

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Annual General Meeting** of the Parish Council
on **Wednesday 28 May 2014** in **Jubilee Hall, Newton on the Moor**

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

ACTIONS

1 **COUNCIL MAKE-UP**

Nominees for the office of Chairman of the Parish Council were requested. Cllr Mrs Sells proposed and Cllr Brotherton seconded Cllr Stanley as Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

Cllr Mrs Stanley proposed and Cllr Mrs Richardson seconded Cllr Francis as Vice-Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

2 **DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Chairman signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Vice Chairman is still to sign his as he was not present at the meeting.

Clerk

3 **APOLOGIES** – Cllrs Anderson, Francis and Mansfield

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON THE AGENDA**

Cllrs Lisle and Mrs Stanley – Planning Application 14/01027/FUL – 1 Studley Drive
Cllr Lisle – Planning Application 14/01321/FUL - Land Adjacent To 38 Park Road
Cllr Brotherton – Planning Application - 14/01464/FUL – Land north of Swarland Equestrian Centre

5 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND POLICE REPRESENTATION** - None

6 **Appointment of Committee Members and Representatives**

a. **Vyner Park Committee** – Defer to item 9 – Vyner Park Update

b. **Joint Cemetery Committee:** It was agreed that Cllrs Anderson and Mrs Richardson be appointed with Cllr Mansfield as a reserve.

c. **Swarland Village Hall Representation:** It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Lewney be appointed.

d. **Davison's Obelisk Working Party:** It was agreed that Chairman and Vice-Chairman would be representatives if required.

e. **Swarland Village Action:** It was agreed Cllr Mansfield be appointed.

f. **Swarland First School:** It was agreed Cllr Mrs Sells be appointed.

g. **Swarland Show:** It was agreed Cllr Anderson be appointed.

h. **Swarland Sports and Recreation Club:** Defer to item 9 – Vyner Park Update

i. **Resilience Plan Working Group:** It was agreed that Cllrs Brotherton, Francis and Mansfield be appointed.

j. **Complaints Committee:** It was agreed Cllrs Mrs Preston, Mrs Sells and Mrs Stanley be appointed.

k. **Finance Group:** It was agreed Cllrs Brotherton, Mrs Fahy, Mrs Handyside and Mrs Stanley be appointed.

l. **Percy Wood Country Park Liaison:** It was agreed Cllr Brotherton would be appointed.

7 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2014** were agreed as a true record.

8 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 23 APRIL 2014**

a. **Pot holes at Overgrass** – Still awaiting repair despite NCC being contacted again. The statement from NCC is that they are on the list of works however no timescale can be given at present. The road is no longer patchable and is difficult for both residents and visitors to use. Clerk to pursue with NCC.

Clerk

b. **Repairs to B6345 from Old Swarland to Felton** – No response to this request despite NCC being reminded.

Clerk

c. **Coast View** – request to NCC for costs to making this up to an adoptable

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

standard – No response to this request despite NCC being reminded.

Clerk

- d. Percy Wood – hedgerow along 10th hole** – The Manager of Percy Wood has contacted the Clerk to state that the overgrown bracken and other vegetation was removed from here, there was no actual hedgerow, so that golfers could see pedestrians, dog walkers and horse riders using the pathway and not hit balls when people are in view. The Manager reported that this was a safer situation for the footpath users as the overgrowth that was originally growing here would not provide protection from a wayward golf ball but would not make it easy for golfers to see users of the footpath. This area will remain cleared of vegetation by the Golf Club.
- e. Response from NCC in relation to the demolition of the listed building** – NCC's Conservation Team Manager has responded stating that they have investigated the matter. Pre-application advice was given to the owner by NCC on the understanding that a more detailed listed building and planning consent application would be submitted before any works were undertaken. The main area of advice related to the main property which is Grade II listed, but the applicant also requested a view on the potential demolition of the outbuilding, which is not listed in its own right but has listed status because it falls in the curtilage of the main property. It is accepted by NCC that an error was made in the identification of the outbuilding that was being referred to. This issue has been investigated internally and revised procedures will be put in place to ensure that this situation does not arise again. Following demolition of the building a site visit was undertaken and it was judged that enforcement action could not be effective or appropriate. The conservation officer therefore gave the owner advice on the need to submit a listed building consent to regularize the situation. With regard to the scaffolding, the conservation officer discussed the works to the front of the building that necessitated scaffolding; they were repairs to the flat roof of the first floor dormer window which does not require listed building or planning consent. NCC thanks the Parish Council for raising these issues with them and they have been taken very seriously and formal procedures will be established to ensure that a similar situation does not arise in the future.

Mr Sanderson, the owner, spoke to Cllr Mrs Stanley to inform her that the scaffolding was for roof repairs. He also stated he was upset that the scaffolding was minuted without the Parish Council contacting him for information first.

Cllr Mrs Handyside stated that she was unhappy that the demolition had been allowed to happen as this cannot be rectified and would like to see what the revised procedures are that NCC have put in place. Clerk to request this information.

Clerk

- f. Suggestions for funding for Newton on the Moor from CC Thorne's Members Scheme** – The Jubilee Hall Committee has come up with a proposal for installing railings and a hand rail to the front of the Hall and recommissioning of the bell in the bell tower. It was also suggested that an item be put in the next edition of the Column asking residents for suggestions. CC Thorne stated that the Jubilee Hall Committee railings would cost in the region of £7-8k and this could be covered under capital projects, however work to the bell is classed as repairs so this could not be covered. It was agreed an item be placed in The Column requesting suggestions from residents.

Clerk

9 REQUESTED AGENDA ITEMS

- **Email from Mr Howarth** – Mr Howarth emailed the Parish Council to request that the Parish Council retract their objections to his recently refused planning application for 14 Kenmore Road (13/03556/FUL) and also he requested comment on whether one specific Councillor acted without bias or conflict of interest in relation to the same application. This email was received the night of the April meeting so the discussion re a retraction could not be considered until the May meeting. The matter in relation to action without bias was responded to following the April meeting. Before a discussion took place on this issue the Clerk informed all Councillors that she had been contacted by The Gazette following a phone call they had received from a Councillor informing them that this application was to be discussed and that " 'off the record' there had been a lot going on behind the scenes and Councillors felt bullied into objection". The Clerk informed the

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Councillors that though they are free contact the press as individuals, they cannot make statements as a Councillor that purport to speak for other members of the Council. Cllr Stanley said she found it disturbing that any councillor should take this action.

Cllr Mrs Stanley then read out the appeal letter and read out a letter from four residents – Mr Mason, Mrs Hood, Mrs Murphy and Mrs Lisle – stating they had concerns over the Parish Council's objections and believed this would be an opportunity for the Councillors to withdraw their objections.

Mr Howarth's email to Cllr Mrs Stanley and his meeting with Cllr Mrs Stanley raised the following issues: 1) one Councillor putting pressure on the other Councillors to change their submission on the application; 2) that the Clerk delayed submitting a response to NCC; 3) too much attention was paid to the concerns of neighbours; 4) one Councillor changed his mind but might not have looked at the application and was simply responding to the responses of some of his colleagues.

These issues were discussed with the following responses:

1. Some Councillors did state they felt pressured into changing their minds on this application due to the email exchanges. The result being some Councillors re-reviewed the application and amended their submissions and some Councillors held with their original comments.
2. The Clerk informed the Councillors that the response was within the timescales set by NCC. The Clerk had to ascertain what the outcome of the email conversations were in relation to this application. As there was an ongoing discussion following the 6 – 4 response it was not appropriate for the Clerk to make a response until a final decision had been made between the Councillors. There was no delay on the part of the Clerk and she disputes this statement from Mr Howarth.
3. This item was not covered in the discussions.
4. Cllr Brotherton acknowledged that he did change his mind but was not pressured into this. He admitted he had not looked at it properly initially and therefore reviewed the application further following the comprehensive email from Cllr Francis. Based on this information he revised his comments but did not at any time feel pressurised into changing his decision. Cllr Stanley agreed; she had initially approved the application but then studied the revised plans more thoroughly and changed her mind. Cllr Brotherton stated the Parish Council has learnt from this and put a planning policy into place and the Planning Inspectorate will ultimately make their decision based on all the information they receive.

A vote was then taken as to whether the objections by the Parish Council should be withdrawn. Cllrs Mrs Fahy, Mrs Handyside, Mrs Sells and Mrs Richardson voted for withdrawal of the objections. Cllrs Lisle and Mrs Preston were not Councillors at the time of the response being submitted so could not vote. Cllrs Anderson and Francis were not present at the meeting so their email response that the application with not withdrawn were not taken into consideration in the vote. Therefore with a majority it was agreed that the letter of objection be withdrawn and the Clerk to write to the Planning Inspectorate advising of this after circulating the response to Councillors.

- **PC Insurance Renewal** – AON has quoted £201.03, Zurich has quoted £484.31 and Came and Company declined to quote. It was agreed to renew the insurance with AON. Clerk
- **SPARCE – Invitation to join a Rural Sounding Board** – This has been set up with the intention of Parish Councillors completing 4 questionnaires per year on relevant issues, ie superfast broadband, rural transport etc. It was agreed the Chairman would be the contact for the questionnaires for this Rural Sounding Board and would circulate to Councillors for their input when received. Clerk to register the Chairman's details with SPARCE. Clerk
- **Bank Signatories** – The Clerk advised that it would be appropriate to remove Cllr Anderson from the authorized signatories as the new Clerk is related to Cllr Anderson. Mrs Trench also requires removal from the bank signatory list. It was agreed that Cllrs Mrs Lewney and Mrs Richardson would become signatories and

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

the Clerk would inform the bank as the change of signatory forms are now produced by the bank electronically.

• **Vyner Park Update**

Cllr Brotherton reported that the safety checks are nearly complete, cleaning of the pavilion has been undertaken and it is nearly ready for opening. Bowls has started along with children's tennis. Mr John Richardson has agreed to be the bowls leader and two volunteers are helping with the tennis. On 22 June a launch will be held between 1pm and 4pm with tea and cakes with fun events to get the Pavilion off the ground again.

- Adoption of Draft Constitution – this was agreed by the Council
- New charity takes on responsibility with immediate effect – this was agreed by the Council
- Terms of Reference for Committee – this was agreed by the Council
- Committee Membership – it was agreed that Cllrs Brotherton, Mrs Fahy, Mrs Handyside, Mrs Preston and Mrs Stanley would be appointed with Cllr Francis available in an advisory capacity. This would be a legally binding committee and would align to the rules and regulations of the Parish Council. It will comprise 5 Councillors and then cooption of user group representatives onto the Committee.
- Budget – A draft has been drawn up by the Clerk and a Finance Group Meeting to be held to discuss this further.
- Secretariat arrangements – It was agreed the Clerk would take the minutes and record the financial transactions of the new Vyner Park Trust but the Committee Members would provide support in terms of actions to be undertaken. Meetings would take place on a separate night from the Parish Council meeting in future and hours for the Clerk would be monitored in case additional paid hours were required.
- **Request of Parish Plan Funds** – Cllr Brotherton asked if some of the Parish Plan funds could be used for the Vyner Park launch on 22 June and it was agreed £100 could be used from the funds.

Finance
Group

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

CC Thorne reported that the Post-16 transport debate starts at NCC this week. CC Thorne hopes the administration takes note of the comments from rural areas as these areas are the ones that will be hit hardest if cuts are to be made. The administration is stating more courses should be provided in-house in schools however it is felt by others that in house cannot match what Newcastle College etc can provide. This is a really important debate particularly in light of the impact when compulsory education comes into place in a few years time.

CC Thorne then thanked the Clerk for her work over the last 7 years and wished her well for the future.

11 **FINANCE**

- a. Bank statements - Lloyds current £6,497.98, Instant Access £3,862.76, Treasury £15,000.
 - b. Clerks' salary and expenses: £364.16 plus expenses £64.23 = £428.39
 - c. Other receipts and payments:
 - i) Receipts: Bank Interest £22.44, Mr Howarth (FOI) £10.60, NCC Get Going Funding £230.80, SVA for The Column £62.50, Remaining Sports Club Funds £71.85
 - ii) Payments: R Brotherton for Sports Club expenditure £394.47, Felton Parish Council for Davison's Obelisk maintenance £160.00, David Pettifer for Silicone for Phone Box £4.58, Felton Parish Council for insurance of Davison's Obelisk and War Memorial £29.69, Caretech Systems Ltd £552.00 for fire alarm modification and electrical repairs, Lodge Joinery £80.00 for lock fitting and repositioning of fire extinguishers, AON Insurance £201.03.
- Rates Bill from NCC first payment due 1 July of £314.13 – it was agreed to pay this by cheque monthly as opposed to setting up a direct debit as it is envisaged that relief will be given to the rates bill once charitable status is achieved for the Vyner Park Charity.

12 **PLANNING**

NEWTON ON THE MOOR AND SWARLAND PARISH COUNCIL

a. To report on any planning decisions:

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

14/00960/FUL - Land SW 6 Kenmore Road - Bungalow with detached garage and new entrance – APPROVED – Cllr Mrs Handyside asked if there was a condition placed on this application re the hedging as raised by NCC and the Parish Council. The Clerk to check the approval notice and report back to the Councillors.

Clerk

b. To consider any planning matters:

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

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

14/01302/FUL - Spencer Joinery - New dwelling as a live work unit, office and workshop – On circulation

14/01321/FUL - Land Adj 38 Park Road - New dormered dwelling with attached garage – on circulation

14/01263/VARYCO – Old School, NotM – Vary condition 4 to allow for family use as well as holiday let – on circulation

14/01464/FUL – Land north of Swarland Equestrian Centre – erection of detached house with garage – on circulation

13 CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter from Post Office confirming service reopening – letter of confirmation that this service has now started.
- To Circulate – Clerks and Councils Direct and City and County
- NCC – Garden Waste Kerbside Collection leaflets and composting leaflets. The Garden Waste information to be placed in notice boards and the composting leaflets to be left in Swarland Club. Clerk
- NCC – Reporting of litter thrown from vehicles – A report form has been devised by NCC for residents to report offenders littering out of cars. Clerk to put information in The Column and also ascertain if this form is available on the NCC website, if not this can be put on the PC website. Clerk
- NHS – “Help us create a healthy Northumberland” leaflets – to be left at the doctors surgery. Clerk
- Letter from Mr & Mrs Thirlwell of Springwood re repositioning of grit bin in turning circle. A letter was received requesting the grit bin be repositioned to allow for access of the disability vehicle to turn in the turning circle more easily. Cllr Mrs Stanley reported that she had viewed the bin and it can only be moved a few inches at its present site, where it is needed in winter because of drainage issues. The Clerk reported that she had received a call from a resident of Springwood stating that there is still the ongoing issue of people parking in the turning circle and leaving their vehicles here for consecutive days without moving them. The Clerk reminded NCC that they were to send out letters to all residents requesting them not to park in the turning circle and NCC confirmed that these letters would be in the post this week. Clerk to respond to Mr & Mrs Thirlwell stating this matter has been passed onto NCC for consideration. Clerk

14 URGENT ITEMS - None

15 REQUESTS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Parish Council representative for Listed Building Issues.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be held on **25 June 2014 at 7.30pm** in **Swarland Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 9.56 pm.

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