

# THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 5 August 2021.

**Present:** Cllrs E Davidson, D Green and T Jackson.  
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

Cllr Green took the Chair in Cllr Allan's absence

**33 Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs S Allan and J Marshall. County Councillor Sanderson

**34 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda** – None

**35 Rachel Blake re Felton CAN** - to promote/encourage/take practical steps for nature & climate

Rachel introduced Felton Climate and Nature a group who has expertise and an interest in nature and wildlife, climate and environmental matters. They were due to launch at the 2020 fair but due to Covid have been having fact finding zoom meetings, contacting local organisations, land owners and looking at fund raising.

Areas of action are:

1. Nature projects. Surveying of species in our area within a 2km radius of Felton Old Bridge. Encouraging wildlife friendly gardens, looking at road side verges, use of pesticides and generally promoting wildlife in the area.
2. Climate – looking at footpaths, cycle routes, renewable energy, car charging points and litter picks.

There have been articles in the Bridge Magazine. The group has installed swift boxes on Main Street, arranged wild flower walks, removed plastic green guards along Mouldshaugh Lane and are looking at doing bird surveys, bat surveys and moth trapping.

There is a lot of the areas the group are doing which overlap with potential projects for Thirston PC. The group have been in contact with the school and are looking to get involved with projects the children are undertaking and keen to get involved with individuals in the village. There are currently 13 founder members and could open up to more and are discussing how to progress membership; the group is still in a start up phase and evolving with time. There is a wildlife facebook page and there will be a display at Feltonbury. One member of public asked if any of the group had thought about joining the Parish Councils – some had considered it & they had decided not to.

**36 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person)**

There were a number of members of public raising concerns about the upcoming decision on the airfield application and the proposals for the conditions relating to the Management Plan linked with this application.

Firstly it was asked where both the residents and the PC are with regard to the Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint letters. The Clerk stated that both had been ignored by NCC and the residents have gone to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman stated that Corporate Complaints Manager would be contacting the residents within 5 working days and this had not happened so this is back in the hands of the Ombudsman.

With regard to the response to the Management Plan proposals this was explained as to how the PC are going to respond and is minuted in point 42 below.

It was agreed to write to NCC CEO stating it is illogical and questionable to proceed with the decision on the application when there are so many questions unanswered by NCC.

Clerk

One resident asked if there was a timeline of the issues not being addressed by NCC and the lack of responses by NCC. The Clerk confirmed that this was available.

The question was asked if the PC are going to go to the press in relation to NCC's lack of action/response and it was agreed to contact other PCs to see what, if anything, had been done by NCC when they had taken this cause of action.

Clerk

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It was raised that there is an issue of cronyism within NCC and this should be made clear, backed up with conclusions drawn from facts.

There is no representation from our County Councillor or our local MP so the only other cause of action is to go public with the issue to the appropriate investigative journalist/TV where the ongoing issues can be demonstrated.

It was agreed that the management plan as it stands will not work, there is no justification for the extended flying hours with no legitimate reasoning behind the extension.

**37 The minutes of the meeting 24 June 2021** were agreed as a true record.

**38 Matters Arising therefrom:**

- Road to Longhorsley to Burgham complaint – still outstanding by NCC Clerk
- Ditch on the Burgham Park Road blocked – still outstanding by NCC Clerk
- Leak at riverside – still outstanding remove from agenda until this issue is able to be reviewed in winter. Clerk
- Bus Shelter opposite Northumberland Arms – repairs have been undertaken and look good. Clerk
- Street light request for East Thirston – still outstanding by NCC
- Letter to Highways and NCC re traffic diversions – Felton has not written to Highways yet as this action was at the request of Felton PC it was agreed to remove this from the agenda. Clerk  
Clerk
- Replacement bus stop sign – still outstanding by NCC Clerk
- Directional sign, left over the bridge – reported to NCC, no action taken as yet. Clerk
- Boundary Commission Review – The Clerk put a request into The Bridge for residents to give their views to the PC. Only one response received to date.
- Stage 2 Complaint to NCC – No response or acknowledgement by NCC in relation to the Stage 2 Complaint and the reminder to Mrs Lally that the deadline has passed.

**39 Report by County Councillor Sanderson**

The new Council has settled in with a lot of new faces and we are working on our new corporate plan for the next four years. The over-arching aim is to ensure that, as we hopefully begin to move from the shadows of Covid, the Council plays a very proactive role in encouraging new and existing businesses to invest in our County while at the same time doing as much as it can to support those residents who most need help by tackling poverty and health inequalities.

We know that some families have really suffered and still are from the effects of the lockdown and the current levels affecting schools has brought further pressure to some households. But there is much to feel optimistic about - the work is due to start at the end of this month on the new battery giga plant which will bring over 3000 jobs in a few years and best of all will encourage new industry to invest here in the County.

The Government last week announced £21 million for town regeneration in Blyth making at total of £33 million of Government funding for the town regeneration.

The Borderlands Partnership in which we are a member with Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, and Scottish Borders Council is up and running funding £5m to Lilidorei in the Alnwick Gardens, the new whisky distillery and visitor centre in Wooler and soon a large-scale development of the Maltings in Berwick as well as 7 town deals in market and coastal towns in Northumberland at a cost of £30 million.

And the first cruise ships have arrived in Berwick.

Less good is the current consultation around the East Coast Mainline where proposals include a reduction in trains from Morpeth of around 30%. This is absolutely not the right thing to be doing but, because of the shortcomings of the line, if fast trains are expected to shave time off their journeys then slower trains will have to simply stop. So we are lobbying Government strongly on this.

Finally our work on Climate Change continues and we are looking to work more closely with Parish and Town Councils.

Locally I am more than happy to set up a meeting with planners re the Local Plan issue which you have raised today.

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- 40 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC**  
None
- 41 Potential Projects**
- a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – Email received from Skill Mill and they are keen to discuss future opportunities with the Parish Council. Need to think of areas that they could be involved in and set up a meeting. All
  - b) Landscaping – We have two plaques to put up for the Japanese Cherry Trees. Cllr Davidson agreed to do this – Clerk handed plaques over to him. Cllr Davidson
  - c) Neighbourhood Plan Update – The Plan will go to referendum on Thursday 16 September. NCC are concerned that residents and businesses may not be aware of the referendum until the ballot paper dropped onto peoples’ door mats. I have assured NCC that updates have been given in The Bridge Newsletter and the website but perhaps putting something on facebook and a letter drop to all residents and businesses in the parish might be appropriate. Clerk
  - d) Short term/medium term/long term projects - All
- 42 To report on any planning decisions:**
- 21/00940/FUL** - Land East of Bockenfield Manor – Agricultural storage shed – APPROVED  
**21/02109/VARYCO** - Silverwood 10A Burgham Park - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission 17/01468/FUL for the removal of rear porch, addition of front porch and changes to the chimney structure – APPROVED
- Planning applications pending:**
- 19/03659/VARYCO** – Eshott Airfield – make temporary hours of 7am to 11pm permanent – objections submitted. NCC has provided what they are recommending as to the content of the proposed management plan with a request to respond by 14 August to enable NCC to write their recommendations for the committee meeting in September for a decision on the outstanding planning application. The Parish Council do not feel that the proposals are specific enough to enable enforcement going forward, which NCC has stated has been the case in the past. The information is only a summary and more detail is required. NCC has not demonstrated how they feel these proposals will work and whether they have the resources to manage the proposals effectively. NCC has not demonstrated that they have a specialist to check that the airfield will comply with the procedures and operational controls in relation to fueling issues. There are too many unanswered questions and areas of concern at present with these proposals by NCC.
- 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 – objections submitted
- 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 submitted
- 21/02354/FUL** - Chaswell House Burgham Park - Single and two storey extensions
- 21/02064/FUL** - Northumberland Country Zoo Animal house to include pool and on-show viewing area for the public – no objections
- 21/02455/FUL** - 7 Thirston Court West Moor Farm – Retrospective for shed – no objections
- 21/02587/FUL** - The Dairy South High Moor Farm - Erection of oak frame sun room to front of property – no objections
- 21/01894/FELTPO** - Land South of Northumberland Arms The Peth - Fell two wild cherry trees (T1 and T2) and two Sycamore trees (T3 and T4) to ground level – no objections
- 43 Requested Agenda Items:**
- **Policy Review** – The Clerk circulated the policies prior to the meeting. The only amendment being to the Risk Policy to include the speed cameras. The following policies were reviewed and agreed: Risk Policy, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations,

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Complaints Procedure, Disposal Policy, Publication Scheme Policy and Virtual Meeting Policy.

- **Cemetery Terms of Reference for approval** – Amendments were made to the ToR finance section which were reviewed and approved by the Councillors. Clerk to relay these details to Felton Parish Clerk. Clerk
- **Litter pick volunteers** – Following a request for litter pick volunteers in the parish to ascertain whether equipment should be purchased, to date 4 residents have volunteered.

## 44 Correspondence:

- NCC – Local Transport Plan Programme 2022-23 priority issues request – deadline 8 October for submitting response – Defer to next meeting. Clerk
- NCC - LOVE Northumberland Awards 2021 - Rewarding community achievement
- Email from Northumberland & Newcastle Society - requesting PCs to submit letter in opposition to the wind farms proposed in the Local Plan – this was circulated and agreed to send letter and response required before this meeting.
- Email notification of resurfacing between Newton on the Moor and West Cawledge – information was put on the website.
- Felton & Thirston WI request for planting a tree for Queens Platinum Jubilee – it was agreed that would be a lovely idea, location to be agreed with WI team.
- Email requesting hedging and cutting back works in West Thirston – NCC will undertake these works once staff replacement arranged. Clerk
- Email re evidence of intensive helicopter training
- Email re helicopter training affecting funerals
- Donation request from Victim Support – add to list for consideration at next budget review. Clerk
- Request for advice on housing dumpy bag temporarily on pavement – this dumpy bag will only be on the pavement temporarily. Should any complaints be made direct them to the Clerk as NCC has agreed that this is acceptable for the short timescale involved.
- Email from PC Teasdale re parking at the Wintrick Junction – She has spoken to the driver about this already and asked him to stop blocking the junction. She is assured this happens term time because they are transporting children to school so isn't all the time so if it starts again September she will go back and see him again.

## 45 Finance

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £13,823.85.

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

| Payments this meeting: |   |         |
|------------------------|---|---------|
| IB120                  | L Hamlin Salary and Expenses<br>24 hours at £15.50 (£372.00)<br>4 hours for Neighbourhood Plan at £15.50 (£62.00)<br>1 x zoom (£14.39)<br>1 x home working allowance (£11.09) | £459.48 |
| IB121                  | P Brown bus stop repairs  | £250.00 |
| IB122                  | Mrs A Morton – plants for tubs  | £39.80  |

(c) **Income** – NCC Cemeteries double recharge £41.00

46 **Urgent Items** – Email received re unofficial safeguarding chart to be included in Local Plan for Eshott Airfield – a response was submitted to NCC within the deadline.

## 47 Items for next agenda –

NCC – Local Transport Plan Programme 2022-23 priority issues request  
What increased role can the Parish Council take?

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm

Date of Next meeting: 16 September 2021