

**Minutes of the meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday December 8th 2016 at 7:30 pm in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Room, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall**

**2.1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Hilary Kristensen, Marge Rastall, Ed Parker and Mandy Charlton

Councillors present: Gill Whatmough, Alastair Stevens, Austin Iliffe, Alison Tweddle, Davy Short, Andrew Nixon, Greg Finch

**2.2 Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November**

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the last meeting.

**2.3 Declaration of interests**

All members declared an interest in the planning application for a broadband mast at Wally Thorn.

**2.4 Matters Arising**

2.4.1 The planning application for an extension at Peth Head has been approved.

2.4.2 The Highways department have agreed to a site meeting at Dalton Bridge on 16<sup>th</sup> December.

2.4.3 The overgrown hedge on the Lee road has now been cut.

2.4.4 The owner of Rushwood has agreed to replant two trees for each one felled following the intervention of the planning enforcement officer. Other enforcement issues concerning the buildings have yet to be resolved.

2.4.5 Key personnel at Two Castles Housing Association are leaving the organisation shortly and will be replaced in January 2017. The Council resolved to have an early meeting with the new personnel to discuss various concerns including the process of tenant selection. A local person had recently been refused a property despite having employment in the parish.

**2.5 Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**2.6 Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to be discussed.

**2.7 Financial Report**

**2.7.1** There was no financial report. Annual donations for local organisations will be discussed at the next meeting.

**2.7.2** It was agreed to open a new bank account with the Cambridge and Counties Bank for the deposit of surplus funds. Signatories to be GW, MC, GF and AS.

**2.7.3** A payment of £108 to Davy Short was agreed for ditch maintenance at Quakers Hole.

**2.7.4** A payment of £192.50 to Austin Iliffe was agreed for the broadband mast planning application fee.

**2.7.5** Last year's accounts have been added to the parish website.

## **2.8 Planning**

**2.8.1** The proposed broadband mast at Wally Thorn was supported.

**2.8.2** Andrew Nixon and Alastair Stevens recently attended a planning seminar organised by the County Council. More details are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

## **2.9 Parish website**

**2.9.1** There were no matters to discuss on this item.

## **2.10 Matters for discussion with the unitary councillor**

**2.10.1** As Colin Horncastle was not present, there was no discussion on this item.

## **2.11 Smelting Arches**

**2.11.1** There is an outstanding cheque to be paid in to the Arches account.

**2.11.2** A final payment of £90 is outstanding from Friends of the North Pennines to complete the handover of the Arches to the Parish Council.

**2.11.3** Grills are to be attached to the culvert entrances to prevent access.

## **2.12 Broadband sub committee report**

**2.12.1** Austin Iliffe reported that the application for the mast had been acknowledged and a decision was expected by mid January.

## **2.13 Highways and footpaths**

**2.13.1** Blocked ditches are overflowing on to the public highway at Lilswood and Barker House.

**2.13.2** Overhanging trees are a hazard on the Lee road. Surface water at the Lee road/Dipton mill road junction is causing an ice hazard and damage to the road surface.

**2.13.3** There is a problem with the inspection cover at the Newbiggin Hill Road junction.

**2.13.4** Road repairs are needed at the entrance to East Peterel Field. It was agreed to discuss this with Hexham Town Council as it is in their area.

**2.13.5** White painted rocks have been placed on the road verge at Dye house. Traffic is now at risk of damaging the wall on the opposite side.

**2.13.6** There is a general problem of damaged verges and collapsed ditches alongside parish highways.

**2.13.7** Gill Whatmough recently met with Duncan Lovett and Monica Haig at Quakers hole to discuss rerouting the footpath. A “permissive footpath” may be the answer.

**2.13.8** A budget of £1.3 million is available for pothole repairs in West Northumberland. The Highways subcommittee have agreed to survey all roads in the parish and report defects to the Highways Department.

## **2.14 BOATS**

**2.14.1** Davy Short reported frequent four wheel drive activity on BOATS, including routes currently subject to winter closure. A BOAT near Hackford has seen a recent increase in use.

## **2.15 Reports**

### **Wetland**

**2.15.1** Gill Whatmough is drawing up agreements for the grazing and willow management.

### **School**

**2.15.2** There was no specific report on this item, though councillors expressed concern at the continued drop in pupil numbers.

### **Parish Hall**

**2.15.3** The new kitchen is now complete following installation of a pump to improve water pressure. The final cost was about £17,000. Grants provided 83% of this sum, the remainder provided by the fundraising efforts of local organisations.

**2.15.4** The Christmas Fair raised about £500, slightly less than last year. Increased competition from other Christmas Fairs in the area may be a factor.

### **Sportsfield**

**2.15.5** An estimate from Matthew Hope for £90 to clean up the bonfire site was approved.

## **2.16 AOB**

**2.16.1** It was reported that Helen Tranter has resigned from the Parish Magazine.

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

## APPENDIX

### Planning seminar, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016

- So far this year the County have dealt with over 5000 applications with 80% meeting the 8 week deadline for most applications or 13 weeks for larger applications.
- The enforcement team is now fully resourced
- The Core Strategy has just completed a final consultation, mainly about Dissington Garden Village. A public enquiry is scheduled for late summer; adoption of the Plan is likely in December 2017.
- The response time for **pre applications** has been increased to 35 days. Parish Councils will be consulted. There is a fee of £150 for a single dwelling. The planners can indicate whether planning permission is needed for a proposal and whether it is likely to succeed.
- A validation checklist is sent to all applicants to ensure all necessary information is provided.
- PCs have 21 days to comment on applications; they can object, comment or support. If there is a PC objection to an application, the Head of Planning and Chairman of the planning committee decide whether it should be referred to the committee. Most planning decisions are now delegated to planning officers and don't go to the committee. PC objections can only be based on material considerations.
- **Permitted Development rights** have been increased. Eg single storey house extensions up to 8m for detached and 6m for semis and terraced don't need permission. **However** extensions over 4m and 3m need prior notification and consultation with neighbours. Building regs still needed in all cases.
- **Farm buildings** do not need approval if the farm is over 5ha, size less than 450 sq m, no buildings erected in last 2 years. Extensions on farms less than 5ha do not need permission. Conversion to dwellings and various changes of use only need permission if the building is less than 10 years old. Prior notification needed in all cases.
- No requirement to consult PCs on prior notifications. Planners must deal with these within 28 days.
- The Highways department have much reduced powers to object. Their role is to provide advice on road safety.