

Minutes of Rothbury Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 14th September 2011 in the Parish Hall Rothbury commencing 715pm

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs Tinlin, Cllr Dawson

Those Present: Cllr Reynolds (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Dawson, Cllr Mrs Edes, Cllr Mrs Morton, Cllr Bridgett, Cllr Fendley, Cllr Gilson, and the Clerk

Members of the public present: Robin Murray, David Brown, Colin Wheeler (Church Bell Captain)

124/11 Declarations of Interest

Two new councillors had signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office at the previous meeting using forms brought by Councillor Bridgett, although the Clerk had some available. All Councillor's to keep up-to-date Register of Interests.

As Chair of DCC Cllr Reynolds declared an interest in All Saints Church Clock and churchyard trees. He asked for the clock to be the first agenda item to discuss.

All Saints Church Clock

Bells installed 1893, clock fitted at a later date by the local community, with an agreement made that it would be maintained by the PC. One hammer mechanism has broken and could have cracked the bell costing £15000. Smith's of Derby can repair for £2000 but a recent report had quoted a total of £5600 to check and repair all the of the hammers. Colin Wheeler mentioned alternative clock repair companies at Carlisle and Gateshead could be asked to give alternative estimates. It was agreed to speak to Cllr Dawson before any action can be taken. In the meantime Colin has arranged for the bells not to chime to hours to avoid any further damage.

125/11 Police Presence

David Brown present on behalf of the local police. One ASBO has recently been given out, the only crimes concerning the area being farm thefts. Moat enquiry ongoing, and Northumbria Police continuing to monitor the riverside. It was asked whether the area could have a speed flashing notice as situated on the A697 – David replied a planned speedwatch campaign is ongoing and will be present in Rothbury.

126/11 Public Questions

No public questions.

127/11 Minutes of the meeting held 10th August 2011

- The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record, with the following amendments.
- Sympathies had been expressed to Cllr Mrs Edes.

- Regarding 'Declarations of Acceptance of Office', when Cllr Bridgett had stated some Cllr's may not be legal, Cllr Reynolds requested the following be included – Cllr Bridgett was asked if he wished to stay at the meeting believing as he did that the Parish Council may not be legal. He said he would stay.
- Planning Sub-Committee & Finance Committee had been reconstituted and membership stated as Councillors Reynolds, Morton and Fendley on Planning and Reynolds, Morton and Peter Dawson on Finance . New Councillors had been invited to express an interest but Cllr. Tinlin felt it was too early for her.
- It had been confirmed further information did not have to be forwarded to NCC regarding Provision of Local Services.
- It was agreed the latest bridge plan was as close to what had been asked for as could be expected.

128/11 Matters Arising

128/11.01 Chairman's Announcements

- Declarations of Acceptance of Office/Code of Conduct – Cllr Reynolds passed around a statement he had prepared in response to the concerns raised by Cllr. Bridgett at the start of the last meeting.
- Clerk had made a Statutory Declaration before a Solicitor and a copy had been passed to NCC Solicitor who had since declared that NCC had no concerns on the status of Rothbury Parish Council.
- Cllr Reynolds had devised a Rothbury Parish Council 'Declarations of Interest' form for all councillor's to complete. Issue to be further discussed in private.
- A resolution, that Members of public be excluded for the last session due to a discussion of sensitive legal, contracting and employment issues, was seconded and agreed.

128/11.02 Urgent Business

A tree on the village green has a broken branch – to be discussed under Seats & Trees.

128/11.03 NCC Provision of Local Services

Nothing to report.

128/11.04 Church Clock Update

Discussed earlier.

128/11.05 Dog Bins

Cllr Gilson had met with Northumberland Estates at the Industrial Estate who had no problems with two bins being placed on their land adjacent to the Industrial Estate. Agreed this could go ahead.

Correspondence received from Alan Beith from a member of the public requesting bins be placed near Pennystane Lane (one there previously but residents had complained) and Bridge Street. These requests to be discussed at next meeting.

128/11.06 Parish Clusters

Next meeting 17/10/11.

128/11.07 Bridge Works

Discussed earlier.

128/11.08 Community Policing

Meeting to be held 22/9/11, 7pm Parish Hall, not open to the public. Inspector Peart and one other representative to be present.

128/11.09 Chair's Ribbon of Office

This has been located.

128/11.10 Armstrong Plot

Nothing to report.

128/11.11 War Memorial

Details forwarded to insurance company, and Cllr Dawson seeking quotation for repairs.

128/11.12 Electric Car charging points

Correspondence received from Doug Metcalf protesting at the possibility of a 'disabled' space being used for a charging point, concern has also been expressed from nearby residents, and could they not be placed on the Haugh car park? However they would have to be in the village centre as stanchions already there. It appears persons park regularly in disabled bays who do not have eligibility. Police could aid with this. It was agreed that there should be no reduction in the number of disabled parking places. Issues to be passed on the Cllr. Peter Dawson for consideration.

129/11 Planning

129/11.01 Planning Applications have been received for the following:

- 11/02049/FUL: Mr R Mackay, West Hills Farm – agricultural building – no objections
- 11/01985/CCD: Dr Thomlinson's Middle School – Solar photo voltaic panels of the school roof – no objections

130/11 Financial Matters

130/11.01 Accounts for Authorisation

- C Miller – quarterly salary & expenses (nett) - £707.97
- Inland Revenue – PC's now have to operate their own PAYE system – £156.20
- Newcastle & Northumberland Society - £15.00 – presentation to be held 19/9/11 Jubilee Hall
- NCC – By-Election - £2984.41 – paying for one election will add 21% to the budget, precept will have to be raised due to the possibility of request for future By-Election's rather than co-option. If Cllr. Bridgett had been correct, that would have been a further £3000 for an election.
- UCCT - £80.00 – fares received £85.00
- J Ayre - £297 – gardening
- M Evens - £297 – gardening
- T W Alderson - £22.45

- Wicksteed Leisure - £36.60
 - Brumell & Sample - £67.00 – Statutory Declaration
- It was agreed that the accounts be paid.

131/11 Paths/Verges

- Dog dirt in numerous places. Dog warden concentrating on housing estates, could be asked to also look at centre. Not an option to place cameras to catch offenders.
- Gardeners have mentioned several leaning gravestones in closed churchyard. They agreed to let the Parish Council know if any appeared to be dangerous..
- Cllr Reynolds has measured village greens for kerb works - £2K for 128 metres - as it is illegal to park on kerbs this could also be discussed with the police, installation an additional charge - Tom Mason to provide estimate.

132/11 Seats/Trees

- One tree near Turks Head requires action to a hanging branch. Cllr Gilson to arrange a contractor, if reasonable price.
- Christmas Lights committee need to be informed which trees are to be felled before lights placed, with 3/12/11 being switch on, and lights erected three weeks before this date. Japanese Cherry's at Steward House & opposite West End House due to be felled in 18 months, however there is some crowning and removal of dead wood which will require liaison with Lights Committee.
- Complaint received about two seats to thrum Mill being in disrepair – it was debated whether these are well used, and should they not be taken away and then see if complaints are received. However it is a well used path and with the Mill being restored it may make the path more attractive. Cllr Edes to ask gardeners if they can repair seats initially, if not could a seat be moved from elsewhere and placed there. With all the additional expense incurred recently it was agreed the seat should be repaired or removed, and if requiring replacement wait until a donated seat is offered.

133/11 Unitary Councillor Report

- Rothbury being included in a bid for upgraded broadband, central government has allocated 7million towards this, NCC may have to put 20million forward, the community has demonstrated there is a need for upgrading.
- Boundary Commission had announced proposals for changing the parliamentary constituency borders – currently four constituencies, proposal to lower to three, and place Rothbury area into Hexham constituency instead of Berwick. Parish Council will be asked to comment on this, commission also wish to receive comments from members of the public. Item to be discussed at next cluster meeting.

134/11 Correspondence

- 134/11.01RAF – Battle of Britain Commemoration Service 18/9/11 – Cllr Reynolds cannot attend
- 134/11.02NCC – Copies of decision notices to Parish Councils (planning applications) are no longer to be posted to us but we have to look at the NCC

website – it was agreed we reply formally and request postal copies to continue, Cllr Gilson having problems searching for information, Cllr Morton finds whole process on a local level absolutely ridiculous, and objects to their attitude to planning, Cllr Bridgett commented objections to plans have to be for valid planning reasons, however this is fully understood by the Parish Council.

- 134/11.03NCC – Autumn works to be carried out. Ourselves and members of the public are invited to say what is most urgent.
- 134/11.04Caroline Bruce, NCC – Whitton View – to be discussed in private. Cllr Gilson had been asked why a machine was digging holes which were then being filled in.
- 134/11.05Carers Northumberland - information
- 134/11.06NCC – Northumberland News – available for circulation
- 134/11.07Doug Metcalf – Charging Points – discussed earlier
- 134/11.08E-mail received regarding ragwort – Cllr Reynolds to look at before next meeting, owner/occupier is legally responsible for ragwort removal
- 134/11.09North East Ambulance Trust – Notice of AGM
- 134/11.10NCC Committee Meeting Monday 10/10/11 Morpeth Town Hall
- 134/11.11Robin Murray has ideas about expanding web-site, to be discussed in future
- 134/11.12Parish Hall – notice they will be raising prices next year
- 134/11.13NCC – notice of Northumberland News available on web-site

135/11 Cllr Sandford Retirement/Memorial

Only three trustees at AGM, a future meeting will discuss the matter further. Tony Sandford's family had expressed their wish to be consulted.

136/11 Urgent Business

Agreed Robin Murray could speak on charging points – and he explained stanchions could not be placed at Haugh for electric charging points due to flooding issues.

137/11 Items to be discussed in private (exclusion of public:)

138/11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Rothbury Parish Council will be on Wednesday 12th October 2011 commencing 7.15pm in the Parish Hall.