

**Minutes of the meeting of Heddon-on-the-Wall Parish Council held on  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in Heddon Community Library**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. D. Keller [DK]; (in the Chair); R. Adams [RA]; R. Oatway [RO]; K. Ince [KI]; M. Wilson [MW]  
**IN ATTENDANCE:** L. Barton (Clerk); **Members of the public:** none present

- | <b>Minute No.</b> | <b>Agenda item</b>  |
|-------------------|---|
| 1.                | <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: RESOLVED:</b> That an apology and reason for non-attendance shall be accepted from Cllrs. Dryden, Edwards and Irving-Munro.   |
| 2.                | <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:</b> Cllr. Keller declared an interest in matters affecting Karbon Homes and Batson's Groundcare. Cllr. Wilson declared an interest in St Andrew's Church.  |
| 3.                | <b>NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr. Peter Jackson attended the meeting tonight and updated councillors on changes which have been taking place at Northumberland County Council.</li><li>• A new top team has been appointed leading to greater stability, quicker decision making and clearer points of contact.</li><li>• Northumberland County Council finances are in a good position. Cllr. Jackson has a small schemes allowance which may support community projects. All requests need to be sent to Cllr. Jackson.</li><li>• School OFSTED inspections in the county have been good; 92% of high schools in the county are now rated good or outstanding; this places Northumberland in the top quartile in the country.</li><li>• Cllr. Jackson also informed councillors about a new rail line, currently under construction, which will run through south east Northumberland and will open next year.</li><li>• He fed back to councillors about the Local Transport Plan; some points have already been actioned and others are still under discussion. Cllr. Wilson made reference to the NCC School Street Scheme asking whether the school, NCC, Cllr. Jackson and Parish Council could align and work on priorities. Contact names were provided to Cllr. Jackson.</li><li>• Cllr. Adams raised the issue of tarmacking on Valerian Avenue; only half of the street has been tarmacked due to budget constraints, but this will now be removed then replaced by a utility company who are undertaking work in the area. Cllr. Adams asked whether Northumberland Council liaised with utility companies when planning works. Cllr. Jackson explained that utility companies do not usually liaise with the council about their upcoming works schedule.</li><li>• Following a question from councillors around Temporary Events Notices (TENS), Cllr. Jackson confirmed that Northumberland County Council have not made any changes to their policies and procedures regarding planning applications. He explained that community objections to planning applications carry a lot of weight in these situations.</li><li>• Cllr. Oatway asked whether Cllr Jackson would be able to support Sustainable Heddon in seeking improvements to bus services in Heddon following a bus survey carried out in the summer. Cllr. Jackson agreed that he could support with this.</li><li>• Cllr. Keller informed Cllr. Jackson about the upcoming closure of the lower churchyard.</li><li>• Cllr. Keller updated Cllr. Jackson on the Parish Council's activities to date. Upcoming projects for the future are the refurbishment of the Memorial Park and Welfare Field.</li></ul> |
| 4.                | <b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: RESOLVED:</b> To approve as a correct record and authorise the signing of the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> September.  |
| 5.                | <b>MATTERS ARISING &amp; REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:</b><br>Covered elsewhere in the minutes.  |
| 6.                | <b>COUNCILLOR VACANCY:</b>  |

No applications have been received yet. Councillors discussed making changes to the advert to specify any particular skills required and also to promote the benefits of joining the parish council. It was **agreed** to discuss this further at a later date. It was further **agreed** to consider additional ways of advertising the vacancy, such as placing posters in the bus stops or advertising via the school newsletter.

7.

#### **FINANCIAL MATTERS: RESOLVED**

- To approve payment of invoices presented at the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to pay the invoices presented. The Income and Expenditure spreadsheet (shared with councillors by email prior to the meeting) was signed.
- To consider any applications for grants or donations received at least 3 days before the meeting. None received.
- To consider information relating to Budget Monitoring, Year End and Internal / External Audit. The clerk fed back to councillors on recent correspondence with both internal and external auditors. The internal audit is currently underway and external auditors are aware of this.
- To consider transferring money from bank account 1 to bank account 2 to reimburse account 2 for maintenance costs paid in error from this account. Councillors **agreed** to the transfer of funds.
- Blue Row Tree work. Councillors **agreed** that work could proceed on the tree near to Blue Row. Councillors also discussed the draft Tree Policy which Cllr. Keller had emailed prior to the meeting. Cllr. Oatway had some suggestions to share with Cllr. Keller.
- To consider advertising vacant office space in the business centre – it was **agreed** that the vacant office space should be advertised as soon as it becomes available. In the case of one office which had previously been two offices, it was **decided** to advertise this as available office space, so that potential tenants can see what is available and make a decision about their needs.
- Councillors discussed the tenant in arrears at the Business centre and the next steps to be taken after the deadline expires.

8.

#### **MAINTAINING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:**

Councillors discussed the Asset Officer report which had been shared prior to the meeting: The noticeboards which were ordered after last month's meeting have arrived and will be fitted. A damaged hand rail fixing on the steps leading to Killiebrigs will be reported to Northumberland Council via FixMyStreet.

Councillors **agreed** to an increase in the hourly rate for library cleaning, to be implemented and backdated to April 2023 with immediate effect.

Councillors were notified by email prior to the meeting of a damaged pane of glass in the library fire exit door. It was **agreed** that repairs would be undertaken and paid for as soon as possible.

9.

#### **IMPROVING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:**

Cllr. Keller reported that she had shared feedback from residents regarding the Culture Festival and Heddon Show with the organisers of the events.

Cllr. Keller fed back to councillors regarding the Sponsored tree report. It was **agreed** to replace 3 trees which have not survived and to buy 2 trees which remain outstanding on the Sponsored Tree List.

10.

#### **REPORTS:**

**Chare Bank:** the repairs to the wall have been completed and Cllr. Wilson has been in touch with Northumberland County Council about the resurfacing works. Cllr. Keller thanked Cllr. Wilson for his

hard work in organising this work. It was **agreed** that the clerk, on behalf of the Parish Council, will write a thank you letter to the contractors for their high-quality repairs to the wall.

**Selman Park:** Cllr. Wilson and the clerk will meet with the landowner to get the Addendum of the Lease Agreement signed. Discussions regarding managing future bookings and cleaning arrangements for Selman Park will take place at the November meeting.

**School:** Cllr. Wilson fed back to councillors following a recent meeting with the headteacher:

- Year 4 children are taking part in a litter pick around the village on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October, prior to the litter pick organised by the Parish Council, which is taking place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October. This is in preparation for Remembrance Sunday.
- Cllr. Wilson shared with councillors a calendar of events taking place at the school in the coming months and said that parish councillors are welcome to attend these events. Cllr. Wilson shared the protocols to follow if councillors wish to attend events at the school.
- Cllr. Wilson also shared potential plans for the children's work, which formed part of the Heddon Culture Festival, to be displayed at the library.
- Cllr. Wilson reminded the school that they can use Selman Park for sporting events and clubs if they need to and they can also use the library for meetings if they need extra space.
- Cllr. Wilson told councillors that the school are happy for pupils to design posters which could be displayed in the village to encourage safe driving and parking in the proximity of the school. It was **agreed** that Cllr. Wilson will initiate contact with the School Street scheme at Northumberland County Council.

**11. PLANNING:**

Cllr. Keller fed back to councillors about the closure of the lower church yard following a meeting with a representative from Northumberland County Council. It was **agreed** that the Parish Council are in support of closing the lower churchyard and handing responsibility for future maintenance to Northumberland County Council.

**Planning Consultations:** none received

**Planning Decisions:** 23/02284/FUL Houghton Moor – permission was **refused**.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence has been received from residents this month.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Cllr. Keller proposed buying a wreath to lay at the memorial on Remembrance Sunday. Councillors **agreed** this proposal.

Cllr. Adams informed councillors that he has been approached regarding future use of Selman Park by Brownies, Guides and Scouts. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Cllr. Keller proposed trialling a wildflower area on Taberna Close in an area currently maintained by Batson's Groundcare. Councillors supported this proposal. It was **agreed** that this will be explained to residents in the next issue of the Heddon Gossip.

**14. NEXT MEETING: RESOLVED:** That the date of the next meeting shall be Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7pm.

**CONCLUSION OF MEETING:** The meeting closed at 9.03pm.

## **APPENDIX**

### **MAINTAINING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:**

#### ACTIONS:

LB to report loose hand rail on steps to Killiebrigs to NCC via FixMyStreet  
DK to report tree damaged by NCC strimmer to NCC  
LT to request a quote from J. Proud for cleaning the signs  
RO to forward his paragraph regarding the Tree Policy to DK / councillors  
LT to contact a glazier for repairs to the library fire door

### **IMPROVING OUR VILLAGE FOR ALL:**

#### ACTIONS:

LB to thank Neil Jones  
LB to contact tree surgeon re Blue Row  
LB to scan and share NCC map  
LB to organise poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday RBL

### **FINANCE AND ASSETS:**

#### ACTIONS:

LB to transfer funds from account 1 to account 2  
LB to continue to liaise with auditors

### **OTHER:**

#### ACTIONS:

MW to liaise with Tracy Aitken / William Binks re Walk to School scheme  
DK to follow up with Highways lead at NCC re transport plan  
LB to check on planning portal re Pitch on Wall  
RO to liaise with Peter Jackson re bus services / routes to Heddon  
LB/ MW to meet with landowner to sign the addendum to SP lease