Draft Minutes of Ford Parish Council Annual meeting.

Tuesday 10th May 2022 at 7pm in Etal Village Hall.

1. **Questions from members of the public -none**

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| 2. Members present |  |  |  |
| Cllr Baker | Chairman | Cllr. Smith-Lacey |  |
| Cllr. Beattie | Vice chairman via Zoom | Cllr. Musgrave |  |
| Cllr. Clark |  | Cllr. Hopper |  |
| Steve Taylor | Clerk | Colin Hardy | County Councillor |
| Keith Webster | Member of Public | John Docherty | Member of Public |
| Rosanna McCorkell | Ford and Etal | Rob Brown | Member of Public |
| PC Daniel Perry | Northumbria Police | Sgt. Duncan Budge | Northumbria Police |

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| 3. | **Apologies for absence** – Cllrs. Denson and Watson |  |
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| 4. | **Declaration of interests with regards to items on the agenda** – None |  |
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| 5. | Chairman’s Report 2021/ 2022  I will start off this report by saying, it’s been nice to have all our meetings face to face this year and to have some kind of normality back.  The year started off with me and the other councillors having to be re-elected and we also got a new local councillor, Colin Hardy. He has already attended more meeting in this year than his predecessor did in four years. It’s good to have our local councillor attend meetings so he gets a good understanding about what’s happening on and in the area.  We got behind the Great British Spring clean with many volunteers helping from the villages clean up other people’s rubbish which was left in the area. Rubbish and dog poo will always be an issue for a Parish Council and will always be on the agenda every year no matter how signs and bins we have in the villages and on some footpaths.  Crookham footpath from the A697 towards the village was un-covered from the overgrown bank, weeds and grass by NCC, we felt this was a step forward as we have been asking for this to happen for some years.  Even with the 20 MPH speed limit during school dropping off and picking up times on Ford Bank, this still hasn’t stopped car traveling at faster speeds. We have tried with the safer Northumberland partnership to have the Speed camera van on Ford bank but as yet had no joy with them. The local police did run a speed check for one morning and checked approximately 40 cars and only one was exceeding the speed limit. This is an issue that will keep coming up, speeding motorist through the villages. It’s an item that we need to continue to work with the local police team on.  We have investigated the Common Land being registered with the land registry and it turns out that it is not registered. We will continue to look into this to see how we can get it registered. Looking back, we have come across records that date back to 1865, so I think you would have to say that we have a right to state that it belongs to Ford Parish Council.  Heatherslaw bridge is another item that has been off and, on the agendas over many years. I think the feeling from the councillors is that it will continue to be on the agendas until we can get commitment from NCC about the care and maintenance of this old and very well used bridge. We have asked other bodies for advice and had an independent inspection plus the inspections from NCC, which we will hopefully use when meeting / talking to NCC about how they or when will they start to maintain the bridge.  We have lost and gained some new councillors this year. Bill Mills and Jan Brian have moved areas, Val Keating has stepped down after being a councillor for many years and, she was the Chairlady for some time on the Parish council. Mac Bell also decided not to stand again, and it was an honour and a privilege to present Mac with the Honorary Freeman of Ford Parish Council award for his 40 years of service to the council, nobody before has ever been on Ford Parish council for that amount of time. We have welcomed Eric Musgrave, Victoria Smith-Lacey, Shannon Denson and Graham Hopper as new councillors.  Like last year and the years before, I would like to thank Steve Taylor for all the work he does for the council and keeping us all in line. |  |
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| 6. | **Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman.**  The clerk asked for nominations for chairman. Cllr. Clark proposed Cllr. Baker, seconded by Cllr. Musgrave. All agreed. Cllr. Baker was elected chairman for the year.  Cllr. Clark proposed Cllr. Beattie for vice chairman, seconded by Cllr. Musgrave. All agreed. Cllr. Beattie was elected vice chairman for the year. The chairman signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office of chairman form. |  |
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| 7. | **Co-option to fill vacancies on the Council.**  There is currently one vacancy. Keith Webster is interested in being co-opted onto the council. Councillors all agreed to this. Keith was duly co-opted and signed the Acceptance of Office form which as witnessed by the clerk.  He also provided the clerk with the Declaration of Pecuniary Interests form. The clerk will pass this to NCC. | Clerk |
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| 8. | **Approve minutes of the council meeting held on 8th March 2022**  – These were approved and signed by the chairman. |  |
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| 9. | **Matters arising from previous minutes.**   1. Crookham planters – Cllr. Beattie said that if planters were bought by the council, he and Judith would be willing to maintain them. Councillors agreed that it would be a good idea to install these at the entrance to Crookham village off the A697 in recognition of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Cllr. Beattie will research prices for these and report back. 2. Notice boards. No further progress made. Cllr. Beattie reported problems with the notice board in Crookham and wondered if a new one should be purchased for Crookham as well as Ford. Councillors agreed to keep this on the agenda. The clerk will ask Cllr. Denson if she has made any progress in researching notice boards and prices. 3. Common Land. The council has not received the copy of the old document requested from Northumberland Archives. The clerk will follow this up and keep on the agenda for the next meeting. | Cllr. Beattie  Clerk  Cllr. Denson  Clerk |
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| 10. | **Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2021/2022**  **10.1 To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor.**  The clerk reported that the internal auditor had pointed a minor discrepancy on the Asset Register where three items valued at £1 had not been included in the total value. This has now been corrected.  **10.2** **To approve the Annual Governance Statement**  This was approved by councillors, completed by the clerk and signed by the chairman and clerk.  **10.3** **To approve the draft annual accounts for 2021/2022**  These were approved by councillors and signed by the chairman and clerk.  **10.4** **To approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances.**  These were approved by the councillors and signed by the chairman and clerk.  **10.5** **To confirm and approve the Certification of Exemption**  This was approved by councillors and signed by the chairman and clerk.  **10.6 To agree dates for the exercise of public rights.**  The clerk proposed the dates suggested on the pro-forma – 13th June – 22nd July. Councillors agreed.  The Certificate of Exemption will be emailed to PKF Littlejohn LLP. The AGAR and Annual Accounts will be published on the council’s website. The provision for the Exercise of Public Rights will be published on the website and posted on the parish noticeboards. | Clerk |
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| 11. | **Barmoor wind farm committee representation.**  The chairman explained that currently he represents Ford Parish Council on this committee which meets twice a year to agree payments of grants to applicants to the EDF Energy Barmoor Windfarm fund. He asked if any other councillor would like to take over from him. Councillors agreed that he should continue. Cllr. Baker remains as representative. |  |
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| 12. | **Ford School report 2022.**  We currently have 57 pupils in school including our largest Year 4 for a while of 16 pupils. This has led to a dynamic group able to take part in Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award, including one young man climbing Snowden in aid of the Air Ambulance and we're looking forward to our Kielder residential.  Our children are also excited about their transition visits in July to new schools including Berwick Middle, Glendale, Longridge, Barndale, and Mowden.  A slight dip in numbers next year is due a smaller than usual number of children coming up from pre-school, but Pre-school is thriving with nearly 30 children on the books so we're confident of a steady intake and close working relationship with them for many years to come.  Ford staff are wonderful and enthusiastic and have arranged trips and visitors throughout the year of Indoor curling, a Science and Technology Week, Zoolab, Berwick Archives, The Tweed Foundation trout project, Printed Line Gallery, print artist, the Laing Gallery, Linking Project with a contrasting school in Gateshead, Skipping Festival, Skateboarding, Swimming, Forest school, Cookery, Gymnastics and Dance, Rugby, Cricket, football.  After school clubs run by staff and volunteers include Makaton sign language, French, Spanish, I-pad photography, Jubilee Problem solving and Challenges, hockey and Playground Leaders.  We're also working with Keith Webster of RavnClay to produce a Jubilee inspired plaque for the Castle Walled Garden.  Working with Reverend Charlotte we have celebrated in church - Harvest, Christmas, Easter as well as weekly Worship in school.  We managed to get the playground patched up as safe, smooth surface however our ambitious plans for a new playground with equipment will be very long term due to the costs involved.  We have had a drone over the roof to indicate the storm damage which was miraculously minimal - chimney pots off and slipped tiles but the roof will require attention and scaffolding is one of the major outgoings.  We have submitted a bid to the Diocese to help us replace single glazed sash windows which are deteriorating, draughty and temperamental! Similarly new doors are needed around the ground floor.  We have had extremely positive feedback from parents who responded to our latest questionnaire and we feel our frequent Seesaw app updates (with photos and comments from school) keep parents well informed and engaged in their children's learning. Parents and PTA are very supportive.  The Berwick Partnership consultation has been a long time coming but we feel that on balance we could and would adapt to become a thriving Primary school, with up to 90 pupils, without compromising any of our Values (Kindness, Perseverance, Thankfulness) or ethos. Please do take part in the consultation when it opens to the public.  I have been working 2 days a week at Norham school this academic year to support them in the absence of a headteacher and we continue to work closely with them and Lowick and Holy Island, Scremerston and St Cuthberts as small schools within the partnership.  We would love for members of the Ford community to**join us on Friday 27th June for a Jubilee Party on the field** **1.00** - tea and cake and commemorative tree planting.  Yours sincerely  Jacqueline Dalrymple  Headteacher  Hugh Joicey C of E First School, Ford, TD15 2QA  It was noted that there is to be a consultation on the future of the school system in the Berwick Partnership as mentioned in the report above. Councillors and public are encouraged to engage in the consultation when it comes live. |  |
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| 13. | **Police report**  PC Perry and Sgt. Budge attended the meeting. PC Perry reported that there had been two recorded crimes in the Parish since the last meeting in March. There was no wider impact from these crimes. He also reported that he has been trying to be a presence on Ford Hill with a speed gun to try to discourage drivers travelling too fast up and down that stretch of Road. Sgt. Budge explained Northumbria Police have a new system in place to try to connect with the Public. It is called Northumbria Connected and he encouraged as many people as possible to sign up to this as the more that are signed up, the more effective it will be. The clerk commented that the information was included by him in the May edition of the Fourum newsletter.  Cllr. Clark asked if there was a designated wildlife crime officer and PC Perry replied that there is a Wildlife Crime Officer who would lead on these issues but if he is not on duty then other police officers, including himself, have a working knowledge of these issues.  The chairman thanked both officers for coming to the meeting. |  |
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| 14. | **Ford Forge Bridge. (Heatherslaw Bridge.)**  Inspection reports had been received from Patrick Smith, principal engineer for structures with Northumberland County Council. The reports highlight various issues of differing priorities from low to high. Patrick Smith has stated –“ *Painting works to the bridge currently sit within the Council's outstanding workbank of maintenance tasks. Please note that funding allocated to Northumberland County Council for highway maintenance, which includes bridges, is limited.  We must therefore carry out works on a priority basis determined by the needs of Northumberland's entire highway network.”*  He has offered to hold an online meeting with Ford Parish Councillors to discuss the issues and hear councillor’s concerns. Cllrs. Baker, Clark, Webster and Hopper agreed to take part in this meeting. The focus of the meeting would be to try to obtain an estimate of the likely costs of painting the bridge and also whether NCC could do anything about the vegetation, loose and defective pointing and bracing plate which seems to be affecting some of the bridge structure. The clerk will try to arrange this meeting at a time to suit everyone.  It was generally agreed that it is unlikely that any major works will be carried out on the bridge in the near future if left to the County Council. Councillors agreed that it might be worth trying to create a “Friends of Heatherslaw Bridge” group which could be active in trying to raise funds to have some remedial work carried out on the bridge such as re-painting. A group such as this would have access to funding streams that the Parish Council would not likely have. It was also agreed that the bridge should be the focus of the Annual Parish Meeting on 31st May. (see below)  Cllr. Musgrave has been in touch with Natural England and they would like to be kept in touch with any developments. Cllr. Musgrave also pointed out that English Heritage have grants available to help preserve listed buildings and structures. | Clerk |
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| 15. | **Annual Parish Meeting – 31st May, 7pm in Etal Village Hall.**  As above it was agreed that the focus of this meeting should be “Heatherslaw Bridge”. Councillors should encourage as many parish residents to come along as possible. It is also an opportunity for residents to meet the councillors and raise any issues they may have about the parish.  County Councillor Colin Hardy agreed to come to the meeting and give a 5 minute address about his work as councillor.  The meeting will be publicised through the Fourum, on posters and also social media where possible. | All councillors.  Clerk |
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| 16. | **Highways.**   1. Footpath out of Etal. Concerns have been raised via Cllr Hopper about crossing the road at the entrance to Etal Village. The lack of path and poor visibility are an issue. Cllr. Baker has already spoken to Lord Joicey about this and he is speaking to the gardeners to look at options. It was agreed to contact Philip Bradley, NCC footpaths officer to see if he could have a look and possibly offer some advice. 2. Extra traffic exiting Heatherslaw car park following the extension to the car park. These concerns have been raised with Cllr. Hopper. Councillors agreed that extra signage might be a good idea to make traffic travelling along the B6354 aware of vehicles exiting the car park. It was pointed out that the “Slow” road markings need re-painting. Cllr. Hardy suggested contacting Richard McKenzie at NCC for signage advice. 3. Damage to a small footbridge in Ford from a falling tree has raised concerns. Has the bridge been assessed since? As this is on a “Right of Way” then it was agreed the question should be put to the footpaths officer. 4. Pedestrian signage on Ford Bridge. Lord Joicey has asked if there is a possibility of getting some signage to warn motorists that pedestrians use the bridge. It was agreed that this was also a matter for Richard McKenzie. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
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| 17. | **Planning.**  None |  |
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| 18. | **Finance.**   1. It was agreed that the clerk should pay NALC subscriptions and Web site fees - £117.85 and £75 2. The clerk will inform councillors once he obtains a new insurance quote following the current insurer ceasing to offer insurance to parish Councils. 3. It was agreed to pay £16 hall hire to Etal Village Hall   Financial report and bank reconciliation   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  | Expenditure | Income | Balance |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Bank balance | 01/03/22 |  |  |  | 3119.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | Age UK donation | 60.00 |  | 3059.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | CAB donation | 60.00 |  | 2999.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | Ford and Etal PCC donation | 100.00 |  | 2899.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | GNAA donation | 60.00 |  | 2839.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | S W Taylor clerk’s wages | 850.00 |  | 1989.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | S W Taylor clerk’s expenses | 150.00 |  | 1839.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Expense | 14/03/22 | The Fourum newsletter donation | 150.00 |  | 1698.09 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Income | 04/04/22 | VAT refund |  | 97.40 | 1766.49 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Income | 05/04/22 | Joicey Partnership rent of common land |  | 100.00 | 1866.49 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Income | 08/04/22 | NCC Precept |  | 1000.00 | 2866.49 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Bank Balance | 06/05/22 |  |  |  | 2866.49 |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Clerk |
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| 19. | Correspondence:- previously circulated via e-mail  a) CANNY News, NALC E-news, Rural Services Network e-news.  b) Thanks received for donations from GNAA, The Fourum, Age UK, CAB.  c) General Power of Competence – The clerk explained that he thought the council were not able to adopt this as the council does not qualify according to the first two items below - “*A Parish Council may only use the power if they satisfy the criteria for eligibility set out in the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 (SI 2012/965):*   * *At least two thirds of the members of the Council were elected (i.e. not co-opted)* * *The Clerk has a specified qualification and has had relevant training* * *The Council resolved that it is meets the order’s conditions.*  1. The council has received an invite for councillors to consult on Lowick Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation ends on 16th June. | All councillors. |
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| 19. | **Any other business –**   1. The clerk stated that this is likely to be his final year as Parish Clerk. He has been in office for 11 years. He suggested that the council could start the process of finding a replacement for him with a view to possibly mentoring the replacement over a period of months, as there is quite a lot to get to grips with if new to the job. Councillors agreed to consider this. | All councillors |
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| 20. | **Date of next meeting**  The suggested dates of meetings for 2022 –2023 were agreed as follows– 12th July – LWH, 13th Sept. – Crookham, 15th November – Etal, 10th January – LWH, 14th March – Crookham, 9th May - Etal | Cllr. Smith Lacey to book LWH dates. Clerk will book others. |