

Hexhamshire and District Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8th January 2009
at 7.30 pm at Whitley Chapel Parish Hall.

13.1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Alison Tweddle and the Clerk, Mandy Charlton.

Present

Parish Councillors Brian Massey (Chairman), Hilary Kristensen, Anne Porter, Malcolm Caisley, Mike Linklater, Andrew Nixon, Davy Short and David Trotter and Unitary Authority Councillor Colin Horncastle.

13.2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th December 2008.

It was noted that David Trotter was present and, that apart, the minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

13.3. Matters Arising

8.11.3 Alison Tweddle will again be requested to pursue this matter with Bobby Gordon.

11.9.1 The Chairman and Land Factor have exchanged correspondence regarding the lease on the field. Land Factor currently await their client's views on the matter.

11.15.1 The chairman has communicated with Mr John Price of the N.C.C by letter (on 17th December) and by phone. Mr Price was happy with the pressure created by the publicity arising from the press report and radio interview and would be pursuing the matter this month.

12.6.1 The Chairman has sought a quotation from Mr Swanson for repairs to the Millennium seats.

12.6.3 Information is awaited from Peter Trevelyan on the proposed N.C.C 'Community involvement' policy.

12.11 The Chairman and Andrew Nixon had met with the area surveyor, Mr Mel Richardson and had pointed out some of the current highway and roadside ditching problems.

12.16.2 The Chairman had visited Liz Sobell before Christmas and handed over gardening vouchers for £50 in appreciation by the Parish Council of her work on B.O.A.T's issues.

13.3.1 Update on Play Area in Parish

As previously reported, Malcolm Caisley and Anne Porter had attended a play builder programme run by NCC. and had submitted an initial grant application. They have now been invited to submit very quickly a follow up application proposal. The Councillors were very supportive of the idea of a play area on the sports field and it was agreed that the application should be pursued. It was however felt that the proposal should also now quickly involve the wider community and other Parishioners will therefore be drawn into the discussions by

Malcolm and Anne, who will also publicise the project particularly in the Courant 'Hexhamshire Notes'.

13.3.2 Update on Parish website

It was pointed out that information is still awaited from the school through Mike Linklater and also from the Vicar.

13.4 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

13.5 Matters for Discussion with Unitary and District Councillors

13.5.1 It was agreed that the Chairman should re-submit the request for a Review of the Electoral arrangements for the Parish Council as soon as the boundary Committee have completed their present review relating to the Unitary Authority.

13.5.2 Colin Horncastle explained that the Unitary Authority is looking to make savings in its budget of £20 million pounds possibly requiring a 20% cut in services across the board. This may involve 800 redundancies perhaps costing the authority 30 million pounds. He made reference to locality officers and the ongoing discussion on the format of Community forums. Concern was expressed to him over the lack of gritting, particularly on the school bus routes. Councillors should contact him on 0797 6677305 regarding any such problems as they occur.

13.6. Correspondence

13.6.1 The list of correspondence considered was circulated at the meeting and is attached to the principal Minutes. It was deemed that no action should be taken in respect of the correspondence 'to be actioned'.

13.7 Planning Matters

A planning application for extensions to Springwell Cottage, Whitley Chapel under reference 20081167 was supported by the Councillors.

13.8 Financial Report

Treasurer's Account - £4773.64 (There are however un-presented cheques totalling £830)

The balance includes:

- 1) A grant to offset the projected cost of setting up the Parish website of £500
- 2) A one off grant from Tynedale Council of £1,700

Wetlands Account - £569.96

Savings Account - £8761.17

13.8.1 It was agreed that a cheque be drawn in favour of the chairman for £50 as reimbursement for the gardening voucher of £50 he had passed over to Mrs Liz Sobell

13.9 Application for a grant from Tynedale Citizens Advice Bureau

This request had been brought forward from the previous meeting. The Chairman declared a personal interest in the matter and handed over the chair for this agenda item to the Vice-Chairman Mike Linklater. On a majority vote it was agreed to make a donation of £100 to the Citizens Advice Bureau

13.9 Grant from Tynedale Council

Tynedale Council has paid over to the Parish Council a one-off grant of £1,700. This represents Hexhamshire's apportionment of the £75,000 that Tynedale Council had decided to distribute arising from its receipt of an LPSA grant from central government, It was agreed that this sum should be transferred to the sports field savings account and ring fenced for capital expenditure items such as mole drainage of the sports field, construction of a hard standing on the sports field immediately adjoining the Hall and a War Memorial plaque (estimated at up to £250).

13.10 Precept for 2009/10

Consideration was given to the circulated draft budget for 2009/10 (copy attached to the principal Minutes)

The following decisions were reached :

- a) The Clerk's salary will be increased from £815.04 to £840
- b) Administration costs will be reduced by use of e-mail for all the Clerk's communications to Councillors Caisley, Kristensen, Massey, Porter and Trotter.
- c) Arrangements will be instigated or progressed to put in hand the capital expenditure items comprising mole drainage of the sports field, construction of a hard standing on the sports field immediately adjoining the Hall and a War Memorial plaque.
- d) The grant of £500 for the setting up of the website will continue to be ring fenced for that expenditure.
- e) £1,000 will be transferred from the general account to the sports field savings account as identified within this year's budget, subject to adequate funds being available in that account.
- f) The precept for 2009/10 will remain at the same level as for the current year at £7344 (to include the annual apportioned election expenses).
- g) As from May, the revised approved budget for 2009/10 will be circulated with the Minutes and incorporate a column showing the actual outgoings incurred to date'

13.11 Common Land

It was agreed that no specific management action should be taken with regard to the common land near Dye House other than a watchful eye to ensure that it is in no way built on or enclosed.

13.13 Highways and Footpaths

The following concerns were expressed:

- a) Damage by a snowplough to the fence adjoining the cattle grid at King's Law.
- b) The ford below Low Ardley Farm is now unpassable for a wheel chair
- c) The roadside 'lay-by' below Barker house is seriously disintegrating.
The Chairman will pursue these concerns at a, b and c above.
- d) The footpaths leading off the Red Lead Mill track are covered in dog faeces. Anne Porter will keep a watching brief.

13.14 Sports Field

Andrew Nixon will procure a quotation for drainage works on the sports field. He will also provide the Chairman with a specification for repairs to the tennis court 'surround' following which the Chairman will obtain competitive quotations including an estimate from Andrew Nixon.

13.15 BOATs

Davy Short again reminded the meeting of the modification Orders which have recently been enacted by the County Council.

13.16 Reports

13.16.a Wetlands

Records of the Wetlands such as the 10 year management plan, photos etc. can shortly be stored in the Parish Hall. Anne Porter will discuss with Malcolm Caisley the possibility of some drawings being exhibited on the Parish Hall walls

A scheme involving the construction of steps down to the Hide will be accompanied by a school workshop in order to retain and create ongoing interest in the Wetlands

13.16.b Parish Hall

Work continues on the improvements to the Hall
Burns Night celebrations will be held on 17th January

13.16.c School

Nothing to report.

13.17 Date of next meeting

Thursday, 22nd January at 7.30 specifically to consider the responses to the Parish questionnaire and, if necessary, any developments with the 'play area' grant application.

13.18 Any Other Business

None requiring attention.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed.