

Minutes of the Meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 13th April 2023
in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall

4.1 Present –Marge Rastall (Chair), Hilary Kristensen, Greg Finch, Lauren Porteus, John Austin. Clerk - Jonny White.

Apologies for Absence – Ed Parker, Nicola Matthews, Roger Rutherford, Davy Short, Gill Whatmough, Colin Horncastle (Councillor).

The council welcomed John Austin to the team.

4.2 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 13th March 2023

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

4.3 Declarations of Interest – No Declarations of Interest.

4.4 Matters Arising

- Following further reports of disturbances at Rushwood, including the potential burning of hazardous rubbish, the clerk was asked to contact Glen Sanderson, Leader of Northumberland County Council, to complain about the lacklustre efforts of the council's enforcement team. Mr Sanderson passed the matter on to Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing and Public Protection, who said he would get his team to investigate and address the complaint.
- John Dent has kindly volunteered to take down the cherry tree at the corner of Whitley Chapel, after it was deemed to still be at risk of falling. The WI have a replacement tree to plant as soon as they're able.

4.5 Northern PowerGrid Grant

A sum of £17,485.28 has been kindly received from Northern Powergrid to assist in transforming the parish hall into a resilience hub. Efforts are underway to source an appropriate generator and carry out electrical work in the hall. The parish clerk will keep a record of expenditures and actions taken by the council to support energy resilience in the area and report back to Northern Powergrid.

4.6 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

4.7 Matters for discussion with the Unitary Councillor

No communications had been received by Colin Horncastle.

4.8 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

4.9.1 Finance

- Precept arrived: £4500
- £67.50 for renting the hall.
- £151.06 for Zen Internet (domain name and hosting of parish website).

4.9.2 Balances as of 11th April 2023

Treasurer's Account	£18,235.78
Sportsfield Account	£2,148.46
Dukesfield Account	£3,329.18
Wetlands Account	£516.70

4.10 Planning

- The proposed caravan site at Guard's Lane (22/04043/MISC | Reference 087/037) has been approved, despite receiving 13 objections. Having investigated this matter, the Clerk was told that because the caravan club hold a 'Certificate of Exemption' and a license to establish small caravanning sites, they have no need for planning permission, and the application they submitted to the council was merely a 'consultation' by the club, to formally declare that they were acting on their permitted development rights. The county council noted that they had read the objections but were legally powerless to stop the club from going ahead with its plans.
- 23/00812/VARYCO: Variation of drawings on the approved plan for Dairy House, Steel, Hexham. No Objection.
- 23/00885/VARYCO: Variation of drawings on the property for Newbiggin Farm Cottage. No objection.
- 20/03451/FUL: Lilswood Caravan Park, amended red boundary line: GRANTED
- Rowley Head:
 1. 23/00564/FUL: Retrospective change of use planning application for the equestrian arena. No objections.
 2. 22/04129/FUL: Replacement gable extension: REFUSED

4.11 Highways, footpaths and BOATS

Footpaths: -

BOATS:

No update this month as Davy Short could not attend the meeting, but efforts to tackle illegal activity on the BOATS continue.

Roads:

The speed limit through Whitley Chapel has been fully installed, though many parishioners are unhappy with it being a 40mph zone. The Clerk is trying to lobby the county council into reducing it to 30mph (as well as extending it through Whitley Mill), though to the lengthy, bureaucratic processes involved, this may take some time. If you would like to voice your concerns over the speed limit, please direct your correspondence to: highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk

Elsewhere, the county council are prioritising the repairs to the Yarridge Road crossroad, where a serious crash took place last month. This will include placing new road signs and road markings. The council have also said they will look into issues of flooding and road damage on the stretch outside the old Click'em inn.

4.12 Reports

Wetlands: No reports

Dukesfield Arches: Greg considered the site satisfactory and would not need a spring clean-up. This will be revised in the Autumn.

School: No reports

Hall: No reports

Sportsfield: Gill received a message from Carl Beckett, who works for Corbridge football club, about using the Sportsfield. It was agreed a charge may be prudent, but in principle, it is fine, subject to further details.

4.13 Any Other Business:

Queries were made to the parish council regarding plans for celebrating the King's upcoming coronation. However, due to a combination of factors, the parish council will not be organising any events to mark the occasion.

Meeting closed at 8:50pm.