

Minutes of a Meeting of Rennington Parish Council held on 30 November 2017

Councillors present:

K Burdett (KB) Chair
John Watson (JW) Vice Chair
C Barker (CB)
L Bosanquet (LB)
W Kenway-Smith (WKS)
A Tremlett (AT)

Apologies:

K and N Anscombe

Also in attendance: one member of the public and the Neighbourhood Police Officer (Stuart Bruce)

Following the resignation of the Clerk with effect from 18 November 2017, WKS offered to take the minutes of the meeting.

1. Declarations of interest

JW and WKS declared an interest in matters concerning the village hall as members of the village hall committee.

2. Public participation time

Stuart Bruce introduced himself as the local Neighbourhood Police Officer. Rennington was in a low crime area with speeding the issue most frequently raised as a concern. The police were seeking volunteers for the Community Speedwatch programme and he would forward contact details to the Chair if any member of the parish wished to become involved. The issues of speeding on the bends round Rennington, through the village and at Stamford were drawn to his attention.

He noted hare coursing and poaching as other key issues. Use of the My Northumbria App was encouraged for notifying and sharing issues.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2017 was proposed by CB and seconded by AT and unanimously agreed.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a. Village hall defective boundary wall

The Chair and AT had met with Mr White and whilst he had acknowledged the wall was his responsibility he did not accept that it needed attention. The cost of repairing the wall was likely to be around £1500. NCC had noted that legal action could be expensive and that it might be preferable to surrender the lease of the village hall back to Northumberland Estates. Following a discussion of the issues it was proposed by the Chair and seconded by AT to continue to pursue matters as follows:

- Approach some additional solicitors for an estimate of costs to provide legal advice;
- Draft a letter to go to Mr White recording the discussion held
- Draw the issue to the attention of Northumberland Estates and seek their intervention as freeholder.

The resolution was unanimously agreed.

b. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – use of land at Stamford Cottages

The Planning Officer's response to the Parish Council's concerns about use of land next to the development did not reflect the reality of the situation and it was agreed that JW would draft a further letter for the Chair to send.

c. Longhoughton Ward Chairs meeting - available grant funding

No further action

d. Broadband in Rennington

The Chair reported that there were 27 properties in Rennington parish where faster broadband was not available and a further 9 which would have faster broadband before the end of 2018. The Chair would identify all properties where faster broadband was not available and identify if there was grant funding available to help.

e. Stamford farm traffic concerns

The parish council had proposed introduction of a speed limit in the traffic management plan and the issue was also being pursued by Wendy Pattison, County Councillor.

f. Maintenance Order for Rennington Churchyard

This had been forwarded to the County Council and the grass was already being cut.

5. Financial Matters

No payments had been made since the last meeting with a final payment due for the Clerk. LB proposed and AT seconded that such a payment be made when due which was unanimously agreed.

The budget for 2018 would be discussed at the January Parish Council meeting as a separate item. Parish councillors would be invited to approve the budget for 2018/19 and to set the precept for that financial year at the January meeting.

6. Town and Country Planning Act 1990

There were no new planning applications to consider.

7. County Councillor update

Wendy Pattison's written update was duly noted. The member of public present noted that flooding issues remained at Stamford and further action might be required to resolve.

8. Village Green Trees

The Chair reported that George Daniels of Percy Farms had complained about trees overhanging the road on the entrance to the village causing larger traffic to move to the centre of the road. Mr Barry Wilson, Tree and Woodland officer at NCC considered that the trees on the green and on the verge belonged to Northumberland Estates although AT stated the verge trees were on his land. NCC would charge £416 to prune the crowns of the trees concerned. Councillors unanimously agreed to take no further action as they did not think crown pruning would address the issue and were not convinced a problem existed in the first place.

9. Correspondence

a. Footpath between Rennington and "Masons Arms"

Philip Bradley, Footpath Officer at NCC, had confirmed that two stiles on the footpath would be replaced with gates. He was also addressing the issue of the start of the path adjacent to a property in the village.

b. Precept for 2018/19

Required by 29 January 2018 and to be discussed at next meeting as above.

c. Speed activated signs

The Chair reported that the cost of a sign was around £3500 plus a maintenance charge of £400. NCC was looking into establishing a single contract for the maintenance of such signs across the County which might reduce the annual cost for parish councils. At least two signs

would be required and it was agreed no further action would be taken given the costs were currently prohibitive.

10. Future meetings

The next meeting was scheduled for 11 January 2018 at 7.30pm in Rennington Village Hall. The Chair would circulate dates for the remaining 2018 meetings following a similar date pattern to 2017.

11. Urgent Business

The Chair would chase progress on the parking survey outside the Grange care home.

12. Staffing

The Chair provided feedback to Councillors only on his discussion with the Clerk following her resignation. He would circulate a note to all Councillors. The previous Clerk had worked to the final date of her notice period and handed matters over to the Chairman in good order. The position had been advertised and the Chair and JW hoped to interview a potential candidate shortly.