



Wylam Parish Council

MINUTES OF AN ELECTRONIC ORDINARY MEETING OF WYLAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 8th JUNE 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) K Quinn and 2 members of the public

Questions from Members of the Public

1. A resident referred to the Parish Council's Decision to allow owners to exercise their dogs on Charlie's Corner during lockdown and wanted to say how grateful she was for access to this safe facility which she used on a daily basis. Residents in Blackett Cottages had also expressed their gratitude at being able to use the space for socialising as well as exercising their pets.

She noted that there had not been any issues with fouling and indicated that, going forward, she and other users were more than happy to monitor the area for cleanliness and adherence to guidelines. Given the success of the initiative she asked that the Parish Council consider allowing continued access to dogs once lockdown had ended. She was advised that this would be considered later in the meeting.

2. A resident reported concerns with regard to one of the trees growing close to the wall at Orchard Corner. This tree had been retained and pruned during recent tree works on the site with its condition being monitored. The resident was concerned that it was now causing damage to the wall and should be removed. He also questioned whether the Council's Tree Policy had been amended to include a suggested clause about felling of trees in specific circumstances, including those causing damage to walls etc. He indicated that, subject to quotes being obtained, he was prepared to meet the cost of the felling if necessary.

Resolved that:

- i. The Council's Tree Policy be reviewed to determine whether this clause had been included.
- ii. The Tree Warden together with the Clerk be requested to inspect the tree and wall and report back to the next meeting.

Report from County Councillor K Quinn

K Quinn reported that she had not attended any County Council meetings as a result of lockdown but had been involved in a number of Covid-19 related issues including supporting food deliveries to the vulnerable.

A site inspection, to discuss the Riverside Footpath adjacent to Tom and Joe's, was to be held on Friday 26th June and would be attended by the appropriate officers, the relevant Cabinet Member and Tom Martin as well as herself. The Parish Council had been invited so send two representatives to the meeting.

Signed: Date:
Chairman of Meeting

The Clerk advised K Quinn that the Council continued to receive complaints about Cycling on the footpath on Wylam Bridge and asked whether the County Council were proposing any action. She also had received complaints and referred to a letter from the Leader of the County Council on this issue which she had shared on Social Media, indicating that no action was taken or planned as a result of the survey showing there were no significant issues. She indicated that she would forward a copy of this letter to the Parish Council.

1. Apologies for absence

L Bray

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

None declared.

3. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Litter Campaign

J Henderson reported that she had started this campaign following the unprecedented issues with litter that the village had experienced during recent weeks. She hoped that it would be possible to organise regular litter picks rather than just one annual event. A paddle boarding club had become involved in helping to clear rubbish from the river and the plan was to reach out to other groups in the village e.g. the School.

The possibility of securing additional wheelie bins from the County Council to support this initiative would be investigated.

Resolved that:

- i. The initiative be developed further with J Henderson leading and the name be confirmed as Wylam Waste Warriors.
- ii. The issue of risk assessment be investigated by the Clerk and an appropriate policy implemented as soon as possible.

5. Tyne Riverside Car Park

The Parish Council, along with the Police, had been formally consulted by the County Council on the re-opening of the Car Park. Although the car park was now open, and no problems had been reported, NCC had indicated that they would provide signage to support social distancing but this was not in place at the time of opening.

Resolved that more information be requested from NCC with regard to signage.

6. Covid-19 Community Support

J Martin provided an update on current service delivery to support vulnerable residents during lockdown. The delivery of free Sunday lunches had stopped and those in receipt of them had been advised. Alternative arrangements were in place through family and friends.

Demand for prescription deliveries remained high and currently there was no plan in place to wind this down in association with the relaxation of Covid-19 guidance.

Signed: Date:

Chairman of Meeting

Given the easing in lockdown restrictions members discussed an exit strategy for the Covid-19 support in the village. It was agreed that it was too early to wind things up and that the Council's approach should be linked to the relaxation of government guidance.

It was suggested the volunteers who had come forward to support the Covid-19 effort should be encouraged to get involved in other voluntary and community support networks in future.

With regard to the use of Charlie's Corner for exercising dogs during lockdown it was reported that the vast majority of feedback had been extremely positive. The area was inspected daily with no problems reported.

Members then discussed the increase in anti-social behaviour experienced in the village in recent weeks. This had resulted in Dispersal Orders being used by the Police to address the problems. This action had been welcomed locally.

Resolved that:

- i. The report be received.
- ii. The use of Charlie's Corner for exercising dogs be extended until the September meeting of the Council when the situation be reviewed. In the meantime the situation be monitored. Use of the facility to be in line with current government guidance and with no more than 2 dogs at a time?
- iii. A letter of thanks be sent to the Police in recognition of their work to address the anti-social behaviour experienced locally.

7. Member Vacancy

The Clerk reported that following the advertising of the vacancy no request had been made to the County Council to call an election.

Resolved that given the current situation with Covid-19 and the forthcoming local elections, the vacancy should remain until it is filled through a formal election in May 2021.

8. Finance

Resolved that

- i. The report of the Internal Auditor 2019-20 be received.
- ii. The Annual Governance and Accountability Statement for 2019-20 be approved
- iii. The Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances for 2019-20 be approved
- iv. The payments detailed in appendix B be approved
- v. The financial reports to May 2020 be received
- vi. The bank reconciliations for May 2020 be received.

9. 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 planning ref 20/01525/FUL

10. Correspondence

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

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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).

11. Village Handyman

J Martin reported that following the relaxation of government guidance he had spoken with M Hadden about returning to his normal working arrangements. A risk assessment had been carried out in relation to Covid-19 working arrangements.

Resolved that J Martin meet with M Hadden to discuss his return to work.

12. Riverside Footpath

Resolved that the site meeting on 26th June be attended by C Percy and M Moore.

13. 3-4 Laburnum Terrace

J Joures provided an update on the current position with regard to the sale of the property, particularly the negotiations with the purchaser. After considering the position fully it was

Resolved that:

- i. The purchaser be advised of the Council's position on this matter.
- ii. Arrangements be made to remarket the property.
- iii. Advice be taken on the approach with regard to the remarketing exercise.

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

- i. **Riversdale Surgery** – J Joures reported that the CCG had indicated that a decision on the proposed closure was to be made on 10th June 2020. J Joures confirmed that officers in the CCG had confirmed their commitment to explore measures to mitigate against the impact of the closure on the most disadvantaged groups in the community, regardless of the decision taken now.
- ii. **Public Toilets** – Northumberland County Council had asked for the Parish Council's opinion on the re-opening of the public toilets on 22nd June. Whilst the Council were generally supportive of this, given that the toilets were within the Jubilee Field, it would be vital to talk to WCPFA about the proposal.
- iii. **Quotation – Wylam Entrance Sign** – only one quotation had been received with the cost being significantly higher than the budget available.

Resolved that the quote not be accepted and alternative arrangements be investigated to replace the sign.

- iv. Litter Bin on Station Road –

Resolved that the possibility of providing a new bin in this location be investigated.

15. Date of next meeting

13th July 2020

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed: Date:
Chairman of Meeting