

HEXHAMSHIRE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 12th February 2015 at 7.30 pm in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms at Whitley Chapel Parish Hall.

2.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Marge Rastall, Davy Short and Edward Parker.

Councillors present: Gill Whatmough, Alastair Stevens, Andrew Nixon, Hilary Kristensen, Austin Iliffe, Alison Tweddle and Greg Finch.

Also present: Kris Westerbury, Highways Manager, NCC
Colin Horncastle, Unitary Councillor
Mr Phillipson, member of the public.

2.2 Kris Westerbury, Highways Department

- 2.2.1 Gill Whatmough introduced Kris Westerbury, Highways Manager for NCC responsible for Ditching, drainage, winter services, capital delivery and the local transport plan.
- 2.2.2 Kris Westerbury requested that grid references for the grit heaps that need replenishing be forwarded to him. His mobile number is 07767 391680. He advised that he would send existing records for grit heaps. Andrew Olive is the main contact for grit heaps and potholes. Kris Westerbury agreed to forward a current contact list to Austin Iliffe.
- 2.2.3 It was reported that the grids are solid with mud. Kris Westerbury advised that the teams were to be in the area the following week and he would advise Ray Whelans of the issue.
- 2.2.4 Kris Westerbury advised that he could be used as a point of contact in connection with Byways issues but that Mike Jeffries is the contact.
- 2.2.5 Kris Westerbury was advised that the cattle grid next to Gairshield needs a clear out. He advised that the bridge at Dalton is scheduled for repair.
- 2.2.6 It was advised that some of the unclassified roads are lifting. Kris Westerbury requested locations.
- 2.2.7 The on-going issue at the layby near Dye House was raised and the need for hardcore.
- 2.2.8 The Councillors were advised that £91 million has been allocated to Northumberland and more investment is to be made next year. Kris Westerbury advised that classified roads are on a 3 monthly inspection rota but that unclassified roads are only inspected annually. He also advised that surface dressing is scheduled and a ditching programme including gullies is prioritised for rural areas. He is keen to build up local knowledge and emphasised the importance of being kept informed of any issues.
- 2.2.9 Gill Whatmough thanked Kris for attending the meeting.

2.3 Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 8th January 2015.

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

2.4 Declaration of Interests

Colin Horncastle declared an interest in any planning issues.

2.5 Matters Arising

12.8 Matters are still ongoing.

12.15 Gill Whatmough is yet to speak to the vicar in connection with the parking outside the Church.

1.14.2 The Council had put up signs reference the dog fouling issue.

2.6 Public Participation

Mr Phillipson had attended the meeting as an observer for UKIP.

2.7 Correspondence

2.7.1 Notification had been received from NCC regarding the planning application at Crossfield, Ordley to advise that the application had been granted.

2.7.2 Greg Finch had supplied valuable information regarding the various historical sites in connection with woodland work to be undertaken. Points highlighted were small remnants of slag consistent with the smelting of lead in a bail hill. Few such sites are recorded in Northumberland. Greg suggested a survey of the site should be undertaken prior to the next felling of the wood. Also noted were the furnace wood which may contain remains of early iron working. To the north of High Staples are the visible remains of a cart track, once the main route in and out of Blackhall lead smelt mill. Also the remains of track on either side of the Hall Burn.

2.7.3 A letter had been sent regarding the Housing Developer Fund regarding applications for funding. This was to be passed back to the school, if there was no interest in applying then the Parish Council would apply again.

2.8 Financial Report

Treasurer's Account - £2624.54

Wetlands Account - £267.54

Savings Account - £13798.50

Funding requests are to be considered at the March meeting.

2.9 Matters for Discussion with the Unitary Councillor

2.9.1 Colin Horncastle advised that £40 million was to be saved over the next 4 years.

2.9.2 A bid was to be submitted for £50 million to upgrade highways.

2.9.3 Schools in the area had recently benefitted from funding from government.

2.9.4 Changes are to be made to the planning process with a reduction of applications being considered by committee. Deloitte had undertaken a review of the process and come up with recommendations including having only one county wide committee. Changes could be made as quickly as May this year. Councillors commented that enforcement was a great concern. Colin Horncastle advised that the report was very thorough.

2.9.5 Colin Horncastle advised that he would be meeting with Kris Westbury. There is now a dedicated ditching and drainage budget of £140K.

2.10 Core Strategy and Green Belt Issues

Alastair Stevens and Gill Whatmough had read the report and advised that there were no proposed developments in this area. The report considered the rural economy, affordable housing, roads, phone masts etc. It was reported that road 'hot spots' were to be a consideration. Other areas covered in the report were the re-use of existing buildings, flood risk, green belt and ancient woodland. Alastair Stevens advised that it was a very extensive report.

2.11 Defibrillator

Davy Short and Marge Rastall had attended the training meeting at Slaley. It was reported that Slaley had very little interest. The aim would be to train first responders.

2.12. Smelting Arches

Walking leaflets were handed out for the Allen Valleys and Dukesfield which were also to be distributed in various outlets. A touring exhibition is also to take place.

2.13 Broadband sub-committee report

2.13.1 There had still been no response from Cybermoor. Kevin Wood promised a response in the week following the meeting.

2.13.2 Daneco had been contacted and information sent to enable an initial assessment. No response had been received at the date of the meeting.

2.13.3 Austin Iliffe advised that a new BT technology, Fibre to the Remote Node, is currently being trialled in North Yorkshire, which is designed to enable high speed internet to be transmitted over copper cable. This is likely to form part of the phase2 roll out, but not expected to commence until 2016, although suitable for the Shire, not likely to be available soon.

2.13.4 The high speed internet for Juniper has been further delayed due to a power supply problem which is not likely to be resolved before June 2016.

2.13.5 No planning application had been received regarding the radio mast and mobile broadband.

2.14 Highways and Footpaths

There were no further issues.

2.15 BOATs

No issues were brought forward.

2.16 Reports:

Wetlands – Anthony White is contacting John Price direct.

School – There were no issues.

Hall – The date for the Lost Farms in Weardale talk was confirmed as 20.3.15.

Sportsfield/Play Area – Nothing to report.

2.17 Any Other Business

- 2.17.1 The Parish Councillors expressed their sadness at the sudden and unexpected death of Geoff Brooker of the Dipton Mill. He was acknowledged as being an integral part of Hexhamshire life and a very important part of the community and will be sadly missed. Gill Whatmough advised that she had sent a card on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 2.17.2 It was suggested that the old noticeboard be refurbished and put back up as a Hall Noticeboard.
- 2.17.3 The new noticeboard needs some reinforcement.
- 2.17.4 The 4 new benches need re-siting and one placed next to the noticeboard. The plaque on the old seat needs to be moved to the new one.
- 2.17.5 It was agreed that Councillors should check the condition of benches around the 'Shire and report back at the meeting next month.

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