

MITFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the electronic Parish Council meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 2 September 2020

Present:

Councillors Mrs S Hudson, Mrs E Ridley, ~~T Rodger~~, M Sharp (Chairman – presiding), M Skillen and Mrs A Young

Also present:

D Laux – NCC Head of Technical Services – who left after item 11

SE Rickitt – Clerk

NB: "NCC" means "Northumberland County Council"

1: Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to this, the fourth electronic meeting of the Council.

2: Public Participation

The clerk reported that there had been no questions emailed to the Council's email address and no parishioners had requested log-in details.

3: Apologies for absence

[Cllr T Rodger](#)

NCC Cllr Glen Sanderson

PC A Teasdale

4: Declaration of any interests and the grant of any dispensations

Councillor	Item	Reason
Mrs E Ridley	15	Parish Council representative on the hall committee

11: Highways

With the agreement of the meeting this item was brought forward. The Chairman thanked David Laux attending this meeting of the Parish Council which was requested in order to discuss a number of highway matters throughout the parish

A: General matters

During the discussion Mr Laux asked Councillors whether their intention in seeking gateway features was to enhance road safety particularly for pedestrians. On the Council confirming this as a major element of their previous thinking, Mr Laux recommended that any gateway features are placed at or near the start of the dwellings. His advice was not to have gateway features some distance away from dwellings as their effect in slowing vehicle traffic could be reduced.

B: St Leonard's Lane and Spital Hill

Mr Laux's was pleased to confirm that investigations are proceeding into the provision of an interactive 30 mph sign at the top of St Leonard's Lane and his team are looking at the signage near the bends between the new junction to the by-pass and the top of Spital Hill. Investigations are continuing into the water seepage onto the Mitford Rd at the foot of Spital Hill.

The County Council is also looking at a traffic regulation order to extend the 30 mile per hour limit at the top of Spital Hill and will be considering the exact location in consultation with the Parish Council.

C: Tranwell Village

There are existing village signs and the Parish Council wish to replace one or both with gateway features. On the north side of the village, shortly after the existing 30 mph sign, is a wide verge which could accommodate a gateway feature.

On the south side of the village there is a sharp bend with an informal layby.

Subsequent to the meeting the Clerk took photographs of the entry on the southern side and it may be preferable to place a gateway feature on the near side verge just by the small bridge at the entrance to the village.

D: Tranwell Woods

There is an existing sign entering Tranwell Woods from the east and it was suggested that the gateway sign could replace this by one 1500 millimetres wide with slats to resemble a farm gate.

For the existing sign entering Tranwell Woods from the north, from the Walton Rd, the gateway sign would have to be slightly smaller, 960 mm wide, again with slats to resemble a farm gate.

The sign entering Tranwell Woods from the south could be replaced by a white gateway sign 960 millimetres wide again with slats to resemble a farm gate.

The post box is set into the verge and drivers are pulling in to either get out or more often draw right up to the post box to deposit mail. Mr Laux was asked if

this could tarmac'd but he explained that would be a more significant piece of work than to lay a hogging base.

The Council drew attention to the informal pull-ins on the roads leading south out of Tranwell Woods where the Parish Council had requested "No Tipping" signs for some years.

E: Mitford

The Council's original thought had been to have a gateway feature at the start of the wide verge by High Ford Bridge but given Mr Laux's advice about location of gateway features, the Council agreed to suggest a location at the commencement of the existing 30 mile in our zone where wooden sign had already collapsed into the verge.

Attention was drawn to an illustration of a blocked drain by Blacksmith's Cottage.

The pavements along the road leading from the village by Fontside are in a poor condition. Mr Laux was candid and stated that many footpaths within the County are in similar poor conditions and, provided they are not a tripping hazard, they receive a low maintenance priority.

[There is a plethora of potholes in the middle of the road stretching from Wansbeck Cottage \(just before the Spital Hill turn\) all the way along Mitford Road to the entrance to Fontside](#)

F: Parking under the A1 viaduct

The Parish Council was concerned that cars are parking hard up against the existing fence under the viaduct leaving no room for pedestrians. The County Council was asked to consider what remedial measures may be taken to try to get cars parked so as to leave enough room for pedestrians.

The Chairman thanked Mr Laux for his attendance at the meeting. Mr Laux assured Parish Councillors that he would pass on details of all the issues to the relevant teams within the County Council.

5: Coronavirus

Councillors indicated that there had been no change since the previous meeting, the community continues to assist vulnerable and isolated parishioners. Councillors had raised concerns about the assistance to those shielding once lockdown ceases. The clerk had been informed by NCC that support would be continuing.

6: Report from the Beat Manager

PC Teasdale had sent her apologies and the following report

Here is a bit of an update:

Over this past week there has been an increase in reports of poaching across the area. Numerous cars have been sighted driving over fields – some with cows and other livestock within. If you see anything like this please phone in straight away– use 999 if you cannot get through on the 101 system as this is very dangerous to the livestock and anyone trying to intervene. We do have the rural crime team that look into all of these complaints. If you suspect there have been poachers on the land please let us know via 101 or a web submission on the Northumbria Police website so we know where people have been and we can focus our resources to the area.

There are still various different scams in operation with callers stating they are from HMRC, TV Licensing and Amazon. Please hang up if you get a call or delete any e-mails that request bank details as you would not be contacted in this way to provide those details. We also have had calls recently from people being conned on dating websites – one lady has given over £300,000 to a man she has never met!

7: Report from the County Councillor

Cllr Sanderson had sent his apologies and the following report

I have logged in the request for an interactive sign for St Leonards Lane. I guess the process may take quite a few months but hopefully it won't be too long.

Looking at any possible work for Tranwell is in hand.

The Boundary Review report is set for November Council.

We have launched a new enforcement project for fly tipping in the Ashington and Blyth areas where figures are way too high.

We will be launching the next stage of our Climate Change Action Plan over the winter which will be highlighting our plans for a number of new initiatives for all of us - some fairly minor to very large schemes involving heat source pump projects and EV chargers in streets. These will require very large capital outlay and the recent Covid costs and loss of income to the Council mean this will be a harder decision to compete with all the other work.

And our Free Tree for every household in the County kicked off in August with the offer of 10,000 trees. All were gone in 4 days and so we paid for a further 5000 - they have gone also. This is the first year - I want us to do this each year - and interestingly other Councils have been in touch to find out more about our scheme.

8: Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2020

The minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting were approved as a true record subject to the date being corrected to July and will be signed by the Chairman.

9: Any matters arising from the minutes if not already on the agenda

9.1 The Chairman advised that no local tradesmen had expressed interest in refurbishing the seat and noticeboard and it was agreed to offer the work to the Village Warden. **Action MSk**

9.2 The Council noted that the report into Morpeth Town Council's request for a change of boundaries was likely to go to the November County Council. The clerk is attempting to obtain a copy of the report. **Action SER**

10 Planning

The Council considered the following applications and agreed as follows

20/01924/OUT - Land North Of Threeways Tranwell Woods - Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of a single dwelling house - to object as this is not infill development and it would set a precedent for future such developments within the Green Belt.

18/03394/REM and 18/01362/REM - Land west of Lancaster Park - There were no objections to the latest matters but the clerk was asked to enquire if the concerns regarding drainage into the rivers have been satisfactorily addressed.

20/02506/VARYCO - Land west of High House Road - There were no matters of concern to be raised with the planning dept.

11: Highways

11.1 See above for the discussion with Mr Laux.

11.2 The Council deferred discussion on the LTPP bids for 2021/2022 until the October meeting.

12: Financial Matters

12.1 The Council noted the current accounts for 2020/2021 [A copy is attached to the signed minutes] and gave retrospective approval to the following payments

- HMRC – PAYE Q1 - £112.50
- G Christie – Village Warden - £606.00
- Arthur J Gallagher – Insurance – 358.94

12.2. The Council noted that there have been no issues raised with PKF Littlejohn (the external auditor) and therefore the Council resolved to agree the accounts for 2019/2020 as being final. Copies were circulated with the agenda for the May meeting.

13: The Website

Cllr Mrs Young had no new matters to report.

14: The Village Warden

Cllr Skillen is in regular contact with the warden and asked his fellow Councillors to bring any matters of concern to him as soon as possible. **Action All Cllrs**

15: The Village Hall

The Council agreed to exercise the powers under the Commons Act 1899 Management Scheme to allow the Village Hall to erect a warning sign on the portion of village green at the entrance to Fontside.

16. Time and date of next meeting

The Council noted next meeting was to be an electronic one held on Wednesday 7 October 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Future meetings are

- 4 November 2020
- 2 December 2020

Meetings may be cancelled if there is insufficient business

Confirmed as a true record

and signed by the Chairman..... Date.....