

Minutes of the meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 10th March 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall.

3.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Hilary Kristensen, Austin Iliffe and Edward Parker.

Councillors present: Gill Whatmough, Andrew Nixon, Davy Short, Alastair Stevens, Greg Finch and Marge Rastall.

The Unitary Councillor, Colin Horncastle was also present.

3.2 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th February 2016

Thanks were given to Alastair Stevens for producing the minutes for the February meeting. It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting.

3.3 Declaration of Interests

Andrew Nixon declared a financial interest.

3.4 Matters Arising

2.4.2 Gill Whatmough advised that she was speaking to David Francis to ascertain whether it is possible to apply retrospectively for grant aid in connection with the website. Gill Whatmough advised that funds are available for a printer/scanner and she advised she was following this up.

2.9.2 Ladycross had expressed an interest in the feature about the website but nothing further had been heard.

2.15.4 Derwent Gibson had been engaged to act on the Parish Councils behalf in connection with the lease.

2.16.3 There had been no further enforcement action regarding Rushwood.

2.15.2 Colin Horncastle advised that he would contact Austin Iliffe regarding funds to be donated to the Parish Hall.

3.5 Public Participation

Gill Whatmough advised that the Vicar had intended to come to the meeting to discuss a Baby and Toddler Group but would attend at the next meeting.

3.6 Correspondence

3.6.1 Clerk and Councils Direct had been received.

3.6.2 HM Queen Elizabeth II 90th birthday commemorative medal – option to buy.

3.7 Financial Report

Treasurer's Account - £9128.56

Savings Account - £6767.59
Wetlands Account - £137.76

Requests for payment had been received from:

Land Factor - £675
Play Inspection - £75
D. Nixon – grasscutting £140 for September and October
Clerk Wages - £450 for the six month period to 31.3.16
These were all approved and payment was to be made.

It was agreed to opt out of the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments.

3.8 Website

It was agreed that the Parish Council could request a hit count to be included on the website if it were required after a period of 6 months.

3.9 Matters for Discussion with the Unitary Councillor

- 3.9.1 Colin Horncastle advised that the County Council had approved the budget which included funding for the new County Hall. The build was scheduled to begin in 2017.
- 3.9.2 Hexham House was to become a wedding venue. Prospect House has an offer on it.
- 3.9.3 The closure of the railway bridge in Hexham scheduled for June will cause huge problems. The west end turn out onto the A69 will be very dangerous and may need traffic lights on the road.
- 3.9.4 There had been suggestion of a multi-storey for Hexham.
- 3.9.5 Colin Horncastle advised that pressure was being kept up regarding drainage and ditches.
- 3.9.6 Due to the relatively warm winter savings have been made on grit this winter. The amount of grit put onto the roads is centrally controlled.

3.10 Planning Applications

Two storey and single storey extension to south west elevation, Dye House.

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

Proposed early years playground with equipment, installation of a gate to the playground with gravel footpath, removal of 2no trees and pollarde the remaining trees within the site. Whitley Chapel School.

From a pure planning point of view, we have no objections, but we do have the following comments and would be pleased to have our concerns addressed:

- 1 firstly, we question the need for an extra playground when there is already a well equipped play area on the sports field, just a few yards from the school
- 2 we feel that the funds would be better spent improving and draining the grassed area of the existing playground which has been waterlogged all winter, perhaps also laying an all weather surface.
- 3 the area set aside for this play area is already damp and we are concerned that removing two trees will

only exacerbate this and leave the area, situated as it is at the bottom of the slope, prone to flooding
4 is this area going to be open to the public outside of school hours? If so, where is the access?

3.11 Smelting Arches

- 3.11.1 It was reported that some maintenance would be necessary by the Autumn but that hopefully by then the lease would belong to the Parish Council by then. Some cutting back of bramble and clearing of foot treads had been done by Peter and Joyce Jackson. Thanks were to be sent to them by email.
- 3.11.2 Once the lease belongs to the Parish Council risk assessment would have to be undertaken in relation to any work that is done. It was agreed that the Young Farmers should be contacted in the Autumn to ask if they would be prepared to help with any clearing work.
- 3.11.3 It was reported that the Lottery Fund asked to see a copy of the lease.
- 3.11.4 The aim is to transfer the lease on 1st June 2016 when the insurance is due for renewal.
- 3.11.5 Once the money comes to the Parish Council it will be necessary to have a separate bank account with a good rate of interest. John Williams and Greg Finch are in the process of summarising the process.

3.12 Broadband Sub-Committee Report

- 3.12.1 A meeting had been held with Slaley to explore mutual benefits. There had been no outcome so far.
- 3.12.2 Healy had been in touch again but there was nothing to report.
- 3.12.3 iNorthumberland were making a bid for EU funding to enable connection of final 5% of rural properties. As yet there had been no result.
- 3.12.4 Some work had been done on funding but without success.
- 3.12.5 Cybermoor were still to be contacted.

3.13 Highways and Footpaths

- 3.13.1 Davy Short reported that the top of Kings Law was in a very poor state.
- 3.13.2 The road survey of the pot holes had been completed and submitted for Low, Middle and West quarters.

3.14 BOATs

There is still activity on the BOATs.

3.15 Reports:

Wetlands – Derwent Gibson is currently working on the lease. Gill Whatmough was to speak to Monica regarding an agreement regarding the willow.

School – There was nothing to report.

Hall – Austin Iliffe had thanked the Parish Council for the donation to the Parish Hall.

£1000 had been donated by the Leek Club, the Young Farmers had had the play and an auction and proceeds had been donated towards the kitchen refurbishment.

Money was still being generated by the lunches provided by the Women’s Institute currently

standing at over £700. A meeting had taken place with Lorna Common regarding quotes for the new kitchen and the final layout was to be circulated to users before the order was placed. Sportsfield/Play Area – Lewis Short had requested that the pitch should be rolled.

3.16 Any Other Business

3.16.1 It was reported that there had been an attempt to hold an illegal festival. No licences had been applied for but a marquee and stage had been put up. The Police had been involved in stopping the event.

3.16.2 There had been further complaints regarding people not cleaning up after their dogs especially around the play area. Gill Whatmough had investigated a bin with the Council and the best solution would be a wheely bin fastened onto a locking post which could be emptied on a normal bin run. A locking post would cost in the region of £100 and a second hand bin would be £20. There would be no installation costs if the Parish Council did it. Other suggestions included a dummy CCTV and also the use of fluorescent paint.

As there was no further business the meeting was declared closed.