

Minutes of the Meeting of Hexhamshire Parish Council held on Thursday 14th September 2023
in the Malcolm Caisley Meeting Rooms, Whitley Chapel Parish Hall

7.1 Present –Marge Rastall (Chair), Hilary Kristensen, John Austin, Davy Short, Roger Rutherford, Gill Whatmough; Colin Horncastle (County Councillor).

Apologies for Absence – Nicola Matthews, Greg Finch, Lauren Porteus, Ed Parker; the Clerk, Jonny White, was also absent due to illness.

7.2 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 13th July 2023
(There was no August meeting)

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

7.3 Declarations of Interest – Gill Whatmough declared interest in the fencing between the wetland and Mire Meadows field.

7.4 Matters Arising

- The fence/hedging between the wetland and Mire Meadows field. – It was agreed that objections to hedging and tree planting were sensible and only replacement fencing would be needed. The Chair to contact Matthew Ford for a quote and Roger Rutherford also said he would submit a quote.
- The large block of mature willow trees would need cutting in the near future.
- Verge species list – it was confirmed from earlier meetings that the Parish Council would liaise with the County for verge cutting in the early part of the Spring in order to plan appropriate areas that needed protecting. However, junctions, corners and the majority of the verges would need to be cut. Only the rarest category of flowers according to the list submitted by Mr Porter would be used to pinpoint the appropriate places.
- Gill Whatmough had now received the plaque for Alison. Davy Short volunteered to screw it to the bench along the Lee Road.
- The cattle grid before Kings Law had been repaired.

7.5 Northern PowerGrid Grant

HK reported that Tom Kristensen was completing the installation of the generator at Blanchland and would be able to install the generator at the hall provided the concrete pad was in position. The Chair will inform the Hall committee at the meeting due on 19th September. JA suggested that the work should coincide with the installation of the new septic tank at the end of October.

7.6 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.
However, it was decided that the public participation section of future meetings would be restricted to 10 minutes per participant.

7.7 Matters for discussion with the Unitary Councillor

£30million had to be saved over the next 2 years by the County. Various cuts were being planned but there will be a 3% increase in parks investment but centred on urban centres. Following a pothole trial, an extra £500,000 was being spent on using equipment to make permanent repairs. Further investment would be provided for new schools. 94% of Northumberland Schools were rated as Good or Outstanding. There are no schools in Northumberland with RAAC concrete problems. A successful programme of support for Ukrainian refugees was reported.

A new way of communicating with the County about any issue or problem was explained; this is the app, **Fix my Street**. It was agreed that it was important to give information of this App elsewhere in this magazine.

7.8 Correspondence

An email was received from Matthew Eastburn about a dilapidated gate on a footpath. However, this was regarded as a private matter with the landowner.

7.9.1 Finance

- Clerk's Antivirus software: £19.99
 - Precept: £4500.
 - Meeting room payment: £67.50
- The above items were approved.

7.9.2 Balances as of 10th September 2023

Treasurer's Account	£19,574.53
Sportsfield Account	£2,082.38
Dukesfield Account	£5,037.49
Wetlands Account	£668.76
Resilience Account	£6,961.56

7.10 Planning

- 23/02108/FUL Eads Bush, Steel; 'Construction of 40m x 25m equestrian arena with timber post, rail fence and gate for personal use only (Retrospective)'. The Council would highlight issues with this type of retrospective permission to the County.
- 23/01504/FUL The Birks Hexham; 'Conversion of barns into a private dwelling with an extension to the south'. GRANTED.
- 23/02813/FUL Whitley Chapel Parish Hall, Solar Panels. The Council supported this application. (The Chair would check that the Hall Trustees will ensure the roof is checked if panels are to be fixed to avoid any potential problems.)

- 23/00812/VARYCO: Dairy House Steel, Hexham; Variation of condition 2 on approved application 21/01732/FUL in order to amend drawings to provide for the inclusion of an infill area between the utility and garage spaces. REFUSED.

7.11 Highways, footpaths and BOATS

Footpaths/BOATS: Issue of bridleway/BOAT at Steel Grove.

A comprehensive report had been prepared by Liz Sobell to refute the claim. A copy would be sent to inform the consultation process. A further copy was attached to the Parish Council records. The Chair agreed to write to Liz Sobell conveying our thanks and appreciation for her extensive research and work.

Roads: It was agreed that the state of the road outside the Dipton Mill needs to be reported again. There is no point in the council patching the potholes until the problems with drainage at the top of the hill have been addressed.

7.12 Reports

Wetlands: See above for information on the fencing.

Dukesfield Arches: GF reported that Mathew Hope needed to be contacted in order to cut the grass and a section of fencing needed to be repaired.

Hall: Due to shut during the October/November half term for the fitting of the new septic tank.

Sportsfield: Mathew Hope requested to use Hall tap to power wash the tennis court prior to repainting the lines. The Hall Chair had already agreed to this request.

7.13 Any Other Business:

- It was noted that an extension/sun room was being added to Raw Green. The County needed to be informed as there were no plans submitted.
- JA had photographic evidence of development at Guards Lane. The County Enforcement department needed to be informed.

Meeting closed at 9:20pm.