

Minutes of the Meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 08<sup>th</sup> August

2024

in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall

1. Present – Marge Rastall (Chair), John Austin, Roger Rutherford, Nicola Matthews, Lauren Porteous, Hilary Kristensen, Greg Finch, Gill Whatmough, Susanna Nixon (Clerk) Colin Horncastle (County Councillor)

Apologies for Absence – Davy Short, Ed Parker

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

It was agreed that two amendments were needed, namely that the response to both planning applications should be changed to no objection, and that at 11.2 it should be specified that the bends of most concern are those between Moss House and Mire House, but otherwise the Minutes were a true record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest – None

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Whitehall Chapel Junction

The white lines have been painted on the road.

- 4.2 Rushwood complaint:

The last correspondence received following our complaint about the historical lack of planning enforcement stated we would need to raise the issue with the Local Government Ombudsman within 12 months of our knowledge of the failure by the planning department. As this was several years ago, it was concluded that a further complaint was unlikely to be resolved in our favour and therefore it was agreed not to take the issue further.

#### 4.3 Lilswood Caravan Park

A response to our complaint about the lack of enforcement of planning conditions was received on 30<sup>th</sup> July, which states that the owner has some outstanding matters in hand, and that the planning department will contact him to ask about other matters. Colin Horncastle said he would speak with Abbie Henrick the next day to ask what progress has been made since the letter. It was agreed that we would review the situation at September's meeting.

#### 4.4 Verges:

Verges at Channel Well & Dalton Bridge were discussed as the long foliage is a matter of concern. It was discussed that the contractor misjudged the area to be cut at Mire House. There will be an email sent to David Hunt at NCC to ask for more cutting this year particularly at bends and junctions, and that if verges are not wide enough to be mowed, that they be strimmed instead, and not just left, which is currently the case. Colin Horncastle said he would speak to the relevant department at NCC.

#### 4.5 Rennys Barn:

Concerns have been raised about the underneath of the road. Photographs and a report will be done so this is looked at.

#### 5. Public Participation - None

#### 6. Matters for discussion with the Unitary Councillor

In addition, to Colin Horncastle promising to speak to the relevant departments at NCC regarding Lilswood and verges, there was a general discussion about the apparent lack of management at NCC, as very few issues that the parish council raise are dealt with, without us having to raise the same issue on multiple occasions. Examples given were 1. The state of the road at Doctors Lane; 2. The insufficient cutting of verges; 3. The failure of flashing lights on the 20-mph sign during school start and finishes; and the failings of Fix My Street. Colin

Horncastle said that NCC simply haven't got enough resources, and matters were dealt with in order of perceived priority.

Colin Horncastle reported that DEFRA want NCC to ask householders to put glass into ordinary bins, but this would require £10m investment, so NCC are looking at caddies instead. DEFRA also want NCC to collect food waste at the kerbside and discussions are ongoing about the cost of doing so.

A concentrated road repair programme was expected to be completed by October.

Almost all schools in the county are rated Good or Outstanding

NCC have been told they need to build 17,000 new homes during Labour's 5-year term in office (a 220% increase). It seems inevitable that land between Hexham and Haydon Bridge will be targeted. There is also a lack of affordable housing. There is high demand from refugees and early release prisoners, on top of local residents.

## 7. Resilience Hub

A draft emergency plan was circulated and agreed. It was discussed that running the generator every quarter, when the hall committee meet is appropriate, and will burn away unused fuel. Lauren Porteous will speak to Dan Nixon, who has the instruction manual, in order to get it from him and prepare user instructions to be held in the hall, together with the keys. A list of Councillor contacts will be published as it is considered vital that only trained hall trustees should start the generator, and not the general public.

## 8. Correspondence - None

## 9. Finance

9.1 Agar Forms - All documents have been sent and notification of them being received have been sent and declared as received.

9.2 Tom Kristensen invoices for electrical work regarding the generator- £3080.00 & £1740.00 - Approved.

9.3 Balances as of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024: -

Treasurer's Account £15918.74

Sportsfield Account £2,106.69

Dukesfield Account £5,366.21

#### 10. Northumbria Water/ United Living offer

John Austin stated that United Living had offered a half to a full day of labour for a parish project as a thank you for our patience during the recent watermain renewal disruptions. Gill Whatmough will speak to John Dent about what work, if any, is needed to the bird hide.

#### 11. Planning -

- 24/01519/FUL New Dotland Farm – Granted
- 24/00773/FUL Newbiggin Farm – Granted.

#### 12. Highways, footpaths and BOATS

Footpaths/BOATS: - No reports.

Highways – Discussed under Matters Arising

#### 13. Reports

Wetlands: It was discussed that the Board Walk next to Moss House needs replacing.

Dukesfield Arches: No action required apart from the usual maintenance in the spring.

Sportsfield: - Following the playground inspection report, one concern was raised, and that was that the Basketball nets need removing. Roger Rutherford has done this.

The Hexhamshire Football team have approached the council asking if they can use the sports field. A donation was asked for towards the sports field maintenance and this was agreed gladly. John Austin offered to investigate what would be an appropriate amount to charge, and report back. The Changing container would be used by the team again. Hexhamshire Leek club are aware the space will be needed by the football club again.

School: - Drains have been cleaned and an improvement has been noted.

14. Any Other Business:

14.1 – A vacant house at St Helens Gate will become available to rent shortly. Gill Whatmough will try to find out more info

14.2 - Car parking – The issue was raised as to whether the sports field could be used as temporary car parking on 14th September, as there will be a demand for over 120 cars to be parked as a result of a large event at the hall and a wedding at the church. Council had no objection to a row of cars, as long as the weather is fine but the hall users would need to provide a steward to supervise and ensure no cars drive onto the football pitch.

14.3 - The Hexhamshire website update – Gill Whatmough will chase Edward Robson for a progress report.

*Meeting closed at ...9.15pm*