

## WOOLER PARISH COUNCIL

### **Draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Council, Held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 7pm – a virtual meeting via ZOOM**

Present: Councillor Mark Mather (Chair) Councillors: Tom Armstrong (Vice chair), Rob Donkin, Joyce Robertson, Caroline Cumming, Anthony Murray, Kevan Curry, Helen Leighton-Rose, Helen Deane-Hall, Mark Napier

In Attendance: Kerren Rodgers (Clerk), Ian Smith (JPI Media),

#### **20/121 APOLOGIES**

P C Curtis Ritchie

#### **20/122 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION – Maximum 5 mins per item**

##### **1. Hedgehog friendly gardens**

The meeting was informed of an email received from Helen Cunningham (resident of Wooler) concerning a campaign she has started. The campaign is to get residents of Wooler to check that their gardens are accessible to hedgehogs when they are on their nightly travels – they only need a small 13cm hole in a fence/wall to allow them to come and go. A poster has been designed and put up in various locations around Wooler and an article has been produced that gives six easy ways to assist hedgehogs in the garden. Wooler Parish Council are very happy to support this campaign and will put information up on their website and facebook page and will also send to the press for a wider publication. A vote of thanks for highlighting this issue was extended to Helen.

#### **20/123 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mark Napier, Helen Deane-Hall & Helen Leighton-Rose Item 20/129.

#### **20/124 LOCAL SERVICES UPDATE**

#### **REPORT**

Report received via email from PC Ritchie

1/ Minor skirmish in the town centre resulting in 2 assaults being recorded. All parties identified and have been dealt with.

2/ A fight was reported in the bus station car park however all parties dispersed prior to police arrival.

3/ 2 push bike thefts were reported in the town centre which are still outstanding

4/ 2 further minor offences linked to a domestic dispute were also reported.

The Chair informed the meeting that PC Ritchie had not been able to gather information regarding the Rural Crime Unit but will present this for the next meeting.

The meeting was also informed of an email “scam” that had targeted PC’s which appeared to have been sent by Chairmen of PC’s and looked very believable but on closer inspection the email address was incorrect.

#### **20/125 CORONAVIRUS – Covid 19**

#### **REVIEW & DISCUSSION**

- Update – The chair confirmed that support is still here for people if needed although only a couple of calls received for meds.
- Community Groups Meeting Update – The Chair confirmed some of the more important items from that meeting such as £20k grant given to Becki Murray – Berwick Community Trust who is heading a joined up community response for food provision, this included Berwick, Alnwick and Glendale food banks. Also there is to be a campaign to get contact with families that may need extra help over Xmas and BM explained how this had been achieved in Berwick. The Glendale food bank would be available over the Xmas period and it was noted that following that meeting they had now introduced a mobile number which allows for text messages to be sent as well. The medication delivery service is to continue and provision has been made in case of bad weather whereby Cllr MM has kindly offered his 4 x 4 for our delivery service to use, this will take medication/deliveries to a central point (Chatton/Lowick village shop) and then a local delivery service would take on from there. Pre-printed Christmas cards are to be purchased to send to those already being supported along with information on where help can be sort if required. The meeting was also informed of an initiative involving school children to produce artwork and nominations for Age UK packs. This is to be developed with the school. It was agreed that some of the original Age UK packs could be passed to Jane Pannell.

To be signed as a correct record minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 26<sup>th</sup> October '20

The Parish Council read through the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26/10/20 were agreed to be a true and accurate record. Cllr Tom Armstrong proposed the minutes and Cllr Curry seconded them. The Chair signed the minutes.

To consider matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council –

The meeting was informed that Bernicia had responded to the WPC complaint regarding the overhanging tree in Horsdenside. This matter may take a little longer to resolve as tree as TPO and an application has now been made to NCC planning.

Cllr TA asked for an update on Padgepool Place fencing – The Chair confirmed that despite providing an acceptable quote from the WPC contractor, as he didn't hold a street works licence then he could not complete this work. Back to NCC to program in to their schedule.

- **First School Site/Cemetery Land** - The Chair informed the meeting that he and Cllr.AM had been in contact with Mike Robbins (Head of Estates, NCC) regarding this land. It was noted that a disappointing response appeared to suggest that we have now gone backwards and it was back to being agreed by NCC housing. Cllr AM concerned that this has been discussed for the last 5yrs and no further forward. Concerns raised over the latest delay because we had stressed the urgency of this project.
- **Riverside Update** – The Chair expressed his thanks to everyone who turned out to plant bulbs. Thanks to Cllr JR for refreshments. Pleased at how quickly the work was completed. Thanks for a donation of tulip and daffodil bulbs from Mr Fred Murray. All bulbs have now been planted and have also planted some at the Tenterhill car park. Cllr MN had been approached by an officer of the environment agency – will give contact details to the Clerk for future reference. This area looks excellent and is now being fully used.
- **Cars on Scotts Park** – NCC have again been asked to replace the bollards to stop vehicular access to the park.
- **Parish Council Laptop** - The Chair confirmed the new laptop has been purchased and felt it was a great additional asset.
- **Christmas Tree/Lights** – The Chair thanked all that helped putting up the lights. Particular thanks to Mr & Mrs Davidson for the donation of the fantastic Christmas tree, a donation of £400 from Mr & Mrs Ferguson for lights on South Road, and a donation of £185 from Mr Wilson for lights on The Peth. Thanks to all that worked putting up the lights, for the drinks and cake supplied. Particular thanks to Cllr Rob Donkin for all his hard work behind the scenes, unseen but absolutely necessary and couldn't do this project without him. Massive testament that we have managed to extend the lights to Padgepool Place and the Peth and thanks to residents for providing electrics. Some spare lights have been lent to The Old Vicarage to improve their building. The Chair suggested that a competition was started for the best dressed garden/window and a prize of £20 gift voucher for Wooler High St. Discussion followed and it was agreed that the competition would be best window and best garden separately. WPC will donate second prize. Cllr AM to head judging team. Judging dates to be confirmed.
- **Caretaker Works** – Update on works that are needed, Tory works needs extending, also planting needed at the side of the old police station. Some strimming is needed on South Road to keep on top of that work. All agreed that High Street needs tidying with leaves blowing and NCC to spray weeds. Cllr TA to check with landowner regarding the area in front of the Terrace Café.
- **Bus Station surface and paths** – The Chair confirmed these works had been reported to NCC to be dealt with. Also noted that all problems should be reported to NCC via website as more complaints that are received may get jobs dealt with quicker.

- **Sign Poles next to Christmas Tree** – these have been reported to Highways as poles are rotten and could potentially be a danger.
- **Business Forum** – An NCC official had contacted a member of the business forum as the date of the Shopping day had not been changed on a new facebook page. Disappointed with his negative response to this trader. Cllr MM contacted and he has his mobile number if any advice is needed.
- **Road works on the Peth** – Cllr JR questioned why there was a sign at the Peth as the road works had been cancelled. The clerk had raised this with NCC and they confirmed their works are not starting till New Year.

**20/129 SCHOOL FARM FIELD SITE DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- Community Orchard – The Chair confirmed that a letter had been given to Aspire to allow for a further application for 32 fruit trees. Design had been circulated to all Cllrs and all agreed the revised plans. Discussion followed regarding hedging and it was agreed that a site meeting to finalise details should take place.
- Mower - The meeting was asked to confirm if it would support the scouts making an application to get a mower from the Community Chest that could be used to cut the grass in the Orchard – all agreed.
- Water – Nothing has as yet been received from Northumbrian Water – Clerk to chase again
- Polytunnel – Thanks extended to Cllr AM for the grant money to purchase a polytunnel – also thanks to Cllr RD for his work on this project.
- Road – Concern over the state of the road, letter to be sent to WCFG asking for the road not to be used as poor state. WCFG have been asked to park at top and walk down. Scouts offered to pay half towards wagon load of hoggin to repair.

**20/130 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT REPORT & DECISION**

Cllr Murray had nothing further to report and noted that the PC had been far busier than CC's.

**20/131 SCOTTS PARK/BRYONS PARK UPDATE & DECISION**

- Update – The Chair reported that a couple of minor defects had been reported on Brysons Park play equipment and these have been passed back to NCC as this still not transferred to WPC. Still no correspondence received regarding the land transfer.  
An email had been received complaining about dog mess on Brysons Park and the health hazard this is to children playing. The Chair made the point that all dog walkers should be clearing any mess and all incidents will be reported to the dog warden. Discussions followed regarding this problem and it was agreed that NCC to be approached to see if the play areas could be fenced off and made “no dogs”. Cllr KC noted that the moving of the bin had greatly improved the littering problem. Cllr RD reported that he had timber for seat repairs in Scotts Park.

**20/132 TORY SITE/TORY BANK REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- War Memorial Repairs – The Chair asked for confirmation that all happy with the quote from the QS to design plans regarding the slippage at the war memorial - All agreed.
- Tree Works- All works now completed at the Tory and the Market Place.
- Tree Survey – Update – The surveyor had been back to follow up on the survey and noted some trees still had ivy. Cllr TA agreed to inspect the site and report how many had been missed. It may be necessary to recall the Tree Surgeon to complete the works. The Surveyor had marked some trees that he felt worth keeping, generally all now ok and no further problems to report.
- Bat Survey – Daytime bat survey, 2 quotes received;
  - i) £875 (ex vat)
  - ii) £750 (no vat)

Cllr TA proposed the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Cllr JR seconded – all agreed.

**20/133 PLANNING MATTERS DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- None

**20/134 PLANNING DECISIONS****UPDATE & DECISION**

- Proposal To make a new opening in stone garden wall with a wooden gate to provide a safe pedestrian access to the footpath onto Tenter Hill; the side face wall of the stairway leading down from the new gateway opening would be of stone construction. 2 Tenter Hill, Wooler, NE71 6DB – GRANTED
- Single storey rear extension (amended plans received 04/11/20, amended description 06/11/20) 16 Glendale Road, Wooler, NE71 6DN – GRANTED
- Erection of new detached dwelling house. Building plot Ryecroft View, Wooler, NE71 6AT - GRANTED

**20/135 OUTSIDE BODIES****REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION**

The Chair reported on the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> Nov with Robin McCartney NCC Highways Infrastructure Manager. Discussed all the outstanding issues;

- i. Bus station – disabled bays
- ii. COOP crossing point
- iii. Ramseys Lane junction with High Street
- iv. Ramseys Lane (half way up) where road narrows
- v. Ramseys lane damage to Road & also Common Road
- vi. Chatton Bridge – how to make safer
- vii. New building site entrance – no 30mph zone
- viii. A697 crossing points
- ix. Paths on A697

The Chair expressed how very disappointed the attendees were as no further forward and particularly the poor attitude over loss of disabled bays and narrow paths. There has been no investment in Wooler for years. It was noted that several other PC's have reported the same issues regarding lack of communication and poor service. It was also noted that Cramlington Town Council have now removed a £350k contract with NCC having had the same problems that WPC are experiencing. It was noted that some departments and staff at NCC are excellent and also Cllr AM has always supported the town an invested where he could. General feeling of lack of interest on NCC part. Discussions followed regarding what options are now available. Residents rightly see PC as point of contact but we cannot get any answers. Cllr AM noted that NCC have procrastinated for nearly 5 years over the cemetery site and then only now are beginning to look at possibilities. Meeting appreciated processes need to be gone through but there is no accountability. Cllr KC suggested an Open Letter should be sent to Glen Sanderson, Leader of NCC and also a vote of no confidence. Meeting all agreed that this now was the only course of action to be taken. Copies to be sent to Press, all local PC's and be published and then to hold an extra-ordinary meeting where Mr Sanderson can address the PC with answers. The meeting unanimously voted that WPC had no confidence in NCC investing in Wooler.

**20/136 COUNCILLOR'S TASKS/QUESTIONS****REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- Cllr KC asked if a bench could be re-instated at the end of Ryecroft Cresc. Cllr MM confirmed that a site meeting had been held and it was deemed to be unsuitable as it would narrow path and block dropped curbs.
- Cllr KC also raised the issue of the unsightliness of Railtons Yard – WPC to send a letter to see if we can work together to keep the area tidy.
- Cllr MN – Forestry Commission – had been contacted as trees are being planted in the wild flower meadow and these will need to be removed. The chair suggested that the Forestry Commission should put out a public statement letting the residents know what they are hoping to achieve in the area. Cllr RD also made note that residents have tried to contact the FC and have been unsuccessful. MN to pass contact details to Clerk for reference.
- Thanks were extended to Mark Robson for the hedge cutting on South Road – disappointing that the owner hasn't cut the hedge since NCC stopped cutting.
- Cllr KC to work with clerk to map assets.

**20/137 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 at 7pm. This has been brought forward to allow for Christmas

**20/138 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Precept – budget information will be circulated. Difficult decision this year allowing for problems that have been experienced.

**20/139 FINANCE**

- Payments for authorisation – SEE TABLE BELOW

TLC (Southern) Ltd – Christmas Lights	471.79	Transfer
NCC – Summer grass cuts	2445.83	Transfer
EE – Sim Card Oct 20	14.71	DD
EE – Sim Card Sept 20	14.71	DD
Viking – PPE Equipment	84.97	Transfer
Zoom – Oct 20	14.39	DD
Viking – Toilet Rolls	65.94	Transfer
HIVIS.co.uk – jackets for WPC	92.15	Transfer
Pitman Computers – new laptop incl setup	870.00	Transfer
Donkin Engineering Ltd Materials for bench surrounds and Xmas Lights	76.67	Transfer
NCC – Oct 20 payroll	971.91	Transfer

Two signatories to authorise the above payments

Signed: .....

Signed: .....