**Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 10th November 2014 in the Parish Hall.

**Councillors present:**

Cllr. Malcolm Reid Cllr. Brian Singer

Cllr. Jill Mills Cllr. Eileen Carew

**In attendance:**

Cllr. Anne Dale – Northumberland County Council

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk

Mrs Gemma Brown – Hexham Courant

Public (8): Mr R Archer, Dr & Mrs Chainey, Mr D Henderson, Mrs B Purvis, Mrs J Rowntree, Mrs L Stephenson and Mr B Young.

**Local Crime Issues**

As there was concern amongst residents at the recent number of burglaries and also with the issue of hawkers coming to the door, the Parish Council had asked if our local police officers could attend the meeting and PC Dean Rowell and CSO Emily Benson-Muir were thanked for their time this evening.

PC Rowell confirmed that there had been four burglaries this year and one attempted burglary and reported that it was not just Riding Mill being targeted but Stocksfield to Hexham too. High visibility patrols were ongoing as well as other covert measures being taken. PC Rowell highlighted the importance of taking basic security measures especially with the dark nights – leaving a light on if you go out, if you are away asking a neighbour to put your bin out, not leaving valuables on show or car keys by the door. It was also important for residents to report anything suspicious and to phone 101. It was noted that recent burglaries had targeted patio doors, entering from secluded back gardens – security lighting was therefore important.

PC Rowell also explained how he had been looking in to the issue of hawkers. The story some of the men had been giving i.e. that they were from the Middlesbrough area on a probation type scheme did not appear to be true. It would appear that it was a more informal arrangement with someone driving a group of them to an area. He explained that the Tyne Valley was perceived as a middle-class area where they were more likely to get sales and therefore would keep coming back. Some of the callers did have a licence and therefore were perfectly entitled to call at someone’s door – a licence can be issued in another policing area and be valid in Northumberland. Residents were again asked to call 101 and police officers would come and check if the person had a valid licence. If they didn’t their goods would be seized. Recently a group of men had been selling door to door in Ponteland – one had a valid licence the rest hadn’t and their goods were taken and they were fined.

The issue of security cameras was discussed. The police couldn’t fund recording units but could give advice if the PC wished to pursue this.

PC Rowell and CSO Benson-Muir highlighted that they and their colleagues were happy to be contacted by residents with any concerns.

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Cllr. Reid opened the meeting at 7.57 pm.

The Council was sad to report the death of Dick Routledge. He had been a long serving member of Tynedale District Council and also a parish councillor and had been a very good representative of the village. Condolences were sent to his family.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Cairns and Dunhill.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

No disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting were given.

3. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 8th September 2014**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8th September 2014 were a true record and duly signed off by Cllr. Reid.

4. **Matters arising from the September meeting other than those listed on the agenda**

*(i) Minute 15 – Domestic Thermal Imaging*

Dr Chainey clarified his proposal that if the owners of a variety of properties showed an interest in thermal imaging of their properties to detect hot spots in heat loss it might be possible to invite a student at Northumbria University to undertake this as a project at little or low cost. The PC had agreed to be a channel for contacts. Little interest had so far been expressed.

1. *Minute 4(i) – A695 Road bridge over the railway: removal of wall*

Cllr. Dale had no further news to report.

1. *Minute 5 – Lighting on the footpath from Broomhaugh to the station*

It was noted that NCC planned to visit the site again within the next couple of weeks to agree the exact location of the lighting column and hoped that the light would be installed before Christmas.

1. *Minute 5 & 21(i) – Tree works*

It was reported that all tree works identified at the last meeting had been undertaken.

1. *Minute 8 – Japanese Knotweed*

Mr Henderson reported that the problem of Japanese Knotweed by the parking area for the double tennis courts had been ongoing for years. The cordoned off area was unsightly and he had identified plants outside of this area, closer to the road. Cllr. Reid had been to view the problem and agreed that a more permanent barrier should be made. He proposed that posts should be hammered in around the problem area in order to stop cars parking there (some parking space would still be available) and a notice displayed asking people not to walk on it. The plants would then be treated as soon as they reached the required size next year.

It was agreed unanimously to accept these proposals.

**ACTION: CH**

1. *Minute 12 – Paths & Parishes Initiative*

It was reported that a number of residents had expressed an interest in joining a footpaths group. Cllr. Dunhill had offered to represent the Council on this group and an initial meeting would be held shortly.

**ACTION: AD/CH**

1. *Minute 14 – Improvements to the path connecting the station to the Corner House, Broomhaugh*

It was reported that Network Rail had confirmed land ownership of the path connecting the station to the Corner House at Broomhaugh and also that they were content for the permissive access to continue. Mrs Hunter, the owner of the adjacent land, had been asked if she would allow the path to be widened but had indicated that she would not be prepared to do this although she would arrange for overgrowing shrubs to be cut back. The Clerk would write to thank her.

Cllr. Reid suggested that as the path had been in use for more than 20 years it should be adopted as a right of way although it was agreed to get the advice of Tim Fish, the Footpaths Officer at NCC before proceeding.

**ACTION: CH**

5. W**heelchair access by the Parish Hall leading to the Play Park and Tennis Court**

Mr Tennet had recently submitted the plans for the wheelchair ramp and quotes were in the process of being sought. A discussion was again held as to whether the ramp was necessary as some councillors felt that it was a large expense and disabled users of the tennis court could access the court via Mill Close. Mr Archer was asked to clarify the exact requirement for the MUGA grant re disabled access. It was also suggested that Kathie Keady be asked for accessibility advice. Further discussions would be held once quotes had been received. It was also agreed to highlight the project in the Parish News and seek residents’ views.

**ACTION: RA/CH**

6. **Cricket Club/Reconditioning of Football Field**

Representatives of the Parish Council and Cricket Club had recently met to discuss the desire of the cricket club to play in a league and to extend its facilities. Discussions were being held regarding amalgamating with Corbridge Cricket Club which would require additional wickets to be provided. The PC expressed a desire to see the football pitch brought back in to use as a village amenity and the Cricket Club were in support of this as it would help them provide additional facilities. A number of grant possibilities were available and advice was being sought from Kathie Keady, Sports Development Manager for West Northumberland. The Parish Council had received a number of quotes for the cost of reconditioning the football pitch. As funding was available for different elements of the project, the PC was asked to not specify exactly what it would fund rather to guarantee a contribution. Cllr Reid proposed a £5000 contribution but that this would be conditional on the football pitch being reconditioned as part of the overall scheme. This was seconded by Cllr. Singer and unanimously agreed.

It was noted that the PC had been advised that if a full-sized football pitch was installed it was likely that it could be hired out regularly which would hopefully pay for the additional grass cutting and maintenance costs.

**ACTION: CH/BS**

7. **Repairs to the footbridge leading to the double tennis courts**

It was reported that under delegated powers the Clerk had given permission for Mr Archer to commence repairs to stabilise the river bank as the work needed to be completed before any frosts. Additional repairs to the bridge were required. Cllr. Reid proposed and Cllr. Mills seconded that standing orders should be suspended in order to award this work to Mr Archer rather than seek additional quotes. This was felt to be appropriate as Mr Archer had undertaken the installation of the walkway from the bridge to the tennis courts and these repairs were felt to be a continuation of this project. This was unanimously agreed by councillors.

8. **Agreement not to enforce covenant**

Cllr. Reid reported that a request had been received from a resident asking that the PC issue a letter confirming that it would not enforce a covenant with respect to a past extension in line with the Council’s policy as displayed on the website. It was noted that all required documentation had been reviewed by the Planning Sub-Committee and the Chairman (Ref: CR14/001) and Cllr. Reid proposed that the letter be issued. This was seconded by Cllr. Mills and agreed unanimously.

**ACTION: CH**

9. **Marchburn Lane Bridge**

Cllr. Reid reported that the issue of future repairs to Marchburn Lane Bridge was a problem topic that had been neglected over the years and that a plan should exist for the day when it would require serious repair or replacement. He therefore proposed that the PC ask its solicitors for advice on who should bear this responsibility. This was seconded by Cllr. Mills and unanimously approved.

**ACTION: JM/CH**

10. **Standing Orders/Financial Regulations**

1. It was noted that NALC had issued new Standing Orders. Cllr. Reid proposed that the new Standing Orders should be adopted subject to the following two changes:

2.3 The retiring Chairman will report on the activities of the Council for the preceding year *at the annual Parish Meeting*.

2.4 In addition to the business in 2.2 above, the business of and requirement for an annual meeting will be subject to the same provisions as are specified for the council meetings in section 3, below.

This was seconded by Cllr. Mills and unanimously agreed.

1. New Financial Regulations had also been issued by NALC in light of the changes to the Standing Orders. Clarification was requested on one point, item 1.13, and the Clerk was asked to report back to the next meeting when the matter would be considered again.

**ACTION: CH**

11. **Edible Riding Mill**

Cllr. Reid suggested that a possible area for the planting of fruit trees could be in the centre of the land adjacent to the double tennis courts. Approval for this was agreed by all councillors. Suggestions for other areas should be made at future meetings.

12. **Defibrillator**

Mr Latham had written to the PC asking if the issue of a defibrillator could be considered again as he felt it important that the village should have access to one. Cllr. Dale confirmed that Broomley and Stocksfield PC were currently in the process of installing two defibrillators. Some concern was expressed about training and it was therefore agreed to invite someone from the North East Ambulance Service to a future meeting to explain who could access the defibrillator and how the system would work.

**ACTION: CH**

13. **Councillor attendance at meetings**

Cllr. Carew reported that the main issue discussed at the Tynedale Forum was the repositioning of the bus station in Hexham – all indications were that it would move to the Loosing Hill car park area.

Cllr. Reid reported on the Joint NCC/Town & Parish meeting. He felt it was an excellent means of meeting the various officers at NCC and suggested that all councillors and the Clerk should attend future meetings on a rota basis. He had the opportunity to discuss grass cutting with the new area manager Ray Wheallans, who had offered to come and visit Riding Mill and discuss the issues further.

Following this point, Mr Archer raised the matter of hedge trimming along the A695 to the roundabout. He felt that there were bushes overhanging the road which were becoming dangerous to cyclists. It was agreed that the Clerk should report these concerns to Cllr. Dale.

Fast broadband should be coming to the telephone exchange in Riding Mill in December, but residents would have to contact BT to arrange their own connection from there for which there would be a cost. It was agreed to ask Paul Goldsmith to clarify this.

**ACTION: CH/PG**

14. **Speed Activation Signs**

It was agreed to renew the warranty on both Speed Activated signs at a cost of £140/year per sign as it was noted that a call out fee alone was approximately £450.

**ACTION: CH**

15. **MUGA court**

Mr Archer gave a report on the current membership of the tennis club which had pleasingly increased since the courts were refurbished and additional sports offered. With particular reference to the MUGA court: 1300 activity hours had been identified in this first year and of this just over 700 hours had been classified as core time. Actual usage rate of this core time was just 19%. In the future, various training events were likely to be offered such as netball, walking football and football. The club was also offering a winter membership package. Upgrading of the club house was ongoing. It was noted that the Club felt that the small number of issues raised by local residents had been addressed quickly.

Mr Archer was asked to give local residents a chance to comment on the report and also asked to outline to them what plans the Club has for next year. If residents have concerns then the PC is happy to act as a facilitator again if necessary.

**ACTION: RA**

Councillors did query the usage rates and asked if they satisfied the grant conditions. Mr Archer confirmed that usage levels had been adjusted for the first year because of the delayed start. Cllr. Mills asked if the Tennis Club had introduced a sinking fund and requested a copy of the yearly accounts once they had been produced. Mr Archer confirmed that there was a sinking fund.

**ACTION: RA**

16. **Tree works by double tennis courts**

A request from the Tennis Club to cut back overhanging trees above their club house was unanimously approved. The work would cost £220.

**ACTION: CH**

17. **Shop**

There was still nothing to report on the possible re-opening of the shop. A number of residents had indicated an interest in looking into the future provision of a shop and Cllr. Cairns had indicated his willingness to represent the Council on such a group.

18. **Finance**

a) Current Account

It was reported that the current account had been transferred from Bank of Scotland to the Unity Trust Bank. This account allowed online banking plus interest was paid on the balance.

b) Monthly expenditure

(i) The following payments were authorised:

Homevend – planting of hedge £150.00

SLCC (Northumberland) – training day fees for Clerk £20.00

RM Cricket Club – final part-payment towards grass cutting £426.00

Stuart Burns – tree felling

1. Station to Broomhaugh path £180.00
2. Play Park £200.00
3. Marchburn Lane – various £390.00

TOTAL £770.00

Neil McLaughlin

(Play Park additional grass cutting and Marchburn Lane) £215.00

Homevend – final planting and installation of edging £45.00

Tyne Valley Rail User Group – annual subscription £5.00

Riding Mill Pre-School S137 donation towards calendar costs £60.00

Catherine Harrison – September salary inc £10 home allowance £384.83

October salary inc £10 home allowance £384.83

Catherine Harrison – reimbursement and expenses £233.42

(Summary: Computer package upgrade £25.64, Ink cartridges and postage £62.95, Land registry search fees £24.00, Materials for handyman for hedging by tennis courts £91.58 (gravel, edging and laurel bush), travel expenses to SLCC training day £29.25)

Robert Archer – repairs to bridge leading to double tennis courts £470.00

**Standing Orders:**

Homevend (October) £75.00

Homevend (November) £75.00

1. The following receipts were noted:

Bank of Ireland interest – September £1.85, October £1.85

Triodos interest – 2nd quarter £22.44

Northumberland County Council precept - £17500

Allotments Association rent - £31.50

1. A report showing budget spending for the financial year was received. There were no matters of concern to note.

c) Request for S137 Funding

It was noted that in advance of the meeting, Councillors had approved by email a payment of £60 to Riding Mill Pre-School to help with production costs of a village calendar.

Additional funding requests from other bodies would be considered at the December meeting and the Clerk should prepare a summary.

**ACTION: CH**

d) Yearly Budget

The Clerk was asked to start preparing a budget summary report and circulate it in advance of the December meeting.

**ACTION: CH**

19. **Handyman**

(i) A yearly work schedule for the handyman was received and unanimously approved. It was noted that on day to day matters the handyman would report to the Clerk but that his work would primarily be overseen by Cllr. Dunhill.

(ii) It was noted that the handyman had completed treating and cleaning all the remaining benches in the village – this accounted for his October & November payments. In addition, he was to be paid for additional work planting the hedge by the tennis court.

20. **Planning**

It was reported that:

1. that the following planning applications were under consideration by NCC:

14/03363/FUL – Hopton House, Riding Hills – alteration to west elevation – PC: no objection.

14/02745/CLPROP – Grey Court – re-opening of blocked doorway – PC – No objection.

1. that the following planning applications had been considered by NCC and granted permission:

14/02310/FUL – Alnmouth Cottage, Sandy Bank – detached garage.

1. that the Forestry Commission was considering an application for tree felling at East House. The PC had no objection.

22. **Correspondence**

It was noted that most correspondence had been dealt with in the course of the meeting but the following letters/emails were considered:

* Mr Goldsmith – installation of security recording cameras: it was agreed to invite Mr Goldsmith to attend a future meeting to provide further information about his proposal.

**ACTION: CH**

* Mrs Estyn-Jones – letter re street lighting and footpath leading from Marchburn Lane to Sandy Bank. It was agreed to refer this letter to Cllr. Dale.
* Mrs Walker on behalf of the Committee of the Long Rigg Association – concerns re the urbanisation of the footpath leading to High Plains: the removal of a hedge and the installation of a fence were deemed to be within the rights of the homeowner and therefore not an issue the PC could comment upon.
* Mrs Jones, Dere Hollow – bank defences along the March Burn near her home. The PC agreed to write to the Tyne Rivers Trust and ask that they inspect the piece of land. She also asked that residents bordering the burn in Mill Close and the Hollow should have the appropriate Northumbrian Water telephone number to be able to report any obstruction of the burn. The Clerk would check up on this.

**ACTION: CH**

* Mrs Richardson on behalf of the Marchburn Lane Residents’ Association – request for an ex gratia payment of £50: this was unanimously approved by the Councillors.

**ACTION: CH**

22. **Minor Matters**

No additional matters were considered.

23: **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Council on Monday 8th December 2014.

Meeting closed at 10.43 pm.