

THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 28 October 2021.

Present: Cllrs S Allan, L Clarehugh, E Davidson, D Green and T Jackson
County Councillor Sanderson
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

63 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Marshall

64 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda – None

65 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person) - None

66 The minutes of the meeting 16 September 2021 were agreed as a true record.

67 Matters Arising therefrom:

- Road to Longhorsley to Burgham complaint – This has been added to the LTP. Remove until a decision is made by NCC. Clerk
- Ditch on the Burgham Park Road blocked – This is still outstanding and has been chased up again by the Clerk. Clerk
- Street light request for East Thirston – this has been chased up by the Clerk but no response to date. Clerk
- Replacement bus stop sign – this has been chased up by the Clerk but no response to date. Clerk
- Directional sign, left over the bridge – this has been chased up by the Clerk but no response to date. Clerk
- Stage 2 Complaint to NCC – A response was received from NCC which was directed to both the PC and the residents. The response was unacceptable and did not answer the issues raised. Clerk to recirculate to Councillors. Clerk
- Noticeboard at Eshott – quotes – Clerk to circulate examples to Councillors. Cllr Green also looking at repairs/replacement using a local joiner. Clerk
- Japanese Knotweed along Riverside – Clerk still trying to identify who is responsible for this. Clerk
- What increased role can the Parish Council take – There are Government guidelines for what Parish Councils can and cannot and to try to changes these would have to be led by NALC on a national level and they do not believe this is appropriate.
- Invitation to Council Leader or Cabinet Member – This is still to be arranged Clerk
- Speed strips in Eshott and on the Peth – Awaiting information back from NCC on this. Clerk

68 Report by County Councillor Sanderson –

NCC are in the middle of setting the budget. Positive news from government budget as more money for adult social care and education. Special education needs costs are increasing by about £3m per year.

Visited Port of Blyth to review the work going on there and the 3 big industrial sites on the other side which include the battery manufacturer and a cable manufacturer. £17m being invested in Blyth and bidding for money into Ashington. NCCs priority is to encourage new businesses and support existing ones.

There are a number of post-Covid issues to be addressed ie children missing out on education and an increase in domestic violence.

Airfield hopefully moving forward and a meaningful Management Plan will be produced with a genuine attempt to get the issues addressed.

NCC are well on top of road issues. Traffic calming in W Thirston seems to have worked.

East Thirston scheme going ahead in next financial year for 30mph limit in place.

TPC raised the issue of a comprehensive complaint from a resident in relation to the airfield and would it not be sensible for NCC to take action in relation to this complaint. GS is sure NCC is looking into it.

The question was asked if TPC will have input into the Management Plan and if it will be NCC led rather than airfield led. GC stated he hoped PC would have input into the Management Plan. It was asked that if this is the case can the PC have more than 5 days

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notice to provide response. GS stated the MP would not go back to Committee until there has been discussion/input from the PC. The Plan has to be acceptable to the airfield and that there is a system in place that allows anyone who has a reasonable complaint to have this addressed fairly and comprehensively.

The question was asked what happens if the MP is not forthcoming. GS was not sure. It was suggested there should be one Enforcement Officer covering all airfields in Northumberland to ensure a consistent approach to all airfields. It was also suggested that NCC and CAA meet to agree which organisation is responsible for which areas.

The Burgham Park application was raised as a new application has been presented. GS thought this was still being discussed. It was agreed the Clerk would write to Mr Murfin to ascertain the exact position of this application.

Clerk

The Clerk asked if GS could do anything in relation to the lighting issue at East Thirston. This development has grown, a light was removed by NCC a number of years ago and never replaced and the residents would like more lighting in place. The Clerk has requested that as a minimum the original light should be replaced however NCC has not responded despite a number of email requests. GS stated he would contact the lighting department.

CC
Sanderson

69 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC

Cemetery - Fairly straightforward. Neal Skelton joined us and we agreed arrangements for the Remembrance Day service which will take place as usual at the war memorial. [I assume we have a wreath sorted as there were discussions about Neil having a supply but not sure how we source ours?] Social distancing will be encouraged. We also agreed works to the waste disposal area including covering the existing area and putting a bin in its place. We agreed the suggested fees for the next financial year and also training for the Clerk in Cemetery Management and Compliance to ensure she can support Hazel Hood. DONM Thursday 25 November at 7pm at Village Hall.

Recreation Field – There has been a working party to prune the hedge at the rear of the play area and another one planned to finish it off. We agreed to recommend a full tree inspection for the recreation field area (including the trees on the bank at the far side of the field) and get a plan produced for ongoing maintenance to ensure safety. Tenders are out for grass cutting and we have the new toddler swing on order for December installation (plan is to get a bark chippings consignment to coincide). There will also be a recommendation to Felton PC to buy two new bins for the play area at their next meeting.

Members of the public present expressed frustration at the state of the play area and also the MUGA and asked about progress with plans to address this and also a possible new building. It was made clear there was an ongoing project to explore replacement of the equipment in the play area, although this will cost around £50,000 so will need grant funding. A volunteer outside the Committee has volunteered to help with this. It was recognised this doesn't give an area for teenagers and that, without this, the possibility of anti-social behaviour from idle hands may occur. The plan is therefore to explore resurfacing the MUGA and creating a new 3 or 4g area – this would probably mean rebuilding from ground up as part of this project. This too will require grant funding as the money set aside for re-laying the MUGA will be insufficient but does provide an all-age answer to what will be recommended for the field.

It was asked what was happening about a building on the field – first raised in 2016. Whilst investigative work has been done, at present the conclusion had been to progress with the Park and MUGA and then look at any building as a Phase 2 project. A recent letter from Northumberland FA about lack of facilities on the field prompted residents to press for this to be progressed with more speed than this. A working group has been set up including these residents to explore what is needed (through speaking with Northumberland FA and John Stewart) and to then come back for a further discussion. This could all be included as

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part of the same project but there remains the need to establish demand and usage for any new building to ensure viability.

The football pitch is also in a poor state and needs attention to remain playable.

The issue with drainage of the field has arisen again and works undertaken by Peter Blewitt with a camera of the drains shows obstructions. They will need rodding so the plan is to sink a new chamber into the pipe to facilitate this – again this was recommended to be undertaken at a cost of circa £500 plus VAT.

Overall a lot of work and funding is required to bring the facilities to the level of those in similar localities around Northumberland so this will need to be a major focus.

70 Potential Projects

- a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – Need leaves sweeping from pathway down the Peth and also the steps. Clerk to request NCC undertake this. Clerk
- b) Landscaping – No issues to report
- c) Neighbourhood Plan result, press release and surplus budgeted ringfenced money. The referendum took place and the Neighbourhood Plan has been voted on and adopted. There have been a number of press releases about this and the Clerk has circulated to Councillors. There is a remaining balance of £1328.24 in the NP ringfenced money and it was agreed that the legal counsel costs would be funded from this pot as this is an issue affecting a number of parishoners. The remaining funds will be looked at during the forthcoming budget. Clerk
- d) Councillors to suggest short term/medium term/long term projects – meeting with Skill Mill to be arranged. Cllr Clarehugh suggested looking for areas where wildflowers can be introduced into the parish. Clerk to speak to NCC about this along verges. Clerk

71 Planning:

To report on any planning decisions:

19/03659/VARYCO – Eshott Airfield – make temporary hours of 7am to 11pm permanent – objections submitted. This application has been changed to propose the hours of 8am until 8pm, with weight limit for no aircraft over 5700kg unless an emergency, 12-month trial starting once Management Plan approved with restrictions on plane movement as well as non-aircraft noise. APPROVED at Committee. It was felt that there was a definite different attitude to this application and there was cross party support. The PC needs to encourage complainants to go direct to NCC as well as the PC so the stats NCC holds on complaints is accurate as the level of issues did not come across well by the Planning Officer.

21/03273/FELTPO - Bennington Lodge Stable Drive - TPO application: T1-2 Lime and T3-9 Beech - Crown thin by 20%, crown reduce by 2.5 metres; T10 Lime - Crown raise by 2.5 metres on clients side of boundary - APPROVED

21/03184/FUL - Bank House West Thirston - Removal of existing lean-to conservatory and brickwork WC. New Rear extension – APPROVED

Planning applications pending:

20/02026/COU – Cottages at Burgham Park Golf Club – Change of use from holiday cottages to residential dwellings – No Objections

20/02094/FUL – Land NW of Burgham Park Golf Club - Remove green keepers compound and erection of 56 dwellings plus upgrade of access road, electric sub station, SUDs, domestic package treatment works and domestic gas storage – this application is undergoing a new consultation as the housing has changed to 46 dwellings (to include 10 affordable houses). There is still an issue with this application as the original application was approved under special circumstances for housing to support the rebuilt of the golf club house etc. This is still not applicable and there are still no facilities to support this level of housing.

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20/04177/FUL - Land North East of Felmoor Caravan Park - Extension to existing holiday comprising 139 no. pitches for holiday lodges plus ancillary features including water feature, play area and vintage vehicle museum – objections based on Neighbourhood Plan

21/02354/FUL - Chaswell House Burgham Park - Single and two storey extensions – no objections

21/02064/FUL - Northumberland Country Zoo Animal house to include pool and on-show viewing area for the public – no objections

21/03098/FUL - Ivy Cottage West Thirston - Erection of a timber single storey granny annexe for ancillary use to the main dwelling – no objections

21/03090/FUL - Northumberland Country Zoo - Extend cafe to add a large indoor soft play facility to create an all year round attraction – no objections

21/02941/FUL - Dukes Cottage, West Thirston – Side extension and front porch – no objections

21/04084/FUL – Land SW of Foxhemels – 2 storey residential dwelling (C3) – no objections

72 Requested Agenda Items:

- Appointment of legal counsel – it was agreed between meetings to appoint legal counsel to speak on behalf of the Parish Council at the recent planning committee meeting with regard to Eshott Airfield. Thanks were given to Cllr Marshall for arranging the legal counsel.
- Feedback from Meeting with Felton PC Chairman re Cemetery and Rec Field – see item 69. Cllr Allan spoke with Felton PC Chairman to discuss the recreation field however the meeting started by discussing the Cemetery. Felton PC are proposing to take full management control of the cemetery. This would allow them to make decisions on day to day basis in regard to its running and any capital expenditure decisions. Three options were proposed. 1) We all do nothing and contributions stay as they are. 2) TPC still makes a nominal contribution. 3) TPC pull out altogether with no contributions. Options 2 & 3 would relinquish TPC involvement and there would be no need to attend management meetings. Options 1 & 2 would still see any residents in the parish who wish to use the facility attract the discounted provision as it currently stands. Option 3 a complete withdrawal would mean any resident wishing to use the cemetery would pay the full fees and no discounts applied. In reflection it is clear that FPC wish to manage the cemetery regardless of the decision we take. A discussion took place and it was felt that the residents of Thirston Parish should still benefit from the reduced “in area” fees. Cllr Allan asked that we all think what direction we wish to take and come together at the next meeting to decide. The discussion then moved to Recreation Field and again Felton PC would like to take full management control. The three options as above were presented. It was agreed that there has to be a review of the proportional contribution based on a limited area of Thirston Parish not the whole electoral register number. With this in mind Cllr Allan again asked that the Parish think about what direction we wish to take and decide if possible at the next meeting. Both items to be put on the agenda for a decision at the next meeting.
- Renewal of Contract for Speed Cameras – the Gold Maintenance contract is up for renewal. The price has increase by £90 however this contract covers annual maintenance of the cameras were as Silver does not cover a maintenance check. It was agreed to take out the Gold Maintenance Contract.
- Dates 2022 meetings – 20 Jan, 10 Mar, 28 Apr, 16 June, 4 Aug, 22 Sept, 3 Nov, 15 Dec
- Trees along the Riverside – Cllr Clarehugh raised concerns about trees in the parish which may be suffering from ash dieback and as a consequence are weak and may fall. Clerk to speak to Tree Officer to see what assessments, if any are being undertaken and how to move forward on this.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

73 Correspondence:

- NCC – Notification of Parking Restrictions in Felton/Thirston – for information
- NCC – meeting with Costain and Highways England notification – Cllr Allan to attend this meeting on 18 November
- NCC – Licensing Policy Consultation – there have been no changes to this document

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- Pensions Regulator – re-enrolment – legal duty as employer – duly completed
- Email from auditor re arrangements for future arrangements and scope of audit. The auditor has joined the national internal audit forum (an offshoot of NALC). The revised Practitioners guide has a range of expected controls in relation to the audit. The auditor is asking if we should agree the scope of the audit going forward – Clerk to review and speak to the auditor and relay back to the Council in the December meeting. Clerk
- Email re hole and spring in steep bank pathway – a hole with water pouring out has appeared in the pathway – the Clerk has reported this as a matter of urgency to NCC. Clerk
- Email from Felton PC re defibrillator – Felton PC have approached the Northumberland Arms to see if they would be willing to house a defib machine on their building as the one originally located at the Running Fox has been removed. The only concern is that when this was looked at in relation the Thirston defib machine this was not possible as the Northumberland Arms is a listed building. Cllr Allan suggested that the phone box on the bridge should be looked at for siting defib machine. Clerk to replay to Felton PC. Clerk
- Email from resident re helicopter training – a resident has raised concerns about the helicopter training taking place beside her land and also the overflying of stables. This has been relayed to the CAA and they are investigating.
- Email in relation to overflying of Felton – the PC was included in this email to NCC. The resident should be encouraged to also relay this to Felton PC. Clerk
- Emails, texts and phone calls re Coastguard – The coastguard was dealing with a genuine emergency and refuelling at Eshott which is within the planning approval. The Clerk posted this information on the F&T Facebook page to alert those concerned. Clerk
- GNAA donation request letter – it was agreed to donate £50 as per the annual budget.
- Playlist for Life - Free resources for people with dementia and their families – information to be put in the Bridge Newsletter Clerk
- CPRE – Invitation to house design seminar - circulated
- Highways England – notification of road closures 10 & 11 November – Clerk to post of F&T facebook page and TPC website. Clerk
- COSY CAN leaflet – Produced by CAN this gives tips on energy efficiency and keeping warm. It also gives information of Warm Hubs were people can find a safe warm friendly environment to enjoy social activity and refreshments. PC to highlight this via webpage and Bridge newsletter. Clerk
- Emails from NALC - circulated

74 Finance

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £15,889.10.

(b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

Payments this meeting:		
IB124	Trinity Chambers (Legal Counsel) - already paid	£1,200.00
IB125	L Hamlin Salary and Expenses 24 hours at £15.50 (£372.00) 4 hours for Neighbourhood Plan at £15.50 (£62.00) McAfee Subscription (69.99) 2 x zoom (£28.78) 2 x home working allowance (£22.18)	£554.95
IB126	Swarco – Speed Camera Maintenance	£582.09
IB127	Great North Air Ambulance	£50.00
IB128	Royal British Legion	£30.00
IB129	Complete Weed Control (Japanese Knotweed Treatment)	£150.00

(c) **Income** – None

75 Urgent Items – None

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- 76** **Items for next agenda –**
Cemetery Committee decision
Recreation Field decision
Draft Budget

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25 pm
Date of Next meeting: 9 December 2021