

A Meeting of Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council Tuesday 16th February, 2021, via Zoom at 7:00pm

Present: Chair Ian Lepingwell (IL), Councillors: B Wood (BW) K Armstrong (KA), K Turvey (KT), A Young (AY), C Durie (CD) J Renner (JD), A Whincup (AW), S Gray (SG) Lord Ravensworth (LR) R Bateson (RB)

In Attendance: Lesley Long (Clerk), NCC Cllr. Steven Bridgett (SB), David Biesterfield representing Northumberland & Newcastle Society, John Parker, Head of Community Engagement- Alncom

ITEM

18/21 Public Questions

The Clerk reported that there were no public questions.

19/21 Apologies for Absence & Declaration of Interest

H Sordy & J Renner. There were no declarations of interest.

20/21 Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 19th, 2021.

The Minutes were ACCEPTED as a true record.

21/21 Northumberland Sandstone Ridges & Vales – A Valued Landscape. Landscape Study.

David Biesterfield of Northumberland & Newcastle Society gave an overview of the Landscape Study which sought to identify areas of high landscape value outside the Northumberland National Park. He explained that the Society had recognised a serious gap in Northumberland County Council's ('NCC') approach to the local landscapes, in the discharge of its planning decisions, plan making and policy functions. As a result, there was no evidence-based recognition of the 'value' of the local landscapes, which left them exposed to bad planning decisions in relation to development likely to harm them. The Study, undertaken by the Society, addressed this deficiency.

Having substantially completed the Study, the Society wished to consult parish councils and Mr Biesterfield invited the parish council to consider passing a resolution in support. After discussion, it was agreed by a majority to pass the following resolution. *"Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council supports the findings of 'The Northumberland Sandstone Ridges & Vales – a Valued Landscape' prepared by 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."* The Chair thanked Mr Biesterfield for his contribution.

22/21 Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme.

John Parker, Head of Community Engagement, Alncom attended the parish council meeting to give an overview of the company's plans to rollout FTTP (fibre to the premises) across the parish. Thanks to a partnership with a new investor, Alncom has been able to increase its workforce and delivery capacity. To date, the company is working to deliver FTTP projects into Alnham, Unthank, Great Ryle and Prendwick with other areas being considered for the near future. Alncom is aware that residents in Whittingham and Glanton are eager to get faster broadband but have not marketed their offering into either village yet. They plan to do so. While it was not possible for Mr Parker to give a firm date for when full fibre will be available, he confirmed it was Alncom's intention to deliver it within a year. Anyone interested in registering for full fibre broadband can do so via the Alncom website. The Chair thanked Mr Parker for his contribution.

23/21 Matters Arising

- a. **Dangerous Tree on Eslington / Netherton Road:** The Clerk reported that NCC Highways have issued

a S154 Notice to the owner of the property on which the tree is situated, to fell it. The Clerk was asked to find out the name of the landowner so that the parish council can progress the matter as quickly as possible. **ACTION - Clerk**

- b. **Text for website History Page.** Text for the History page is still awaited.
- c. **Alternative Route for the private footpath** AW reported that following consultation with fellow parish councillors, the proposal was to reinstate the path and extend it to avoid all the non-paved road – thus making it much safer for users. Going forward the intention would be to clear the area and create an attractive recreational space with a picnic bench for the community.

Two quotes for labour had been submitted and Cllr Steven Bridget offered to approach the local quarry to see if they would be willing to support the community by donating the stone needed.

Councillors were advised that a resident had queried if public funds could be used to maintain a path over private land. Cllr Bridget and the Clerk confirmed that the parish council was entitled to do so under general powers and also had authority under statute; namely S164 of the Public Health Act 1875, to provide for public walks and pleasure grounds for the purposes of recreation – by agreement with a landowner.

After a full discussion, Councillors AGREED to accept the lower quote of £1,450 ex VAT for labour. The Clerk advised that the parish council can reclaim the VAT. It was AGREED by all that payment would be made from the parish council reserve funds. Cllr SB offered to pay for the hardcore from his Members' Small Improvement Grant, should the local quarry not agree to donate the stone. The Chair thanked Cllr SB for his extremely helpful contribution. **ACTION – AW / SB**

- d. **PC liability for risk in event of injury to users of the private footpath.** – The Clerk reported that BHIB Insurers had replied that the parish council would be covered for public liability provided the following conditions were satisfied: there is an agreement with the landowner, there is an up-to-date risk assessment, regular inspections are conducted and responsibility for maintenance is assigned. AW undertook to produce a risk assessment and forward it to the Clerk. The Clerk will advise the insurers that the requirements for public liability cover have been met. **ACTION – AW/Clerk**
- e. **Update on request to NCC Highways for repairs to the slip roads around the village green**
Cllr Bridgett reported that NCC Highways have inspected the slip roads and will be undertaking temporary remedial works within the next 14 days. He confirmed that the permanent repair of the slip roads has been included in the Highways Programme for the new financial year starting April 1st, 2021.

- 24/21 Whittingham Scout Group request for storage space.** The Clerk had re-circulated a request from the Scout Group who are looking for suitable storage space for their camping equipment. Two councillors said they might be able to help but needed to know if the Scouts had sourced a suitable storage container. The Clerk will contact the Scout Leader to find out. **ACTION – Clerk**
- 25/21 New Model Code of Conduct for Councillors.** The councillors had all received a copy of the new Code of Conduct for Councillors which NALC recommend all local councils adopt. It was AGREED by ALL to ADOPT the new Code of Conduct. The Clerk will upload the Code to the Policy and Procedures section of the parish council website **ACTION – Clerk**
- 26/21 NCC Private Sector Housing Strategy 2021 -23. Consultation** The parish council supported the Strategy and four key priorities. The Clerk to respond to NCC Housing. **ACTION Clerk**
- 27/21 NALC Selection of Parish Representatives to the Northumberland National Park Authority 2021**
NOTED that the Clerk had circulated the NALC briefing paper and any parish councillors wishing to seek election, are clear on the process to do so.

- 28/21 Citizens Advice Northumberland – Request for Donation.** Deferred to March 16th meeting. Clerk to clarify when the parish council last donated to the charity. **ACTION – Clerk**
- 29/21 Election 2021** – The Clerk reported that she was still awaiting the revised Nomination Forms to send out to Councillors. **ACTION – Clerk**
- 30/21 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Section 53**
- i. **DMMO (No 2) 2020, RB No 44, PB No 27, Parish of Whittingham** – The Clerk had circulated details to councillors before the meeting. The closing date to submit representations or objections to NCC Legal Services is **March 25th, 2021**. It was AGREED that councillors who wished to make specific comments on the DMMO Order would direct them to the Clerk to collate. **ACTION ALL / Clerk**
- ii. **Pre-Order Consultation – Eslington. Alleged Bridleway/Byeway No 28 (Points K- L)** AW reported that the Ravensworth Estate had received a pre-order consultation letter from NCC referring to an application to add a public bridleway/byway to the Definitive Map. The proposed route is to run for 300 metres from West Lodge emerging on to the C172 Whittingham to Netherton road at Eslington High Hill Farm. This is currently a 3-way junction and the creation of a byway would effectively create a crossroads. There is a double bend where visibility is poor, and accidents occur frequently. AW asked if the parish council would review the map and proposed route and consider supporting an objection to the alleged Byeway on the grounds it would cause a safety hazard at the junction. The closing date for responses and comments is 4th June 2021.
- AW undertook to circulate documentation to all councillors before the next parish council meeting. **ACTION AW / Clerk**
- iii. **DMMO (No5) 2018 BOAT Nos 38 & 22 (Parishes of Ingram & Whittingham)** AW reported that he had received another application for a BOAT across land on the Ravensworth Estate. With 4 x 4 users and off-road riders increasingly using the BOAT routes in Northumberland, there is a real threat of damage to land and injury to stock and wildlife. Cllr Steven Bridgett stated that he was aware of the issue and offered to lend his support by liaising with the legal team at NCC to address the problem. Cllr Bridgett will organise a meeting to discuss the next steps. **ACTION - SB/AW/KA/ RB/LTR/BW**
- 31/21 Planning**
- i. **20-03745-FELTOPO** – Woodland strip west of Treetops, Callaly Road, Whittingham. NOTED – GRANTED
- 32/21 Finance Report & Payments**
- a. The Finance Report for February 2021 was RECEIVED and AGREED
- The balance of the Treasurers Current Account is = £6,906.80
 - The balance of the Parish Plan Account is = £1,157.03
- b. The following payments were AGREED
- i. Clerk’s salary for Feb 1st – 28th, 2021 (15 hours @£10.44) less PAYE £138.40
- 33/21 Correspondence** (not covered elsewhere on the Agenda)
- a. Email from a resident querying the use of public money for a footpath over private land, expressing concerns about poor broadband speeds and the condition of the village green slip roads. All matters were discussed during the meeting. Clerk to write in reply. **ACTION – CLERK**
- 34/21 Any General Matters** – None

35/21 Time and Date of next meeting - Tuesday, March 16th, 2021 at 7.00pm via Zoom

Scheduled Meeting Dates for 2021

- April 20th at 7.00pm
- May 18th at 7.00pm
- June 15th at 7.00pm
- July 20th at 7.00pm
- September 21st at 7.00pm
- October 19th at 7.00pm
- November 16th at 7.00pm

Signed as a True Record of the Meeting

Chair: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT