

**Blanchland Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting**

Blanchland Village Hall

On Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 7:00pm

1. **Present:** Councillors, Mr T Bowers, Chair, Mr M Kennedy, Mr M Forster, Mr D Kelly, Clerk Mrs C Asquith.
2. **Apologies:** Mr R O'Connor, Mr C Horncastle
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Councillor Forster BCDO Chair, Councillor Kelly, Village Hall Committee, Carolyn Asquith, Treasurer Blanchland Village Hall, Blanchland Artisan Markets 2023
4. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st November 2023:** Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - 5.1 **Drainage and Highway Maintenance:** Issues still at Birkside, but no relevant updates from Highways. There has been no work to the curb at Clapshaw and as such there is continuing erosion in the car park of the Village Hall each time it rains, Councillor Kelly has cleared out some of the drains on Clapshaw but more substantial work needs to be done to prevent further damage in wet weather. Baybridge drainage soes seem to be working and have been running clear after heavy rain. The issue on Hexham Road has eased as gullies have been cleared, however the pipe is still not sorted and as such may cause issues in rainy weather, Michael Forster to monitor. The Clerk is to contact Glen Harrison and Richard Mackenzie for updates, (cc Colin Horncastle)
 - 5.2 **Slaley Forest Access Public Meeting:** restrictions are now in place and signage has been placed at the bottom of Baybridge and at the bottom of Shildon Road. There seems to have been a noticeable difference in the amount of motorised traffic and there is planned work to go ahead to repair damage and then reopen seasonally. Clerk to update as required.
 - 5.3 **Bridle Paths and Public Footpaths:** Councillors Kennedy and Bowers, met with Duncan Lovatt from NCC and Micaheals Evans from Savills with the Parish Clerk to monitor and discuss the riverside path and the cinder path on Friday 16th February. They walked the distance of the path and took in the comments that were raised by the Clerk. The route was not at its muddiest and as such was hard to appreciate the difference a walker would experience after heavy and sustained rainfall. The discussions included looking at ways to improve existing paths and also the possibility of taking some of the field to the north. Missing gates were raised and no decisions made. The cinder path was not resolved and some research needs to be done to look into who maintains the path and what rights were agreed at the time of installation. Michael Kennedy to discuss with BCDO and to advise Clerk accordingly who will liaise with Micahel Evans. Both paths are still under discussion and although some positives there are no quick fixes. The Clerk has received an encouraging email from Duncan Lovatt with a new contact Cat Kilner, the Clerk will email both and Micahel Evans over the course of next week. Clerk to monitor and liaise accordingly.
 - 5.4 **Grit and Salt Piles:** Grit bins all installed and full. Councillor Bowers will check levels, but as it hasn't been a very cold winter they should be ok for this year. The Clerk asked if they could have fasteners on, as the lids blow open and rocks have been used to hold them closed. They can be moved into the Car Park as soon as no longer required.
 - 5.5 **Blanchland Place Making Scheme:** No updates from Savills, Clerk to contact Michael Evans for updates.

5.6 Warm Hub/Northern Power Grid Foundation. The Village Hall accepted the generator with thanks and fired it up successfully on the day when the village was without power due to maintenance; a few local people used the facilities and it has not been needed since. It has fuel and additives and should be good for 18 months. The VH Committee will look at an appropriate cover to protect it from the elements and to help it blend in better.

5.7 Blanchland Village Spring and Christmas Fair: The Artisan Markets are all booked and planned for the year ahead, May 6th, Sunday 11th August, Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th November. As no further support is needed this item can be removed from the agenda for the next meeting.

5.8 Transport: No updates, the Councillors decided that as this item does not seem to have any leverage and interest appears to have waned it will be removed from the agenda for the next meeting, but can be picked up again should any new information present itself

5.9 Litter Pick: Subsequent to the meeting the Lord Crewe are organising a Litter Pick for Earth Hour on Saturday 23rd March 2024

5.10 Blanchland Community Buildings: The Committee are settling into their new roles, there are events planned which will be advertised on noticeboards, A Frames and on Facebook.

5.11 PC Laptop and Email: The Clerk is in the process of changing over to Google. The Committee members will be notified by email with the new email address etc. If there are no issues with the transition this item will be removed from the agenda for the next meeting.

6. Finances

6.1 Current statement/Balance: £670.48 - Precept to be received in April

6.2 Petty Cash: Less than £1 in petty cash the Council agreed to pay £15 to top up petty cash. (Chq no. 69), Clerk keeps spreadsheet updated and keeps all receipts.

6.3 Clerk Wages: £109.00 (cheque 70 signed by TB and MF)

6.4 Donations: No charitable donation request.

7. New Business:

7.1 Mrs Asquith asked on behalf of the Village Hall Committee if the Parish Council would contribute £100 towards the purchase of a waste bin for the Village Hall car Park. The Parish Council voted in favour and the cheque will be made available when required.

7.2 Fix My Street, the Clerk recommended that she advertise the app on facebook as anyone can record/report issues and the more reports are lodged then the more likely the issue will be resolved promptly.

7.3 Town and Parish Conference 14th March. No one was able to attend.

Meeting closed 20:30 pm

Date of next Parish Council Meeting/ AGM : Tuesday 21st May 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall