

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Thursday 16th March 2023 at 7:30pm.
At Wall Village Hall.**

PRESENT	<p>Cllrs: Mark Wood, Chair (MW),, Elisa Wyrley-Birch (EWB) Stephen Blake (SB), Gina Scott-Middleton (20.30) (GSM), Nick Morphet (County Councillor) (NM) Clerk: Alix Pearson (AP).</p> <p>Jonathan Carty and Mel Bramley newly residing at Peartree Cottage, attended as observers.</p>
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NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
2535	<p>1. Apologies for absence: Due to ill health, apologies were received from John Lamb. RESOLVED A six month leave of absence be granted to John.</p>
2536	<p>2 Declaration of interests AP declared an interest in Planning Application 23/00776/FUL, as a consulted neighbour</p>
2537	<p>3. Approval of Minutes Approved</p>

2538

5. Review of Action Log -

a. Community Resilience Plan

SB & AP reviewed the Humshaugh plan, against the plan template provided by Nigel Fisher and against the Wall Parish Council proposed plan. It was concluded that as the resources of WPC had not changed since the plan was drafted, only minor changes were required.

RESOLVED

SB to present proposed plan at next WPC meeting.

b. Speeding Traffic in Wall Village

Extensive analysis and proposals have been received from NCC addressing the issue of speeding traffic on the A6079.. The NCC report has been placed on the WPC website. Further information can be found in detail in the County Councillor Report at Appendix 1.

RESOLVED

NM to request NCC implement measures:-

9.1 a) Mobile Speed Camera Site

9.1 c) Removal of carriageway centre line

c. Energy Efficiency in Wall

The group will report back to the next council meeting.

d. Book Exchange in Church

GSM has commissioned publicity and information posters for the Book Exchange.

RESOLVED

GSM to write up the guidelines and protocols for discussion with churchwardens..

e. Species Rich Grassland Site

A volunteer team met to dig up the remaining brambles.

NM discussed the location of the information signs, which may not be able to be erected until mowing has taken place.

RESOLVED

Signs to be made and erected as soon as practically possible. Monies are available from the Wildflower project to support the cost of fitting ..

f. Streetlighting Consultation

After considerable progress chasing, NM has been informed by NCC that it is not cost effective to turn off the street lighting. Further information in Appendix 1. Individuals who are inconvenienced by a specific light may still approach NCC to explore their options to have it turned off

g. Matters Arising from Bi-Annual Land & Buildings Inspection

Friends of St Oswalds have agreed to make a donation to churchyard wall repair costs

Overhanging tree on Brunton Bank has been cut back'

The drain on Old Lane has been rodded this week.

	<p>h. Additional Play Equipment EWB & GSM identified a number of pieces of play equipment which may be of interest. The style of equipment available and the suitability of the local in the existing play area will help refine the eventual choice. Working with the topography of the rising bank to install a slide was considered. RESOLVED EWB to research the cost and availability of Sylvan style equipment and contact NCC regarding funding.</p> <p>i. Dilapidated Signs in Scenic Lay-by NCC inform that signs will be removed this week.</p> <p>j) Wildflower Project AP has received copies of the original grant applications completed in 2016 and a brief report of actions taken to date. A report summary of actions and options for discussion appears at Appendix 2</p> <p>k) Condition of Village Greens After a long hard winter, some areas of the green continue to deteriorate. Parishioners have mentioned this to MW. There are concerns that the greens will not have recovered in time for the mowing season, which has implications for the Coronation party plans. MW favours a period of considerable reduction of vehicles driving across, or onto the greens. RESOLVED AP & MW to discuss with mowing contractor as part of recontracting process.</p>
2539	<p>5. County Councillor update NM's comprehensive report appears in full at appendix 1</p>
2540	<p>6. Coronation Events The group of residents who kindly organised the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in the village in 2022 are currently planning the village Coronation celebration event. There were sufficient monies carried forward from the Jubilee to completely fund the Coronation events as planned, so no application has been made to NCC for their Coronation fund, nor to the Parish Council for a grant. This event will be smaller than the Jubilee events and will comprise a village tea, children's fancy dress and games. It is likely that there will be a tent and gazebos erected on the greens. AP requested more information on the tents and gazebos in order for our insurers to be informed. SB reminded that a parish council representative should be involved in the planning committee in order to meet the requirements of the Village Hall insurance. JL is nominally the PC representative on the committee. RESOLVED MW to liaise with JL and committee representatives to gather the information required.</p>

2541

7. Review of Planning Applications Log

21/03394/FUL Land on Hadrian's Wall holiday accommodation

See also CC report Appendix 1. Planning Permission Refused. 2 enforcement notices have been served, with one still outstanding. Councillors were interested in whether the parish could take action to remove the unauthorised fencing but that was not considered appropriate at this stage. NCC may take action at some point in the future.

22/00919/VARYCO Chapel Lane. Variation of building finishes Ongoing.

This is likely to be approved

21/04496/FUL – The Cottage, The Green, Wall. Holiday Accommodation –

Application PERMITTED 26/10/22

22/02989/FUL, 22/02990/LBC. Fallowfield House. Building Alterations and Listed Building Consent. Closing date for comments 11/10/22 - Ongoing

22/02991/FUL Fallowfield House. 24 solar panels in field

PERMITTED 03/03/23

23/0029/FUL West Dunkirk Farm. Buildings Conversion

Closing date for comments 10/02/23 - No objection made from PC

23/0428/VARYCO Brunton Bothy. Change of use from holiday let to full time occupation

Closing date for comments 28/03/23

Objection recorded from PC

23/00691/LBC Fallowfield House. Installation of electric car charging point

Closing date for comments 30/03/23. Supported by PC

23/00776?FUL Ivy Cottage, Front Street. Replace UPVC perch and add dormer windows

Closing date for comments 29/03/23. Strongly supported by PC

2542	<p>8. Village Hall Report A verbal report was given by SB</p> <p>Once again, the main area of Village Hall Trustee activity was in pursuit of the roof works. A suitable contractor may have been found, who is also able to undertake the roof works in sections, meaning that the hall may not need to be out of use whilst the works take place.</p> <p>Once the roof is replaced, installation of solar panels and appropriate batteries may be addressed. Currently there are insufficient funds to cover the roof replacement and solar panels and batteries. NM may be able to provide a grant from his local budget - see also Appendix 1.</p> <p>MW reiterated the importance of any contractors respecting the the greens as they undertook their work, as they are already in poor condition.</p>
2543	<p>Parish Communications AP raised concerns that current methods of communication with parishioners - FB group, Parish Council Website and Village noticeboard - did not have sufficient reach. It was acknowledged that some parishioners would always be difficult to reach, but there was some merit in the production of a hardcopy newsletter.</p> <p>SB had volunteered to DTP a hardcopy letter in the past.</p> <p>A template format could be used, as an aide memoir with appropriate headings.</p> <p>RESOLVED All to consider the subjects which might usefully form part of a parish newsletter</p>
2544	<p>11. Date of next meeting Thursday 25th May 2023 at 7.30pm</p> <p>The meeting ended at 9.35pm</p>

COUNCILLOR UPDATE FOR WALL PC MEETING 16/3/23

Agenda item 4. Review of Action Log.

4b. Highways Programme have finally released their **Traffic Calming Feasibility and Options Report**, which I shared with the parish councillors via Alix a few weeks ago. They're suggesting that they start by asking the police to put Wall on their mobile speed camera location list, and also by removing the centre line from the road (at a cost of £11.4k). They do that because it causes motorists to slow down by making them feel less safe. They did it on the road between Chollerton and Gunnerton, and there were a few complaints at first but people got used to it. They'll do more traffic speed surveys before and after they remove the centre line, and if it doesn't slow traffic down they'll consider installing horizontal deflections (also known as build outs) and 40mph buffer speed limits at each end of the village (at a cost of £84.6k). They'll take your comments into account, and I'd be happy to pass them on to Highways Programme.

4e. The Species Rich Grassland project. I haven't been able to order the signs yet because my contact at the Royal Horticultural Society is off sick and hasn't been able to set up a purchase order. The price of the signs has almost doubled, but Northumberland Communities Together has agreed to help me with the cost. I had planned to install the signs about a foot into the brambles, but clearing the brambles would take a bit of work and it would also be better to have the signs at the front so that people are facing the species rich grassland (SRG) area as they're reading the signs. I'm hoping that the two grass cutters might be able to work around the signs if they were on the border between the short roadside grass and the SRG area? I'll speak to them both when I get the chance. I can delay the installation of the signs if necessary.

4f. Streetlighting. I gave up waiting for a response from the Street Lighting Manager (Gavin Barlow), so I arranged a meeting with his boss (Paul Jones), and I can finally explain what's going on. Setting the street lights to switch off for part of the night is called Part Night Operation. It would cost the council £75 per street light, and it would take 17 years to pay for that via the energy saved – which is long enough to put them off doing it.

The reason that we can't have motion sensitive street lights is that we don't have a Central Management System. When the County Council decided to install LED lights in every street light it had to decide whether to invest in a Central Management System, but it decided to save £2 million by not doing so. Retrofitting a Central Management System today would apparently cost far more than £2 million.

My understanding of a Central Management System is that it allows you to control every street light from a desk in County Hall, which suggests to me that Part Night Operation would become easy and cheap to deliver. Paul told me, however, that he *thinks* that it would

still cost the council £75 per street light. I've recently asked him for clarification on this, and I'll let you know what he tells me.

Regarding the consultation, it seems that there's been a simple misunderstanding all along. Paul told me that although Gavin consults with residents about switching off certain street lights, he's never been asked to consult with whole villages before. Every time he assured me that the next step was consultation I assumed that he would go on to arrange a whole village consultation, but it turns out I was asking him to do something that he'd never done before.

4i. The dilapidated signs in the lay-by. I've been told that the signs will be removed this week.

Agenda item 5. County Councillor update

1) The experimental Traffic Regulation Order to stop the open water swimmers parking on the footway and verge in Low Brunton is still a work in progress. I passed the parish council's comments on to Neil Snowdon (the Principal Programme Officer in Highways Programme) and he told me that it would be easier to extend the double yellow lines if they need to be extended than to remove them if they need to be removed. He hadn't seen the plans when I spoke to him, so I sent them to him and suggested that we either follow the plans or we install double yellow lines from the lay-by to just below the crossroads and extend them around the crossroads or down towards the bridge if necessary. I'd prefer to let them make the final decision, so if it's ok with you I'll agree to whatever they think is best.

2) I mentioned in January that I'd had a report about **dangerous trees in the woodland on the south side of Brunton Bank** that Hadrian's Wall National Trail passes through. I've since been out to have a look and my (lay-person's) opinion is that the danger is minimal, but I've passed my findings on to the Trees and Woodland Officer anyway. I've also asked him how members of the public, parish councillors and county councillors should report concerns of this nature, and I'll let you know what he tells me.

3) I've asked Highways Maintenance whether **the pipe under the main road at the bottom of Old Lane** has been jetted yet, but I haven't had an answer. I'll keep reminding them!

4) The intermittent flooding problem above the stile on Hadrian's Wall National Trail on the south side of Brunton bank hasn't been addressed yet. The Hadrian's Wall Trail Maintenance Ranger has been out twice to have a look, once with the landowner, but apparently the problem wasn't apparent on either occasion. I sent photos of the flooding in late November to the Countryside and Rights of Way Officer, so he knows that the problem's intermittent rather than non-existent. He says that the area will be monitored regularly and that we should let him know if the problem continues – so please keep sending your photos to me.

5) I've received confirmation that our Expression of Interest to the Borderlands Partnership Board for **funding to improve the footway alongside the A6079** is still on track. The EoI was

rejected by the Borderlands team and is now in the inbox (or in-tray) of the County Council's Rural Growth Manager, Tony Brown. I spoke to Tony last week and he told me that he would look at our EoI soon. He also said that there would be an opportunity to tidy it up if we wanted to, and I'd be happy to do that when I get a chance.

6) A cycle path between Acomb and Chollerford had been scored highly in the draft Local Transport Plan programme, but unfortunately it was found to be too expensive and hasn't made the final programme. I don't know whether they got as far as looking at possible routes.

7) The good news in the final Local Transport Plan programme is that the A6079 between Low Brunton and Chollerton viaduct will be repaired in the next financial year. The work is scheduled to take place between Friday 12th and Friday 19th of May. The Military Road east of where they left off last year will also be surfaced dressed in the next financial year.

8) And finally, I had a meeting with the managers of McDonalds in Hexham about the amount of McDonalds litter on the side of the A6079. They weren't keen to make a financial contribution towards traffic management (which is required to enable safe litter picking), but they did say that if the County Council arranged the traffic management they'd be happy to send half a dozen employees to help with picking litter. I've passed their offer on to the Neighbourhood Services manager, and I'm hoping he'll accept it. It might be possible for parish cllrs and members of the public to join in, and I'll let you if and when we set a date.

Agenda item 7. Review of Planning Applications Log.

7a. Two Enforcement Notices have finally been served on the owner of the glamping pod site on Hadrian's Wall. They were for the unauthorised fencing and the toilet block, but the Enforcement Notice for the earthworks is still with the legal team. As far as I'm aware there's been no progress regarding the appeal over the unauthorised entrance.

7b. The Variation of Conditions application for the holiday accommodation on Chapel Lane is likely to be determined within the next week or so. I understand that permission to vary the conditions is likely to be granted.

Agenda item 8. Village Hall report.

Rob Say asked me if I'd be willing to make a contribution towards either the roof, insulation, solar panels or batteries. I told him I'd be happy to contribute up to £10,000 and that I'd prefer to contribute towards the insulation, solar panels or batteries than the roof itself. I also told him that I might need to spread the contribution over two financial years, and that I might not be able to contribute quite as much as £10,000 if I continue to receive as many requests as I'm currently getting. I sent him an application form, and told him that I'd have to see how much was left in the kitty when I received the completed application form.

Wildflower Project - Progress Report

In 2016, two applications were made to local funds at Northumbrian Water and Greggs, with an intention of establishing a wildflower habitat on areas of the back green.

Advice was taken from the Buglife Charity and project documents and action plans were drawn up.

Action was taken as per plans, with ground preparation and seed distribution, but increasingly hot and dry weather conditions, combined with a reduction in community involvement due to Covid19 regulations, meant that very few wildflowers grew.

Northumbrian Water remitted £3000 and Greggs have remitted £1000. Of these funds, £2198 remains. The £800 expended in the last 6 years has been on mowing, strimming, and materials, with the great majority of manual work undertaken by volunteers.

In 2021, the Parish Council was able to be involved with a wild grassland project, (Wild Wall) which adopts a low intervention approach to habitat development, which has informed the wildflower project as it continues to develop.

Wall Parish Council is keen to revive the project, in the light of what has been learned from the project activity to date.

As Northumbrian Water is the major funding body, it is their Branch Out criteria which will inform future activity.

As of 2023, the Northumbrian Water Branch Out fund has an overarching aim of:

“The Branch Out fund supports projects that reconnect habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife, building resilience to our region whilst bringing benefits to water, wildlife and communities “

This aim is embraced through 6 criteria:

- Water in the natural environment
- Wildlife
- Community
- Sewerage and Drainage
- Climate Change
- Science

of which fund applications should seek to meet three, one of which should be wildlife.

These criteria may well have changed since the 2016 application.

In 2023, it is proposed that the criteria addressed by the project would be

- Wildlife
- Community
- Climate Change

The original project intended to establish and seed wildflower habitat and could be argued to have failed due to the effects of climate change. Learning from the Wild Wall project activity, it is proposed that activities and actions are as follows:

- To address concerns of climate change, it is proposed that a variety of drought resistant, flowering trees and shrubs are planted, in lieu of wildflowers
- Both the wildflower and the Wild Wall projects have engaged a wide community, from beekeepers and gardeners to school children and less physically able elderly.
- Reduction in habitat has had an impact on the amount and the diversity of fauna, bird and insect life. Informal monitoring of fauna, bird and insect life is in place. The Parish Council is researching the reasons for and the impact of the arrival and roosting of approx 40,000 immigrant starlings in winter 2022/23

Costs

Local sapling suppliers have insufficient choice and availability for the current tree planting season, so a full cost and planting proposal will be attempted later in the year.