

MINUTES OF THE MITFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting for Mitford was held at The Village Hall, Mitford on Wednesday 4 May 2016 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors Mrs Elaine Scott, Mike Sharp, Brian Talkes and David Towns
6 Parishioners,
PC Andrea Teasdale
Stephen Rickitt (Clerk)

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Mike Sharp, presided and welcomed everyone.

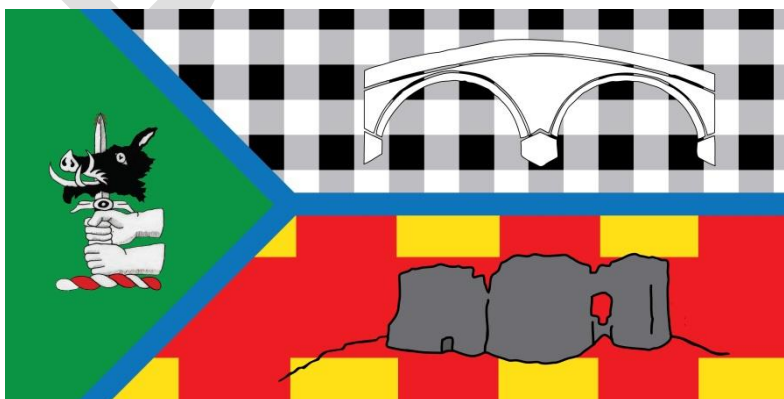
Apologies were given from Councillors Mrs Esther Ridley and Matt Skillen and County Councillor Glen Sanderson

1: Honorary Freemen

The Chairman proposed that the Meeting endorse the award of the title of Honorary Freemen of the Parish of Mitford to Billy and Pat Elliott. This was support by all present given the many years of service to the Parish.

At the Chairman's request, the Clerk formally read the citation

MITFORD PARISH COUNCIL



That in pursuance of the statutory powers them enabling, the Council hereby admits PATRICIA ELLIOTT and WILLIAM ELLIOTT to be Honorary Freemen of the Parish of MITFORD as the highest mantle of esteem and honour that the Council can bestow in recognition of the eminent services rendered by them to the Parish.

William (Billy) Elliott served as a founding member of the Parish Council since its inception in 1955 and as Chairman for over 20 years. His continued service of over 50 years was recognised by the award of the honour of MBE.

In addition to this remarkable service as a Councillor, Billy has had other leading roles in the Community, including Chairman of Trusts for Mitford Church, Governor of Mitford Primary School and its successor school, and executive committee member of the Northumberland branch of the NFU. He has always been the person to whom anyone in the Parish would go to if they had a problem and they could be guaranteed that he would do all in his power to solve the problem expeditiously.

This would not have been possible without the support of his wife Pat who has also taken leading roles in the Community, serving on the Village Hall Committee and also as Treasurer of both the Women's Institute and Mitford Historical Society for many years.

The Council is delighted to have this opportunity of expressing its sincere appreciation of the outstanding and conscientious manner in which Mr & Mrs Elliott have served the Parish.

By conferring this honour upon Mr & Mrs Elliott, the Council desires to acknowledge the indebtedness of the Parish/Community to them for the untiring and notable manner in which they have always discharged the arduous duties and responsibilities of the various offices they have so ably occupied.

Signed on behalf of Mitford Parish Council, following endorsement at the Annual Parish Meeting on 4 May 2016

Dr MRG Sharp (Chairman)

SE Rickitt (Clerk)

Councillor Sharp then presented Mr and Mrs Elliott with a scroll recording the citation

Mr Elliott responded on behalf of Mrs Elliot and himself giving thanks and expressing their delight at the honour. Parishioners and Councillors stood, applauded and showed their appreciation, wishing them well for their forthcoming move to Yorkshire.

2: Minutes of the last Annual Meeting

The minutes of the previous annual parish meeting held on 6 May 2015 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3: Matters Arising.

The Chairman updated parishioners on the successful outcome of the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan which was anticipated to be formally adopted by the County Council the following week.

4: The website

The Chairman introduced Alison Young who has volunteered to assist in getting content for the parish website. Due to a number of issues, she had not read in a position to move forward with this work until relatively recently but was now are starting to develop and put ideas into practice.

She did plead for groups within the parish to provide her with material and especially photographs for the website. In discussion the use of Facebook was mentioned and in particular the large number of people that could be reached. The clerk was asked to ensure that Facebook details are placed on notices and other material available to the public as well as the website's address.

Parishioners were keen that the website is used not only by groups within the parish but also by local businesses as a means of increasing the economic viability.

5: Report of the Chairman covering the activities of the Parish and County Council followed by any questions

Councillor Sharp gave his report as set out below. He drew attention to the number of significant planning issues affecting the parish, including the re-opening of the Plough Inn.

6: Report on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee

Mr Hedley commenced by setting out the Hall Committee's appreciation to Mr & Mrs Elliott for their work for the Hall over the decades and was pleased to see the award being given by the Parish Council.

He reported on steady progress although the Committee had concluded it was no longer viable for the Committee to arrange events due to low rates of attendance. Groups are however continuing to use the Hall and there are a significant number of children's parties being held. November's Craft Fair had demonstrated the availability of the Hall to a range of people.

Mr Hedley thanked the Parish Council for their continuing support

7: Police Issues

With the consent of the Chairman, PC Teasdale gave a brief report. She reminded parishioners to secure outhouses and sheds noting that power tools and garden ornaments had been the target of thefts.

She advised the Meeting of the steps being taken to apprehend those responsible for recent incidents of indecent exposure. Parishioners were asked to report incidents and this gave valuable intelligence to the Police.

Poaching remains an issue but Parishioners should not confront suspected poachers, reports should be phoned in. Use of cameras on mobile phones can assist detection.

The Meeting closed with informal discussions over a cup of tea.

Confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

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Date.....

Mitford Parish Council
Chairman's Report
May 2016

It has been another year during which major projects have impacted our parish, construction of the flood retention dam was completed during the year, construction began on the Morpeth Northern Bypass, and we have an application by Mitford Estate for a significant mixed commercial and housing development on the land to the west of Lancaster Park. There have been further consultations on the Northumberland Core Strategy, and we have worked with Morpeth Town Council and the parishes of Hebron, Hepscott and Pegswood to bring the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan to a successful conclusion. I will provide a brief update on each of these and will take questions at the end.

The flood retention dam on the Mitford Estate was completed in September. The heavy goods traffic on the Mitford Steads and Molesden roads had damaged the carriageway and verges, with the help of County Councillor Sanderson we worked to see this repaired. We are currently seeking clarification about the planned log catcher above Low Ford Bridge, trees were cleared over 12 months ago for access but construction has not started.

Construction of the Northern Bypass started last year, the brokered road closure schedule on St Leonard's Lane has worked well, and damage to the road caused by construction traffic has been mitigated. During the project approval process the Parish Council had argued that increased traffic arising from the bypass justified safety improvements at Spital Hill. We failed in our objective of linking the desired improvements to the bypass project, however subsequent discussions with NCC have been encouraging and we believe two of our issues will be addressed, namely the drainage at the top of the hill and sight lines at the Mitford Road junction.

Mitford village has benefited from Carillion's Community Support Programme, the fencing at the entrance to Fontside has been replaced and varnishing of the exterior cladding on the village hall is planned.

There is yet further slippage to the timescale of the Northumberland Core Strategy which is now unlikely to be in place before 2017. Following the last round of consultation in December the plan was effectively withdrawn for another look at green belt boundaries and housing numbers. This has not delayed the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan which was passed by the independent examiner with minor amendments and was overwhelmingly supported in the referendum by 93% of the

vote. With the neighbourhood plan expected to be adopted by the County Council this month, we will now conduct a review of the Parish Plan which will continue to be used as a framework for improving facilities in the Parish.

Two planning applications by Mitford Estate for a mixed commercial and housing development to the west of Lancaster Park were considered by the Parish Council, we failed to reach a consensus due to the conflict with the housing policy in the neighbourhood plan vs the need for jobs and affordable housing in the parish. The vote was in favour of no objection, the Planning Committee rejected the first application, the second is expected to be heard at the June meeting.

During the year various landscaping and fencing initiatives have improved the environment in Mitford Village, we have extended the scope of work of our warden to include more verge maintenance, regular cutting of the village greens and clearance of fallen leaves, we worked with Mitford Estate to upgrade fencing on the eastern approach to the village, and worked with Carillion to replace fencing at the entrance to Fontside. Parking at the church has long been a problem, with support from Councillor Sanderson's communities fund, the verge opposite the church has been dug out and gravelled. It is hoped to extend the parking area this year. Speeding vehicles continue to be a problem in Tranwell Woods, traffic calming measures have been agreed with NCC and implementation is expected in early summer.

I must mention our finances. Our bank balance at the end of the 2015/16 financial year was £6834, this is higher than the previous year due to an early payment of a £2000 capital funding contribution to the village hall. The 2016/17 budget is £8490 with precept income of £8000 and the balance from reserves. Given the healthy state of the finances, the Parish Council determined to keep the precept unchanged for 2016/17.

Finally I would like to thank our Parish Councillors and our Clerk for the excellent work that has been done over the last year, and our County Councillor both for his support and for brokering meetings with decision makers at County Hall. I also thank PC Andrea Teasdale for her support and advice to the Parish Council during the year.

Dr. MRG Sharp
3rd May 2016