

Whittingham, Callaly & Alnham Parish Council
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PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Parish Council held on Tuesday 20 February 2024, at 7.00pm at Whittingham Memorial Hall.

Present : B Wood, Chair (BW), R Bateson (RB), A Whincup, (AW), K Armstrong (KA), Prof. J Clark (JC), J Renner (JR), K Turvey (KT) and A Young (AY)

In Attendance : Linda Pullan, Parish Clerk (LP) and a member of the public

ITEM	DISCUSSION
012/24 Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest	E Gardiner (EG), J Bolton (JB), D Bateson (DB) and S Gray (SG) Declarations of interest – AW to abstain from voting on Memorial Hall Grant Application
013/24 Public Questions	None
014/24 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	The minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2024 were APPROVED as a true record.
015/24 Matters Arising	<p>i. Neighbourhood Plan : BW and JC had been discussing this over the past few weeks. After the last Parish Council meeting, Councillors had felt they couldn't vote on a consultant as the names had not been on the Agenda and that there were various concerns raised which needed to be explored further and dealt with properly. A concern was expressed how the Neighbourhood Plan differs to the Northumberland Local Plan. JC explained they won't be able to compare until the Consultant is involved. KT asked if they have to implement what the Consultant recommends or can they withdraw at anytime. JC explained there are various stages which need approval before moving onto the next stage.</p> <p>It was pointed out that an Article had been written in the Vale News entitled "The Neighbourhood Plan" which had asked residents to send to the PC email address buildings, structures and sites that have local historic interest or connections, so a list could be compiled. This Article had not been written by the Parish Council. BW expressed concern that he had already received a complaint from a local resident with concerns regarding this Article. It was asked if the Steering Committee had backed this Article. JC said it had been written by a member of the Steering Committee and that NCC have a list of historic buildings. It was pointed out that this was the 2nd Article that had been written without the PC approval.</p>

Concerns were raised about the structure of the Steering Committee, which should include a mix of people from the Parish and the right focus. It was felt that the Neighbourhood Plan should help the villages move forward and improve the Parishes. JC was happy to circulate the Minutes from the Steering Committee. It was felt that the PC had not been given all the additional information and that there needed to be more collaboration between the PC and the Steering Committee. JC suggested that the Steering Committee and the PC amalgamate to discuss further. It was pointed out that at the last PC meeting it had been agreed that the PC would review all the documents to be sent to the Consultant in its entirety, and not just the questionnaires summary. It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should be put on hold until the PC can review what is being sent to the consultant.

- ii. Path along riverside : AW reported that the Landowner was happy to go ahead, however it wasn't a right of way, only a permissive path which would need to be maintained by the PC. KA to liaise with Biddlestone Quarry and Lee Charleton for work to start in the Spring. AW explained the path would need to be on higher ground so didn't flood. AY said the gravel can be put in his yard until needed, or behind the white railings.
- iii. Village Farm Restricted Byway : AW reported there had been a Motorcross Rally a few weeks ago, in the evening. The police had been called out, due to resident safety concerns, worries and damage being caused. The police have closed the track next to Village Farm and have given permission for signs to be placed denying vehicle access.

016/24 Highways Matters

RB has 2 cast iron road signs in various states of repair. BW has been trying to contact Mike Mason regarding refurbishment and will review at the next PC meeting. KA showed the PC a photo of a newly restored sign and bench at Branton/Powburn.

017/24 Planning Applications

24/00207/FUL Hill Top Cottage, Alnham – Demolition of conservatory and construction of two-storey extension, first floor extension with ground floor open porch and 1no dormer window. **PC SUPPORTED.**

An email had been received from the above applicant, thanking the PC for their continued support with this planning application.

24/00316/FUL Low Barton Farm, Whittingham – Single storey garden room side extension to west elevation. **PC SUPPORTED.**

There were no applications received since the agenda had been prepared.

018/24 Finance

- i. To receive the monthly finance report for February (*Circulated with Agenda*)
- ii. To approve invoices and expense claims received prior to, or during the meeting
- iii. Clerk's salary 1 – 29 February '24 15 hours @ £15.00 per hour = £225 to be approved. **Approved.**
- iv. VAT reclaim received for 21.3.22 – 30.11.23 £249.89

**019/24 Section 137
Grants**

A copy of the budget and analysis had been circulated with the Agenda. BW explained there is a maximum of £9.93 per elector that can be spent on Grants. There are currently 531 residents over the Parishes, therefore the maximum that can be allocated is £5272.83. However, the annual Precept received is only £5035.00. KA explained that she had received an email from St Bartholomew Church regarding an email they had received in August from Col. Hutchinson's daughter. KA had contacted the family, who have stated the family don't mind what/where the donation is spent, the PC can decide. It was noted that last year the PC had more capital, as KA didn't claim for Parish Clerk duties, so were able to give grant funding. Future PC costs were mentioned ie construction of riverside path, maintenance and replacement of benches and village assets, the loan interest, a new defibrillator for Whittingham and the extended warranty for the speed signs. The PC had received 4 applications for S137 Grant Funding. After discussion and consideration the PC agreed to award to the following 3 organisations included in the financial year ending 31 March 2024 :

Friends of the Vale £550

1st Whittingham BP Scout Group £400

The Parochial Church Council of Whittingham with Edlingham and Bolton Chapel for the churchyard at Bartholomews £1,100

020/24 Donation

Endowment Fund : A summary from JC had been circulated with the Agenda. EG had forwarded her summary. Concerns were expressed regarding the PC rules and the legality of the audit, plus the amount of work involved as would need trustees and signatories. JC explained the 2 foundations he would recommend would do all the admin themselves. JR enquired what would happen if Parish Councils amalgamate in the future. JC said you can specify what the money is spent on and can express the current geographical areas. BW had concerns regarding the need to become a charity and paying tax. KA pointed out that a decision would need to be made before March before the audit. AY felt that a permanent structure in the village would be able to be shown to Col. Hutchinson. It was decided to vote at the next PC meeting.

021/24 Correspondence

- i. Warmer Homes Leaflets received from NCC – placed on village noticeboard and PC website
- ii. Correspondence received from Northumbrian Water regarding sewage treatment works in Whittingham – placed on village noticeboard
- iii. Correspondence received from Northumbria Police, introducing Police Community Support Officers responsible for area
- iv. Correspondence received from NCC regarding disposal of household DIY waste – placed on village noticeboard and will be put in next edition of Vale News

**022/24 Any General
Matters**

- i. LP had received an invite for Councillors to attend the Town and Parish Council Conference on 14 March 2024.
- ii. LP had received a poster from NCC to raise awareness for the requirement to bring photo ID to polling stations. Placed on village noticeboard.
- iii. LP had received an email from a resident requesting name plates to identify the start and end of Alnham Village. LP to place request on fixmystreet.com.

023/24 Time and Date of Tuesday 19 March 2024 at 7.00 pm Whittingham Memorial Hall
Next Meeting

Signed as a True Record of the Meeting Chair _____ **Date** _____