

MITFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the electronic Parish Council meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 31 March 2021

Present:

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

Also present:

SE Rickitt – Clerk

NB: “NCC” means “Northumberland County Council”

1: Chairman’s opening remarks

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

2: Public Participation

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

3: Apologies for absence

NCC Cllr G Sanderson

PC A Teasdale

Cllr Skillen suffered connection problems and had to leave part way through the meeting.

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

Councillor	Item	Reason
M Skillen	11	Employee of Mitford Estates
Mrs E Ridley	17	Parish Council representative on the hall committee

5: Coronavirus

Councillors were not aware of any parishioners requiring assistance which was not already being provided.

6: Report from the Beat Manager

PC Teasdale had sent her apologies and the following report:

Poaching continues to be an issue across the rural area and Northumbria Police have Operation Hawkeye to address this. Please report any issues you have with poachers to us on 101 or by a web

submission so that we know where the issues are. We have volunteers from across the area working with the Police to tackle these crimes.

The motorbikes and quad riders using the green lanes and BOATS has increased recently with multiple groups of riders being in the area most weekends. This is being addressed with a multi-agency approach as they are legally allowed to use certain lanes and areas to ride however, we are aware some stray onto private land and can cause damage and are a nuisance. There are issues with them being on private land that we cannot enforce but we are working with the landowners to try to stop this nuisance behaviour. This is a National issue as these off-roaders are causing problems all over the country. There have been some bike seizures over the last few weeks but there are too many of them unfortunately.

We still have the COVID team working to address COVID breaches across the area whilst the lockdown continues – however the restrictions are starting to be eased and with the Easter weekend coming up we are expecting it to be busy.

If you have any issues you wish to report to me, I can be contacted at 8603@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

7: Report from the County Councillor

Cllr Sanderson had sent his apologies and the following report:

The Council is cracking on with filling potholes after a very wet winter which, with frosts and snow as well, has caused major problems across the County and also for many other County Councils, but we are putting in a lot of effort and time into this.

Our staff continue to do a brilliant job in continuing to deliver all our frontline services.

The new Leisure Centre complex is underway in Morpeth now and work will start soon on the new car park at Goosehill, as well as ones for Amble, Alnwick, Hexham and Berwick.

The pilot glass collection is going well with high levels of glass being collected.

Our new Climate Change Action Plan lays out the new projects which we will undertake over the coming years including very large solar and ground and air source heat pump schemes plus a trial of pavement EV chargers.

The Northumberland Line has received its first major funding and will be up and running in 2023 with plans for new stations being lodged with planning shortly.

And it is hoped that the new battery mega factory will get the go ahead - it is in for planning now and could be the creator of thousands of new jobs in the County.

Locally, the interactive sign is due to go up in April - and work for Tranwell and Tranwell Woods is in the LTP. I am hoping to see some road patching on the road through the village in the summer.

As usual please let me know if I can help with anything and sorry, I can't join you at your meeting.

8: Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021

The minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chairman.

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

9.1 Cllr Mrs Young had inspected the seats. The one at the entrance to Fontside was in the worst condition and is not screwed down. After discussion it was agreed

- To replace the Fontside seat, ideally with one made from hardwood – the plaque will need transferring to the replacement.
- To amend the accounts by including a new budget head “Renewal of Street Furniture” and to allocate £500.00 from the uncommitted funds.

The clerk will research costs and circulate details to Councillors. **Action SER**

9.2 The Noticeboard at Fontside needs re-staining in 2021 by the Village Warden. **Action MSk**

10: Planning

10.1 There were no new applications to consider.

10.2 *Application 20/03654/COU – N1 Golf Centre – Change of Use to twenty touring sites* – had been discussed at the previous meeting. The clerk had not received any response to the request for further information which he shall chase up. The Council also agreed to that the application is determined by County Councillors given the concerns about access for touring units. **Action SER**

11: Erosion of the riverbank at the allotment

11.1 The Chairman displayed a photograph of the embankment showing the erosion of about 1-1.5 metres of the Council’s allotment. The erosion is naturally occurring, but a potential solution is to plant fast growing willow whips. The Council agreed that the Chairman could source whips for the Mitford Estate to plant. [Photograph One]

11.2 Whilst planting whip would assist the part of the bank not permanently submerged, the whips were unlikely to take root if submerged. The Chairman had researched the issue and drew attention to a photograph of an innovative approach using live willow posts interleaved with live willow whips as a way of bolstering a riverbank. It was agreed that the Chairman should explore this with the Environment Agency. It seemed as if costs for the 10 metres or so would be around £2000 but specialist contractors would be required as the live logs must be ordered some months in advance. [Photograph Two]

11.3 Once indicative costs are known, then consideration could be given to sources of finance.

Actions MSh

[NB: Copies of the photographs are in the annex]

12: Highways

12.1 Cllr Sharp had discussed the water flowing down Spital Hill with Martin King, the Highways Area Manager. The County Council's investigations are tending to show that it is not a spring but is a leak from a water main. The evidence for this thinking is the quality of the water emerging onto the road. Martin King intended to raise this with NWL. Cllr Sharp also reported water flowing onto the road from two telecoms chambers indicating that water was flowing through the telecoms ducts and will raise this with Martin King as all the water on the Mitford Road is now coming from these ducts. **Action MSh**

12.2 Given the forecast of a return of wintry weather over the following days, the clerk was asked to urgently request that Spital Hill be added to the precautionary salting route. **Action SER**

12.3 Councillors will report potholes via the County Council's website as they are observed. The state of the roads is a matter often raised by parishioners when talking to Councillors. **Action All Cllrs**

12.4 The clerk will seek to rearrange the site meeting with the Highways Dept. to consider the location of the proposed Gateway features once lockdown has been lifted. **Action SER**

12.5 Cllr Mrs Ridley reported that the speed survey had been carried out in 2020 and wondered if the results had been received. The clerk will chase this up. **Action SER**

12.6 The Council was very grateful for the efforts of parishioners in collecting litter throughout the parish and especially on St Leonard's Lane.

13: Fibre Broadband

Cllr Mrs Young updated the Council as the project has now started by Alncom, with a hope of completion by early summer. Alncom have agreed to install links to the Church Hall, the Village Hall and the Cricket Club at no cost to those bodies.

14: Financial Matters

14.1 The Council approved the draft final accounts subject to

- The retrospective approval of £20.00 to reimburse Cllr Mrs Young for the cost of copying in connection with the promotion of the fibre broadband.
- The insertion of the new budget head (see item 9.1 above)

14.2 With those amendments, the Council agreed for their submission to Mr Vermaas, the Council's internal auditor.

15: The Website

Cllr Mrs Young had no new issues to report.

16: The Village Warden

The Council agreed to ask the warden to chop back the growth at the bottle bank. **Action AY to contact MSk.**

17: The Village Hall

Cllr Mrs Ridley reported that the installation of the new floor was complete, and bookings were beginning to resume as lockdown eases.

18: The Elections

The clerk confirmed that the formal notice had now been given with any contested elections being held on 6 May 2021.

19. Other Business

The Chairman was saddened to have to report the death of a parishioner, Stephen Scott, whose wife Janice had served on the Council.

20. Time and date of next meeting

The Council noted this as

- 6 May 2021 – any contested parish council elections in Northumberland
- 19 May 2021 – The usual date would be prior to the elections. The Council must hold its annual meeting no later than 24 May 2021. The intention is to hold the Annual Parish Meeting immediately before the Parish Council Meeting.

Meetings may be cancelled if there is insufficient business.

Confirmed as a true record at the meeting held on.....

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

Annex – Photographs

One - The riverbank at 1 Feb 2021 – para 12.1



Two – Using live posts – para 12.2

