

MITFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the electronic Parish Council meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 6 May 2020

Present:

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

Also present:

NCC Cllr Glen Sanderson (who left after item 7)

SE Rickitt – Clerk

NB: "NCC" means "Northumberland County Council"

1: Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman noted this was the first electronic meeting of the Council.

2: Public Participation

The clerk reported that there had been no requests by parishioners for the log-in details of the meeting, nor had any questions been emailed to the Council's email address.

3: Apologies for absence

Cllr M Skillen

PC A Teasdale

7: Report from the County Councillor – Taken here to allow Cllr Sanderson to attend to other NCC business

Cllr Sanderson reported on the following issues and responded to questions and comments from Councillors

- NCC had managed to keep essential services functions during the National Emergency, in particular the domestic waste collection
- The Household Waste Recovery Centres had reopened earlier in the week and NCC were waiting for DEFRA to announce an increase in the items allowed to be deposited
- There had been a perceptible increase in fly-tipping especially in some parts of the county
- The Parish Council's wish for a walkaround to discuss gateway features was on-hold until the lockdown has been modified.

- In response to comments, Cllr Sanderson said that resumption of the work on Spittal Hill was unlikely before June or July. The clerk emailed the Highways Area Manager during the meeting to request an investigation into why there is continual water on the Mitford-Morpeth road at the foot of Spittal Hill notwithstanding the current drought.
- The boundary review report will not be considered by NCC at the current time

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

Councillor	Item	Reason
Mrs E Ridley	14	Parish Council representative on the hall committee

5: Coronavirus

Councillors reported that the community had been assisting vulnerable and isolated parishioners. New volunteers were not being sought by either the NHS or NCC at the current time. No requests for assistance by the Parish Council had been received by any means at the date of the meeting.

6: Report from the Beat Manager

PC Teasdale had sent the following report

There has been an increase in poaching – probably due to the fact there are deer all over as there's less traffic on the roads. Please let me know if you are having issues like this as it goes in hand with other crime. There have been quad bikes and other machinery stolen from farms across the area recently so please make sure everything is locked away and secure.

We are aware that an increasing number of vehicles are “racing” on the roads – probably because they're so quiet. We have patrols in the area to address this but it is worth reporting these incidents either via either phone 101 or submit a web submission on the Northumbria Police website. This ensures an incident is recorded and our traffic department will be aware and pay extra attention.

The majority of residents in the area are abiding by the rules of the lockdown and have been great – there are always a few who will breach them in some way. If you wish to report what you consider to be a breach of covid-19 regulations you can either phone 101 or submit a web submission on the Northumbria Police website.

For item 7, see above

8: Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020

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 The walkaround with NCC Highways was on hold – see item 7 above – but will be an item on the agenda for the next meeting. **Action SER**

9. The clerk reported his attendance, as the NALC Chief Officer, at a meeting with local operators just prior to lockdown. It was clear at that meeting that resumption of bus services within the parish was unlikely as services must provide evidence of a proven need to qualify for NCC subsidies or that they will be profitable.

10 Planning

The Council considered the following applications and resolved as noted

10.1 20/00222/PREAPP – Land East of Abbey Mill – two affordable bungalows – whilst Councillors welcome the concept of affordable development with the parish they opposed this proposal because

- a) The 100 sq.m footprint of each bungalow was more appropriate to an executive design and that size meant these would not be affordable in any realistic interpretation of the term
- b) The site is within the Green Belt, which in this location, prevents Mitford from coalescing with Morpeth
- c) The Wansbeck valley is a green corridor with sensitive habitats
- d) In any event the parish already has approximately 50 affordable units with outline consent (the residential element of the site to the west of Lancaster Park)
- e) Consent would be a precedent for ~~further~~ development on this site (which has already been the subject of unsuccessful applications for development in the past) and would be a precedent to allow further ribbon development along the Mitford-Morpeth road.

10.2 18/03394/REM – Land west of Lancaster Park. This application ~~hasis~~ seeking consent for several changes and it was clear that further refinements would be submitted in the near future. Councillors indicated no objections as

- a) The changes would widen the buffer with the existing properties on Lancaster Park.
- b) It was noted that the layout of the commercial area and service station were now more “traditional” as the three drive-thru facilities were replaced by shops and restaurants.
- c) The revised layout would lead to less light pollution and on-site catering would enhance the hotel accommodation

- d) Councillors wish to remind the local planning authority of need to ensure there were no large visually dominating direction signs at or indicating the service area

11: Financial Matters

11.1 The Council approved the draft final accounts for 2019/2020, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, with one amendment to move the clerk's travel expenses from Head 1 to Head 2.

11.2 The Council agreed to reserve £250 to Mitford Village Hall as a grant towards a Fayre in 2020, the clerk being authorised to make the payment if a Fayre is held.

11.3 The following retrospective payments were approved

- Widescope – Website - £228.00
- HMRC – PAYE Q4 – 112.50
- Mitford Village Hall – Room Hire - £137.00
- NALC Annual Subscription - £129.23

12: The Website

Cllr Mrs Young had no new issues to bring to the Council.

13: The Village Warden

Cllr Sharp will speak to Cllr Skillen about the need to mow the verges to the east of Mitford. **Action MSh**

14: The Village Hall

Councillors were advised that bookings are suspended due to the National Emergency. Councillors indicated that they would look favourable on a grant request if the Hall's reserves were to be severely depleted because of the Emergency

15: Other issues

15.1 Cllr Sharp had received a suggestion that the village flag at Fontside be lowered on the death of a parishioner. Councillors debated the practicalities and asked the clerk to draft a policy for discussion at a future meeting. **Action SER**

15.2 In any event the current flag is becoming tattered as it flies continuously apart from during the winter. With it being a bespoke design, Councillors agreed to delay replacement until the Cricket Club were to replace their flag. In the interim, it was agreed to purchase via eBay a Union Jack and a Northumberland Flags. **Action SER**

15.3 Stannington Parish Council had alerted the Council to a possible three-day music festival at Tranwell airfield over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Whilst Councillors were sceptical about the festival proceeding, it was agreed to contact NCC to seek details of proposed traffic routes and other environmental issues.

Action SER

16. Time and date of next meeting

The Council noted the Coronavirus legislation had postponed the Annual Meetings until May 2021. The following programme of meetings was agreed, noting that some are likely to be electronic

- 3 June 2020
- 1 July 2020
- 2 September 2020
- 7 October 2020
- 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.....