

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM IN GREAT WHITTINGTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr S Gregory, Chairman of the Council together with Cllrs M Petrie and Dr W Brittain, W E Robson, S Lawson

In attendance: Mrs M Senior, Clerk to the Council and Mrs V Jones, County Councillor
7 members of the public.

1124.01 **Attendance by representatives from Alcom Telecommunications to discuss installation of a full fibre cabinet on the village green in Great Whittington.** Alcom representatives attended the Parish Council meeting to discuss the proposal to install a full fibre cabinet on Great Whittington's village green to improve broadband access for the village and surrounding rural areas. While the Parish Council supports the project, concerns were raised about the cabinet's size and location. An alternative location was suggested to Alcom, behind the Village Hall, however they felt this was not suitable. The Parish Council requested a visual representation of the cabinet in the proposed location before making a final decision and will hold an additional meeting once all necessary information is available

1124.02 **Apologies for absence** –. None

1124.03 **To consider co-option to fill one vacancy.** It was RESOLVED to co-opt Helen Lewins onto Whittington Parish Council.

1124.04 **Declarations of Interests.** None

1124.05 **Minutes** of the meeting held on **10th September 2024** having been circulated were taken as read and signed as a true record.

1124.06 **Items arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024.**

- a) Facebook Page. Minute 0924.11 refers. The Parish Council Facebook Page had been set up by Cllr M Petrie and Mrs M Senior is now the administrator and will keep the page updated.
- b) Hallington Mill. Minute 0924.04b refers. The problems with flooding had been reported in September 2022 and nothing had been done. Cllr Mrs V Jones advised that Northumberland County Council is liaising with the landowner as water is running from their land. A lot of work needs to be carried out on the field ditches.

1124.07 **County Councillors Report.** Cllr Mrs Jones gave her verbal report on matters relating to Whittington Parish and Northumberland County Council.

- a) Grit bin. The replacement grit bin has now been placed at the Village Hall.
- b) Halton Shield. Work is to start on the stretch of road from Halton Shield to the Errington Arms.
- c) Vehicle Activated Signs. Cllr Mrs Jones advised that if the Parish Council wanted to install a vehicle activated sign then she may have some of her member's funding left.
- d) Local Transport Plan Programme. The draft report has been produced and improvements to Halton Shield has been accepted as a priority. A68 safety improvements have not made the list however the police report is still awaited and they will make recommendations to Northumberland County Council. Surface dressing on the road from Bingfield to Hallington Mill is further down the list of priorities and will be carried out if funding allows.

1124.08 Planning Applications and Decisions.

| REFERENCE | ADDRESS | DESCRIPTION |
|------------------|--|---|
| 24/03193/FUL | The Old Telephone Exchange, Great Whittington | Install a velux fire escape window into the roof above our mezzanine (No objection) |
| 24/03230/FUL | Matfen Piers, Corbridge | Installation of Packaged biomass plant to rear of barn (No objection) |
| 24/03302/FUL | Langley House, 7 Briar Fields, Great Whittington | Single storey and 2 storey extension to rear of property (No objection) |
| 24/02481/FUL | Lane House, Bingfield | Single storey extension to east gable plus basement; single storey carport. GRANTED |
| 24/02381/FUL | Land North East of Sewage works, Great Whittington | Erection of agricultural building. GRANTED |
| 24/03231/TRE ECA | East Farm, Great Whittington | Tree in a conservation area: Sycamore Tree – fell, due to collapse of boundary wall, to ground level stump to allow for reseeded. (Application supported) |

1124.09 Finance/Administration

- a) Accounts for payment. Payments were reviewed and it was RESOLVED to approve the items of expenditure on the list, previously circulated.
- b) To note change of bank account to a Community Account and associated charges. Changes to the bank account and associated charges were noted. The application to register for internet banking is still pending.
- c) To consider draft budget. The draft budget was agreed. Expenditure estimated to be in the region of £7360 in 2025-2026 with the 3 yearly tree survey due in 2025. It was noted that the invoice for 2024 had still not been received for the grass cutting. Costs for 2025 had not been received however as the costs had been increased for 2024 the cost is not expected to increase in 2025.
- d) To agree precept for the financial year 2025-2026. It was AGREED to increase the precept by £500 to £7000.00 for the financial year 2025-2026.
- e) To consider signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and adopt the updated Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020. It was RESOLVED to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and adopt the updated Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020.
- f) To consider transitioning to gov.uk email addresses and obtaining a gov.uk website domain. It was RESOLVED to continue with the current website domain name and councillor's personal email addresses. It is expected that in due course it will become mandatory to have dedicated gov.uk email addresses and website domain. This will be reviewed in due course.
- g) To consider request for Grant Aid from Wag and Company. It was AGREED to make a contribution of £50.00 to the work of Wag and Company.

| ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------------|-----|--------------|--------|
| PAYEE | DETAILS | NET AMOUNT | VAT | GROSS AMOUNT | REF |
| Mrs A Senior | Replacement cheque 010926 | 224.00 | | 224.00 | 010932 |
| Mrs A Senior | Clerical services | 224.00 | | 224.00 | 010933 |

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|--------------------------------------|--|---------|-------|---------|--------|
| H M Revenue & Customs | PAYE | 56.00 | | 56.00 | 010934 |
| Mrs A Senior | Postages/travel expenses | 25.20 | | 25.20 | 010935 |
| Great Whittington Village Hall | Hall rent – November 2024 | 15.00 | | 15.00 | 010936 |
| Bank of Scotland | Unpaid cheque 010926 | -224.00 | | -224.00 | 010926 |
| First Rescue Training & Supplies Ltd | Replacement defibrillator battery – Hallington | 267.60 | 44.60 | 223.00 | 010937 |
| The Poppy Shop | Remembrance Day Wreaths | 50.00 | 6.66 | 43.34 | 010938 |
| Society of Local Council Clerks | Membership 2025-26 | 45.00 | | 45.00 | 010939 |
| Wag and Company | Grant aid | 50.00 | | 50.00 | 010940 |

1124.10 Great Whittington Village Hall and the village environment.

- a) **Village Hall.** The chairman of the Village Hall committee gave an update on the Village Hall. Bookings are going well with new classes starting and booking into 2025. The Village Hall continue to host the Highlights Rural Touring Company productions and showings of the National Theatre Live. The Village Hall had hosted 3 fundraisers for free and defibrillator training sessions which the attendees found very informative and useful. They had recently received a £3400 from the Green Rigg Windfarm Fund towards the Emergency Hub.

1124.11 To receive Councillors reports and Highway matters.

- a) **Pothole.** There is a large pothole on the road from Great Whittington to Matfen on the corner. This will be reported on Fix My Street.
- b) **Hedges.** Concerns expressed from a resident regarding the number of mature, well-developed trees of considerable age that have died and fallen along the sides of our local roads that have not been replaced. Also, the number of trees growing up through the hedgerows and reaching as much as 12 to 15 feet in height which are eliminated by the indiscriminate hedge cutting which takes place. Concerns were expressed over the enormous loss of hedgerows in our countryside as farmers make such vastly increased field sizes. The chairman and members of the Parish Council advised that hedge cutting is covered by new regulations under the [The Management of Hedgerows \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) including the buffer strip guidance and farmers follow the strict guidelines.
- c) **Remembrance Day.** Thanks were expressed to Cllr W E Robson for laying the wreath in Great Whittington. Cllr S Gregory had laid the wreath at the Hallington War Memorial.

1124.12 To consider response to consultation enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at meetings. After discussion, it was RESOLVED to send a response based on the following. Remote attendance should only be used for emergencies and not as an excuse not to attend in person. The Parish Council is not in favour of proxy voting.

1124.13 Thank you gift. It was AGREED to send a small gift and card to John Sadler.

1124.14 Date of next meeting – The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 14th January 2025** at 7.30pm in Great Whittington Village Hall.