urgent need of filling in. Clerk to pursue NCC on these two issues.

Clerk

Mrs Vaggs raised the following issues:

1. Footpath 17 – Mrs Vaggs asked if this is to change to a bridlepath. She stated the parish residents were consulted when it was made into a footpath and a consultation should be undertaken if it is to change to a bridlepath. Cllr Brotherton stated that horses and bikes have a right to use this footpath as it is on Forestry Commission land however he has no knowledge of this being upgraded to a bridlepath.

2. Cattle Shed update – The Clerk reported that there is still no further progress on this but NCC is being pushed on the matter by the PC which is the only action the PC can take on this issue.

3. Mrs Vaggs asked for urgent road repairs to be made to the B6345 from Old Swarland to Felton. Clerk to contact NCC and CC Thorne also to pursue this.

Clerk

4. Mrs Vaggs asked if CC Thorne would be writing his bit for The Column as he does for the Longframlington Newsletter. CC Thorne stated he would put in an entry to The Column.

CC Thorne

5. There has been fly tipping near the Obelisk. Felton PC is aware of this. The Clerk stated that NCC has cleared this fly tipping and also managed to get an address from the rubbish and will be pursuing this.

4 APOLOGIES - None

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON THE AGENDA - None

6 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2013 were agreed as a true record.

7 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 27 NOVEMBER 2013

a. Adoption of Percy Drive – NCC has not been able to provide a timescale for the adoption of this road as yet. Clerk to pursue and report back to the Council once a date has been given. It was also reported that there are some nasty pot holes at the end of Percy Drive. Clerk to report to NCC.

Clerk

Clerk

b. Play area complaint to RoSPA – RoSPA has agreed to undertake another report on the play area with a different inspector free of charge and will forward their report to the Clerk once this has been undertaken. They have apologised for

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the concerns raised and state that they are changing their systems which may have accounted for any errors.

c. Pavement of Park Road/Douglas Crescent – An order has been issued to lift and relay the paving flags however NCC cannot give a timescale at present.

d. Policy Review – The policies were adopted following the amendments discussed at the November meeting.

e. Request to NCC as to which parts of Coast View are adopted – NCC has confirmed that Coast View is an “unmaintained public highway”, it is not adopted. It is owned by NCC with a long term view of ultimately making it up to an adopted standard. NCC would not undertake any gritting on any part of this road, even if it was adopted. Cllr Handyside reported that the pot holes in this road are dreadful and need urgent works. Clerk to contact NCC on this issue.

Clerk

f. Yellow Lines outside the School update – The School is in agreement with the yellow lines and has also requested flashing warning signs but this would have to be put into the LTP. The Head Teacher also asked if NCC could include parents in the consultation. NCC has stated this is not possible but it could be highlighted in a newsletter. The Clerk also raised the concerns about the length of the yellow lines. It was agreed that these could be shortened and for the Councillors to agree on this and respond to NCC. It was agreed the Clerk to arrange a meeting with NCC and Cllr Brotherton to meet on site as Cllr Brotherton is concerned about the state of the road here which needs repairs before the lines can be installed.

Clerk

8 **REQUESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

Budget approval for setting of precept – it was agreed unanimously to set the precept at £16,000 for 2014/15. Clerk to send the paperwork to NCC.

Clerk

Planning Application Process – Following the resubmission of a planning application for Kenmore Road some of the new Councillors felt they had been harassed into changing their opinion on this application based on comments on the previous application that had been submitted prior to their joining the Parish Council. The Clerk stated there was a failing on her part for not adding the original comments to the application being circulated. However, some new Councillors felt that the application should have been reviewed as a new application. The Clerk stated that as it was not a new application, such a change in response from the Parish Council on an application that had originally been refused and resubmitted with very few changes would have resulted in NCC raising questions as to the change in view of the Parish Council. This statement was backed up by CC Thorne who stated the Planning Committee would have asked questions of the PC as to why they had changed their decision; they would require a good reason for the change of opinion. Cllr Mrs Handyside stated she was unhappy with the way the Kenmore Road application had been handled and thought that, in view of the obvious division of opinion, it might have been beneficial to have a special meeting to discuss it.

Clerk
Clerk

Cllr Mrs Stanley stated this whole situation could have been avoided and lessons would be learnt from it, but it had been an unusual combination of circumstances. Clerk to locate information on Material Conditions for Planning Applications and contact NCC to see if planning training is to be provided to Councillors soon.

Discussion then took place on the issue of circulating planning applications as there are now 12 Councillors to view each application and as there are only 21 days in which to respond, it leaves little time for every Councillor to review the applications. Cllr Handyside asked if making decisions between meetings was legal, as CPALC made it clear it wasn't. The Clerk and Cllr Francis confirmed that this was legal and really the only way to proceed unless a sub group was specifically appointed to review all applications outside the PC meetings. Cllr Handyside stated it would be good to discuss planning applications at a PC meeting in front of parishioners for the sake of transparency.

It was agreed that once a planning application is received the planning number is

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circulated by email to all Councillors. The paper version is then put on circulation. All comments on the application to be circulated to all Councillors via email. Councillors must inform everyone should they be away for any period of time to avoid applications being held up. Phone numbers are to be added to the circulation list for checking each Councillor's availability before delivery. It was also agreed that reasons for objections on applications are listed in the minutes and if there is a split of opinion on an application it should be minuted that a response was given by a majority decision.

Cllr
Brotherton

Vehicle damage to sports field at Vyner Park – The Clerk showed photographs of the damage to the sports field at Vyner Park following vehicles driving on the grass. It was proposed that a gate or barrier of some kind be installed at the entrance though this would cause issues with access for grass cutting by NCC. Cllr Brotherton to look at the options and bring to the next Vyner Park meeting.

Replacement Bus Service for the 813 – Grant funding has been successful to keep this service running for two years. A new provider will be running the service – Upper Coquetdale Community Transport. Letters have been sent to current users informing them of the change and people are already signing up for the new service. The Clerk is writing to organizations and users requesting donations to this service as it will have to be self funding by the end of the second year. Cllr Mrs Stanley thanked the Clerk for her work on this as it does not just help this parish but those residing all along the bus route.

Tree Removal along the A1 – Highways has confirmed that of the 600 oak trees planted to commemorate the Queen's coronation in 1953 some 180 have to be removed due to disease and the risk they pose to road users from collapse. Highways Agency propose to plant up the existing hedge in the gaps that exist behind each tree which would help mitigate the loss of the trees and improve the overall appearance of the fragmented hedgerow.

Swarland Sports Club – Cllr Brotherton reported that the AGM of the Sports Club took place on 15 January. Cllrs Brotherton, Fahy and Handyside attended along with about 25 others. There are currently two people on the Committee, and the Club is set up as a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. The Club is having financial issues due to lack of grant funding and also a fall in membership. A wide ranging discussion took place; the Chairman wishes to stand down but still be involved with the Club. After an unsuccessful request for people to join the Committee it was agreed to set up a Steering Group with Cllrs Brotherton, Fahy and Handyside to move things forward and 6 people offered to get involved with this Group. It will meet on 30 January and it was agreed that a Parish Council subgroup would meet before this to discuss what options could be progressed. It was agreed Cllrs Francis, Mrs Preston and Mrs Stanley would join this subgroup. Meeting date to be arranged.

School Governors Representative – Cllr Mrs Stanley is the current representative and her term finishes in May and she would like to step down. There is no legal requirement for a Councillor to be on the School Governors but it does open up lines of communication. Cllr Mrs Sells agreed to take on this role in May.

Clerk

Web Page Update – The Clerk circulated proposed design for a new web site. She also informed the Council that a new host and domain name could be sourced for £90 per year as opposed to the current £260/year being paid. It was agreed to progress this.

9 **REPORTS BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND OTHER MEETINGS**

County Councillor Thorne reported the following:

A meeting has taken place with Dale Rumney of NCC to review the roads and pot holes in the parish and specifically the road surface in Newton on the Moor which is to

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be put on the priority list for surface dressing to include the road to Longframlington.

Sale of County Hall has come as a surprise to members as well as the public.

Questions have been raised about this action as support was given to centralise services at NCC and the sale of County Hall would result in decentralizing services.

This issue needs much debate and consultation.

CC Thorne is a member of the Parish Liaison Group which has representatives from Parish and Town Councils to promote better communication between NCC and Councils along with the trying to ease the transfer of assets process. The Local Charter is also being reviewed.

CC Thorne is pleased to see the Swarland Woods Project is progressing well and will report back to NCC. Cllr Brotherton stated that a lot of local people are involved in this project.

Schools – Ofsted has inspected the 17 worst performing schools. NCC knew there would be issues especially since the categories have changed. 4 schools are now deemed as Special Measures and 9 require improvement. This could result in school closures and there are questions raised as to whether some schools are in the wrong category. Questions are being asked as to whether the spending in schools is correct. There is the possibility of looking at the 2-tier/3-tier system again. This would have an affect on the Alnwick pyramid so could ultimately affect Swarland First School. Cllr Brotherton stated that restructuring in education needs to be looked at closely for the impact it will have within rural communities and parents need to be involved in any consultation at the very early stages. CC Thorne agreed with this statement.

Cllr Francis asked if there is any update on the car parking fees as papers going to the Scrutiny Committee are recommending NCC take on board the comments of Parish and Town Councils. CC Thorne stated free parking would benefit the businesses in the local market towns and that a blanket system on charges should be initiated. It is still early days but the proposal for free parking does seem to have universal support.

10 **FINANCE**

- a. Bank statements: Lloyds TSB current £630.53, Instant Access £7,616.27, Treasury £15,000
- b. Clerks' salary and expenses: Salary £352.66 plus expenses £43.23 = £395.89
- c. Other receipts and payments:
 - i) Receipts: None
 - ii) Payments: Castle Morpeth Disability £75.00 (already paid for The Column), Tyne & Wear Play Association £250.00 for Play Area Maintenance Training, NALC £15.00 for New Councillor training, J Thompson £120.00 for Vyner Park maintenance, Northumberland & Newcastle Society £25.00 subscription payment, Felton Parish Council £71.79 for stationery, Town and County Tree Surgeons £504.00 for removal of tree in Vyner Park.

11 **PLANNING**

a. To report on any planning decisions:

13/03361/FUL & 13/03362/LBC – Newton Hall – conversion and renovation of existing outbuildings at Newton Hall. Existing 2 bed flat, 3 bed flat and disused building converted into two 5 bed houses, one 3 bed house and extra facilities to main Newton Hall dwelling - WITHDRAWN

b. To consider any planning matters:

12/02228/RENE – Land North of Old Felton – Erection of 67m wind turbine – objections – Clerk to once again ask NCC for this application to be decided upon or withdrawn as despite numerous requests for information none has been forthcoming.

13/03556/FUL – 14 Kenmore Road – Resubmission of 13/01308/FUL, Extension to rear, and into roof to form one and a half storey dwelling – Objections submitted - In summary the scale of the proposed dwelling is not in keeping with the size and style of existing dwellings on Kenmore Road, compounded by its dominant position at the top of this road, it would create an

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imbalance and a building out of proportion with the sites around it. It would also impact on the light and privacy to existing dwellings in its proximity.

13/03931/OUT – Land North West Of The Larches Nelson Drive - Change of use of land to residential – on circulation

12 CORRESPONDENCE

- Clerks and Councils Direct, CAN News, Youth Work Northumberland Information – on circulation
- Bailiffgate Museum Donation Request – it was agreed to donate £50. Clerk
- NALC - Royal Garden Party – annual request for putting forward the name of the Chairman to be nominated for attending the Royal Garden Party in May. The Chairman declined this invitation.
- Alnwick Play House invitation – thank you letter for donation.

13 URGENT ITEMS

- Letter from NCC re the Budget Review – it was agreed to send this email around the Councillors for them to access to link for the budget update. Clerk
- Fly tipping – The Clerk reported the fly tipping near Davisons Obelisk as covered above. There has been a large amount of fly tipping in the area and NCC has stated there has been an issue all along the A1. Four addresses have been recovered from fly tipping and also one person was caught in the act and his car registration details given to NCC and the Police. NCC will be contacting all those people they have addresses for.
- Parish Clean up taking place on 6 April at 10am – meet in The Square
- Swarland Woods – work taking place on Sunday 26 January at 10am, ditch cleaning and tree cutting works
- Dog Waste bin in Vyner Park needs emptying as not emptied since before Christmas Clerk
- The Golf Club driving range has been leaving its lights on all night. Clerk to report to NCC Planning. Clerk

14 REQUESTS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Community Resilience Plan
Firework Safety Training
Playground Inspection and Maintenance – Vyner Park Agenda
Moving bins in Vyner Park – Vyner Park Agenda

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be held on **26 February 2014 at 7.30pm** in **Swarland Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 8.56 pm.

Dates of Future Meetings: 26/03/14 JH, 23/04/14 SVH, 28/05/14 JH, 25/06/14 SVH, 23/07/14 JH,
27/08/14 SVH, 24/09/14 JH, 22/10/14 SVH, 26/11/14 JH