

Minutes of the meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Monday 10th February 2014 in the Whitley Chapel Parish Hall Meeting Room.

- 2.1. Apologies for Absence were received from Andrew Nixon, Alastair Stevens and Marge Rastall.

Councillors Present: Gill Whatmough (Chairing the meeting), Hilary Kristensen, Alison Tweddle, Greg Finch, Ed Parker, Austin Iliffe and Davy Short.

Also present: Amanda Cryer, NEAT Manager, Paul Turnbull, Highways and Neighbourhood Services, Michael Bank, Maintenance Engineer, Andrew Olive, Highways Inspector.

Rosalind Saul, Hexham Courant was also present.

2.2. Amanda Cryer, NEAT Manager, NCC Highways

- 2.2.1 Austin Iliffe explained the frustration felt by the Parish Council in connection with the lack of progress with the roads and also re-iterated the system in place for reporting issues in Hexhamshire. He also commented that the continual change of personnel within the Highways Department is confusing.
- 2.2.2 Amanda Cryer advised that there is a multi-functional team who do all repairs etc. Inspectors undertake six monthly road inspections, complete task sheets for necessary work and then prioritise the work to be undertaken. Work should be done in 24 hours on A roads and can be 28 days if a C road. There is currently a backlog of 13,500 potholes from reports from residents and parish councils.
- 2.2.3 Lists are published on the website advising which roads are to be resurfaced. U and C roads are not high on the priority list and are unlikely to be done in the 'Shire.
- 2.2.4 The County Council currently have 2 jet patchers, one in the western area. There is still the traditional tar method being used as well. There is now a mobile hotbox in the west area which holds 3 to 4 tonnes of tar which stays hot. After the winter Amanda Cryer advised that within 5 months Highways will complete the backlog of potholes. Andrew Olive priorities work to be done. There are some U roads in the County Council area which are in such a bad state of repair they are in danger of being closed and are therefore priority.
- 2.2.5 Amanda Cryer advised that the Highways Department are trying to meet with parish councils on a quarterly basis so that councils can advise their priorities.
- 2.2.6 Contact emails for the highways are westernareahighways@northumberland.gov.uk and paul.turnbull01@northumberland.gov.uk for ditches and gullies. He is the main point of contact for any problems. There was discussion regarding the problems with cleaning out ditches and gullies and Amanda Cryer's team were advised of a problem at Steel where the road is about to be covered by a lake formed due to blocked ditches.
- 2.2.7 There is a Tree Inspector at the County Council who can be contacted for issues with trees and branches issues. It was pointed out that there is an issue with the trees going up Dipton Bank. Paul Turnbull advised he would alert the Tree Inspector. If there are Issues like this the Parish Council can email ask@northumberland.gov.uk and the issue will be dealt with.
- 2.2.8 Austin Iliffe was to email Paul Turnbull to arrange a drive around the 'shire to identify current issues. Amanda Cryer advised that he would be able to inform the Parish Council what they could and could not do.
- 2.2.9 The Parish Council questioned the quality of the work undertaken. Amanda Cryer said that Inspectors do inspect the work undertaken.

- 2.2.10 The team responsible for repairs also do gritting on the roads and are subject to European Driving hours and therefore must adhere to breaks otherwise they can be personally prosecuted.
- 2.2.11 There was discussion regarding the gritting routes which are agreed at County Hall. It is possible to request for routes to be added. The school route has always been a priority. Any change of route request should be emailed to Amanda Cryer who will pass it on. It was reported that it is likely that fire service vehicles may be made use of for gritting in the future.
- 2.2.12 There was a short discussion regarding BOATs issues.
- 2.2.13 It was reported that there was the possibility of additional funding but that this had not yet gone beyond discussion stage.
- 2.2.12 Gill Whatmough thanked Amanda Cryer and her team for attending the meeting.

2.3 Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 16th January 2014

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting.

2.4 Declaration of Interests

There were no declaration of interests.

2.5 Matters Arising

- 11.16 It was reported that the septic tank at St Helens Gate was still particularly smelly and that this was to be reported again to Two Castles.

2.6 Public Participartion

There was no public participation.

2.7 Correspondence

- 2.7.1 The planning application for the construction of the horse arena at Peacock House had been approved.
- 2.7.2 A letter had been received regarding the proposed changes at Hexham bus station advising that this was to go to public consultation.
- 2.7.3 Definitive Map and Statement of Public rights of Way Modification Order No 10 2013 had been received and acknowledgement sent to the County Council.
- 2.7.4 Notification of Diversion of a Public Footpath No 12 and 13 had been received and acknowledged.
- 2.7.5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Definitive Map Modification Order No 18 2009 at Harwood shield had been received and acknowledged.

2.8 Financial Report

Treasurers Account - £4755.26

Savings Account - £13712.74

Wetlands Account - £217.43

The following invoices had been received and it was agreed that they should be paid and cheques raised:

G R Sloan – £210 Inv. 1655

G R Sloan - £390 Inv 1619
Chris Porter – replacement of tennis net - £32.53
Andrew Nixon – Bench - £348.00 including £58 VAT
Zen Internet – Service Renewal - £11.98
NALC – Councillor training - £25.00
Whitley Chapel Parish Hall - £50.00
Parish Online Annual Fee - £48.00

The Young Farmers and Burial Ground were to be asked for accounts in connection with making a donation.

2.9 Matters for Discussion with the Unitary Councillor

There were no issues brought forward.

2.10 Planning Applications:

Change of use – Formation of turn-out paddock/ménage in existing field adjacent to domestic dwelling, Lee Nook Farm.

‘The Parish Council do not object in principle to this planning application but DO object to the precise location recommended by the planners as being impractical as it is adjacent to neighbouring property and would involve a significant and intrusive amount of earthworks. The Parish Council recommend that a more suitable location would be approximately 150 yards north.

Proposed agricultural storage building, Land East of Oaklea Bungalow Steel Northumberland

It was agreed to support the application as an appropriate development.

Variation of condition 1 relating to planning application 12/01839/FUL, Chapel House, Steel

It was agreed to support the application.

Extraction of 2.2 million tonnes of coal and 500,000 tonnes of fireclay by surface mining methods including provision of coal haul road with restoration to a mixture of agriculture, woodland and nature conservation habitats, open water and an extended rights of way network. Hoods Close Surface Mine Newlands Stocksfield Northumberland.

It was agreed that the Parish Council did not need to respond regarding this application.

A query was raised regarding the paving stones at the Old Post Office. Gill Whatmough was to investigate.

2.11 Smelting Arches

2.11.1 A further dig is to be held in May 2014.

2.11.2 The roadshow has been well attended at its various venues.

2.11.3 The noticeboard is going to be reinstated.

2.11.4 Hexhamshire Brewery have agreed to brew a beer for the Smelting Arches project. A competition is to be held to name the beer and the intention is to have the beer available

in pubs on the lead route.

- 2.11.5 Various events are to be held in connection with the Smelting Arches project including a dousing day a heritage cook-off on 19th April 2014 at Slaley village hall. The schools are to be involved in various events.

2.12 Broadband Sub-Committee Report

Austin Iliffe reported that he had received an email from Brian Playle at Briskona who advised that they were looking into the feasibility of using local landowners with a view to putting local repeaters on their premises. He advised that he would be in touch as soon as possible.

2.13 Highways Sub-Committee Report

Austin Iliffe requested that Councillors supply him with a list of priorities for highways work to be done in Hexhamshire. He would then email the final list to Councillors and contact the Highways Department.

2.14 Highways and Footpaths

No further issues were brought forward.

2.15 BOATs

It was reported that the BOATs are still being abused.

2.16 Reports

Wetlands – Davy Short had finished some fencing. There are now cattle in the Wetlands but the willow has been fenced off. A further meeting was to take place with Dilston College.

Hall – An events programme was due to be published. An application was to be made to Colin Horncastle for funding. A positive response had been received from the Henry Bell Trust. Austin Iliffe reported that he had a meeting with Community Action Northumberland regarding more funding.

School – there was nothing to report.

Sportsfield – a new tennis net had been purchased.

- 2.17 The next meeting was to be held on Thursday 13th March.

2.18 Any Other Business

- 2.18.1 Gill Whatmough had been handed various documents for safe keeping from Brian Massey.
2.18.2 Tom Kristensen had supplied a quote of £20 per hour for cutting hedges and had estimated that it would take no more than 2 days to complete. It was agreed that this work should go ahead.

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