Mitford Parish Council

Meeting Minutes

The Parish Council met at 7.30pm, on Monday 5th December 2022 at the Village Hall, Mitford.

**Present:**

Councillors: Alison Young (Chair), (A.Y.), Mike Sharp (M.S.), Ted Roger (T.R.), Eric Dodd (E.R.)

Damian McEnroe (D.M.) - Clerk

**1: Chairs Opening Remarks.**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and especially to Cllr Dodd who had recently joined the Parish Council after a successful interview.

**2: Public Participation.**

There were no members of the public present.

**3: Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from County Cllr Sanderson, Parish Cllr Skillen (M.S.) and police representative Olivia Coleman.

**4: Declaration of any interests and the grants of any dispensations.**

Cllr Rogers declared an interest in the Village Hall.

**5: Report from the County Councillor.**

*At present the County Council is working on its 2023/24 budget which is always difficult but more so this year given the effects of wage and fuel inflation both of which will cost significantly more than we budgeted for this time last year when inflation was much, much less.*

*As well as this we are not sure just what kind of a Government settlement we might get this year given the messages from Whitehall.*

*There is the ability for Councils to increase Council Tax by 5% and many if not most are planning to do that. I have said that I will do my best to keep the rise below that.*

*I am very keen to ensure we do not reduce our key frontline services if we can possibly avoid that whilst at the same time protecting our free town centre car parking if we can. This is an expensive extra that very few Councils provide now but I am still firmly of the view that it does help trade and visits to our town centres.*

*Our new car park at Goosehill is being used well and the new Leisure Centre is due to open in the Spring.*

*So we are doing our best!*

*We will shortly be announcing our Queen Elizabeth Memorials programme which is based on the feedback from almost 1000 responses to our recent consultation.  These will include projects around new paths, or woodland for quiet reflection in and around the main towns around the County.*

*We have recently invested in extra money for our roads and we are finally beginning to get on top of years of underfunding. Of course, there is much still to do but people do tell me they are beginning to see the difference.*

*We are seeing great things happening in our more rural areas like Ad Gefrin in Wooler, and, soon to be started, the new Maltings in Berwick and the Lilidorei project at the Alnwick Gardens which is due to open in the Spring.*

*Recently we have welcomed new Hi-Tech industry to the South East of the County bringing in over 200 new jobs.*

*We have organised three Town and Parish Council conferences for January which will touch on a number of key topics we would like your views on and we will have the key officers present for you to have time with. I hope as many as can come do come.*

*We have recently recruited a new Chief Executive as three former senior officers have now left, and we are now recruiting for a new Top Executive Team so there has been some significant changes.*

*Therefore, I am looking forward to the new year and the continuous improvements I want to see and, in the meantime, I wish you a very happy Christmas.*

**6: Report from the Police.**

Nothing of interest was identified. Cllr Skillen to attempt to arrange a meeting with representatives from “Op. HawkEye” for the next meeting. **ACTION M.S.**

**7: Minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2022**

The minutes were considered and Cllr Sharp raised a matter around the potential change in precept level for the forthcoming year. He wished it to be recorded that the intention of the Parish Council was to ensure there was no increase in individual premise contributions, but only to raise the overall amount of precept collected to £8840.00 which would be achieved through additional premises contributing to the precept.

The appointment of a new councillor, Mr Eric Dodd was noted.

**8: Any other matters arising from the minutes if not already on the agenda.**

None.

**9: Financial matters.**

The accounts were agreed and a brief discussion took place regarding outstanding “hall hire” fees owed to the Village Hall. **ACTION -** T.R. to resolve.

**10: Planning Applications, both current and new.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Application** | Resolution |
| 22/03226/COU Morpeth Archers/NE1 Golf | It is understood this may go to Strategic Planning on 7th Feb 2023, where Cllr Sharp will object on behalf of Mitford Parish Council |

**11: Highways.**

An email from Robert McCarthy, N.C.C. Highways, had been received which stated the proposed gateway features for Tranwell and Mitford were in excess of the proposed budget, (£30k) as opposed to an anticipated £10-15K. The project will be reconsidered to identify potential reductions in costs. All Cllrs expressed disappointment at this.

Cllr Sharp queried whether the project cost be split over two financial years, and if so could Tranwell Woods benefit from the first Tranche as it appeared to have the greater road issues.

Cllr Young stated she would contact Neil Snowden, N.C.C. Highways to clarify the position and also ensure previously agreed funding, and momentum in the project was not lost. **ACTION-** A.Y.

Cllr Young also suggested the list of road issues currently unresolved, be renewed.

Cllr Sharp stated the drains on Spittal Hill appeared blocked and water was again flowing over the road surface. He will contact Martin King, N.C.C. Highways. **ACTION -** M.S.

**12: Village Hall.**

Cllr Rogers was asked to explore with the Village Hall committee if they were willing to commit to a £5000 reserve to assist with the Northern Powergrid project concerning Village Hall energy resilience. Discussions then took place regarding the exploration of additional funding streams to help support the project. It was understood that the Village Hall Committee had overall ownership of this project and should drive forward all potential applications, some being time critical. **ACTION**- T.R.

The anticipated Audio/Visual installation has been indeterminately delayed due to funding issues.

**13: The Village Warden and other Environmental Matters.**

All trees have been delivered and will be planted this week. Stakes and tree ties have also been obtained.

Cllr Sharp will liaise with Cllr Skillen regarding the replanting of current planters and Cllr Young will discuss with Cllr Skillen obtaining additional planters for the parish. **ACTIONS -** A.Y. and M.S.

**14: Recruitment of Councillor to Mitford Parish Council.**

The current vacancy has now been filled as previously noted.

Sadly, due to ill health Cllr Hudson has tendered her resignation and so the process to recruit a replacement needs to commence. **ACTION** – D.M. to expedite.

**15: Correspondence.**

The council has been notified from NALC of an upcoming course on Financial Matters. Expressions of interest in attending were made by Cllrs Young and Rodger and clerk McEnroe who all agreed to pay course costs themselves.

**16: Any other Urgent Business.**

Mitford Estate has kindly donated a Christmas Tree for the Village Green which will be erected and decorated imminently. Cllr Young will send a letter of thanks to the Estate. **ACTION** – A.Y.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9.14pm.

**17: Time and dates of next meetings.**

7.30pm, Monday 30th January 2023,

7.30pm, Monday 6th March 2023,

7.30pm, Monday 3rd April 2023

All at Mitford Village Hall.

Confirmed as a true record and signed by the chair………………………………………………………………

Date…………………………….