

WOOLER PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Council, Held on Monday 23rd October 2023 @ 7pm – at Glendale Middle School, Wooler

Present:, Councillors, Mark Napier (Chair), Mark Mather, Duncan Veevers, Caroline Cumming, , Rob Donkin, Joyce Robertson, Rob Parson

In Attendance: Kerren Rodgers (Clerk), Karen Froggat & Lesley Robson GGT, Brian Hurst, Meg Hood and various members of St Marys Church

23/088 APOLOGIES – Ellie Bell (Vice), Helen Deane-Hall

23/089 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION – Lesley Robson – Rural Advocacy & Inclusion Officer based at the GGT addressed the Councillors and informed them of her role. The role is to work with residents in the Glendale area who may not now about services available to them from both NCC and various voluntary groups. Lesley will also identify needs not being met by visiting all areas and talking to residents. Will be working with all key partners including the new transport officer and also Communities Together. Looking to recruit Rural Champions which will be voluntary roles for each area to work with Lesley.

23/090 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST – None

23/091 LOCAL SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT

Northumbria Police report

Crime update - Only two recorded crimes since the last meeting – Parties are the same for both crimes and are known to each other.

No developing issues re rural crime/poaching.

Local issues – There has been some anti social behaviour on South Road reported over the weekend. If comment could be made that obviously there is an empty premises on the road which (A) could be a safety risk to anyone who enters and (B) Anyone found on the premises without authority might be prosecuted.

Local team are aware of us this and will keep an eye out when on patrol.

Community engagement – Local officers are getting into the shops where thefts have occurred to offer reassurance.

For further regular updates on local matters members of the public can go online and search for Northumbria Connected to get signed up for the updates.

The advice from police is if a member of the public sees a crime being reported - a 999 call should be made to report it. If the crime has already happened and the perpetrators have left, then this should be reported either on the website or 101

Councillor Mather noted that he had heard that the Berwick Police Station may be closing but this has been refuted by the Chief Constable.

23/092 PREVIOUS MINUTES

REVIEW & SIGN

To be signed as a correct record minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 25th September '23

The Parish Council read through the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25/9/23 were agreed to be a true and accurate record, Cllr Robertson proposed, Cllr Napier seconded, all agreed. The Chair signed the minutes.

23/093 MATTERS ARISING

REVIEW & DISCUSSION

Bus station defib – Clerk to check the light switch is connected

First School Site – Community Asset transfer update – The read the following report:

The Parish Council responded to a concern about lack of space in St Marys Churchyard Cemetery and lobbied NCC over a number of years. This culminated in an agreement between NCC and the PC that the playing field area of the Old First School Site would be transferred to the PC under a Community Asset Transfer and then the PC would lease the area to St Marys to run as a cemetery for a pepper corn rent of £1 per year.

St Marys agreed that a Community Management Team should be set up and the Parish Council and NCC proceeded to complete the legal paperwork, including lengthy discussions with the Dept of Education to get a change of use of the playing field. The Parish Council has already paid for planning permission & legal fees and County Councillor Mather negotiated with NCC for the site to be cleared and boundary fence to be installed at their expense.

Despite numerous requests, meetings, emails etc the Community Management Team has failed to be established. Various reasons for this failure have been given, including lack of uptake from members of Community Groups, ground not being able to be consecrated as not owned by the Church and amount of time that would be required to administer a cemetery. This is a very disappointing response and has far reaching implications for the whole of the community.

The Parish Council must now have serious discussions as the implications of the Cemetery being run by the PC Clerk will have long reaching financial consequences both to the PC and wider Wooler Community.

It is proposed that a Parish Council Cemetery Committee should be immediately set up to look at the financial implications of running the Cemetery. An increase in Precept would affect all residents and would be needed to be agreed, at the latest, at the December meeting.

Discussions then followed and the Chair proposed that a Cemetery Committee should be set up immediately to investigate the costs that incurred if the Parish Council were to take on the running of the new cemetery and the financial impact on the precept.- all agreed. Cllr Mather has requested a quote from NCC for grass cutting.

- **Request from EA to erect safety fence on South Road – adjacent to weir** The EA had presented plans for a new safety fence on South Road. Cllr Mather proposed acceptance but to request that the fence be made of metal not wood – all agreed
- **Caretakers Work/Playpark Inspection timetable - Update –** Works include repairs to bins which Cllr Mather is to try and reclaim from NCC.
- **Tory Site – Decision on signage, Woodland trust application -** The quotes provided were discussed and it was agreed that 3 boards were to be commissioned. Further discussions followed regarding work required to the plinth, it was agreed that Cllrs Mather, Donkin and Veevers would attend site to discuss options with Glendale Engineering. Report to be made at next meeting and site to be made safe. The woodland trust packs were discussed and it was suggested that the hedging packs could help to act as a barrier. The meeting agreed to delegate the decision regarding amount of hedging required and also number of trees required to replant on Tory Site to Cllr Deane-Hall and Clerk.
- **Christmas Carol Concert date reschedule required–** Discussions over a revised date and it was proposed that the clerk was to request Tuesday 19th December.
- **Playzone Update – Consideration of taking lead on project –** Cllr Mather proposed that Kathie Keady, Sports Development Manager NCC be invited to meeting with GGT & PC to discuss options as PC already over-stretched – all agreed
- **Bus station toilets waiting area – decoration –** A quote had been received for the painting of the waiting area – Karen Froggatt CEO of GGT kindly offered to fund the decoration. Clerk to check with NCC that they are happy for decoration to take place.

23/095 SCHOOL FARM FIELD SITE**DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- **Pergola/seating Community Orchard Site –** It was agreed that the installation is to be deferred until the Spring.
- **Repairs to polytunnel –** Cllr Donkin concerned that further delay will cause damage. Ideas discussed as to possible “fixes” and contact is to be made with local contractor. Cllr Donkin noted that a grass cutter had been donated but will need a new battery. A memorial tree in memory of Patsy and Buntz Morton is to be planted in thanks for the mower – all agreed.

23/096 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

REPORT & DECISION

Cllr Mather reported on the meeting taking place over the yellow lines on South Road. Works on A697 on footpath are looking very good and hopefully will be completed before poor weather sets in. Bus timetables are still an issue – people with disabilities that need to get a connection from High Fair can contact Des Hood – Des is aware of the NCC rules relating to this service. Pot-hole trial now finished with results expected in November. Fixmystreet working well – over 14000 fixes already. Still awaiting a date for the planning training from Rob Murfin.

Incident support room was opened for the latest Storm, but pleased at response which was a great improvement on Storm Arwen response. Highlighted a couple of issues with getting information to “on-call” teams. Wooler emergency response is still progressing with grant application for emergency centre having been submitted to Powergrid. New signage is to be installed and all temporary signs to be removed. NCC have paid for the fencing and clearing of the site at the Old First School and a photo of the handover is to be organised. 2 new picnic tables are to be installed on the site – thanks to Frances Pove, NCC. Oliver Road is to be re-surfaced. The boundary review has decided to change the Wooler Ward quite dramatically, It will have current parishes and also Hedgeley, Eglingham, North & South Charlton etc. This will now be the 2nd biggest ward in the county.

Cllr Robertson noted that the long stay car-park temporary signage is potentially mis-leading and some users are using Padgepool Place. Cllr Cumming noted that the new long stay car park is being used.

23/097 SCOTTS PARK/BRYONS PARK

UPDATE & DECISION

- **Scotts Pk Play Area** – working group update Cllr Parson reported on further progress with quotes requested from Wickstead, Playdale and Sovereign and noted that Friends of Wooler Playparks constitution was being set up with the help of GGT. Sign has been attached to wheelchair swing. Cllr Donkin noted that the basket swing at Brysons Park is in poor repair due to vandalism. Discussion followed regarding funding availability. Cllr Mather suggested using some of the funds he had donated from his small grants pot. A new swing will cost £948.83 to replace – Cllr Napier proposed to buy a replacement – all agreed.
- **Drainage Cover repairs** – Cllr Veevers has new parts to repair and will complete works this week.

23/098 PLANNING MATTERS

DISCUSSION & DECISION

- **23/03604/FUL** Re-submission: Construction of a new 2 storey 4/5 bedroom detached house with an attached garage and external garden room. The proposals include for a new pedestrian and vehicular access to the site (Self/Custom Build). **Land North of 17 Victoria Road, Wooler, NE71 6DX** – Discussions followed regarding change to plans and what comments the PC can make. It was agreed that parking must be available wholly within the curtilage of the property and that it should be for use as a permanent residence only.
- **23/03774/FUL** Conservation roof lights to the front and dormers to the rear, additionally minor elevation changes including closing up the two openings for the doors (one removed entirely, the other converted to a window) and a new door opening proposed more centrally. **46 High Street, Wooler, NE71 6BG** – Whilst additional rental units are welcomed, concern over lack of parking is noted. The Parish Council would need confirmation that off street parking is available and that these units are for permanent residence not holiday lets.

23/099 PLANNING DECISIONS

UPDATE & DECISION

- None

23/100 BUDGET v ACTUALS – Precept considerations

REPORT, DISCUSSION & DECISION

It was proposed by Cllr Mather that a finance committee be established and meet prior to next meeting to review costs and establish a budget – all agreed

23/101 OUTSIDE BODIES

REPORT & DISCUSSION

Cllr Robertson reported on the Annual Town & Parish Council Conference and the fact that NALC Officer had offered training. Given other PC's locally are also looking for training, then it was agreed that a quote was to be asked from NALC for providing training and contact with other PC's to see what uptake there may be.

23/102 COUNCILLOR'S TASKS/QUESTIONS**REPORT & DISCUSSION**

Cllr Cumming will also make contact to see if a Christmas tree will be available for the 25th November and also noted that a 5ft tree was needed for the URC Christmas Tree display.

Cllr Donkin asked if the PC are going to undertake watering of plants on The Peth if the planters were filled? Further discussions took place regarding providing plants for the High Street shops and what plants would be needed for the Parish Council planters for next year.

The bin on the Peth is to remain in situ as it was agreed that it was not needed near the CO-OP.

23/103 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 27th November 2023 at 7pm

23/104 AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:**23/105 FINANCE –****DISCUSSION & DECISION**

- Payments for authorisation – SEE TABLE BELOW

IONIS-emails	30.00	DD
EE mobile	16.26	DD
Tom Armstrong –Caretaker	420.00	Tfr
NCC – Oct payroll costs	998.35	Tfr
National Allotment Society – annual membership	66.00	Tfr
Mazars External audit	378.00	Tfr
Imperative Training – Defib battery	286.20	Tfr
Key cutting – changing room door	8.00	Tfr
Sanderson, McCreath & Edney – CAT Transfer	720.00	Tfr
M Fairbairn – Winter plants	96.86	Tfr

Two signatories to authorise the above payments

Signed:

Signed: