

# FELTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held at Felton Village Hall at 7:15pm on 9 May 2022.

Present: Cllrs J Cruden (Chairman from Minute 3 onwards), G Cuthbert, R Evans, T Hood, G Lings (up to and including Minute 5, and as Chairman during Minutes 1 and 2), Cllr MacDonald (from Minute 6 onwards following his co-option to the Parish Council) and A Walton.

## 1. Election of a Chairman

Resolved:

- a. To appoint Cllr Sowter as Chairman, Cllr Sowter having indicated his willingness to stand in advance of the Meeting.
- b. To permit Cllr Sowter to sign his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the next Meeting in the presence of the Clerk.
- c. To appoint Cllr Lings to chair the Meeting for the next item in the absence of Cllr Sowter.

## 2. Election of a Vice Chairman

Resolved: To appoint Cllr Cruden as Vice Chairman.

[Cllr Cruden signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the chair for the remainder of the Meeting.]

Cllr Cruden thanked Cllr Lings for his services to the Parish Council.

## 3. Apologies for Absence – Cllrs Blagburn and Sowter

## 4. Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda and Granting of Dispensations – None

## 5. Co-option Policy and to fill two Vacancies

- a. Resolved: To adopt the Co-option Policy.
- b. Resolved: To co-opt Adam MacDonald to fill the first vacancy.

[Mr MacDonald signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting as a councillor.]

- c. Resolved: To co-opt Christopher Gamble to fill the second vacancy and to permit Mr Gamble to sign his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the next Meeting in the presence of the Clerk.

[Cllr Lings indicated his intention to resign from the Council ~~due to his dissatisfaction with the co-option and left the Meeting.~~ stating that in his opinion, there had been a determined effort by some councillors to prevent one of the candidates being elected. He then went on to warn the Council not to believe everything they have been told by one councillor and that they had email proof that same councillor had misled them. Cllr Lings left the Meeting. Cllrs noted for the record that they were not aware of any campaigns for or against candidates as alleged by Cllr Lings.]

## 6. Public Participation

- a. A resident stated that they had questions on a number of agenda items and the Chairman confirmed these could be raised during the relevant item.
- b. A resident asked if the new councillors were joining the Meeting. Cllr MacDonald moved to sit with the other councillors and the Clerk confirmed the second new councillor was not present at the Meeting.
- c. A resident asked whether any further information had been received about the plans to create residential housing in the garages at Mouldshaugh. Nothing further has been received. The Clerk will ask for an update.
- d. A resident stated that the Co-option Policy adopted by the Parish Council [see **Minute 5a**] ignored the NALC advice on co-options and asked who drafted it. The Clerk advised that the draft policy had been prepared by

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Cllr Sowter, based on his research into the co-option policies of other parish councils and NALC guidance. The resident stated that the NALC advice was for wide publicity in order to attract a wide range of candidates, but the Policy adopted only required the Parish Council to advertise the vacancy on the Parish Council noticeboard and website. The Parish Council discussed other methods of advertising the vacancy, for example via Facebook and by advertising directly to village and community groups.

7. **The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2022** were approved as a true record subject to the following amendments:
- a. **Minute 199b** – addition of “and to keep garage holders informed”.
  - b. **Minute 202b** – addition of “included in the terms of appointment”.
  - c. **Minute 203b** – addition of a list of practices involved in the Well Up North Group.

8. **Appointment of Members to Existing Committees and Working Groups**

Resolved: To make the following appointments:

Felton Cemetery Joint Committee	Cllr Hood Cllr Walton Cllr MacDonald (Substitute Member)
Recreation Field Committee	Cllr Cruden Cllr Cuthbert Cllr Sowter Cllr MacDonald (Substitute Member)
Complaints Committee	All
Finance Committee	Cllr Blagburn Cllr Hood Cllr Evans Cllr Cuthbert (Substitute Member) Cllr MacDonald (Substitute Member)
Biodiversity and Climate Change Committee	Cllr Cuthbert Cllr Evans Cllr Walton Cllr Cruden (Substitute Member)
Property Management Committee	Cllr Cruden Cllr Hood Cllr MacDonald Cllr Gamble (Substitute Member) – subject to Cllr Gamble’s agreement
Policies Review Working Group	Cllr Blagburn Cllr Evans Cllr Sowter
Contracts Working Group	<del>Cllr Cruden</del> <del>Cllr Gamble – subject to Cllr Gamble’s agreement</del> <del>Cllr MacDonald</del> <u>Cllr Evans</u> <u>Cllr Sowter</u> <u>Cllr Walton</u>
Oval Working Group	Cllr Cruden Cllr Gamble – subject to Cllr Gamble’s agreement Cllr MacDonald
South Lane and South View Working Group	Cllr Cruden Cllr Gamble – subject to Cllr Gamble’s agreement Cllr MacDonald
Layby Working Group	Cllr Cruden Cllr Gamble – subject to Cllr Gamble’s agreement Cllr MacDonald

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Mrs Krzyzosiak stated that she ~~is willing to be appointed~~ has been co-opted to the Biodiversity and Climate Change Committee but that she does not wish to continue on any working groups and Cllr Cruden thanked her for all her considerable work and efforts.

## 9. Appointment of New Committees and Working Groups – None

## 10. General Power of Competence

Resolved: To confirm continued eligibility for General Power of Competence.

## 11. Deferral of Remaining Items of Business from Standing Order 5j

Resolved: To defer the following items of business:

- a. Review of policies – defer to next Meeting
- b. Review of inventory of land and other assets – defer to meeting at which draft Accounts and AGAR are considered
- c. Review of subscriptions – defer until budget setting
- d. Review of Parish Council's expenditure under s137 LGA 1972 – defer to meeting at which draft Accounts and AGAR are considered

## 12. Time and Place of Ordinary Meetings

Resolved: To set the following dates for the ordinary meetings of the Parish Council, to take place at 7:15pm in Felton Village Hall unless otherwise specified on the agenda for the meeting.

6 June 2022  
 4 July 2022  
 5 September 2022  
 3 October 2022  
 7 November 2022  
 5 December 2022  
 6 February 2023  
 6 March 2023  
 3 April 2023

## 13. Finances

- a. The financial statement and budget monitoring document to 28 April 2022 was received.
- b. Resolved: to authorise the following payments:

Payee	Head of Expenditure	Cost	VAT	Total	Reference
Staff	Salaries	1,290.82		1,290.82	
	Fuel	16.50		16.50	
	McAfee Protection	7.99		7.99	
	WFH Allowance	19.21		19.21	
Bentham Ltd	Stationery	74.86	14.97	89.83	
J Cruden - Reimbursement for mole traps and bark	Recreation Field – Minor Expenses	171.16	34.23	205.39	
Three-16 Productions	Remembrance	75.00		75.00	
Zurich	Insurance	1,591.25		1,591.25	
NALC	Subscription Fee	228.97		228.97	
	Website Hosting	75.00		75.00	

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The Clerk has noted guidance in the most recent addition of the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance's Practitioners Guide that GDPR should be taken into account in relation to publication of salaries. Accordingly, salaries are now listed as a single item.

- c. Resolved: To appoint Cllr MacDonald to verify bank reconciliations in accordance with Financial Reg. 2.2.
- d. Resolved: To appoint Cllr Cruden and Cllr Walton as additional signatories to the bank mandate.

### 14. Felton Surgery

- a. The Parish Council noted that the Surgery has requested an extension of the s106 deadline.  
  
Resolved: To write to NCC to request an extension of the s106 deadline.
- b. The Parish Council noted that according to the Surgery, Assura are in the process of re-costing the project. It is not known when this process may be completed. Assura have not contacted the Parish Council.
- c. A further plan has been provided by Bellway for the Transfer of land in response to the Parish Council's request for confirmation that the new plan includes all the land owned by Bellway to the north and west of the site. This plan still does not follow the fence line.

Resolved: To send an annotated plan to Bellway to indicate the fence line and to ask for confirmation that the plan includes all the land owned by Bellway to the north and west of the site.

### 15. Report from County Cllr Trevor Thorne

County Cllr Thorne provided a written report to the Parish Council. Staff are returning to County Hall. The refurbishment of County Hall is progressing well and the work space is 'fit for modern working'. It is hoped that some of the departments traditionally located outside County Hall can be moved into the new work space, resulting in a more efficient service. £85,000 has been given out in Jubilee Celebration grants. Max Caller is leading a team of local government inspectors to look at the Conservative administration's work at NCC and he will present his findings in a report to NCC on 8 June. Unemployment has fallen to a low of 3.8% in the County and it is hoped that the levelling up initiatives in the South East of the county (British Volt and JDR Cables) will make the local economy even stronger. The new leisure centre in Morpeth is nearing completion. £163mn in grant funding has been awarded to NCC by Central Government for bus improvements to the Joint transport Fund, which it is hoped will include some park and ride pilot schemes. County Cllr Thorne was delighted to cut the ribbon for the opening of the electric vehicle charge points on Main Street and to learn about the work and projects of Felton CAN.

### 16. Update from Committees and Working Groups

- a. The Biodiversity and Climate Change Committee met on 5 May. There were eleven attendees including Hannah Davison from NCC's Climate Change Team. The Committee is keen to emphasise it is not in competition with Felton CAN but hopes to have a good working relationship. The Committee co-opted Fiona Krzyzosiak and Mark Winter as non-councillor members. Hannah Davison was very helpful and the Committee was please she had attended. Hannah Davison gave a good presentation on NCC's Warm Homes initiative which is being led by Matt Baker. Under the Warm Homes scheme, residents can apply for grants of up to £10,000, which must be used to improve the fabric of housing to improve energy efficiency, and then may be applied to install carbon saving technology. Hannah Davison also provided information about other energy use schemes.

The Committee discussed woodlands and biodiversity, and a ~~resident~~ committee member signposted the Committee to a valuable YouTube talk on the subject made by the NCC ecologist, Ann Deary-Francis. Felton CAN are working on a project which will use NCC land to develop a community orchard. The Committee is continuing to look at the issue of verge management in conjunction with Felton CAN and hopes to be ready to discuss this further at the next Parish Council meeting.

The Committee discussed the Public Right of Way (Footpath) on the south bank of the Coquet from Thirston towards the A1, which is affected by the A1 dualling scheme. Cllr Evans has written to Thirston Parish Council

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and Newton on the Moor & Swarland Parish Council. The Committee considered the need for public consultation and whether signs should be put up on the footpath.

- b. The Recreation Field Committee reported on their recent meeting. There is financial pressure to take decisions on the regeneration project, in particular the upgrade of the MUGA, as there is funding available now which will not be available in the future. A resident has made enquiries about the most recent resurfacing at Vyner Park, Swarland, which was not expensive. Volunteers repaired the fences. The Committee is progressing with plans for a building; ongoing discussions include consideration of the main use of a building, which is likely to be sports use with ancillary community use. Cllrs Sowter and Cruden, with Mr Harrison, have installed a new offshoot drain on the east side of the Field, which saw an immediate outpouring of water. A second offshoot drain is due to be installed and the Committee is pursuing a camera survey of the drains at the east side of the Field.

### 17. Update from Northumbria Police

- a. No crimes have been reported which would have wider community impact. Suspected rabbit poachers were reported on Sunday 3 April using an "08" Peugeot vehicle. Residents are encouraged to report suspicious activity or anti-social behaviour via 101 or the Northumbria Police Website. The recent Operation Checkpoint was successful, with almost 70 vehicles stopped, drugs seized and suspects arrested. Northumbria Connected has been introduced as a new tool to connect with communities and to provide information about issues affecting them. The team plans to visit communities with its engagement van throughout the year and dates will be sent out once known.
- b. The Parish Council noted that an incident had occurred outside Pumpkin Pie Daycare, but that this was by chance, being the location at which the police caught up with their suspect.

### 18. Leamington Lane Bus Shelter

This item was deferred from the last Meeting at the request of Cllr Anderson (Newton on the Moor & Swarland Parish Council). No further correspondence has been received. The Parish Council noted that it would be a shame to demolish the bus shelter if grant funding may be available to improve bus services in the area, as referred to in County Cllr Thorne's report (see **Minute 15**).

Resolved: To formally request a response from Newton on the Moor & Swarland Parish Council as to the possible demolition of the bus shelter, or the transfer of responsibility for maintenance costs.

### 19. Ramp at Riverside

Cllr Cruden reported that he is struggling to find a contractor who is willing to carry out work on the ramp due to the SSSI. County Cllr Thorne has offered £2,000 towards the project. All councillors will consider whether they know of any suitable contractors. The Clerk will ask the NCC ecologist for any advice on working within an SSSI. It might be possible to save materials by redesigning the ramp to run the other direction now that the tree has fallen.

### 20. Red Phone Box

Cllr Cruden has obtained a quote to repair and refurbish the phone box from a company specialising in this type of work. The work needed is far beyond a repaint. To bring it to a museum specification would cost around £6,000 and for a fully cosmetic repair, around £3,000. Cllr Cruden will ask for up to date quotes and the Parish Council will then consider whether the repair can be funded from the budget.

### 21. Seats and Paving Area at the Village Hall

Cllr Cruden has offered to power wash the paving area at the Village Hall and hopes to do so this weekend. The gaps between the paving slabs will then need to be re-sanded. The bench seats need to be sanded back and painted.

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## 22. Annual Parish Meeting

The Parish Council discussed the Annual Parish Meeting and agreed it was important to hold this to engage with the community. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to consult on the Recreation Field Regeneration Project. The Parish Council considered various dates and fixed on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 7:15pm, to allow time to advertise the meeting. Cllrs Cruden and Evans stated that they would be willing to call the meeting if Cllr Sowter is unavailable.

## 23. Correspondence

Bailiffgate Museum is seeking the heirs of a person who donated Coffin Making Tools, in order to return these. The Clerk will contact the Museum and if appropriate will put a notice on Facebook.

## 24. Planning

There have been no changes to the list of ongoing planning matters.

## 25. Ongoing Matters

The Clerk will circulate this mid-month. A location needs to be identified for the Jubilee Tree and a decision taken as to when the tree should be planted. Cllr Cruden is seeking further advice but advised the Parish Council that it may be more sensible to plant the tree in the correct season in autumn rather than having to water it through the summer.

## 26. Items for the Next Agenda

- Verge Works
- Review of Policies
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return
- Notice of Vacancy and possible co-option

## 27. Date of Next Ordinary Meeting – 7:15pm on Monday 6 June 2022 at Felton Village Hall.

Chairman closed the meeting at 9:15pm.