

WHITTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18 MAY 2021 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Gregory, Chairman of the Council together with Councillors A Williamson, J Sadler, M Petrie, S Lawson and W E Robson.

Also present: Mrs M Senior, Clerk to the Council
County Councillor Mrs V Jones

1. **Apologies for absence** – None
2. **To receive the minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting held on 14th May 2019.** Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2019, having previously been circulated, were accepted as an accurate record.
3. **Matters arising.** None
4. **Chairman's Report.** Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Parish Council has been required to meet remotely since May 2020 and this negated the need for a Chairman's report in 2020. Despite having to meet remotely we have held our requisite six meetings per year since our 2019 AGM. Our meetings have been well attended by councillors, our parish Clerk and County Councillor.

Since our last AGM we welcomed two new members onto the Parish Council, in May 2019 we were joined by Edward Gillam and when Kevin Laing left the Parish Council due to work commitments we were joined in May 2020 by Eddie Robson.

Earlier this year Edward Gillam and Paul Martin both resigned from the Parish Council, Paul was our longest serving member, having joined the Parish Council in May 1991 and served for 30 years. We are now joined by Marion Petrie and Steven Lawson and the current members were returned unopposed in the recent elections.

We have increased the precept again this year, a modest increase which means the cost to a band D dwelling in the parish is now £21.63 per year or £1.80 per month. This increase has been necessary to maintain a reasonable balance in the face of increased costs, mainly for grass cutting and tree maintenance. It is agreed that the increased cost of grass cutting is justified by the improvement in the standard of the work and the appearance of the village. There has been significant expenditure on tree maintenance, but we now have some time for reserves to recover before more work is needed. We have had several trees planted to replace those that had previously been removed, and I would like to thank Councillor Eddie Robson for the time and effort he gave to remove two diseased rowan trees from the village green.

I reported as long ago as 2012 that the dog fouling issue was improving but unfortunately it remains a significant problem, unfortunately the increased number of dogs has not been accompanied by owner responsibility. More signs have been put in place and an additional large bin has been provided but the problem persists. May I again thank Councillor Robson for his work installing the new bin and relocating the original bin to the bottom of the village.

There have not been any significant planning issues to consider, the Badgers End development appears to have stalled, Aspen Ridge is currently for sale and although the Queens Head has been sold, little work has been carried out.

I feel that we should try to raise the profile of the Parish Council and the Village Hall within the community, there are many residents of the Parish who do not receive any communications from the Parish Council or from the Village Hall and I am sure many people do not know who we are or what we do.

The actions of a small number of Village Hall committee members over the past year have created division and ill feeling within the community, I hope that reason, respect and discussion can

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restore harmony. There is a new Village Hall committee in place who are working to enable community events to take place as and when restrictions will allow.

As ever, there are many highway matters that need to be addressed, the Highway department is slow to respond to problems, communication is extremely poor, and the work rate in our parish is below reasonable expectations.

I would like to thank all parish councillors for their attendance and contribution, Mandy, for your support and all the work you do and Veronica for the help you give us and may I congratulate you on your re-election as our County Councillor.

5. **County Councillor's Report.** Cllr Mrs V Jones gave her report in the Annual Meeting that followed.
6. **Parish Council Accounts 2020-2021.** The accounts for the year 2020-21 were presented by the Clerk for information. A copy is attached to this minute.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR 2020/21

RECEIPTS

Bank Account b/f from 2019/20	£7,912.01	
Precept 2020/21	£4,800.00	
Wayleaves	£15.22	
VAT refund 2020/21	£556.07	
Community Foundation Grant	£1,798.00	
		£15,081.30

PAYMENTS

ADMINISTRATION

Zurich Insurance Premium	£257.60	
NALC Subscription	£158.60	
Clerk's salary	£1,200.00	
Clerk's expenses	* £73.66	
Website	* £73.95	
Room hire	£0.00	
Audit fee	* £31.00	£1,794.81

GRANTS

Community Action Northumberland	£0.00	
Great North Air Ambulance	£0.00	
Matfen & Ryal PCC	£0.00	
RBL Poppy Appeal	£60.00	
Sport Tynedale	£0.00	
Great Whittington Village Hall	£0.00	
Campaign to Protect Rural England	£36.00	
		£96.00

PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

Grasscutting	* £2,225.00	
Defibrillator	* £375.00	
Signs	* £13.80	
Tree works	* £800.00	£3,413.80

VAT

£90.00 *

£5,394.61

BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD TO 2020/21

£7,912.01

Represented by (as at 31 March 2021):

Bank of Scotland Treasurers Account	£9,686.69
Less outstanding cheques	£0.00
	<u>£9,686.69</u>

* net of VAT which is shown separately

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 18TH MAY 2021

PRESENT: Cllr S Gregory, Chairman of the Council together with Cllrs A Williamson, J Sadler, W E Robson, S Lawson and M Petrie.

- 0521.01 **TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.** All Councillors present made and signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office in the presence of Mandy Senior, Clerk and Proper Officer of the Council.
- 0521.02 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.** It was proposed by Cllr A Williamson, seconded by Cllr M Petrie and AGREED to elect Simon Gregory as Chairman. Cllr S Gregory took the chair.
- 0521.03 **TO RECEIVE CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.** Cllr S Gregory gave and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 0521.04 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** None
- 0521.05 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN.** It was proposed by Cllr S Gregory, seconded by Cllr W E Robson and AGREED to elect Cllr J Sadler as Vice Chairman. Cllr J Sadler accepted.
- 0521.06 **TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.** All Councillors completed their Declaration of Interests form which will be sent to the Monitoring Officer, Northumberland County Council.
- 0521.07 **MINUTES** of the meeting held on **10 March 2021** having been circulated were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.
- 0521.08 **ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
- a) **Bingfield Road.** Minute 321.03a refers. This issue has now been resolved. Unfortunately, the debris on A68 has still not been removed. Cllr Mrs V Jones is to pursue this on behalf of the Parish Council.
 - b) **Litter bins.** Minute 321.03b refers. Litter bin has now been installed. The clerk will contact NCC to advise.
 - c) **Trees.** Minute 321.03c refers. The two trees have now been removed. Thanks to Cllr W E Robson for dealing with this.
 - d) **Great Whittington Village Hall.** Minute 0321.04 refers. The situation with the Village Hall has significantly changed and a new committee elected.
- 0521.09 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT.** Cllr Mrs V Jones gave her verbal report on items relating to Northumberland County Council and local issues relating to Whittington Parish.
- a) **Highways Issues.** Cllr Mrs Jones agreed that the response from Central Highways is dreadful and she had spoken to the portfolio holder to try and address the issues.
 - b) **Members Funding Schemes.** Capital funding schemes will continue and Cllr Jones advised that she would like to concentrate on more community projects.
 - c) **Speeding.** The speed data from the monitoring exercise is still awaited. If the monitoring suggests there is a speeding issue then Cllr Jones can push for a 20mph limit through the village. This is not a quick process and can take several years.

0521.10 **PLANNING MATTERS**

REFERENCE	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION
21/00667/FUL	Land North East of High Baulk Farm, Great Whittington	Conversion of agricultural buildings into 4no residential units REFUSED
20/03952/FUL	East farmland to the West of Strawberry House, Great Whittington	Change of use of land to equestrian use including erection of stables and hardstanding and hay store/garden store (Part retrospective) GRANTED
20/04257/LBC	Town Farm Cottage, Great Whittington	Listed building consent for installation of 2no conservation rooflights and replacement of 2no existing rooflights to rear elevation GRANTED
21/00856/FUL	Land North of Thirnswood, Bingfield	Proposed agricultural shed

0521.11 **FINANCE**

- a) **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.** Payments were reviewed and it was AGREED to approve the items of expenditure on the list previously circulated.

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ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	CHEQUE	VAT	NET	CHQ NO
Mrs A Senior	Clerical Services	160.00		160.00	010792
HM Revenue Customs	PAYE	40.00		40.00	010793
Northumberland Assoc of Local Councils	Subscription 2021	143.78		143.78	010794
Zurich Municipal	Insurance renewal 2021	257.60		257.60	010795
Mrs A Senior	Postages	45.17		45.17	010796
J C Accountants	Internal audit fee	38.40	6.40	32.00	010797
Northumberland Assoc of Local Councils	Training	15.00		15.00	010798
Income					
Northumberland CC	Precept	2500.00		2500.00	09.04.21

0521.12 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2020-2021

- a) **To approve Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021.** It was agreed to accept and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021 which had been circulated.
- b) **To approve the draft annual accounts for 2020-2021.** It was agreed to accept and approve the draft annual accounts for 2020-2021 which had been previously circulated.
- c) **To approve the Account Statement and Explanation of Variances.** It was agreed to accept and approve the Accounting Statement and Explanation of Variances which had been previously circulated.
- d) **To confirm and approve the Certificate of Exemption 2020-2021.** The Certificate of Exemption was confirmed and approved.

0521.13 **GREAT WHITTINGTON VILLAGE HALL AND THE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT.** Since the last Parish Council meeting, John Roberts had stood down was the Village Hall committee over a perceived conflict of interest. An EGM was held on 12 April where a new committee was elected. Before the end of April, several committee members resigned and formed the 'Friends of Great Whittington'. A meeting is to be held on 28 May and an AGM will follow. The whole committee will resign and be re-elected. The current committee is working hard to re-organise and re-open the Village Hall. The constitution requires two members of the Parish Council to sit on the committee. This is currently Cllr M Petrie and Cllr A Williamson.

0521.14 **TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND HIGHWAY MATTERS.** Several issues reported to Northumberland County Council Highways are still outstanding. These include; debris left after accidents including coach accident last year at Little Whittington and also A68 to the south of the Old School House. Signage is also just left on the verges after roadworks and not removed. Cllr Mrs V Jones to pursue on behalf of the Parish Council.

0521.15 **CORRESPONDENCE.** All correspondence received since the March meeting had been noted and most has been circulated to all councillors by email.

- Northumberland County Council – Chief Executive's Briefing – HRH Duke of Edinburgh
- Northumberland County Council – Northumberland Respect Campaign
- Northumberland County Council – Local Authority Treescape Fund
- Northumberland County Council – Return of Result of Uncontested Election.

0521.16 INFORMATION ITEMS.

Copies of all information items are available from the Clerk on request.

- NALC – weekly eNews
- Campaign to Protect Rural England – Countryside Voices – Spring 2021
- Campaign to Protect Rural England – Members Update – Spring 2021

0521.17 **ANY URGENT BUSINESS [FOR INFORMATION ONLY].** Paul Martin had stepped down from the Parish Council at the May elections having served for 30 years. Cllr S Gregory proposed that a £50 voucher should be sent to Paul as a token of the Parish Council's appreciation. This was seconded by Cllr A Williamson and AGREED.

0521.18 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 27 July 2021 at 7.30pm in Great Whittington Village Hall.

Chairman