

# NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 26 March 2014 in Jubilee Hall, NotM

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

### ACTIONS

#### 1 **POST OFFICE REPRESENTATION –**

##### **MR BRIAN HEWSON, SUB-POSTMASTER FROM AMBLE PO**

Mr Hewson stated he has owned Amble PO for over 11 years now. The outreach PO can offer all the services the Amble PO offers, including dry cleaning and shoe repairs. Proposed opening date is 28 April as long as BT put the lines in. The hours proposed are 8am – 12 noon Monday and Thursday. These can be expanded if needed. Mrs Brotherton asked if a Saturday morning service could be offered and Mr Hewson stated the hours will be demand led so if customers prefer an alternative day this can be looked at. She asked how he would know if alternative days were required and Mr Hewson responded stating word of mouth and feedback from users. Mrs Vaggs asked if Mr Hewson was aware that when Longramlington PO closed the residents were told that Swarland would be their new PO, therefore there could be more business than just from Swarland village. Mr Hewson stated there are currently 487 outreach branches and they can be extended to other areas if there was enough demand. Mr Hewson also attends regular Senior Management PO meetings in London so he can send messages as to what is required in the area. Cllr Francis stated it was excellent news that the PO would be back in the village.

#### 2 **PAUL MCKENNA – NCC RE SPEEDING ISSUES IN THE PARISH**

Apologies from NCC again – they state they cannot attend this meeting as it is an incredibly busy time as they are trying to complete schemes for the end of the financial year.

#### 3 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND POLICE REPRESENTATION**

15-16 February – Burglary at Felton Fence Farm, access to outer building where a strimmer, generator, rabbit hutch, dog kennel and Lfor Williams trailer was stolen.

2012-2013 – Swarland Chester Bears – theft by employee

26/27 February – Leamington Lane, theft from motor vehicles – diesel fuel stolen.

28/02 – 03/03 – Smiths Haulage, Rashercap – diesel fuel stolen.

Speeding - last week checks in Swarland registered 4 out of 10 speeding. In NotM it was 4 from 25. Today 2 out of 7 people were caught speeding along Park Road.

Mrs Vaggs stated that when the Council Tax demands had been received there was a separate page listing new contact numbers for County Council but that Newton on the Moor & Swarland were not listed under any of the numbers. Mrs Vaggs rang NCC and they stated the parish was probably under the Alnwick number. The Clerk informed Mrs Vaggs that an announcement had been made in the last edition of The Column and the number to be used is the same as Felton area – 01670 627000.

Mrs Vaggs reported that residents were concerned about speeding of Henzell vehicles through Old Swarland, Park Road and The Avenue. The Clerk stated she would contact the company and also the police to raise this concern.

Clerk

#### 4 **APOLOGIES** – Cllrs Anderson and Mansfield

#### 5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON THE AGENDA** - Cllr Brotherton in relation to Planning Application 14/00368/PRUTPO.

#### 6 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2014** were agreed as a true record.

#### 7 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 26 FEBRUARY 2014**

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- **Costs for suggested speeding deterrents –**
  - **“chicanes on The Avenue would be and what cost”** - The present policy with regard to introduction of physical traffic calming measures is to consider their introduction on estate roads within built up residential areas. To date no extensive system of physical traffic calming measures have been introduced on roads which are by their nature the through routes in towns and villages. One of the reasons being that the introduction of such vertical or horizontal measures may actually create a road safety problem if the road is heavily trafficked. National guidance also advises that vertical traffic calming, such as road humps, should not be introduced in isolation therefore a system of traffic calming would have to be considered at the location you have identified. The County Council have introduced priority chicanes on the approaches to two villages located on lightly trafficked 'B' class roads in Northumberland and the intention is to assess the effectiveness of these measures by undertaking before and after speed surveys in the centre of the villages and to establish that the chicanes themselves do not constitute a road safety hazard. The effectiveness of these measures will determine if similar features are considered for introduction at other locations, on approaches to villages, in the County. In view of your concerns I will therefore add a request for speed reducing features on The Avenue at Swarland, to the Directory of Requests database for consideration in future works programmes. With regards to cost, it's very difficult to give an idea without knowing the type and amount of measures being put in. As an approximate guide, chicanes cost in the region of £15000 and each individual speed cushion around £1500.
  - **“flashing speed signs”** – It depends on the manufacturer, however, as a guide SID (speed indicator device) signs recently put up in the County have cost in the region of £3800 for one sign and one post.
  - **“dummy speed boxes”** – The County Council have not introduced any dummy speed boxes throughout Northumberland. Only prescribed signs and street furniture authorised by the DFT (Department for Transport) have been authorised to be located within the extents of the highway and a dummy speed box is currently not one of these. Unfortunately we could not authorise this at this present time.

Cllr Francis asked what the accident records were for the two villages in relation to speeding and the Councillors could not recall any other than one at the crossroads two years ago but were unsure if this was speeding related. It was agreed due to the cost and lack of enforceability to file this information for future reference.

- **Crossroad signage in the ditch on Leamington Lane** – This has now been removed from the ditch and is awaiting replacement.
- **Pot Holes at Overgrass** – these have not been repaired and the planings that were promised which are actually for the track from Overgrass Farm away from Swarland have not been delivered. Clerk to pursue again. Cllr Francis asked CC Thorne if NCC would be able to hold with their commitment to have all pot holes filled by June. CC Thorne stated he was not sure. Clerk
- **Repairs to B6345 from Old Swarland to Felton** – No response has been received to date as to whether any works will be undertaken despite requests for feedback from NCC on this issue. Clerk
- **Play Area Complaint to RoSPA** – Cllr Anderson and the Clerk met to discuss the play area following the revised RoSPA report. It was agreed on the works that are to be undertaken and also that the new RoSPA report was a more comprehensive report and therefore recommend the Parish Council use RoSPA again this year. There is an urgent need to have more chippings in the play area and the Clerk has sought a quote for this. Cllr Anderson would recommend delivery of 5 cubic metres of chippings which would cost approximately £250 to include delivery. It was agreed to order these chippings. Clerk
- **Yellow Lines outside the School** – The Clerk and Cllr Brotherton met with Neil Snowdon of NCC to discuss the lengths of the yellow lines. It was agreed to reduce the length along The Avenue towards the village but increase the length outside the school towards the car park and where the bus parks. NCC to produce a revised plan to forward to the Clerk. Clerk

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- **Local Transport Plan update (only to be covered if CC Thorne not present, otherwise in his report).**
- **Issues with accessing the NCC Planning Portal information/documents** – it would appear that this was just a temporary glitch in the NCC system and documents were able to be accessed following the last PC meeting.
- **Information supplied to Cllr Lisle on past planning applications objected to and conditions applied by NCC on a Kenmore Road application** - this information was forwarded by the Clerk to Cllr Lisle. Cllr Lisle produced a report on the past planning applications and stated he could not find the words “strongly object” among the responses. Cllr Lisle also pointed out that when investigating applications there was a condition to upgrade the road at Studley Drive. Cllr Lisle also confirmed the Clerk’s comments were correct in relation to the 2 properties on Kenmore Road application, that as it was only outline permission and not a full application there would be no conditions attached in relation to making up of the road.  
Cllr Sells queried whether the Clerk is sending Parish Council responses to individual residents before sending onto NCC as she felt this had happened in the past. The Clerk stated that responses are sent to NCC based on Councillors comments, if requests come in from the public for a copy of these comments they are passed on as the information is in the public domain but in no instance has any response been sent to a member of the public before being submitted to NCC.
- **Coast View – request to NCC for costs for making this up to adoptable standard** – This matter is still outstanding and the Clerk to pursue. Cllr Mrs Handyside reported that the deeds to her property do not state the requirement to maintain Coast View and no searches suggest the need to put in costs for maintenance so presumably the road must be adopted by NCC. Cllr Francis stated it was not the case that this means the road is adopted by NCC, it means there is no legal obligation by the householder to maintain the road.
- **Percy Wood Golf Course removal of hedgerow along the 10<sup>th</sup> hole** – No response has been received from the Golf Club on this issue. Clerk to pursue.

Clerk

## 8 **REQUESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

**Commemoration of start of the First World War** – Re a request from a resident, Cllr Mrs Stanley asked do the Councillors wish to do something to commemorate this date and if so what would they like to do. Cllr Mrs Handyside asked CC Thorne what NCC is doing, if anything and CC Thorne responded that he is not aware of anything but Shilbottle are going to construct a War Memorial and have a planter constructed.

Cllr Mrs Handyside asked if Felton PC is doing anything and the Clerk reported that no discussion had taken place but she has included it as an agenda item for the meeting of the Cemetery Committee who arrange the Remembrance Day Service. Cllr Brotherton asked Mrs Vaggs if there was anything being arranged in the village and Mrs Vaggs stated not as yet however the History Society is yet to meet – they have arranged for a speaker and WWI items at a future meeting. There was no strong feeling among the Councillors to commemorate the date but would see what the feedback was from the Cemetery Meeting.

**Draft Planning Application Strategy Document** – the Clerk circulated a draft document for dealing with planning applications. This was discussed and some amendments made, the Clerk to redraft and circulate to Councillors for comment. The following Councillors also stated they wish to be removed from the hard copy circulation list to speed up the process as they are happy to view via the NCC website – Cllrs Brotherton, Mrs Fahy, Francis and Lisle. Clerk to check with Cllrs Anderson and Mansfield to see if they wish to continue on the paper circulation list.

Clerk

Clerk

**Parish Councillors representing the parish council: procedures, rules and responsibilities** – Cllr Mrs Handyside stated that a decision to attend the NCC Area Planning Meeting was decided outside the PC meeting and she did not know who have made the decision and agreed the text. Cllr Mrs Stanley stated both she and Cllr Mansfield had been approached by separate residents asking if the PC

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was going to make representation. Following these requests Cllr Mansfield prepared a speech which highlighted the divide between the Councillors and listed the documented objections as on the response re this application; this was circulated to Councillors for comment. He also requested a slot be booked to speak at the meeting. No Councillors responded objecting to Cllr Mansfield speaking at this meeting, the only responses were asking who made the decision which was felt to be undemocratic. Cllr Brotherton stated lessons had been learnt from this, mistakes had been made, problems recognised and action was now being taken to ensure this situation does not arise again.

**Agreement of guidelines for e-mail communications between Councillors –** Cllr Mrs Stanley raised three issues in relation to emails between Councillors. Firstly content, for example the recent web site email had resulted in some prompt and useful responses, but also some unnecessary ones, and the apparent tone of one e-mail had caused concern. In other contexts there were many superfluous messages; Councillors need to think whether they are providing relevant information. In relation to planning meeting emails – again some valid points were made but some unprofessional comments were made. Some emails were circulated that did not actually make sense in relation to the chain of emails, which raises concerns about Councillors having separate discussions amongst each other. Care should be taken to ensure that emails are only going to those you wish should receive them. Secondly, technicalities – emails in strings should be kept as one topic. If a new topic is raised this should be under a new email title for continuity. Thirdly, Cllr Mrs Stanley is the Chairman of Parish Council meetings only; this role does not extend to charring lengthy email discussions.

**Freedom of Information request –** The Clerk has received two information requests, one relating to all emails and correspondence in relation to the original planning application for 14 Kenmore Road with the statement that this will probably not be the last request for information. A further request for information was then received asking for any emails since 5 February where Mr Howarth's name is mentioned. The Clerk brought this to the Parish Council meeting as this information does have to be provided however a decision has to be made as to whether a charge should be made for this information as per the publication policy, particularly as the Clerk's contracted hours this month had already been exceeded. It was agreed that the Clerk contact Mr Howarth and state the Clerks hourly rate to be applied to the provision of this information and any future requests. It was agreed to revisit the Publication Scheme to add in the charge threshold to state that the Clerk's hourly rate would be recovered.

Clerk

Clerk

Cllr Francis did raise the question as to why this information was required as the planning application had been refused and the two options open to the applicant are to appeal the decision or resubmit the application. Cllr Mrs Handyside suggested that the applicant may require the information for his appeals process.

Clerk

**Ditch at Vyner Park – flooding of –** Mr Blackshaw contacted the Clerk following an issue with the ditch flooding at the low point on the opposite side of the bund from the Equestrian Centre. The Clerk met with Mr Blackshaw to review the area, as there had been very little rain but the water levels were surprisingly deep. A number of Councillors have viewed the site and it was agreed that there appears to be a blocked drain which needs clearing. Clerk to contact Northumbrian Drainage to ask their opinion and quote on the works.

Clerk

**Lake in Swarland Woods –** Cllr Mrs Fahy raised the issue that the lake is very exposed now the area around the lake has been cleared and there have been concerns about safety as there is no signage indicating a hazard here. Clerk to raise this with SWAG for their attention.

Clerk

**Parking issues at Springwood –** the Clerk has once again received reports of parking issues at Springwood where the turning area is being blocked on a number of occasions for long periods of time by one of the residents. This is causing issues for large vehicles not being able to turn around and having to reverse the

All

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length of the road. The Clerk met with NCC to discuss options available to the residents and is awaiting a response as to what can be done legally.

**Newton on the Moor Phone Box update** – Mr Pettifer is replacing the 'glass' panels in the phone box and is asking if he should retain the old plastic trays or bin them. If the PC were to replace the 'glass' it would cost several hundreds of pounds. It was agreed to house the old panels and Councillors to think of somewhere situation to store them.

**Clearing of cut branches on The Avenue** – The cut down branches have at last been cleared from along The Avenue.

**Swarland Sports and Recreation Club update** – Cllr Brotherton stated the Parish Council is now managing the Sports Club as of 1 March. Insurance is in place but the club is locked until a risk assessment and fire survey have been undertaken along with a Health and Safety plan. The Tennis Professional is keen to continue the children's tennis coaching.

A budget is being worked on and Cllr Mrs Handyside stated that the basic running costs are approx £3.5k/year for the empty building. To date the Committee only has May to October bank statements but based on these Cllr Mrs Handyside states to break even the club would need approximately £5k/year.

There is lots of interest in the village in the sports club and the existing subgroup members are happy to continue working together on a way forward.

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

CC Thorne reported:

- £40k has been agreed under the Local Transport Plan for resurfacing of the road in Newton on the Moor.
- NCC Cost Cutting – Post-16 transport – NCC is one of the few counties left in the country to provide free transport and the concern is that if this is cut it will really hit the 6<sup>th</sup> formers living in rural communities.
- Draft Core Strategy – this is on track with a draft coming out in early summer and adoption to take place in 2015. There is a lack of a 5 year housing figure so great emphasis is being put on the requirement for the Planning Committee to approval planning applications.
- Trevor's Bits are being included in The Column.
- He has been contacted by a parishioner re the state of Kenmore Road and CC Thorne has met with NCC on site but as the road is not made up to an adoptable standard in some areas then NCC cannot do anything about the road.
- CC Thorne is looking forward to participating in the annual litter pick in April.
- Cllr Francis stated that the New Draft Charter has changed in terms of NCC taking over burial and cemeteries in Northumberland and looking at providing new cemeteries. CC Thorne stated that this was not the case and NCC will only look after closed churchyards. The onus is on the Parish Council to identify land for new cemeteries.
- CC Thorne also reiterated that NCC will only adopt roads when they are made up to an adoptable standard. NCC is trying to achieve this via planning but attaching conditions to approval notices however if the road is not made up to an adoptable standard for some reason, ie builder gone into liquidation or not completed all the approved houses on the site, then NCC will not adopt the road.

**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.**

## 10 **FINANCE**

- a. Bank statements: Lloyds TSB current £351.18, Instant Access £5,840.08, Treasury £15,000
- b. Clerks' salary and expenses: Salary £352.66 plus expenses £49.23 = £395.89
- c. Other receipts and payments:

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- i) Receipts: NCC £230.80 first installment of Get Going Funding for bus service; £10 Allotment rental
- ii) Payments: Design Art £108.00 (domain name and hosting for web site), Shelley Signs for NotM notice board £1,194.00
- d. Lloyds on-line banking – the Clerk has investigated this further and there are steps in place to allow payments to be drawn up and then authorized by two separate individuals however each person who has access to the account will have to have reader cards and the process is quite time consuming as opposed to signing a cheque.

## 11 **PLANNING**

### **a. To report on any planning decisions:**

13/03556/FUL – 14 Kenmore Road – Resubmission of 13/01308/FUL – REFUSED by Planning Committee on 6 March 2014 on the same grounds as the original application – *“size, scale and design of the extensions and alterations do not respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Furthermore the proposal would appear overly dominant within the street scene and due to its size and scale would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area”.*

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

14/00193/FUL - Ash Cottage, NotM - Proposed Mansard Roof – REFUSED under delegated powers – *“The scale, form, mass and overall appearance of the proposed mansard roof would not respect that of the host property but instead would dominate and detract from its simple and modest appearance. Furthermore the proposal would appear overly dominant within the street scene due to the increase in height and bulky appearance and would result in an adverse effect upon the adjacent Newton on the Moor Conservation Area.”*

14/00279/FUL - 2 The Avenue - New pitched roof to existing flat roof bungalow – APPROVED

### **To consider any planning matters:**

14/00368/PRUTPO - 3 Low Chesters - Tree works - removing ivy, deadwood trees & crown – no objections

14/00426/FUL - The Old School, 20 Newton on the Moor - Conversion of double garage into holiday let - no objections in principle however concerns raised in relation to car parking issues to include lack of space for all vehicles and manoeuvring problematic within the property boundaries. This then raises concerns of cars parking on street. If parking issues can be resolved the Parish Council would have no objection. NCC has responded to the Parish Council that Highways has raised no issues or concerns with regard to the parking situation for this application.

14/00541/FUL - 11 Low Wood - new garden/family & media/cinema room – no objections but request a condition to be included that no windows are added at a later date to conserve neighbours privacy

14/00647/FUL - Newton Hall - convert existing outbuildings into flats and houses – on circulation

14/00648/LBC - Newton Hall - convert existing outbuildings into flats and houses – on circulation

## 12 **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Post Office Consultation for branch reopening in Swarland – this was discussed and responses given to the Clerk to submit to the Post Office.
- NCC – Broadband update – already circulated
- Dept for Communities and Local Government – Consultation on a draft transparency code for parish councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000 – to circulate
- Letter from Mrs Murphy re Swarland Woods – A letter has been received in relation to works in Swarland Woods – raising concerns about the width of the path, cutting back of vegetation, erection of signs and concerns over too many visitors. The Clerk responded stating this was not a Parish Council led project

Clerk

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and that her letter had been passed to those running the project.

- Email from Mr Rixon re manhole cover and diverted traffic due to road works – Mr Rixon reported an issue with a damaged manhole cover outside 2 Newton on the Moor which has also sunk to a dangerous level and concerns about the traffic being diverted on the road in front of the Cook and Barker when A1 resurfacing works take place as this road is in a bad state of repair. The Clerk reported both issues to NCC – the manhole cover has been repaired and made level with the road. NCC has also reported they will investigate the road and undertaken any works required before the diversion takes place.
- Email statement from Chester Bears following Northumbria Police Report – Information was circulated by Northumbria Police in relation to some financial irregularities that are being investigated by the Police in relation to Chester Bear funds. The Chester Bears Committee has issued the following statement “We are aware that the local Parish Councils have been notified that police are currently investigating allegations of substantial theft from Chester Bears. We confirm that we have reported a number of suspicious transactions on the bank account and that the police are investigating this. We wish to make clear that the allegations do not relate to any current or former members of child care staff. It would not be appropriate to comment further at this point in time as this could prejudice the police investigation. We understand that a file is currently being considered by the Crown Prosecution Service”. Following a request for clarification the Clerk then sought confirmation that no Parish Councillors who have or had links with Chester Bears are part of the investigation and this was confirmed by the Committee.
- Request for use of Vyner Park and Sports Club Facilities for Swarland Show – from Friday 29 August to Sunday 31 August. Mr Lewney would also like clarification of who he should liaise with in relation to the use of the Sport Club and reported that the Show Committee proposes maintaining the previous fee for the use of the Club. It was agreed that the Show Committee could have the use of Vyner Park and that Cllr Brotherton should be the contact for Sports Club access. Mr Lewney also informed the Clerk that this is his final year as Show Secretary and would like to thank the Clerk and the PC for their support during his time as Secretary. Clerk
- Invitation from Bailiffgate Museum – in response to the Parish Council's donation to the Museum they have extended an invitation for two members of the Parish Council to visit the museum with the email invitation confirmation of admission as they do not have printed tickets – Cllrs Mrs Handyside and Mrs Stanley stated they wish to attend. Clerk to forward email invitation. Clerk
- Clerks and Councils Direct – to circulate

## 13 **URGENT ITEMS**

- The pot holes on the road from Swarland to Newton on the Moor are reappearing.
- Cllr Mrs Stanley reported that a letter had been received from Mr Howarth requesting an investigation be undertaken into the PC response to his planning application for Kenmore Road. It was agreed as per the Complaints Policy that this would initially be handled by the Chairman and the Clerk.
- The Clerk handed in her resignation to the Parish Council. The Clerk is required to give one months notice however due to it being the end of the financial year and also 1 month being very short notice to find a replacement the Clerk agreed to continue until the end of May. The Clerk also stated she would be available for any queries after this date should the replacement Clerk require any assistance. An interview panel was agreed to include Cllrs Brotherton, Francis and Mrs Stanley.

## 14 **REQUESTS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Swarland Village Hall presentation to PC  
Welcome Booklet – draft booklet circulated for comment and additions  
Draft Planning Application Strategy Document

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## 15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be held on **23 April 2014** at **7.30pm** in **Swarland Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 9.28 pm.

Dates of Future Meetings: 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