

**OVINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**Clerk:**  
**Mr P Smith**

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**Minutes of a meeting of Ovingham Parish Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 7.15pm. in the Pavilion, Ovingham Playing Field.**

**Present: Councillors Jordon, Gray, Jackson, Cairns, Downing, County Councillor Waddell, 3 residents and the Clerk.**

**Questions from members of the public.**

A discussion re Dog Fouling on the playing fields took place.

A member of the public asked what data-driven measurement and research had been carried out by the Parish Council (PC) before taking the decision to require dogs to be on a lead when in the playing field. The extent of danger caused by Toxocariasis (infection caused by dog faeces) was also mentioned.

A second member of the public mentioned that since a group of residents had started checking the playing fields area and clearing away dog faeces the situation had improved.

A third member of the public stressed that the main focus should be on ensuring that people picked up their dog's mess and that the field around the Pavilion was mostly flat, and as such one of the only suitable places for people with mobility problems to exercise their dogs.

Councillors made the following comments:

The PC had been keeping a record of instances of dog fouling since March 21 and the situation had indeed improved.

There were real concerns over Toxocariasis and in particular the dangers posed to children which should not be downplayed.

In addition to fouling there are also concerns over dogs running around off the leash and uncontrolled on the playing fields.

It should be recognized that the PC had not banned dogs – only that they be kept on a leash. The issue is serious and dates back many years. In addition to recent records, evidence is from Councillors own observations and from the many reports from other residents who have asked that the PC take action. A compromise is being investigated, whereby a dedicated area will be fenced off, where dogs could be let off the leash for training, socialising and exercise.

The Chair confirmed that the points raised had been noted and that Cllrs would discuss the matter later in the meeting under Item 5.

## **County Councillors Report**

**Cllr Waddell** advised as follows:

- In addition to the PC she had also asked for Local Transport Plan Priorities to include conducting a speed survey in Ovingham, with a view to extending the 20mph limit in the Village.
- The decision to withdraw the Prudhoe Youth Services is being challenged, as there was no consultation.
- Problems with parking outside Ovingham Schools had been reported, including a complaint from the Fire Service that a fire engine had been unable to pass. A request has been made that a NCC car, equipped with number plate recognition be sent to monitor the area.

**The Chair** responded as follows:

- A resident had raised concerns re the booking system being introduced in Gateshead for using the Council Tips and had asked for confirmation that this would not be introduced at Prudhoe. Cllr Waddell advised that there were no such plans for Northumberland
- Bollards installed in the layby to avert fly tipping - as there was no NCC funding available to replace these with something more aesthetic, the PC were planning to disguise them with ivy or similar plants.
- Parking issues on Horsley Road – following issues residents she and Cllr Gray had met with Neil Snowdon from NCC and they will look to place double yellow lines on the corner at the White Swan and on the corner of Nunnykirk to improve the line of sight when exiting to Horsley Road.
- They will also look to place a white line in the middle of the road on the corner of Tyne Gardens and Windsor Crescent, as cars often cut the corner. Cllr. Jordon queried if the latter two points had been raised with her. Cllr. Waddell advised he had not mentioned this..
- A resident has sent an email to both the PC and Cllr Waddell regarding cycling over the road section of Ovingham Bridge. This is allowed but the current signage is confusing as it appears that cyclists should dismount, whereas they only need to dismount when on the footbridge. Cllr Waddell confirmed this is being looked into.

**Action point 1/21 - Cllr Waddell to report back on the situation re changing the signage for cyclists using the road over Ovingham Bridge  
Cllr. Jordon to follow up request for road markings.**

- Cllr Jordon noted that Cllr Waddell is due to speak at a Wylam Parish Council organised Climate Change Seminar and asked what involvement Humshaugh will have at the seminar. It was confirmed a representative will be speaking. **Cllr Jordon** also mentioned that there were two very good documents to read, associated with this event, which can be accessed using a link on the Seminar poster.

**Cllr Jordon then advised all present that we were moving on to the main body of the PC meeting and as such, members of the public were not permitted to speak.**

**1. To Co-opt Charlie Downing**

It was unanimously agreed that Charlie Downing be co-opted to the Council.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ford, Neal and Swinburn.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**4. Minutes of the last meeting**

There was one minor correction to the minutes of the last meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021. At Item 8, the paintwork was carried out by M Best not M Bell. Other than that, the minutes, having previously been circulated were agreed and signed.

**5. Matters arising**

**Village Signage:**

Cllrs Gray & Jordon had met with a company to discuss what information, history and photographs could be included on the proposed village information board. Cllr Gray advised that it was possible to include QR codes, which the public could scan, to learn more about a particular topic or location. The PC had been quoted £1582 plus VAT for one information board. Cllr Gray advised that Ovingham Village Trust may contribute towards a 2nd board; he also confirmed he would seek a 2nd quote for comparison. Cllr Downing asked where the new board will be located and whether it would be in addition to the excellent board by the Church. Cllr Gray advised the new sign would likely be located by the Packhorse Bridge and would be an addition to the board at the church.

**Dog issues on the Playing Field:**

The Chair reported that the PC had received various complaints of dog fouling on the playing field, especially where children play and on the football pitch. As a result, the PC had requested that dogs be kept on a lead and away from the football field, restricted to a designated path around the boundary. Signs were erected, which were

subsequently taken down by persons unknown, on more than one occasion. However, it was also encouraging to note that, due to the actions of another group of residents, the football field area has been regularly checked and cleared recently, which has improved the situation. As a compromise, a revised scheme is being investigated, whereby a fenced off area is created, where dog owners can let their dogs off the lead to exercise and socialise.

**Cllr Gray** raised concerns that, with the onset of winter, the improvements may be short lived and supported the proposal of creating a fenced off area. He added that the areas where dogs on a leash are allowed could be expanded, to make it less restrictive. **Cllr Downing** supported the idea of a fenced off area but added that some residents bring both their children and their dogs to the fields, so this may cause issues. **Cllr Jackson** supported the idea of a fenced off area and added that she could not understand why dog owners would let their dog foul on a field where children play. **Cllr Cairns** had contacted Northumberland Estates (owners of the playing fields) and they advised: It was the PC's responsibility to ensure that the laws around dog fouling were upheld and to ensure that the field does not present a Health and Safety risk. He supported the proposal of a fenced off area.

**Councillors agreed in principle to the following proposal: The PC will proceed with investigating the possibility of providing a dedicated fenced off area of the playing field, for those who wish to let their dogs off the leash for training, socialising and exercising. Notices would be amended, to make it clear that dogs on leads had access to all areas other than the football pitch and play area. The notices will be amended when the plans are finalised.**

## **6. Donations**

The Chair advised that there was £500 set aside in the Precept for donations. Previously, the PC had made donations to Age UK, Sport Tynedale, Great North Air Ambulance, Victim Support and Tynedale Hospice. This financial year, we have received letters from Sport Tynedale, Great North Air Ambulance and Tynedale Hospice. A decision on donations will be made at the January 2022 meeting.

## **7. Accounts to pay/paid:**

Came & Co (Insurance)	£2225.87
M Davenport (Clerk Sal & Expenses Sept)	£294.97

C Walpole (fencing @pavilion car park)	£850.00
Wylam PC - (Ovingham Joint Burial Comm)	£2520.00
D Jordon (Expenses re Village Gardens & Pots)	£61.03
T Bell (Grasscuts Aug-Sept 21)	£340.00
Royal British Legion (donation for Poppy Wreath)	£25.00
P Smith (Clerk Oct Salary & Exp)	£302.00
T Bell (Grasscuts Riverside etc, to be billed to NCC)	£190.00

## **8. Planning Applications:**

**21/04006/Ful – 11 Piper Road** – extension – PC have advised NCC “No Objection”

**20/03425/Ful – Development of 9 affordable housing on land to the north of Piper Road** – Cllr Gray advised that the site has recently been subject to an Archaeological Survey, conducted by Durham University. The report has been reviewed by the County Archaeologist who has requested that an appropriate condition be included in any Approval. Both documents can be found on the NCC planning portal.

It was also reported that no progress was being made PC queries regarding activity at The Hermitage and it was extremely difficult to contact anyone in the planning enforcement department.

## **9. Climate Change Update**

Cllr Gray referred to a further email sent to Councillors on 26<sup>th</sup> October, regarding the setting up of a Climate Change Awareness Campaign (CCAC) in Ovingham, and specifically asking for a volunteer from the PC to be a representative on the proposed Strategy Group. He had not received any replies.

None of the Councillors present at the meeting felt able to take on this role at the present time. It was agreed that the call for volunteers to run the Campaign would be issued and posted on the PC FB page as well as being sent directly to village organisations.

**Action point 2/21 - Cllrs Jordon & Gray to meet to discuss the way forward.**

## **10. Parish Council Action Plan 2022 - to consider a Village Appraisal**

The Chair advised that there had been two previous Village Appraisals, in the form of a questionnaire sent to all households, asking for residents' views on a wide range of items such as the environment, grass cutting, recycling etc. Cllrs agreed with the aim to proceed with the next Appraisal in January 2022. Data will be collated by the Clerk and the results will inform a series of Action Plans.

## **11. Draft Precept 2022/23 & Finance**

The Clerk presented various budget sheets, which detailed expenditure and income to date and projected to the end of the financial year. This helped inform a discussion between the Councillors, who agreed to keep the Precept for 2022/23 at the current level of £15,300 pa.

It was advised that the PC had recently added the facility for On-line banking. The existing financial controls would be maintained (i.e. each item of expenditure needs two Councillors to authorise) but payments to suppliers will be quicker and the PC will be able to reconcile the bank account whenever needed, as opposed to waiting for a bank statement.

The Clerk advised that the electricity supply contract for the Pavillion expires 31.12.21 and he was seeking alternative quotes before any renewal.

**Action point 3/21 - The Clerk to seek alternative quotes for the electricity supply for the Pavillion and report back to the PC.**

## **12. Representatives to monitor Village Areas**

The Chair confirmed that Cllrs had agreed their respective areas would be as follows:

Cllr Gray – Horsley Road, Nunnykirk and Dean Garth

Cllr Jackson – Horsley Road heading North, the Culvert, the chalets, Gallowhill Road.

Cllr Neal – Laburnam Cottage/shop, all areas west as far as the schools

Cllr Cairns – Piper Road, Cherryburn Lane Estate, Playing Fields

Cllr Downing – Dene Close, Wheatfield Close, Wellburn Close

Cllr Jordon – Bewick Lane, North Meadow

Cllr Ford – Badger View, both sides of road east to 40 Castle View

Cllr Swinburn – Windsor Crescent, Tyne Gardens

## **13. Representatives for Committees**

Cllrs agreed to take on the following roles:

Cllr Gray – Essity, East Tynedale Forum

Cllr Jackson - Reading Rooms

Cllr Cairns – Allotments, Orchard

Cllr Downing - Playing Field

Cllr Jordon - East Tynedale Forum, Joint Burial Board, Pavilion

Cllr Ford – Playing Field, Defibrillator (to assist A. Foster)

Cllr Swinburn - Joint Burial Board, Pavilion

## **14. Use of Parish Council Facebook and NALC website**

The Councillors discussed the continued use of Facebook. Cllr Jackson reported that there had been much fewer negative comments on the PC Facebook page recently.

Cllr Downing felt the PC should make more use of Facebook as a method of communicating with more residents.

Cllr Jordon advised that having listened to all views she agreed that the PC would continue to use Facebook.

Cllr Jordon added that the Clerk had spent a lot of time recently sorting through the PC website and putting documents in date order. This had been noticed by Residents and she thanked the Clerk for his efforts.

### **15. Village Environment and action plan update**

Updated action plans have been circulated to all Councillors and appear on the PC website. Cllr Jordon commented that due to the meeting over-running, there was not time to go through the action plans in detail. She highlighted a few brief issues:

- Phase 2 of NWL surface water scheme in Dene Garth - residents will be receiving a letter shortly, which provides an update
- The overhanging tree and adjacent bushes at the Pavillion have been cut back.
- There are potholes at the rear of the Church and in Windsor Crescent, these will be reported to NCC
- A small number of residents are joining the snow warden scheme.
- The water meter at the Pavillion needs attention, as currently meter readings cannot be taken, as the meter is covered in mud and water. This has previously been raised with Wave, the company responsible but was chased up recently by The Clerk.

### **16. Village projects**

**Cllr Jordon** updated as follows:

- Village signage was discussed at Point 5 above.
- The works to the shower area at the Pavilion will commence on Monday 22.11.21. This is being done free of charge by Bentleys.
- Tree planting - Cllr Jordon has been successful in the Local Authority Treescapes Funding Scheme bid for trees to be planted in the Playing Field. NCC have ordered the trees and a planting programme will be forwarded soon. The PC have also been approached by The Orchard Committee regarding a possible joint scheme to plant more trees to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It was agreed that the PC were keen to progress this proposal. Cllr Cairns agreed to update the Orchard Committee on the above.

**Action point 4/21- Cllr Cairns to liaise with The Orchard Committee over a joint scheme to plant trees to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

### **17. Committee Reports**

- Cllr Gray attended a Forum meeting, which discussed Climate Change.
- Cllr Jackson wasn't able to attend the latest Reading Room meeting, however we understand that the Xmas Cheer event will be on 12th December, the Village Pantomime will be in March and a new sound system and new acoustics are being installed.
- No recent meeting of OJBC.
- No recent meeting of the Allotment Association but it had been

reported that a wheelbarrow had been stolen.

**18. Correspondence**

Nothing to report

**19. Any other business**

**Cllr Jordon** advised that she had received the new waste bin and asked that Cllr Gray and Cllr Cairns assist in installing it.

**Action point 5/21 - Cllrs Gray and Cairns to install the new wastebin.**

**20. To confirm the date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.15pm at The Pavillion, Ovingham.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm

**Action Points**

**1/21 - Cllr Wardell to report back on the situation re changing the signage for cyclists using the road over Ovingham Bridge.**

**Cllr Jordon to follow up request for Road Markings**

**2/21 - Cllrs Jordon & Gray to meet to discuss the Climate Change Questionnaire.**

**3/21 - The Clerk to seek alternative quotes for the electricity supply for the Pavillion and report back to the PC.**

**4/21 - Cllr Cairns to liaise with The Orchard Committee over a joint scheme to plant trees to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

**5/21 - Cllrs Gray and Cairns to install the new bin.**

**Ovingham Parish Council**

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