

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF KYLOE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 25TH
MAY 2021 IN LOWICK VILLAGE HALL AT 8PM FOLLOWING THE AGM**

PRESENT: Chairman: Mr S Biglands
Vice-Chairman: Mr D. Eltringham
Parish Councillors: Mr C Wakeling, Mrs M Murray & Miss E Haigh

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Henderson, Clerk to Parish

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC: Mr Ray Biggs & Mr David Biesterfield

Chairman Mr S Biglands welcomed everyone to the meeting

Apologies: C. Cllr. Colin Hardy

Guest Speaker: Mr David Biesterfield (Northumberland & Newcastle Society)

‘The Northumberland Sandstone Ridges & Vales – a Valued Landscape’ – Alison Farmer Associates January 2021 (‘the Study’)

Summary & full report can be found:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9udrr92q2j7up36/AACK5fdxeoZk29Lhiqn11ZJea?dl=0>

The reasons for the Study are set out at the beginning of the Summary but, in short, the N&N, last year, identified a serious gap in Northumberland County Council’s (‘NCC’) approach to our landscapes, in the discharge of both its planning decision and plan making/policy functions. Put simply, despite being advised by its own experts (in 2010) to carry out just the sort of work now completed through the Study, NCC has never done so. Following the scrapping of the former Area of High Landscape Value designations in the now superseded Alnwick and Berwick District Plans, the result is that there is no evidence-based recognition of the ‘value’ of landscapes in north Northumberland outside of the National Park and the AONB. In turn these landscapes have much lower levels of protection in the event that development plans are submitted that could have adverse landscape impacts.

Having substantially completed the Study, the N&N now wish to consult PC’s on, essentially, two aspects:

- Does your PC welcome the Study and agree with its broad conclusions – if, as hoped, it does so, the PC is invited to pass Resolution A, as suggested, below;
- Does your PC have any comments in relation to the specific ‘valued landscape’ boundary chosen, especially as it relates to your PC area – if so, the PC is invited to pass Resolution B, as suggested, below.

If the Parish area (other than parts of it within the National Park which, of course, is already protected):

- Is entirely comprised in the ‘valued landscape’ advised by the Study, your PC may be less concerned to suggest amendments to the boundary of the ‘valued landscape’, in which case passing Resolution A (or something to that effect) is all that is asked for;
- Is NOT entirely comprised in that ‘valued landscape’, your colleagues may want to suggest an extension or amendment. In that event, Resolution B would provide time for your PC to collate the evidence it might wish to present in support of a suggested boundary amendment.

However, please note that any such comments on that latter aspect would need to be based on the criteria for assessment set out on page 5 of the Summary (these are as required by the Landscape Institute) and, generally, would need to be referable to some physical manifestation ‘on the ground’). The passing of either Resolution A or B is urgently requested.

The urgency of the request arises from the fact that the Study may be relevant to the closing stages of the emergence of NCC’s new Local Plan. It will assist the N&N in its arguments to the Planning Inspector who will shortly prepare her report. The N&N’s ability to tell the Inspector that the Study is broadly supported by relevant PC’s will substantially increase its evidential value.

Resolution A: [] Parish Council supports the findings of ‘The Northumberland Sandstone Ridges & Vales – a Valued Landscape’ – Alison Farmer Associates January 2021 (‘the Study’) and adopts its suggested designation of that part of the Parish Area (and the landscapes surrounding it) as advised by the Study, as an Area of High Landscape Value.

Resolution B: [] Parish Council supports the findings of ‘The Northumberland Sandstone Ridges & Vales – a Valued Landscape’ – Alison Farmer Associates January 2021 (‘the Study’) and adopts its suggested designation of that part of the Parish Area (and the landscapes surrounding it) as advised by the Study, as an Area of High Landscape Value, subject to comments the Parish Council may wish to make on the exact extent of the designation’s boundaries. The Parish Council will endeavour to provide such comments to the Northumberland and Newcastle Society within 56 days of the date of this resolution.

Mr Biesterfield emphasised the importance of the study and the support that he hoped Kyloe Parish Council would give it: it fills a yawning gap in the work that should have been carried out by the County Council, a gap that was noted by NCC’s own experts in 2010. Without the evidential base provided by the study, the County’s landscapes, in our area, are hopelessly exposed to development that would seriously harm them.

Mr Hugh Leyland asked why local landowners had not been informed of this and their views sought. Mr Biesterfield replied that the decision had been taken to only consult Parish Councils to hopefully get their support.

Both Stephen Biglands & Derek Eltringham had reservations about attempting to pass a resolution at this meeting; more time was needed to examine ‘the Study’ before committing the Parish Council to pass any resolution to adopt the report. It was suggested that the report should be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

Chairman Mr Biglands thanked Mr Biesterfield who then left the meeting.

The Parish Meeting continued:

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed as a true record by Mrs M Murray, seconded by Mr D Eltringham and signed by the Chairman

MATTERS ARISING

Traffic Calming measures in Fenwick – Mr Wakeling & Mr D Eltringham had looked at the total spending priorities for 2009 – 2021. Three Parishes have received no funding during that time, one of them being Kyloe. It is hoped that we can continue talks regarding the electronic speed signs which began with C. Cllr. Roderick Lawrie with new C. Cllr. Colin Hardy. Cllr. Hardy was unable to attend our meeting due to a prior engagement, but he would be happy to meet at a suitable time / place.

Parking issues in Fenwick

- Parking on grass verge / footpath on south side of B6353. A resident has been reported and visited by police on two separate occasions. The second time a warning of a £70 fine being issued if they did not move. There has been cars parked there for a long time, even more so when the Manor House is busy. Word spread and now everyone is parking on north side of the road on the bend which is not ideal for the flow of traffic and blocks the view of cars exiting from behind nos. 1-4 & 10-13
- There are commercial vehicles parking at the entrance to Island View obstructing a clear view for cars pulling out. There has been a near miss with cyclists.

Highways have been approached regarding re-designation of the grass verge / footpath, but their reply suggested we speak to our C. Councillor as provision for private parking does not come under the remit of LTP spending. LTP funding can only be used for public car parks.

It was decided that priority no. 1 is to contact C. Cllr Colin Hardy about the electronic signs. Priority no. 2 is to contact Highways and insist on a site visit to show where our concerns / safety issues are.

The Newsletter April extra edition where we asked for comments / alternative solutions regarding parking and the possibility of re-designation of the verge/footpath brought three replies, 2 via emails & 1 phone conversation. These will be included with our talks with both Colin Hardy & Highways.

Slow down for Horses Signs – Richard McKenzie of Highways replied to our letter concerning the speed of vehicles & horses being ridden on the B6353 between Kylee and Fenwick.

‘Given that there appears to be a significant number of horses ridden along that stretch, I think we can probably justify horse warning signs. I can arrange this though bear in mind it will take a few weeks due to workload’.

Beal Foreshore – consultation comments from Kylee PC

“Given the apparent continuing impasse in re-opening the car parking area at the landward side of the Holy Island Causeway and past hazardous parking in the area, the Parish Council supports the introduction of no waiting restrictions as outlined in your proposal dated 1st April 2021.

The Parish Council notes that the provision of double yellow lines will be on an experimental basis initially in order to assess their effectiveness, and may be amended in the light of this, so would expect to be consulted on any future revisions to the scheme and would appreciate the criteria for measuring success being identified beforehand.”

However it has now come to light that Holy Island PC now would like the double yellow lines extended onto the causeway.

CORRESPONDENCE

By email:

Mrs Jennifer Hall AONB -

Each year I submit a Freedom of Information query to Northumberland County Council re the number of properties that are paying Council Tax or Business Rates. This is usually for the 3 Parishes in our Neighbourhood Plan Area. This year I requested figures for the whole of the AONB. (Attached)

These figures speak for themselves. They do NOT include Second Homes which pay Council Tax at the same rate as Permanent Residences.

Those registered as Holiday Homes do not pay Council Tax and therefore no Parish Precept.

Those receiving Small Business Rate Relief pay no Business Rates either.

The Government reimburses County Councils each year for the unpaid Business Rates via a Section 31 payment. Parish Councils do not receive any recompense and, as the number of properties registered as businesses increases, the 'share' of the Parish Precept increases for each Council Tax payer.

This issue has been recognized all around the country. Of particular concern are the owners of Second Home properties that are registered as businesses but are only let out a few weeks of the year, if at all.

Currently, in England, a property only needs to be 'available' to rent and not let out for any minimum number of weeks a year. Different rules apply in Wales and Scotland where a property needs to be 'available' for 140 days a year and actually let out for 70 days in the previous year. I would argue that a business that is only open 10 weeks of the year is not a business.

This obviously makes owning a commercial Holiday House very financially attractive, as seen by the increasing house prices in our area.

The North Northumberland Coastal Area Neighbourhood Plan Group identified this issue many years ago and lobbied our MP Anne-Marie Trevelyan and three different Chancellors of the Exchequer to get the law changed, but with no success.

In December 2018, after action in the House of Lords, the Government consulted on changing the way tax on Holiday Houses was dealt with. The consultation closed in early 2019 but the results have not been published.

In March this year the Government announced it would be looking at the issue and making a decision in the Autumn.

The law on Buy to Let has been tightened up recently but Holiday Homes are still allowed to set 100% of mortgage interest and of course any other expenses against tax. Currently the criteria for Income and Corporation tax are that Holiday Homes need to be available for 210 days and let for 105 days. If the Government is minded to leave all Holiday Homes able to register as Businesses for Council Tax and Business Rates purposes, I feel it appropriate that the longer minimum letting criteria is adopted.

This will hopefully also help extend the seasonality of tourism and year-round employment in the AONB and around the country.

As every Parish in the AONB is now affected I would be keen to write to our MP, as a group, and ask that the legislation be changed. I would be happy to work with Parishes to come up with a suitable letter. Any comments, suggestions or questions would be welcome. Mr Biglands offered to contact Mrs Hall.

LEAFLETS

Clerks & Councils Direct – May 2021 Issue 135

PLANNING

Planning Reference: 21/00941/FUL

Change of use from paddock to orchard, garden ground, proposed potting shed.
land adjacent to Bee Hill House, Beal, Berwick on Tweed TD15 2PB

Mr D Nesbitt

Parish Council Comments

The Parish Council have no objection to this welcome development. The proposed change of use will enhance the environment as well as benefitting the owners

FINANCE

Premium Account as at 25th May 2021 **£899.20**

Community Account as at 25th May 2021 1162.02

Items agreed to pay

NALC	225.26		
Mr C Wakeling Newsletters March & May	45.00		
Hire of Hall	5.00		
Mr S Biglands - Presentation costs	<u>119.71</u>	<u>394.97</u>	£767.05

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No entry - concern has been raised regarding notices on the gates prohibiting entry to Kyloe Wood from the C18. There are no public footpaths from these gates. There was a modification order in 2018 regarding bridleways but the file for the case is still with the Secretary of State awaiting confirmation. There are a lot of timber operations taking place within the wood so safety will be an issue and possible reason for the notices.

Dog Zone Initiative on Lindisfarne Reserve – Natural England are to have a dog zoning scheme trialled between May and September this year which will require all dogs to be on a lead on all reserves with further areas to be a no dog zone. A letter sent to Natural England on behalf of Holy Island Parish Council states:

‘As a community we are in an unusual position. While the village is not part of the Reserve it is in essence enclosed within it, as the map which accompanies details of the trial starkly illustrates, and therefore changes in the management of the Reserve, its’ regulations and bye-laws have a real effect on the lives of our residents and it is disappointing that, while appreciating the advance notification given by your letter, contrary to assertions in the press no detailed or meaningful ‘consultation’ took place with the community Unfortunately, Robert, our Chair, who was invited on to the Advisory “Group” for the reserve was unable to attend meetings held during normal working hours due to his own work commitments.

We note that areas of the island outside the Reserve boundaries marked by the signs indicating entry to the Reserve, are being included in the trial – the grazing land on the eastern shore running between the start of the National Trust land at Castle Point and the Reserve boundary close to Emanuel Head is a prime example. As this land is used for sheep grazing, managed by Jimmy and Martin Patterson with sheep dogs and quad bikes, it would be of interest to know what additional risk is posed by dogs off a lead (when sheep are not present). And not being part of the Reserve itself what authority is being assumed to impose restrictions?

It would also be of interest to the Council to have access to the data on the effect of dogs on the island land area of the reserve on which the decision to hold this trial was based. Can this be made publicly available rather than just stated as fact.

Can you also confirm that when the promised consultation takes place after the trial that any alteration to the byelaws will be based on publicly published data and will only apply to the May to September period and will not be extended to include October to April.

The Aims of Natural England as expressed on its Website make mention of ‘enjoyed by people’ and ‘people connected to the natural environment’ but sadly many islanders feel that they as people and their interests, come some way down the priorities of the Reserve and the Parish Council feels strongly that there has for too long been an uneasy relationship between Natural England and the resident Island Community. The suggestion we made to Lydia Speakman, before Covid intervened, for an informal meeting to be held between us still holds, although it would now need to wait until after the Parish Council election on May 6th. We hope this would lead to better communication in the future and as a consequence to an improvement in the relationship between Natural England and the Island community’.

Broadband – Mr D Eltringham has been talking to Alncom about some issues with the broadband they provide. It seems there is interference between two transmitters and they are now in the process of laying fibre in the ground which will run towards Kyloe and Fenwick. It may happen in the next 6 months.

Next meetings arranged for: 13th July 2021 14th September 2021 14th December 2021
8th February 2022 10th May 2022

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm