

Minutes of the meeting of Hexhamshire and District Parish Council held on Thursday 12th February 2009 at Whitley Chapel Parish Hall.

2.1. Apologies for Absence

Hilary Krsitensen, David Trotter and Colin Horncastle.

Councillors Present

Brian Massey, Anne Porter, Alison Tweddle, Andrew Nixon, Davy Short, Mike Linklater, Peter Trevelyan and Malcolm Caisley.

The Chairman announced the very sad news of the death of Callum Stobbs and requested that the Parish Council stand as a mark of respect. The Chairman will write to Callum's parents to offer the condolences of the Parish Council.

2.2. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8th January 2009 and Extraordinary meeting held on 22nd January 2009.

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meetings.

2.3 Matters Arising

8.11.3 It was reported that Bobby Gordon was not interested in making changes to the hedge to improve the road end at present.

11.9.1 The Parish Council agreed that the Chairman be given authority to act on its behalf in relation to the potential purchase of the glebe land. The Chairman agreed that he would keep the Vicar informed of the Parish Council's intentions regarding its interest in this land.

12.6.1 The Chairman had contacted Michael Swanson who would be interested in repairing the seats but who has not yet submitted a quotation.

12.6.2 Peter Trevelyan reported that he had completed and handed in the Parish Council's response regarding the NCC Community Involvement.

11.15.1 The Chairman agreed to follow up the water supply situation with N.C.C.

13.3.2 Some problems with accessing the website were reported. The Wetlands information had been supplied but had not yet appeared on the website and this was to be investigated. It was agreed that the Parish Council should take responsibility for the website. It is understood that each section was to have a password so that the section could be updated by the appropriate individuals. It was agreed that the minutes, once approved, and the agenda should be included on the website.

Review of Electoral Arrangements – The Chairman would report back on this matter as soon as he had further information.

2.4. Public Participation

There were no issues raised.

2.5. Matters for Discussion with Unitary and District Councillors

2.5.1 The Chairman reported that the official end date for the District Council is 31.03.09.

2.6 Correspondence

2.6.1 Receipts had been received from the Great North Ambulance, Tynedale Community Hospice, Tynedale Citizens Advice Bureau and Mencap, all in relation to the donations made by the Parish Council.

2.6.2 Permission had been refused relating to the Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed rear extension and front porch at Springwell Cottage, Whitley Chapel.

2.6.3 A request for a donation was received from Community Action Northumberland. It was agreed that a donation of £15 be made.

2.6.4 Correspondence had been received from Northumberland Warm Zone relating to free home insulation. It was agreed that this information should be included in the magazine.

2.6.5 A request for a donation had been received from the NTC. It was agreed that this should be considered in the next financial year.

2.6.6 Briefing notes had been received from BDO Stoy Hayward in connection with the audit.

2.6.7 An invitation to the Chairman had been received for the Chairman to attend a Royal Garden Party. He was not eligible, having previously been to one.

2.7 Financial Report

Treasurer's Account - £1925.72

Savings Account - £10500.70

Wetlands Account - £570.00

2.7.1 Invoices had been received from Whitley Chapel Parish Hall for hire of the hall for Parish Council meetings from October to December for £30. An invoice had also been received for £15 in connection with the Sunday football. It was agreed that these should be paid and a cheque was raised.

2.7.2 The question was raised about the payment for the extraordinary meeting and it was agreed that the Chairman procure an invoice for same.

2.7.3 An invoice had been received from Pat Wilson for apportioned BOAT's expenses of £22.55. It was agreed that this should be paid and a cheque was raised.

2.8 Freedom of Information Act

- 2.8.1 The Chairman stated that the Parish Council is required to be more pro-active in keeping the public informed of the Council's affairs and the website has to be used for this purpose. It was agreed that if members of the public requested information in 'hard back' form a charge of 10p per sheet will be made. The budget should also be put onto the website.
- 2.8.2 It was agreed that the Chairman will put together the information for inclusion on the website and add Councillor's phone numbers and email addresses.

2.9 Belonging Communities

- 2.9.1 The proposed meeting had been cancelled due to the weather. The Chairman will circularise by e-mail with a time /date for the re-arranged meeting.

2.10 Parish Plan

- 2.10.1 It was agreed that a copy of the results from the questionnaire should be made available in the Parish Hall.
- 2.10.2 It was agreed that actual expenses incurred in connection with the questionnaire should be paid for by the Council
- 2.10.3 Malcolm Caisley and Brian Massey had held a meeting and had identified Certain areas which could be dealt with fairly quickly.
The placing of new notice boards incorporating a map was discussed with the possible siting at Dipton Mill and at the school crossroads. It was reported that Slaley's notice board had cost £3.5K but that they had obtained a grant of £1k. It was agreed that this proposal should be further investigated.
Slaley also publish leaflets (sponsored by Northumbria Water and Tynedale Council) of walks which are included on their notice board. Walk leaflets are to be discussed at a later date.
- 2.10.4 Malcolm Caisley will speak to the organiser of the Slaley Film Club regarding the organisation of the same.
- 2.10.5 Malcolm Caisley agreed to get back to those people who had shown an interest in volunteering to take part in various activities.
- 2.10.6 It was agreed that Malcolm Caisley will produce a draft Parish Plan from the data obtained.
- 2.10.7 The question of Farm Watch was raised and there is apparently one in place for some of the farms in the area. It was agreed that this could be expanded but that it need not be Parish Council led. The Chairman agreed to speak to Ian Robinson on the matter..
- 2.10.8 Traffic calming outside the school was discussed. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to seek advice regarding what measures could be effectively put in place.
- 2.10.9 The possibility of running courses was discussed. It was pointed out that outreach courses are run but that there is limited uptake and concern was expressed about who would take the lead if courses were to take place.

2.10.11 The letting of the properties at St Helens was discussed. It was reported that it has not been the policy to include the Parish Council in advertising the lettings of the properties. In response to an approach form the Chairman, Barry Moore of Two Castles agreed to take this request to the Directors of Two Castles Housing.

2.11 Play Area in Parish

2.11.1 It was reported that 32 children and 20 families had attended the meeting seeking ideas for the play area. Dave Southern had put the proposals into a document which had been submitted. There was to be a further site meeting with the grant - aiding body in March. 13 proposals had been submitted and 8 were to be chosen.

2.11.2 The total grant being requested was for £80K. This would include the costs of a Project Manager and paving an area on the sports field. Malcolm Caisley thought that, if the bid were at least partially successful, a total of £50K may be available which would need to be spent by March 2010.

2.11.3 The Chairman thanked Anne Porter and Malcolm Caisley for all the work they have undertaken in connection with the play area.

2.12 Highways and Footpaths

2.12.1 The Chairman had requested that he be informed when the ditching machine is in the area.

2.12.2 Huge potholes were reported at Dipton Mill and Channel Well and it was reported that people were driving on the grass to avoid the potholes. The Chairman explained that he had only recently 'toured' the 'Shire with Mel Richardson (of the N.C.C highways dept.) to show him the extent of the problems but Mr Richardson explained that he had inadequate funds to carry out all the repairs.

2.12.3 Paul Pickworth had asked if the Council would allow him to dig out a ditch in need of attention but no answer had been received. If work was undertaken by the Parish Council the precept would have to be increased to cover it and there would also be implications of responsibility for the work undertaken.

2.12.4 It was agreed that The Chairman would ask Highways how the budget was allocated between parishes..

2.12.5 The Chairman will seek the views of the PCC regarding the filling in of the ditch between the churchyard gate and alongside the Churchyard hedge since parking is a problem.

2.13 Sportsfield

2.13.1 A quotation had been received from Shire Building Services. The Chairman is to obtain a competitive quote.

2.13.2 The Chairman will investigate the Developers Fund to ascertain whether funding would be available from this source. There may also be funds available from the Unitary Councillor next year.

2.14 BOATs

2.14.1 A meeting was scheduled for 24th February at Slaley to discuss the Broadway appeal. A meeting was also planned to discuss the monitoring of the Broadway.

2.15 a Wetlands

2.15.1 It was reported that the bird boxes should not be emptied after 31st January. All of the nest boxes had been inhabited.

2.15.2 The ditch had been cleaned out.

b Parish Hall

2.15.2 The construction work is almost finished.

2.15.3 It was reported that Liz Sobell was to give a talk on the History of Hexhamshire in May.

2.15.4 An Open Day at the Hall was planned for May to give the various clubs the opportunity to show what they do.

c School

2.15.5 It was reported that the Head is retiring at the end of the summer term and that an advertisement for her replacement would be appearing in the press soon.

2.15.6 The school numbers were increasing.

As there was no further business the meeting was declared closed.