



Minutes of Parish Meeting held on 12th January 2022

Present – Guy Wilman, Yvonne Wilman, Jim Brierley, Lesley Zimmerman, Andrew Sharp, Sue Sharp, Alison Farrar, Keith Farrar, Di Dickson, Gordon Dickson, Caroline Booth-Burke, Jeannette Robertson, William Robertson, Ian Harmer, Sue Harmer, Jane Stollery, Sarah Whitney, Neil Armstrong-Nash, T. D. Fall, Michael Colver, Cecilia Colver, Jan Buczak (acting Chair); also Richard Ormston (Councillor), Tom Jones (Candidate Councillor), Ken Miller (renter of land off Back Lane)

Apologies – Carol Brierley, Robin Bradbeer, Rosemary Bradbeer, Wendy Hoare, Maureen Ayre, Stuart Harle, Vicky Buczak (Parish Clerk)

Meeting commenced at 18.30. Parish Clerk Vicky Buczak was isolating with Covid, and asked Jan Buczak to act as Chair on her behalf. (Jan had tested negative for Covid 3 hours before the meeting.)

Cllr. Richard Ormston introduced Candidate Councillor Tom Jones, who will stand for election in the new District Council covering Thornton Steward. Richard Ormston is not standing for (re-)election, so it is quite possible that Tom Jones will represent the Council at future Village meetings.

Among the apologies, Carol Brierley, Wendy Hoare, Maureen Ayre and Vicky Buczak had all submitted written comments for the meeting, and extracts from these were read out in the relevant sections below.

Vicky had invited representation from both Land Registry and the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YLCA) at this meeting, but no response had been received from either by the time it started. (The Parish Meeting subscribes to YLCA who can offer legal advice, but none had been received on time.)

1/ Discussion re application for ownership of land in front of The Cottage, Thornton Steward.

Strong feelings were expressed by several participants who advocated submitting a robust objection to the application. On the other hand, the new owners of The Cottage (the Sharps) related how this application came about as a result of seeking clarification about ownership and registration of the land in front of the dwelling. They also confirmed that

their purchase of The Cottage was not dependent on success of the application, and no additional financial considerations were involved depending on outcome.

It is clear from the Land Registry that an objection must be a valid LEGAL objection if it is to influence their final decision. Cllr. Richard Ormston had previously written to the Parish Clerk noting that to satisfy a claim for possession the applicant needs to be able to satisfy:

- a) Factual possession – i.e. they are in actual occupation of the land
- b) An intention to possess the land over the period of use
- c) They must have physical control of the land – i.e. fenced off, tending the land or installed fixtures and fittings on the site
- d) They must exclude all others including the rightful owner

Local residents wishing to object legally must gather evidence to contradict the application and to deal with the points listed.

A vote was taken on whether to object to the application: Objectors 15, non-Objectors 6. The Meeting was in general agreement that employing a Solicitor was financially unjustified. It had been suggested previously that each Objector should write to Land Registry: some have already done so, and others are encouraged to do so as well. But it was felt, in view of the vote, that an official Parish Meeting Objection in addition to individual ones would carry great weight.

We are indebted to Neil Armstrong-Nash who volunteered to elicit relevant information (especially from long-term residents) and form a statement of objection on behalf of the Parish Meeting. Neil agreed to provide the objection statement to Vicky the Parish Clerk by Tuesday 18th. January latest – the Clerk will then formally send the objection to Land Registry as the official representative of the Parish Meeting. Deadline is January 20th.

2/ Vote on whether to buy new chairs for the Village Institute and if so what type of chair to buy.

Jim Brierley provided a statement about the history of the furniture at the Institute, which was read out. In it, the Trustees suggested that the existing chairs be kept, perhaps with cushions/chair pads to improve comfort. On the other hand, Yvonne Wilman noted that, in other Village Halls, provision of more comfortable seating had helped bring the use of the Halls to life more, and other participants agreed that the Institute could be used for more social and other occasions (see point 3 also).

Vicky had already applied for a grant, offered through Richmondshire District Council Area Partnership Fund, to purchase some 20 to 28 chairs. Under the terms of this grant, the Village would pay one quarter of the value of the purchase, and the grant would cover the remaining three quarters. Thus, for example, her submission for £856.80 purchase value would result in a grant of £642.60 and Thornton Steward would pay £214.20. Cllr. Ormston noted that such grants are unlikely to be available in future years.

Questioned about affordability, Jim confirmed that this sum is available from Village Funds. As for what should be done with the existing chairs, that was outside the scope of

this meeting, and a matter for the Village Institute Trustees. The provision of the new chairs in no way implies that any of the existing old ones should be sacrificed.

A vote was taken: Get New Chairs: 12, Don't: 1.

Vicky, after extensive research, had produced two options for the approximate price given above: vinyl or upholstered. Both, being sold in packs of 4, offered very good value compared with most other options, generally sold individually. Pictures and descriptions of the options were circulated, then a vote taken: Upholstered: 10, Vinyl: 0.

Vicky will now formally apply for a grant for 28 upholstered chairs, then arrange the purchase. Deadline for application: imminent, considering that final figures still have to be submitted and agreed.

3/ Formation of Social Committee to arrange social events and celebration of Queen's Jubilee.

There was certainly enthusiasm both for social events and for the Queen's Jubilee celebration, and several participants, as well as others not present, stated that they would be willing to help with the practical arrangements. We are indebted to Caroline Booth-Burke for volunteering to spearhead the formation of such a Social Committee. She will be seeking members to join the Committee, and will in due course let us know how successful such a venture proves.

4/ Call for more Trustees for the Village Institute (the Trustees' Mission Statement is on the village website).

Jim Brierley informed us that the number of Trustees for the Village Institute has recently dropped from 8 to 4, and hence more volunteers are needed. Ideally, 'young blood' should be encouraged to ensure that the Institute stays alive and relevant to the newer and younger members of the Village, and continues to be so for future generations.

Jim gave a little information about what the Trustees are required to do, though details and mission statement can be found on the village website. (So can forms for requesting use of the Institute for e.g. social events.) He emphasised that the Institute has charitable status, that events thereat are covered properly by insurance, and that there was no Liability incurred by Trustees.

Jim noted that the Trustees' mission would be greatly helped by the formation of a Social Committee (see point 3), and envisaged a lot of collaboration between the Trustees and Committee.

Several people asked questions about the role of Trustees, clearly showing interest, but nobody volunteered there and then. Jim asked anyone seriously considering becoming a Trustee to email him.

5/ Unauthorised development and mis-use of agricultural land at Back Lane.

Ken Miller, who rents land off Back Lane for agricultural use, wrote a very informative and detailed letter to the Parish Clerk, dated 7th January 2022, detailing his neighbour's unauthorised building work and use of land for unauthorised non-agricultural activities. Most recently, an unauthorised static caravan was erected on the site on 7th December 2021. He pointed out that unauthorised activity of some form has been going on there for many years, and attached a letter dated 16th June 2010 showing that the Thornton Steward Parish Meeting had objected to a former planning application – this was refused, but the building was erected anyway. That same letter, from the Parish Clerk at the time, noted that there was evidence even then that the original barn erected was not being used for agricultural purposes, as was required under the terms of the planning permission granted.

Ken wanted to know whether the Village Meeting would support objecting to the blatant mis-use and unauthorised building activity, and he received overwhelming support from those present.

Cllr. Richard Ormston advised that the infringements fell into two categories, so that complaints should be sent both to Richmondshire District Council Environmental Department and to the Planning Department Enforcement Officer. Ken agreed to send his letter to both. In addition, to add more weight to the objections and notifications, the Parish Clerk will send a copy of Ken's letter to both groups, and so will Cllr. Ormston himself.

6/ Change of address of Parish Clerk to be the Village Institute. Locked post box to be placed on the Village Institute.

The recent letter from the Land Registry to the Parish Clerk about ownership of land application has highlighted the need for backup to deal with time-critical communications when the Parish Clerk is absent. Hence the requirement for the Clerk to have an address where Clerk business can be dealt with by others in her absence, especially when the absence is prolonged.

The participants agreed this was a good idea, and also agreed that Village funds should be used to purchase the post box.

Thanks to all who attended this lively meeting. It was an opportunity for residents who care about their environment to meet and get to know each other a little more. We may disagree (sometimes strongly) with each other on some issues, but we do so with respect. Thanks also to non-resident Ken Miller for his contribution, and to Cllr. Ormston and Candidate Cllr. Jones for attending.

Finally, several people wished to pass on their thanks to Vicky for the many hours she had put in towards handling all the communication, applications and research needed in preparation for this meeting, and her duties as Parish Clerk in general.