



# Wylam Parish Council

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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WYLAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7 PM. IN THE INSTITUTE

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**Present:** Councillors J Joures (Chairman), T Appleby, J Henderson, A Francis, J Martin and C Percy

**Also present:** Marie Moore (Parish Clerk), L Bray (Tree Warden), J Deeks (Empowering Communities Project), M Hadden (Village Handyman), J Robinson (Hexham Courant) and 5 members of the public.

### 1. Questions from Members of the Public

- a. F McKay presented a petition, to which signatures were still being added, to reduce the speed limit on Holeyn Hall Road from 60mph to 40mph. The petition had the support of County Councillor K Quinn. She referred to a recent speed limit reduction in Heddon, also supported by K Quinn, and to a recent accident when a bus stop on the road had been demolished, fortunately when no one was waiting. She added that the pavement crossing points were on blind corners which was particularly dangerous for pedestrians.

J Joures thanked Fiona and her colleagues for their work on this issue and highlighted that road safety was a priority for the Parish Council. The Council's Local Transport Plan priorities would be submitted by the 4<sup>th</sup> October so the petition should be submitted to the County Council to support this.

- b. P Appleby, the owner of the caravan site in the village, outlined the action he had taken to avoid caravans and motor homes using Falcon Terrace. He had been in dialogue with 'Sat Nav' firms but Google had said that they were unable to take action. They had however added a sign to their map although it was doubtful whether many people saw this.

He indicated that he was willing to pay for a 'no caravans' sign although the County Council had advised that this would need to be outside of the adopted highway.

**Resolved** that suitable locations be identified and quotes be obtained for the sign.

### 2. Report from County Councillor K Quinn

Councillor Quinn had provided a written update on the outcome of the visit to Wylam by N Snowdon. During the short visit he was of the view that, on the day, there was not a problem with speeding mainly because that parked cars made this impossible. However, in view of the Parish Council's concerns he had agreed to arrange a traffic survey to identify any problems and any actions required.

After considering this update and in light of the significant road safety concerns being expressed by both the Council and local resident it was:

**Resolved** that a letter be sent to the Leader of Northumberland County Council setting out local concerns and expressing disappointment at the lack of action.

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3. **Presentation by Jude Deeks, Locality Coordinator, Empowering Communities Project**  
J Deeks gave an overview of the Empowering Communities Project which was focussed on improving public health. A key element was asset mapping communities and connecting people to the local facilities and activities on offer to support social prescribing. It was planned that a directory for the whole of Northumberland would be available late 2019/early 2020 via the County Council website. It was hoped that communities would be able to access and update the information themselves

She would be looking at Wylam and what she could do to support local groups and people. Funding of up to £500 was available, via a simple application process, to help groups continue/set up new groups and even small unconstituted groups could be eligible.

In thanking Jude for her presentation J Joures stated that whilst Wylam was fortunate to have many community assets there were gaps in provision. He added that the Parish Council was keen to be involved in and support the project in future and would appreciate feedback on developments.

4. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from K Quinn

5. **Declarations of Interest from members on items on the Agenda**

None declared.

6. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and their signature by the Chairman**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. **Clerk's Report**

**Resolved** that the following report be received:

- a. **Wylam Entrance Sign** - the entrance sign at the top of Holeyn Hall Road had been removed as a result of a car accident. It had previously been suggested that it be relocated it to the Waggonway east of the village to mark the Parish Boundary as there was a suggestion that the County Council may not approve a sign on their highway land. C Percy added that there was also an 'entrance sign' in storage at the Museum.

**Resolved** that arrangements be made to relocate a sign on Holeyn Hall Road and that quotes be obtained for this work. The possibility of locating the other sign on the Waggonway, East of the Village, should be investigated further.

- b. **Traffic in Falcon Terrace** – NCC had confirmed that it would provide a 'No Through Road' sign on the grass at the junction of Dene Road and Falcon Terrace in an attempt to deter caravans/motor homes from trying to gain access to the campsite.

See also 1 (b) above

- c. **Invasive Species** – The Tyne Rivers Trust had submitted a funding bid to NWL Branch Out fund for invasive species work over the next three years. This would include balsam and giant hogweed in the Hexham to Wylam area and if funding permitting the programme would also look at knotweed.

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The closing date for the funding bid was the end of August and as partnership working was an important element, Town and Parish Councils in the Tynedale area had been approached to see whether they would be interested in being involved. Councils were also asked about the possibility of providing a small amount of match funding e.g. £150 per year for 3 years. The outcome of the bid was expected in October 2019.

C Percy reported that D Peel, who voluntarily carried out invasive species removal work in the village, had suggested that the Parish Council should have a plan for tackling this work.

- d. **Vehicle Activated Speed Signs, Station Road & War Memorial**– Both signs were no longer working so discussions were ongoing with the County Council to clarify responsibilities for repairing/replacing them.
- e. **Christmas Event at Charlies Corner** – Tom Martin had requested permission from the Council to erect a Christmas tree on Charlies Corner during the last week in November. He was also planning to arrange an event for the last Friday of the School term where the school choir would perform carols and members of the public will also be invited to take part. It was anticipated that this would be on 20<sup>th</sup> December at 10am but this would be confirmed in due course.

**Resolved** that permission for this event be granted

- f. **Autumn Planting** – Tom Martin had proposed that the new barrel planters should be located on the Fox and Hounds corner where one was recently damaged by a vehicle and also at either side of the entrance to Woodvale Gardens where historically planters had located.

**Resolved** that these locations be approved.

- g. **Litter/dog Bins** – The Council currently had a sum of money in its budget to purchase new litter bins i.e. a new large bin in the car park and 2 post mounted bins. Requests had also been received for a new dog poo bin at the start of the public footpath opposite Acomb Drive and also for a larger bin at Hagg Bank as this regularly overflowed.

NCC had confirmed that the provision of a new dog/litter bin was the Parish Council's responsibility but that it would need to agree locations to ensure they could be emptied. It had also suggested that the new bin in the car park should be a wheelie bin on a stand rather than a fixed bin. This would be a significantly cheaper option with the saving being used to fund the new bin off Holeyn Hall Drive. It has also recommended that the concrete 'bin' at the entrance to the car park should be removed. A site meeting would be held with the County Council to agree new locations.

M Hadden had identified that the litter bin at Hedley Road Play Area was not being emptied by NCC who had advised that because this was on a Karbon Homes play area and not on the adopted highway it did not empty this bin. If it were to do so there would be a weekly charge of £2.70 i.e. £140 pa. This would be investigated further.

- h. **Flood Resilience** – Following a request from a resident the Council had been contacted by Colin Hall, the EA/NCC Community Engagement Officer for Northumberland who

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specialised in helping to improve the flood resilience of communities, businesses and schools throughout the area. He had asked whether the Parish Council would like his support to create a Community Flood Plan, Flood Action Group and improve the overall understanding of flood risk and flood safety throughout the community. A Community Flood Plan and Flood Action Group would help to build a community's flood resilience, as it allowed it to be aware of potential flood hot spot areas, the locations of vulnerable residents, the resources in place, a list and contact details of relevant emergency responders and a list of proactive volunteers that can be utilised to work alongside those emergency responders.

**Resolved** that C Hall be invited to attend a future meeting of the Parish Council meeting to discuss this issue and respond to questions or concerns.

- i. **Northumberland and Newcastle Society** – A subscription renewal, in the sum of £25pa. had been received.

**Resolved** that the subscription be cancelled

## 8. **Report of the Village Handyman and Tree Warden**

- a. Village Handyman – a report outlining current concerns had been prepared. This information would be added to the NCC issues master list with issues being reported and actioned as appropriate.
- b. Tree Warden – a report on current tree issues had been prepared alongside the Annual Tree Survey. The findings of the survey were set out in detail with priority actions highlighted.

**Resolved** that:

- i. The recommendations and actions set out in the Annual Tree Survey be approved with the Tree Warden being authorised to monitor and report on issues as necessary.
- ii. Quotes be obtained by the Clerk for priority work.
- iii. NCC be asked for an update on the diversion of the footpath alongside the former colliery spoil heap.
- iv. The Environment Agency be asked for advice in relation to the riverside trees on the spoil heap and erosion risk.
- v. In future, the field between Hedley St, Jackson Rd and the Dene be referred to as Hedley Field.

## 9. **Local Transport Plan**

Northumberland County Council had asked the Parish Council to submit its top 3 highways and transport priority issues for the area, so that they could be considered for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme for 2020-21. To assist the Council in doing so a copy of the County Council's criteria for LTP schemes had been provided. The deadline for submission was Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

J Joures referred to the valued contribution of the Road Safety Sub Group who had indicated that their top 3 priorities would be as follows:

- 1. To repair/replace the driver feedback signs that no longer work i.e. Ingham Terrace and Station Road.

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2. To introduce 40mph speed restrictions on the entrance roads into Wylam this to include highway signs, road marking renewal and the addition of more 20mph/slow signs in this zone.
3. To improve safety at the following locations: Holeyn Hall Road junction, the Crescent/Wylam Wood Road and Hagg Bank 'island'

He went on to highlight the significant safety concerns in the vicinity of the Fox and Hounds, Co-op and School. Public rights of way could also be included so the riverside footpath below Wylam Nurseries and the footpath to the rear of the Dene Estate should also be mentioned. With regard to the Dene Estate footpath there had been an indication that this may be funded via the Rights of Way budget in 2020-21.

Whilst recognising that there were a number of significant issues within the village requiring attention and resource allocation A Francis cautioned against asking for too many small schemes with a need to focus on those which could have the greatest impact across the village.

**Resolved** that the following 3 LTP priorities for 1920-21 be approved:

- i. To review speed limits and controls in and around Wylam, in particular looking at (a) introduction of 40 mph limits on all approach roads to the village and (b) better signing and road markings to reinforce the existing 20 mph speed limit zone.
- ii. To repair/replace the driver feedback signs that no longer work i.e. Ingham Terrace and Station Road and also to consider increasing provision.
- iii. To introduce parking restrictions and speed control measures in the vicinity of the Fox and Hounds and the Co-op

All of the above to be set within the context of a comprehensive traffic management plan for the Village.

## 10. Cycling on Wylam Bridge

Following complaints to the County Council about conflict between pedestrians and cyclists on the footpath on Wylam Bridge it had carried out a camera survey to further investigate the issue. The findings of the survey had been provided to the Parish Council which showed that 64 (34%) of cyclists during the period monitored had used the footpath with 20 (31%) of these encountering pedestrians. The County Council had taken the decision, based on the relative small number of cyclists recorded passing pedestrians on the footway, that no further action should be taken but that the situation be monitored.

Members were very concerned at this decision, particularly as signs asking cyclists to dismount had been removed and not replaced.

**Resolved** that this issue and the lack of action be included in the letter to be sent to the Leader of the County Council.

## 11. Riverside Footpath

It was reported that the County Council had appointed a contractor to install secure fencing at either end of the riverside footpath to prevent continued use. This was to be discussed with T Martin as the adjacent landowner. The County Council had also commissioned 'Footpath Closed' signs to go up on the site and the Parish Council had been asked whether it wanted to have its name and logo included.

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T Martin had contacted the Parish Council to request a meeting, with those directly affected, to discuss the matter in more detail.

**Resolved** that:

- i. The County Council be advised that the Parish Council name and logo should be included on the signs.
- ii. NCC be requested to provide further details regarding the proposed fence and how their inspector will access the site.
- iii. Arrangements be made for Councillors Joures and Francis to meet with T Martin as soon as possible.
- iv. A request be made to the Northumberland Association of Local Council's to provide legal advice with regard to this matter and the Council's position.

## 12. Water Safety

It was reported that there had recently been a near drowning incident at the weir under Wylam Bridge. Fortunately, the youth was rescued by a passer-by using the 'throw-line' located on the riverbank. It had however been suggested that there were issues with the line which needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. It was also felt that signage needed reviewing.

**Resolved** that investigations be carried out to determine who is responsible for river safety and to ensure appropriate safety equipment is provided at the site and that signage is adequate.

## 13. Parish Council Vacancies

The Clerk reported that no requests for an election had been submitted to the County Council which meant that the Council was now able to go ahead and fill the two vacancies by co-option. In accordance with the Council's Co-option Policy, arrangements would therefore be made to post the required Notices as soon as possible, with a view to inviting applications for the positions.

**Resolved** that the report be received.

## 14. Green Dog Walker Scheme

It was reported that for a number of years the Council had provided free dog poo bags to local residents from a number of locations throughout the village. The cost of doing so was in the order of £500 per year.

The County Council also had a Green Dog Walker Scheme which provided free bags to members who were also required to act as advocates for the scheme and encourage others to clean up after their pets. The Parish Council had enquired about the possibility of becoming a local distributor for poo bags on behalf of the Green Dog Walker Scheme.

**Resolved** that:

- i. Local residents should be encouraged to become members of the Green Dog Walkers Scheme.
- ii. The Parish Council should continue to access free poo bags via the County Council scheme for as long as possible but in the absence of these should purchase them.

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**15. Hagg Bank Play Area Inspection**

Resolved that this item be deferred to the next ordinary meeting.

**16. Globe Publication Schedule**

The Clerk submitted a report which outlined a publication schedule for the Globe for Autumn 2019 and Spring 2020. It also requested members to agree whether 3 or 4 editions per year should be produced.

With regard to future delivery arrangements it was noted that this had historically been carried out by members of the Parish Council but that this could be problematic as a result of holidays, vacancies etc. Prices for a professional leaflet distribution company had therefore been obtained which whilst reasonable for shared delivery on a set date were significantly more expensive for a single item delivery on a set date.

**Resolved** that:

- i. The publication schedules for the remainder of 2019/20 be approved.
- ii. There should be three editions of the Globe each year and with effect from Autumn 2019 each edition should be 8 pages long.
- iii. Volunteers should be sought to enhance the delivery arrangements with an appeal for volunteers appearing in the next edition.

**17. Financial reports to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019**

**Resolved** that the financial reports to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 be approved.

**18. Payments for Approval**

**Resolved** that the payments detailed in appendix I be approved.

**19. Appointment of Additional Bank Signatory**

**Resolved** that J Martin and C Percy be also appointed as bank signatories.

**20. Quotations received**

**Resolved** that the quotation received from Tyne Valley Woodlands Consultancy for the felling of the Maple at Orchard Corner be approved.

**21. Planning Applications**

The County Council had granted the following applications:

**Ref: 19/01565/FUL** – Proposed single storey rear extension and new roof to the existing utility (Amended Description). 10 Stephenson Terrace, Wylam NE41 8DZ

**Ref: 19/01611/FUL** – Demolition of an existing outbuilding and the construction of a new outbuilding and garden room. High Croft, Elm Bank Road, Wylam

**Ref: 19/01760/FUL** – Proposed sun lounge and WC extension. 18 Algernon Terrace, Wylam

The Parish Council had not submitted any comments or objections in relation to the following:

**Ref: 19/02211/FUL** – Demolition of disused North West porch, erection of single storey meeting room, furniture store and lobby at North West. Erection of new lean-to single storey store West of existing South East store. St Oswin's Church Hall, Church Road, Wylam

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**Ref: 19/02876/FUL** – Proposed side and rear ground floor extension. Moncrieff, The Crescent, Wylam

**Ref: 19/02413/FUL** – New Porch and extension of garage, upgrade of rear conservatory. Ashworth, 8 Denecroft, Wylam

The following application had been received with a deadline for comments of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019:

**Ref: 19/03698/LBC** – Refurbishment works to signal box including replacement windows and new timber frames, new staircase treads and sundry repairs to metal support structure. Signal Box, Station Road, Wylam

**Resolved** that the report be received.

**The Council passed a resolution excluding the press and public from the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (sensitive information).**

## 22. 3-4 Laburnum Terrace

The Chairman reported on the current position regarding the sale of the property, highlighting the number of viewings and offers to date. He explained that a deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 had been set for best and final offers.

He went on to outline a paper which set out suggested criteria for assessing bids for the property. Members were requested to discuss, amend as necessary and agree the proposed criteria and in doing so, identify any issues that could impact on this approach. During the discussion members considered the potential for conditional and unconditional offers, schemes that the Council may wish to object to and housing versus retail.

J Joures referred in particular to the need for the Council to consider the impact of each proposal on the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area and its residents.

Finally, members were asked to consider two quotes for legal services relating to the sale.

**Resolved** that:

- i. The report be received and the criteria set out therein be approved.
- ii. Additional quotes for legal services be obtained from local/regional legal firms but in the event that these are higher than Muckle LLP then this quote be approved.
- iii. The Clerk be requested to clarify the position regarding declarations of interest and Dispensations in the event that bidders are known to Councillors.
- iv. An extra-ordinary meeting of the Parish Council be held on 7<sup>th</sup> October to consider bids received for the property.

## 23. Correspondence

**Resolved** that the correspondence received since the last meeting be noted and actioned where appropriate.

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**24. To receive reports from Parish Council representatives on Advisory Groups and External Bodies**

**Resolved** that J Joures prepare a report for the next Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council on the review of burial fees being carried out by the Ovingham Joint Burial Committee.

**25. To consider minor items & items for the agenda of a future meeting.**

**Resolved** that:

- i. An end of grant report on the Celebrating Points Bridge Project outcomes and spend be submitted to a future meeting
- ii. Arrangements be made to meet with the County Council with regard to public toilet provision.
- iii. Gentoo be contacted to ask when the sign on the public footpath will be moved; and
- iv. Arrangements be made to complete the grant application process for Wylam Winter Tales 2019.

**26. Date of next meeting**

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (Extraordinary Meeting)

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (Ordinary Meeting)

The meeting closed at 10.30pm

