

WOOLER PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Council, Held on Monday 26th October 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), Suzanne Cooke

20/101 APOLOGIES

P C Curtis Ritchie

20/102 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

- **Suzanne Cooke – Inclusive Arts Project**

The meeting was addressed by Suzanne Cooke who explained the origins of the Inclusive Arts Project and the Mission Initiative North Northumberland plan to help SC and the Church to work with communities outside of the normal Church parameters. It has been set up as a charitable organization and all legal structures are in place. Therefore during the lockdown period it was decided MINN could be used to develop an community arts project and has now gathered a diverse, but likeminded team which has pulled together a proposal for any creative medium, which will be good for all people of Wooler and surrounding area. The project is now in a consultation phase for 6 months and would welcome ideas as to what is wanted and is keen to encourage collaboration. Very important to see if this is something Wooler wants. The Chair thanked Suzanne for presentation and acknowledged that it may be a very long, dull winter with all that was happening. Cllr KC also noted that this was a great idea and lots of groups could be brought together. It was agreed that Suzanne would update the PC after Christmas as couple of events were planned.

Suzanne also informed the WPC that a normal Remembrance Service would be held in Church and a short act of Remembrance on the 11th. The WPC cannot support any gatherings however are planning to hold a short service at the War Memorial with invited people to lay wreaths.

20/103 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Mark Napier, Helen Deane-Hall & Helen Leighton-Rose Item 20/110.

20/104 LOCAL SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT

Report received via email from PC Ritchie

- 1/ Allegation of stalking – parties identified.
- 2/ 1 x minor assault – No complaint made
- 3/ Minor public order offence – All parties spoken to.

The Chair informed the meeting that the Rural Crime team was working well, with a poaching operation on Saturday night where 2 cars were stopped and lamps confiscated. The public are asked to be vigilant and if see anything suspicious report on 101. It was also noted that if any repeat of fireworks in the early hours of the morning ring police immediately.

20/105 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. Concern over loneliness was raised and everyone is urged to look out for neighbors. The food bank has a good supply of toilet rolls as the WPC had acquired a taxi full from NCC. Cllr AM raised concerns over whether local children would be affected by lack of school meals in holidays and it was agreed that a facebook post would be made offering confidential support. Cllr AM also confirmed that he was hoping to put £2k from small schemes fund into a County wide fund which will support needy children. Cllr JR asked how this would work but it is too early to report on that. The meeting agreed that it was important to get message out and that it may be needed during the Xmas period. It was also noted that as people were beginning to isolate again, there may be more of a need for the food bank or help from WPC.

- **Cleaner/Bus Station Toilets** – The meeting was informed that NCC had agreed to cover all the additional costs of cleaning the bus station toilets. Consideration may need to be given to the longer term and how costs may be reduced.

20/106 PREVIOUS MINUTES

REVIEW & SIGN

To be signed as a correct record minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 28th September '20

The Parish Council read through the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28/9/20 were agreed to be a true and accurate record. Cllr Tom Armstrong proposed the minutes and Cllr Donkin seconded them. The Chair signed the minutes.

20/107 MATTERS ARISING

REVIEW & DISCUSSION

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

none

20/108 PARISH REPORT

UPDATE & DECISION

- **Riverside Trees Update** - The Chair confirmed that all new benches were in place and thanks were extended to Cllr RD and also ex Cllr Angus Murray and Mr N Mather for their help in finishing off this project. The Clockwinders were also thanked for the donation towards the cost of the trees which had been planted at the Riverside and also the Market Place. The board for the Flower Fountain was in place and proving very popular. Cllr MN offered to remove the ivy from the last few trees. Cllr CC raised the issue of cars parking and it still being a problem. The police had provided cones to deter parking near the fire station and this was being monitored.
- **Parish Council Laptop** - The Chair read information that had been received regarding costs for a new WPC laptop. Cllr KC asked if there was a budget in place although meeting agreed that it was needed, especially given all meetings are currently held via Zoom. The Chair asked the meeting to agree an amount that could be allocated for this asset purchase. Cllr KC proposed £1200 max and Cllr CC seconded. All agreed. Clerk to investigate further and the meeting agreed that Cllr MM & TA could agree up to that amount to be spent.
- **Bulb Planting** - The meeting was informed that the bulb planting was planned for the weekend of the 31st Oct 10-3pm. Volunteers were needed to work in teams of 6, with PPE being provided along with HiVis jackets. Cllr KC suggested an approach to the WCFG allotment holders. 5000 crocuses and 1000 daffodil bulbs to be planted with the approaches to Wooler also being planted. Cllr RD is making a stencil to aid with the planting which is designed to give heavier blocks of colour. The meeting agreed.
- **Wooler Drop In Centre** – The Chair confirmed an email had been received from the Drop In noting they are recruiting new Trustees. The meeting agreed that it was really important to support this Centre and it was hoped the Landlord would be equally supportive.
- **NCC Communication Issues** - The Chair confirmed that a further Teams meeting had been held today with RMcC of NCC which was frustrating as still not getting clarity or answers. Concern was raised over the lack of “communication” between Highway departments.

Common Road – Plans do state road has to be widened, concern raised over who owns the land and if it could proceed without compliance by “default”. Cllr TA made comment that Ramseys Lane is a major issue and should have been included in the original planning considerations. Cllr KC stated that problems caused as no proper consultation/investigation took place and the WPC gets problems as a result. It was stressed that the double yellow lines had made the problems worse and infrastructure investment is desperately needed. There is a site meeting planned with NCC on 17th November and the meeting agreed that if still issues then Glen Sanderson should attend the next WPC meeting to explain why things are not moving forward.

A697 crossing – Money that had been paid for this crossing appears to have been kept within planning dept. Highways felt the road was not suitable for a crossing but they appeared to be looking at wrong report. Clerk to forward correct report.

The Farmers Market – As previously, the response from NCC regarding any formal agreement is not acceptable.

A697Footpath Haughhead to Wooler – This works is dependent on current planning application from Historic England and unfortunately we have heard today that these plans have been granted to infill the bridge.

Wooler First School Site- Cllr Mather confirmed that he had finally received a reply from NCC and they are now going to look into how to make the transaction!

30mph change, Chatton Road – this will be implemented at the end of the building works – meeting agreed this should be implemented at the start for safety reasons.

Cllr TA stated that he had left that meeting feeling very frustrated, it had left him demoralised as this is continually happening.

The site meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 17th November at 1pm

20/110 SCHOOL FARM FIELD SITE DISCUSSION & DECISION

- Community Orchard – Helen Deane-Hall reported that various applications had been made for fruit trees, bushes to provide shelter, along with an additional 300 trees from forestry and also an application had been made for a gazebo and seating. The meeting was advised that if a community Building was to be planned on the site, costings need to be looked at as capital funding may be available. The Chair suggested this needs to be worked through in a working group meeting – all agreed.
- Water – Nothing has as yet been received from Northumbrian Water.
- Polytunnel – Cllr AM confirmed that quotes had been forwarded to finance department at NCC for payment.
- Road – The chair reported that a meeting had been held with WCFG over the erosion of the road and allotment holders not using the parking area as previously agreed. It had been agreed that the Scouts and WCFG are to purchase “hoggin” to repair the track. Generally the allotments are in good order with a couple of empty plots needing tidying. A request for updated contact information and it was hoped that a new committee would be in place soon. The Scouts are happy at the moment but concerned that it will need further repair.

20/111 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT REPORT & DECISION

Cllr Murray had nothing further to report other than the request that had been made for help towards lunches. Discussion followed over allocation of funds.

20/112 SCOTTS PARK/BRYONS PARK UPDATE & DECISION

- Update – The Chair reported that he had made contact with NCC regarding the bill for grass cutting at both sites. Had asked for a years “grace” from charges would be a fair outcome as Brysons Park still not signed over to WPC.
- Litter Problem – Cllr KC reported that the litter problem appeared to be improving and thanks extended to Cllr RD for moving bin. Cllr JR reported that the bin kept falling over and could it be “pegged” down. Cllrs KC and RD to look into this and advise.
- COOP Community Fund – The Chair was pleased to inform the meeting that the Scotts Park Play Equipment Renewal had been chosen to be one of the COOP community fund recipients for the coming year. Cllr RD stated that the mats under the swings needed replacing and that some minor repairs were needed to the swings themselves. The meeting agreed these should go ahead.

20/113 TORY SITE/TORY BANK REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION

- War Memorial Repairs – The meeting was informed that following consultations with a builder/joiner/metal fabrication company it was generally agreed that a metal structure with all-weather decking might be the best solution. A building surveyor is now required to inspect the site and give professional advice. The meeting agreed that any structure requiring a crane installation was to be avoided. Cllr AM may be able to offer some funding and is to check availability.
- Tree Works-Quotations Rec'd - Two quotes had been received for the works required at the Tory Site and Market Place. Quote 1 for works as per specification £2755.00
Quote 2 for works as per specification £ 440.00

Cllr TA proposed that quote 2 be accepted, Cllr KC seconded – all agreed. Instruction to begin work to be given to Nick Walsh. Cllr H D-H asked if it was possible to get the chippings delivered to the Orchard Site. Mr Walsh to be approached.

20/114 PLANNING MATTERS DISCUSSION & DECISION

- Proposed demolition of existing cottage and replacement with new 1.5 storey house and outbuilding. Waud House, Common Road, Wooler NE71 6PD Ref: 20/03005/FUL – Generally acceptable but would prefer roof to be in red tile as now rather than grey as proposed.

20/115 PLANNING DECISIONS UPDATE & DECISION

- Highways Act 1980 Parish of Wooler (Public Bridleway No. 5 Public Footpaths Nos 6 & 12) Diversion Order 2020. Confirmation of Order. – If any member of the public wishes to see this change, the records are held with the Clerk.
- Infill former rail bridge (AKC/35) using engineering fill material, foamed concrete and EPS infill. Embankments to be formed within former railway formation to support infilled bridge and drainage system installed for surface water. Land West of Coldmartin Croft, Wooler – GRANTED
- Trees in Conservation Area: War Memorial, Church Street Wooler – NO OBJECTION RAISED

20/116 OUTSIDE BODIES REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION

Thanks were extended to Siobhan Younger for the dementia training that the Cllrs attended on Wed 21st Oct. The WPC feel it is very important to support this initiative and make Wooler a welcoming town for all. Cllr RD had already been approached for more information after a facebook post showing the Cllrs attending the training session. This was very encouraging.

20/117 COUNCILLOR'S TASKS/QUESTIONS REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION

- The meeting was informed that sadly the MIS/Wooler Skills Workshop had ceased and lost all funds and tools. The meeting agreed that this was a very sad outcome and a great loss to the Wooler Community.
- Wooler Christmas lights – These are to be installed on the weekend of the 14/15th of November and will be switched on for the Christmas Shopping Event on the 22nd November. Any person able to offer some help should contact the Clerk. Again, PPE will be provided. Cllr JR offered to provide drinks. More Christmas lights are needed and the meeting agreed that Cllr RD should order.
- Cllr KC was asked if he could make detailed map of WPC assets - he kindly agreed.
- Cllr CC asked what could be done about a tree that was overhanging a property in Horsenside and keeping the resident awake. The Clerk is to make contact with Bernicia to ask them to deal with it urgently. The meeting agreed that a responsible landlord should deal with it. Cllr H L-R noted that NCC may deal with it.
- Cllr JR informed the meeting that ex Forestry worker Mr Bob Smith had passed and was the WPC prepared to place a plaque in commemoration of his work at the Ponds. His widow is to be approached as to suitability and also Cllr MN will get contact info for Forestry Commission to see if they are planning any memorial. A plaque has also been suggested for Martin Redpath.
- Cllr KC asked about repairs to the fence around Padgepool Place car park. Graham Bucknall at Highways had agreed that WPC could obtain a quote and NCC may cover the costs.

20/118 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 23rd November 2020 at 7pm.

20/119 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None

20/220 FINANCE - Finance Report/admin matters

- Payments for authorisation – SEE TABLE BELOW

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| Amazon – No parking signs | 16.99 | Tfr |
| National Allotment Society | 66.00 | Tfr |
| Safety Surfaces Ltd – Repairs Scotts Pk | 480.00 | Tfr |
| G & M Cross – Stump grinding & base preparation | 320.00 | Tfr |
| PKF Littlejohn – annual audit | 240.00 | Tfr |
| Ian Longstaff – Works on Tory Bank | 2755.00 | Tfr |
| Tracy Hare- Caretaker works | 175.00 | Tfr |
| Cheviot Trees- Riverside and Market Square | 171.00 | Tfr |
| Viking – Stationary/Soap/Gloves | 97.45 | Tfr |

Two signatories to authorise the above payments – the Parish Council agreed the payments and the Chair signed the invoices to authorise payment by clerk.

Signed:

Signed: