

Minutes of the Meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 11th August 2022
in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall

- 8.1 Present –Nicola Matthews (Chair), Edward Parker, Greg Finch, Roger Rutherford. Gill Whatmough, Davy Short, Hilary Kristensen, Alison Tweddle.
Clerk - Jonny White.
Apologies for Absence – Lee Riley, Marge Rastall, Councillor - Colin Horncastle.

Thanks were given to Gaynor Scandle for her many years of hard work as Parish Clerk. Jonny White was welcomed into the role, as of this meeting.

- 8.2 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 14th July 2022

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

- 8.3 Declarations of interest – No Declarations of Interest.

- 8.4 Matters Arising

Photographs of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, taken by John and Barbara Austin, have been added to the Hexhamshire Parish website. A framed print of one of the large group photos is to be ordered and placed in the Parish Hall, costing £50; there are two choices available, with a decision to be made on which is best.

The wording for a plaque to be placed on the WW2 Home Guard Shelter and Ammunition Store at the end of Leazes Lane in Whitley Chapel has been agreed. It reads as follows: 'World War II Shelter and Ammunition Store used by Hexhamshire's Home Guard from 1940 – 1944'. Further supplementary information, including photographs, is to be collated by Hilary Kristensen and supplied to the Hexhamshire magazine.

An email from the NCC has been received regarding the Anti-Speeding measures that have been planned in Whitley Chapel. Though the scheme was supposedly ready for implementation in 2017, it has now been decided that there will be a 20mph 'when lights flash' sign close to the school, with a 40mph limit being imposed on the surrounding roads. Given the timeframe this scheme has already taken to get to this point, this may require chasing up.

No update on the seat due to be placed at the end of Leazes Lane. Trevor Golightly is still due to site it when he can.

Through consultation with Mary and Tony Macklon, it seems plans are in place to remove the cypress tree at the front of the churchyard, roots and all, as well as to repair the path. This should remove any trip hazards that currently exist. Lighting is also due to be installed on the new path. No indication on timescale or costings yet.

Further information is required regarding Andrew Wiley, local postman, before a letter of thanks can be sent.

Another effort was made by the Tyne Rivers Trust, together with local volunteers to rid the Dye House Wood of Himalayan Balsam, though more work needs to be done over a several year period to eradicate it completely. There has also been some Balsam sighted upstream at Whitley Mill. Worse still, Himalayan knotweed, a blacklisted invasive species, has also been spotted around the Whitley Mill area, which will require specialist techniques and equipment to clear. The Tyne Rivers Trust has been informed, though they should be kept updated if it is spotted elsewhere. The magazine has also been informed.

8.5 Public Participation

Anne Porter attended as a guest to inform the council on the Himalayan Balsam/Knotweed (as noted above) and the updates on the plans for the Wetlands (as noted below).

8.6 Neighbourhood Plan

The prospect of a neighbourhood plan was again met with varied strong opinions from the council. The only real advantage of creating a localized plan would be centred on creating affordable housing for young people from the area, for example by making it easier to convert outbuilding on farms. However, it was agreed that most Parish issues are already covered under the terms of the Northumberland County Council's local plan anyway, and that a steering group devoted to lobbying for affordable housing in this area would make little difference. Furthermore, the lack of enforcement on current issues seriously detracted from the appeal of creating a plan. A consensus was reached that, at present, the Shire's situation does not warrant a localised neighbourhood plan and all work towards this should cease.

8.7 Matters for discussion with the Unitary Councillor – not present.

8.8 Correspondence

Only correspondence this month was the email from Neil Snowdon regarding speed limits, noted above.

8.9 Finance

8.9.1 Laptop, Printer and software for Clerk duties: £550.98. Approved. Parish to reclaim VAT.

Jubilee celebrations: loss on the hot dogs of £10. £20 gain from Alan Phillipson, ice cream van. £10 surplus to be paid into general account.

8.9.2 Balances as of 7th August 2022

Treasurer's Account	£15,625.97
Sportsfield Account	£1,793.56
Dukesfield Account	£2,872.59
Wetlands Account	£996.38

8.10 Planning

- Linnels Cottage: Refused, as it represents 'inappropriate development in the green belt' and because of the proposed scale of the project, which would 'have a visually intrusive and harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape'.
- Embley: Granted: Proposal for a detached ancillary building.
- Lilswood Caravan Park: The planning officer wants a 4m barrier of hardwood trees along the fence. However, there is no room within the bounds of the current site to plant said trees, so Nigel Robson has agreed to sell a 4m strip so that they can abide by the planning restrictions. This is still subject to legal requirements (such as that it is for trees only and he must maintain stock proof fencing around). The caravans along the northern edge of the site are also to be painted brown. The site is not intended for residential permanent use, though it is suspected that it may be being used as such regardless. Ideally to be monitored, though feasibility is doubtful. No objections to the plans for tree planting or caravan painting.
- Newbiggin Farm Cottage: Refused. Plans for an extension to the existing bungalow and construction of a new garage have been turned down as the extension would have been larger than the original bungalow, as well as being highly visible from the surrounding area.

- Enforcement Officer Alex Campbell to be contacted regarding Rushwood and the recent work undertaken there, including the possible spread of hoggin.

8.11 Highways, footpaths and BOATS

- 8.11.1 **TTRO 130313257** (Closure of Eastgate). The council are unanimous that the closure of Eastgate for the proposed 7 weeks would be disastrous for the Shire, as well as other areas. The suggested diversion route down Causey Hill is also seen to be unacceptable. Gill Whatmough has written to the authority and suggested traffic lights or a one-way system. Colin Horncastle has been copied into the email. Clerk to also chase Colin up and apply pressure on this issue.

New speed limit to be introduced in Whitley Chapel (see above).

Potholes still to be documented.

Footpaths: Stile should be removed/moved from the Willow enclosure near Moss House.

Water at Click'em Inn corner is apparently not Northumbrian Water's responsibility. Source currently unknown.

BOATS: Large amount of rubbish seen in forests. Bikers still using the BOATS, despite the gates being in place.

8.12 Reports

Wetlands: Anne Porter came to the meeting to suggest that a 'Friends of the Wetlands' group be created so that volunteers can keep a close eye on the quality of the wetland habitat; this was approved by the Council. In terms of the planned management of the site, a list of objectives is to be drawn up, including botany, bird and insect surveys as well as annual photos to be taken in the same place every year to measure changes in scrub etc. These surveys, objectives and other plans for the wetlands are to be uploaded to the website when complete.

It was agreed that the Parish council would meet annually every Autumn with the Friends group to discuss any large-scale action that may need to be undertaken.

John Dent is to buy paint for work on the Hide and supply invoices.

Mathew Hope and Matthew Ford are to be contacted regarding the repair of the steps and Hide foundation.

If the school is prepared to use the site under their own volition, it has the approval of the council.

Dukesfield Arches: Greg Finch informed the meeting that we would be receiving a £400 donation towards the recent work on Dukesfield Arches from The Smith (Haltwhistle and District) Charitable Trust, which they will send by cheque payable to the Council.

School: Closed for summer. New headmistress in September.

Hall:

Sportsfield Mathew Hope is to be contacted regarding his report on the Playground inspection.

8.13 Any Other Business:

No other business.

Meeting closed at 8:35pm

