

Whalton Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 17 January 2024

- 1) **Present:** Parish Councillors Andy Shaw, Nicola Robson, Martin Grix and Marlene Young
- 2) **In attendance:** Peter Ware (Clerk)
- 3) **Apologies for absence:** Anne Lennard, Stephen Trobe, County Cllr Lyle Darwin
- 4) **The Chair's opening remarks:** In Cllr Trobe's absence Cllr Young took the Chair and thanked Cllr Grix for his previous efforts. Acting Chair at the next meeting is scheduled to be Cllr Trobe.
- 5) **Public Questions & Participation:** two Twizell residents, led by Sandra Charlton, attended the meeting for a bus stop update, after recent extensive email exchanges with NCC officers, about that and the new service 777 due to commence on 28 January 2024. Clerk suggested residents and councillors should contact NCC about its missed opportunity to get Cussins to install a bus stop, and also the lack of NCC consultation over the new bus route. Cllr Shaw suggested the bus stop issue should be raised with Cussins' property management company by residents. Clerk to circulate a list of NCC contacts to lobby.
- 6) **Declarations of interests and the grant of dispensations:** none
- 7) **Report from the Police:** none
- 8) **Report from the County Councillor:** via a message to clerk, County Cllr Darwin said he was considering holding a meeting for Whalton & Ogle residents in February or March, and asked for key issues to be flagged up
- 9) **Minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2023** were agreed as a true record and was signed by the Acting Chair.
- 10) **Any matters arising from the minutes if not minuted elsewhere:** none
- 11) **Planning Matters**
 - a) 23/03841/LBC Whalton House – it was noted that permission was granted on 12 December 2023
 - b) 23/04323/FUL Close House – the Council responded to NCC planning with no objections on 18 December 2023
 - c) 23/04485/FUL & 23/04486/LBC Lyn Law Farm House – the Council responded to NCC planning with no objections on 28 December 2023
 - d) 23/04621/FUL The House Ogle - the Council responded to NCC planning with no objections on 10 January 2024
 - e) Window frames at Fox Wood – no response from resident about their pre application enquiry to NCC, clerk sent a reminder.
- 12) **Highway Issues:**
 - a) via a message to clerk, a resident had contacted Cllr Lennard about persistent flooding about 200 yards from the T junction in Ogle village in the direction of Ponteland where the road is at its lowest point and by the bridge over the burn. County Cllr Darwin contacted Highway Inspector Lee Dundas to follow up.
 - b) NCC confirmed the Parish Council are responsible for the maintenance of the flashing 20mph signs. Clerk reported they were purchased prior to Stephen Rickitt's period as clerk from 2013, at a cost of £6,430 and despite an extensive search no invoice /owner's manual/ serial numbers can be found. £1,700 was subsequently spent with Unipart/Dorman in March 2019 updating the signs. Cllr Shaw suggested replacing with a new pair that shows the actual speed, incorporating data tracking information, rather than spending more on the existing set.

13) Environmental Matters: members asked for more information about the proposed replacement posts work, re post locations, wood type and hourly rate, and also about the need to replace/restore the missing chains. Clerk to follow up with Gavin Christie.

14) Ogle Broadband: no progress

15) EV Charging Points: no progress.

16) Community Resilience: clerk passed NPg Foundation information to Cllr Lennard.

17) Correspondence & information items: all NALC, CAN and NCC e-letters were all noted

18) Parish Clerk Vacancy: clerk confirmed intention to leave at the end of March, although he would be available to complete the year end AGAR process to the end of April if needed. Members agreed wording for vacancy to be put in the next NALC e-newsletter.

19) Finance:

a) Cllr Robson explained that Lloyds Bank had mislaid Cllr Lennard's signatory documents for the online bank account, so they would have to be resent.

b) The clerk gave a report of this year's spend to date, with a Finance Summary circulated, showing a balance of £10,924.78 after a VAT claim was added and today's payments were authorised.

c) Payments were authorised for the Caretaker's November and December invoices and clerk's salary for December and January at a total cost of £448.00.

d) Previous Clerk overpayment: despite a valid judgment being issued against the defendant (the previous clerk) by default, there has still been no attempt to repay the money. Next step is to get a warrant issued, which will be sent for execution to the court covering the defendant's address, a bailiff will then seek to recover the monies. The warrant cost (£83.00) will be added to the amount to be recovered. Members were reluctant to do this without giving the previous clerk one more opportunity to repay the money, so Cllr Shaw to contact her husband, who is a Morpeth Town Councillor.

20) AOB:

a) via message to clerk, Cllr Lennard asked whether the Council or Village Hall Committee should consider applying for an energy efficiency grant. Clerk to re-circulate relevant CAN email.

b) Cllr Robson tendered her resignation, with effect from the next Annual General Meeting which is usually scheduled for May 2024.

Date and time of next meeting: 7.30pm on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at Whalton Village Hall

_____ **Chairman**

_____ **Date**