



Wylam Parish Council

MINUTES OF AN ELECTRONIC ORDINARY MEETING OF WYLAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 11th MAY 2020 AT 7 PM

Present: Councillors S Duckworth (Chair), A Francis, J Henderson, J Joures, J Martin, C Percy and H Waddell

Also present: Marie Moore (Parish Clerk)

Questions from Members of the Public

M Hadden had submitted some written questions in advance regarding road safety and the Local Transport Plan. Unfortunately, because of 'lockdown' there had been no communication from Northumberland County Council (NCC) on these issues. He had also highlighted a number of issues in his role as Village Handyman.

Resolved that his report be received and actioned where appropriate.

1. Election of Chair of the Parish Council

Councillor S Duckworth was elected as Chair, proposed by Councillor J Joures and seconded by Councillor J Henderson.

2. Election of Vice Chair

Councillor C Percy was elected as Vice Chair, proposed by Councillor J Joures and seconded by Councillor J Martin.

The Chair and Vice Chair together with J Joures agreed to discuss Parish Council working arrangements, over the coming weeks, in more detail.

3. Apologies for absence

K Quinn. It was noted that she was attending another Parish Council meeting so it was suggested that she be consulted on future meeting dates.

4. Declarations of Interest from members on items on the Agenda

None declared.

5. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Delegation

Resolved that this item be withdrawn from the agenda as arrangements were now in place to meet electronically.

7. Covid-19 Community Support

J Martin provided an update on current service delivery by those who had volunteered to support vulnerable residents during lockdown. There were over 80 volunteers on the database

Signed: Date:

Chairman of Meeting

with 14 currently active. 6 were involved in pharmacy deliveries and 6 in food deliveries (84 meals) to 11 residents, 8 of whom were very vulnerable. It was reassuring to note that the service of volunteers had not been needed more often and some residents, who had accessed the service initially, no longer needed support. Data on the support being provided in the village was being fed into the Northumberland Community Volunteering Hub.

Resolved that the report be received and thanks be extended to all those involved.

8. Use of Charlie's Corner

J Martin proposed that Charlie's Corner be used for a limited period during lockdown to provide a safe and secure area for people to exercise their dogs. There were a number of people who did not feel safe walking on the footpaths around the village so this would provide an ideal area that could be safely managed to maintain social distancing.

In response to a comment from A Francis about why Engine Dene could not be used for this purpose, particularly given the issues with dogs using Charlie's Corner in the past, J Martin stated that some dogs required an enclosed space for exercise.

Should the proposal go ahead there would need to be clear information about following Covid-19 government guidance, signage on the gate and advance publicity via social media. All dog poo would need to be removed and if this was not the case the area would again be closed to dogs.

Following further discussion on this matter with Councillors expressing views both for and against the proposal it was put to a vote with 4 members in favour, two against and one abstention. Accordingly it was

Resolved that Charlie's Corner be used for a time limited period to facilitate the secure exercise of dogs. This to be in accordance with all relevant and current Covid-19 guidance and on the absolute condition that all dog poo is removed from the area.

9. Finance

Resolved that

- i. The revised deadlines for the submission of the AGAR for 2019/20 and the arrangements for reporting on the OJBC finances, be noted.
- ii. The year-end financial reports for 2019/20 be approved
- iii. The bank reconciliations for March 2020 be received
- iv. The payments and receipt detailed in appendix C be approved subject to the addition of the following:

Parish Council Current Account

Date	Payee	Purpose	Net	VAT	Total
11.05.20	Tyne Tees Business Machines	Toner	65.00	13.00	78.00
5.05.20	RBS Business Solutions	Restate work re OJBC	100.00	20.00	120.00

Signed: Date:

Chairman of Meeting

10. Planning Applications and Decisions**Resolved** that

- i. The applications and decisions set out in the report be noted.
- ii. No comments be submitted in relation to 20/01317FUL & LBC.

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

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).

12. Village Handyman

The Clerk reported on the action that had been taken in relation to the employment and salary arrangements of M Hadden, Village Handyman since the lockdown began on 23rd March.

Resolved that the report be received and the action taken approved.**13. Riverside Footpath**

J Joures referred to the timeline of events in relation to the riverside footpath. Unfortunately because of lockdown it had not been possible to meet with T Martin and a meeting with K Quinn had been delayed pending the receipt of information from NCC Officers.

The Parish Council had contacted, and tried to engage with NCC officers on a number of occasions over the last year, without success. The County Council had refused to close the public right of way which meant that the Parish Council was unable to stop people crossing its land. This was a concern as people could injure themselves particularly given the current condition. The view was that until NCC officers were prepared to engage with the Parish Council it was limited in what it could do.

K Quinn had indicated that a site meeting was to take place involving NCC Officers but this had been delayed because of lockdown. It was imperative that the Parish Council was represented.

Resolved that the report be received.**14. 3-4 Laburnum Terrace**

J Joures reported on the current position with the sale of the property, particularly recent email correspondence the agent had received from the buyer regarding the terms of his purchase.

In considering the correspondence the issues of the planning permission granted on the property, the ongoing running costs, the need for a fair and transparent process and the Council's legal duty to secure best consideration in the sale of the asset, were discussed.

A verbal opinion on the proposed sale terms and the potential impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the housing market, had been provided by the Agent which highlighted numerous uncertainties. Further advice was required to enable the Council to reflect on its position and come to a decision of the most appropriate way forward.

Signed: Date:

Chairman of Meeting

Resolved that the report be received and NALC be consulted for an opinion on the most appropriate course of action in the circumstances.

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

- i. **Litter** - was becoming a real problem in the village with a resident highlighting the need for facilities for plastic waste/bottles.

Resolved that arrangements be made to provide litter pickers, gloves, bags, disinfectant in the Institute Porch for volunteer litter pickers. NCC also be asked to trial a dedicated wheelie bin in the car park for plastic bottles.

- ii. **Falcon Centre** –C Percy reported on the current position with regard to the proposed community management of the building.

16. Date of next meeting

Scheduled for 8th June 2020

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed: Date:
Chairman of Meeting