

WOOLER PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Council, Held on Monday 21st December 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 Deane-Hall, Mark Napier

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

20/140 APOLOGIES

Helen Leighton-Rose
P C Curtis Ritchie

20/141 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION – Maximum 5 mins per item

1. D Symons – Common Rd

The meeting was informed of an email received from D Symons, a resident of Common Rd, expressing his concern regarding the heavy traffic using common Rd and the excessive damage caused to the verges and the mud on the road. Concern was also raised regarding the speed of some of the vehicles and the need for residents to park on the pavements to avoid damage to vehicles which then results in width restrictions for pedestrians. Discussions followed and it was agreed that a letter would be sent to Redpaths requesting that vehicles slow down and try and keep off the verges

20/142 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Mark Napier, 20/148

20/143 LOCAL SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT

Report received via email from PC Ritchie

- 1/ Minor disturbance in the Martins. Parties identified and dealt with.
- 2/ Shop lifting in the town centre. Images circulated.
- 3/ and 4/ 2 x Minor verbal altercations in the town. Parties known on both incidents. Enqs ongoing.
- 5/ Internet fraud via a fake facebook account. Offender u/k.

Rural crimes unit had been asked for an update but not received.

The meeting was informed about an alarming incident in Homecare following an altercation between shop owner and youths who entered in and stole goods.

20/144 CORONAVIRUS – Covid 19

REVIEW & DISCUSSION

- Glendale Middle School/Update – The chair gave thanks to Caroline and Kevan for delivering the Age UK packs. Number of thank you's received, many thanks to the School for the lovely handmade Christmas cards. Still open and able to offer help and support.
- The New Covid 19 vaccinations are to begin at Berwick – concern over how residents will get to the centre to get their vaccinations. The Chair suggested that the GP could use their discretion and if they know people cannot get to the vaccine, then the PC will pay for Des to transport. This is not open to all residents, just those that the GP nominate. The Chair proposed, seconded by Cllr Curry, all agreed.

20/145 PREVIOUS MINUTES

REVIEW & SIGN

To be signed as a correct record minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 23rd November '20

The Parish Council read through the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23/11/20 were agreed to be a true and accurate record. Cllr Tom Armstrong proposed the minutes and Cllr Cumming seconded them. The Chair signed the minutes.

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

Pg 3 – Cllr Napier reported that the Scouts cannot apply for the Community Chest Grant as it is only for 75% of the cost as funds are dwindling fast.

The Chair confirmed that a letter had been sent to Mr Railton regarding the tidiness outside his building – he has responded and agreed to try and make improvements.

20/147 PARISH REPORT

UPDATE & DECISION

- **First School Site/Cemetery Land** - The Chair confirmed that a site plan had now been received and a meeting now needed to be arranged with the PCC to make a decision over what area of land they need and discussions also need to be had regarding access to the site and car parking. The PCC will also need to look at the trees on site to see if there are any TPO's on the site.
- **Cars on Scotts Park** – No response had been received from NCC and no action has been taken to stop vehicle access on to the park.
- **Christmas Tree/Lights** – The Chair thanked TLC direct who have supplied the lights and have always been very quick to respond with any additional items. Cllr Robertson asked when the lights were set to go off as some seemed to be not working. Cllr Donkin confirmed that one set were not working but this was a faulty electrical point and the electrician was due to attend. Cllr Napier asked if the lights on the Peth could be attended to as some were not working and as it is the entrance to Wooler, it did not look good when some of the lights were not lit. The meeting agreed that a letter was to be sent to the individual who installed them to offer help with these lights. Cllr Robertson made note that the lights at the Bull were very effective and could these be considered for future years to allow them to be insitu all year round, Discussion followed regarding powering of these lights. The Chair also noted that the Lions had been asked in October if they would attend the Christmas event but they had declined, but he noted that they had visited other towns in the area. He had requested if the sleigh could be hired but this was also declined. Cllr Armstrong asked about the Christmas lights competition – it was confirmed that the judging had been done and it was extremely hard as a lot of work had gone into the displays. The meeting agreed how colourful Wooler was looking and the fantastic displays that had been arranged. Thanks given to Neil Mather for his donation, Cllr Anthony Murray and the WPC have also donated £20.
- **Tree - Horsdenside** – The meeting was informed that Bernicia had confirmed that the tree had a TPO and therefore would take longer but as soon as permission is received, it will be dealt with. Cllr Cumming to report back to family concerned.
- **Wooler Fountain Restoration Group** – The Chair confirmed that the group had now been disbanded and the final balance of their account had been donated to WPC with a request that the funds be used for lights around that area. Cllr Napier asked about costs of replanting and the Chair confirmed that this was an external cost, not WPC.

20/148 SCHOOL FARM FIELD SITE

DISCUSSION & DECISION

- **Water** – The Chair confirmed that an email had been received from Northumbrian Water regarding getting water to the site. A site meeting is to be held in the New Year.
- **Polytunnel** – The meeting was informed that this had now been ordered for March 2021 erection.
- **WCFG** – The Chair confirmed that a letter had been sent to the WCFG regarding parking on the site and asking that cars were parked at the top of the site rather than driving to the allotment as this is causing damage to the road and verges. This has been acknowledged and an email/post has been sent to all members for this to be adhered to. The WPC had also requested details of the WCFG trustees but so far this had not been received. The Chair confirmed this was a requirement of their tenancy and how important it was that this information was kept up to date with WPC. Cllr Napier confirmed that repairs had been made to the track and hopefully if vehicles are kept off the track this will help. Confirmation of distance between trees was agreed as 10m.

20/149 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

REPORT & DECISION

Cllr Murray had nothing concerning Wooler to report.

20/150 SCOTTS PARK/BRYONS PARK**UPDATE & DECISION**

- Update – The Chair reported that no formal tenancy agreement received. An email had been sent regarding the dog muck and a fence being installed to keep dogs off the area – no response received. Also have sent over the repairs that are needed at Bryons Park as currently not belonging to WPC. Cllr Mather had again re-iterated to NCC about WPC being charged for play park inspections when it is not yet our responsibility – no response received.
Going forward, the Chair noted we have been accepted as the COOP community fund to develop Scotts Park play equipment and he reported that he had received positive comments from local Mums regarding a working party to develop this site. The meeting agreed that this would be a good idea and is to be set up in the New Year. Cllr Napier offered to be the WPC representative on this group.

20/151 TORY SITE/TORY BANK**REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- War Memorial Repairs – The Chair confirmed that the surveyor had agreed to report back to the WPC by the 7th January which will be circulated for the January meeting. When surveyor had received the feedback from WPC, he has a further 3 weeks work to prepare the tender documents so it is hoped that by the February meeting a design will have been agreed.
- Tree works update – Cllr Armstrong had visited the site and it was disappointing that some of the trees still had Ivy on them. Discussion followed regarding what was agreed in the original quotation and some additional works that were carried out. The Chair stated that it is disappointing that all original works haven't been finished and suggested that a local contractor be instructed on a day rate to go in and finish the work. Cllr Curry proposed, Cllr Armstrong seconded – all agreed.
- Bat Survey – The person who won the tender has asked for a copy of the tree report, however this is difficult to email and would not be particularly helpful. Contact is to be made again to organise a time for the survey to be carried out.

20/152

PRECEPT – The meeting discussed the proposed budget that was circulated and also displayed at the zoom meeting. It was acknowledged that it was a particularly difficult year as some things hadn't been able to be carried out and other things had cost more. It was also noted that a lot of work was carried out by parish councillors voluntarily and therefore the caretaker fees were kept lower. The repairs and works had greatly increased but included South Road works and also the Tory Bank tree works. Ongoing training was agreed to budget for the next phase of training for the Clerk as this was proving invaluable to the Chair and Vice Chair. It was noted that the costs are to be shared with North Sunderland PC. A ring fenced fund of £5k in case of an election has already been budgeted for and thanks given to the volunteers and Cllrs for putting up Christmas lights which has saved money. The clock winders donated back the fees and this was spent on the Cherry trees and Willow trees. The restricted funds balance was explained to the meeting and it was noted that the skatepark will need repainted this year as it has suffered graffiti again. The current bank account figures were discussed and the current precept is. £26735. The Chair proposed that there should not be any increase in the precept for the coming year taking note that the current WPC has managed its budget well and also the Chair felt that parishioners had suffered this year and increasing costs would not be appropriate. Cllr Cumming seconded and all agreed.

20/153**NCC – Issues**

- Update of Meeting - The Chair thanked all that managed to attend, given that it had to be “teams” rather than “Zoom”. He explained that NCC could not attend an open meeting as originally planned, due to staffing issues, and the WPC did agree to have an informal meeting to progress the situation. Meeting was difficult to ensure that WPC made their point but the outcome seemed to be quite positive although the letter in reply had not been received despite being agreed by NCC. Thanks to Rob Murfin,- Director of Planning who had offered to give Cllrs training in the New Year. Rick O'Farrell was the only NCC member of staff that admitted mistakes had been made which was appreciated by the WPC. Mike Robbins Estates manager was also in attendance and we have worked well with him in the past. Comments had been supplied by Helen Leighton-Rose via email as below:

1. *Bus station – I think we should give real and positive support to moving it to the other car park at Padgepool Place – and make clear the reasons for the move to the public – to open up the disabled bays, the electric charging points and to make the market accessible to the disabled (as the bays at Padgepool would be available on market days). It would solve all the issues.*
2. *Coop crossing – I feel the PC might consider making a statement to the public that we are attempting to make this crossing safer for everyone – as we recognise the issues – but we are facing a long time-span of investigation with NCC. Due to the inadequacy of the initial NCC investigation. I would hate to see an accident there and the PC come under any blame for inaction.*
3. *30mph sign at the new building site should be a priority as it can be quickly and easily fixed.*

Cllr Armstrong also reported his views on the meeting, making note that whilst he didn't agree with all reasons for decisions but understood better the problems NCC planning department face with trying to restrict future developments. Cllr Robertson asked if the proposed development at the top of Ramseys Lane/Common Road was still to go ahead or would it now be restricted as NCC had agreed that the road would need to be widened. This application has now been lapsed and would need to be re-submitted. The Chair noted his disappointment in the site meeting that had previously been held with the NCC Infrastructure Manager who had felt the meeting was positive with which none of the Cllrs agreed. Cllr Murray felt the meeting was more positive but that NCC were still hiding behind their "shadows".

- It was agreed that a working document should be produced for monthly updates to the WPC and should also be made public and circulated to NCC as well. This may take some time to produce but will prove invaluable.
- Additional hours – Cost The Chair made note of the cost of producing all the documents that were needed for the meeting was huge and the employment committee had agreed overtime for the Clerk as in particular, the timeline was a huge piece of work. He also noted his thanks to the Clerk for producing the document and that parishioners of Wooler were paying for the Clerk to keep chasing NCC each month.

20/154 PLANNING MATTERS DISCUSSION & DECISION

- Removal of existing conservatory and erection of new single storey conservatory with solid roof. 1 Turvelaws Farm Cottages, Wooler, NE71 6AJ 20/03726/FUL – no objections
- Proposed front porch, rear extension, replacement roof covering and replacement sunroom extension along with detached garage. Glebe Cottage, Cottage Road, Wooler, NE71 6AD 20/03991/FUL – no objections

20/155 PLANNING DECISIONS UPDATE & DECISION

- 2 Storey extension of existing care home to provide 8no. bedrooms, internal alterations and construction of new timber conservatory. The Old Vicarage, 26 Cottage Road, Wooler , NE71 6AD – GRANTED
- Listed building consent - 2 Storey extension of existing care home to provide 8no. bedrooms, internal alterations and construction of new timber conservatory. The Old Vicarage, 26 Cottage Road, Wooler , NE71 6AD – GRANTED

20/156 OUTSIDE BODIES REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION

None

20/157 COUNCILLOR'S TASKS/QUESTIONS REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION

- Cllr Cumming had been approached by Brian Stewart concerning dog walking on Brysons Park – discussion followed and the meeting agreed that as the land belongs to NCC the decision regarding the problem with dog fouling on the park lies with them.
- Cllr Armstrong made note that the Church clock is not working as the rods are completely worn through. Cllr Cumming asked if this was a PCC cost, however Cllr Donkin stated that the Clock was donated to the people of Wooler and there is a plaque inside the tower commemorating this gift. The cost is expected to be approx.. £80-£100. Cllr Armstrong proposed accepting this price from Donkin engineering, Cllr Curry seconded – all agreed.

20/158 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 25th January 2021 at 7pm.

20/159 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None

The Chair thanked all Cllrs for their hard work throughout the year and noted that the Clerk will be taking time off over the Christmas period but emails and telephone will be monitored. Wished everyone a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year.

20/160 FINANCE

- Payments for authorisation – SEE TABLE BELOW

K Rodgers – SLCC membership £166.00 50% contribution	83.00	Transfer
NCC – Nov Payroll costs	976.91	Transfer
Viking – Toilet paper/Urinal blocks	66.56	Transfer
Vistaprint – Christmas cards	74.05	Card

Two signatories to authorise the above payments

Signed:

Signed:

In camera meeting followed