**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Kirkwhelpington parish held on Tuesday 7th May 2019 commencing 7pm in Kirkwhelpington Memorial Hall**

**Those Present:** R Thornton (Chairman), A Purves, K Fortune, P Senior, J Brown, C Miller (Clerk), nine members of the public

1. **Apologies for Absence**

E Rogerson

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declaration of Interests.

1. **Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

R Thornton proposed and seconded as Chairman, all in agreement; A Purves proposed and seconded as Vice Chairman, all in agreement.

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

1. **Meeting with energy advisor**

Energy Advisor not present, relating to an idea for an underground heating source for the parish, with funding for feasibility study to be sought through Ray Wind Farm fund.

1. **Reports:**

**A Indoor Bowls Club**

Club suffering from a serious lack of numbers, with 12-15 people per week attending, although there are slightly more people on the list, and a few clubs county wide had already closed down.

**B Ceilidh Club**

Club does not exist its original form, but a traditional music night, and disappointing very few people turn up to listen. They meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7pm with a terrific range of instruments, dialect and poetry reading.

**C Educational Trust**

The Trust have income from the sale of Kirkwhelpington school/school house which had been invested Any young person under the age of 25 who reside or have a parent residing in the civil parish of Kirkwhelpington could apply to the trust. Fund balance currently £16461, with funding having been given to the PC for goalposts which would be installed once drainage works completed on playing field.

**D St Bartholomew’s**

Church stands as a focus in the middle of the village, where a faithful congregation meet on Sundays and a wider group attending for baptisms, weddings, funerals, Christmas, Easter, etc. Each September a service is held in the marquee on the village green. The church is not buildings, but people and embedded in the community and represented by the Parish Council. Chimes magazine continues to be a major communication aid for the community. The ancient church is surrounded by a beautiful churchyard with PC thanked for contributing to the upkeep of this. Dagmar Winter, a previous parish priest of Kirkwhelpington, had been appointed Bishop of Huntington, and a letter of congratulations would be forwarded on behalf of the parish.

**E Memorial Hall**

Significant improvements had been made to the hall from their own resources. Throughout the year it had been centre of the usual wide range of meetings and activities and a popular venue for social events, with the first wedding held, and hosting of the reception for the service in October marking the restoration of the memorials to Sir Charles and Lady Parsons in St Bartholomew’s churchyard. November 2018 had marked the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War with re-dedication of the memorials by Revd Jonathan Mason. The annual horticultural and industrial show continues to be an interesting event held each September. Dry rot had been found in the hall with repairs actioned. Further improvements to Post Office room to be carried out, along with hall W/C facilities. Major improvement had been replacing light fittings with LED units and a reduction in electricity consumption had resulted. Strong links maintained with Community Action Northumberland who offer support to Village Hall Committees. Gratitude given to the Hall Secretary and Caretaker, and a special vote of thanks given to the outgoing Treasurer.

**F Kirkwhelpington Show**

The show had been blessed with good weather, children’s sports events had been well supported, with the climbing tower a big attraction, and the younger age group enjoying a bouncy castle. Sadly some exhibitors in the horticultural classes had been lost. New cup had been introduced for the most points for flowers. Children’s section the most difficult to judge, with two children excelling this year. British Legion section had provided teas throughout the afternoon, with a ceilidh held in the evening. The 2018 show had made a short surplus with cash reserves over £4,000, representing over two years expenditure.

**G Royal British Legion**

Women’s Section continues to flourish, with 28 plus members. Funds are raised for those who have fallen on bad times, and applications do not need to be from Legion members but a person with a fairly distant connection to the forces would be eligible to apply. It had been an enjoyable and busy year with a number of visitors and visits. The Legion continue to provide teas for the annual village show, and head the annual litter pick which had covered Knowesgate to Kirkharle Crossroads as well as the village this year.

**H Kirkharle Courtyard**

The Courtyard continues to attract a considerable number of visitors, however there had been reduced consumer confidence due to Brexit, but many residents regularly visit the lake. In September 2018 the Prince of Wales had been welcomed to the site, and who had enjoyed walking around the lake and speaking to craftsmen. The group had been lucky enough to gain Ray Wind Farm funding for an events organiser to be employed and professional performers to hold events, with two concerts, U3A from Ponteland Choir and Brinkburn Quartet to perform. Any profit would go to holding a similar programme next year. All local residents should use and enjoy the facilities as they had been funded by public money, and it was hoped to establish a friends group for the lake and courtyard.

**I Youth Club**

Numbers of children had been going down, however youth worker now attending which had resulted in an increase of numbers this year.

**J Parish Council**

The precept for 2018-2019 had risen dramatically due to the large financial implications regarding the playing field wall near to Meadowfields housing estate, however the precept level for the current year had reduced to the 2017-2018 level of £6500. Landscaping and drainage works had been completed to a high standard, with minor lateral drainage to be completed later in the year. The Parish Council had received funding from the Kirkwhelpington Educational Trust for new goalposts at the playing field and which would be in place in the near future. Several complaints had been received regarding dog fouling within the parish and the PC wish to remind all dog owners about their responsibility to pick up dog waste, with warning signage having already been purchased and put in place at Eastlands by the PC. It had been agreed to request road barriers on both sides at Little Harle corner, passing places past Sweethope Lake and drainage improvements at the bottom of Holly Burn, West of T junction on Cambo to Rothbury road, as the three priorities for County Council Local Transport Plan 2019-2020, with five percent of the counties requests being actioned per annum. The PC had reported numerous issues to the County Council regarding tree/road maintenance and flooding issues and continue to lobby the County Council and County Cllr with concerns. A toddler swing and shackles had been replaced by the PC, who are responsible for the play area equipment. Several grant requests had been received with £50 being donated to the Northumberland Theatre Company. The PC continue to be consulted on planning applications within the parish. Sadly, Jim Brown was to retire after tonight’s meeting after many years service and his knowledge and experience would be a great loss to the parish.

**K Ray Fell Wind Farm**

R Thornton is a director of the Community Interest Company, and each year a fund of £270K from Vattenfall is made available to six parishes and surrounding areas. Community Foundation also have £100K to bequeath to small projects upto the value of £10K and are governed by charity legislation. CIC has greater breadth, and if people are turned down by Community Foundation, CIC can then be approached. The third tranche of money had gone into a legacy fund. A meeting had been arranged in Kirkwhelpington Village Hall, with B4NTR, relating to rural broadband, with the AGM of the CIC to be held 6/6/19, also in Kirkwhelpington Village Hall. The Community Foundation had been inundated with applications, with many projects in the area being helped.

Parishioner stated a lot of people are members of groups and organisations but it is sometimes felt some activities are felt to be exclusive and all groups should attract new members. An initiative for a Summer dance in June had progressed, being a community involved event

**6. Other Matters – Proposals for parish web-site**

Nothing to report on proposals for web-site.

Parishioner from the Kitchen Study at Kirk Harle present, who had opened a design studio and wished to attract more people into the area, and had subsequently approached the Ray Wind Far for proposals to cheer up the parish with flowers/pots/hanging baskets. Funding to be sought for project managing the proposals which would cost approximately £2500 per year, with approval required by the Parish Council for the project. Pots and tubs would be easier to maintain, and a few years ago the village did win Britain in Bloom previously, with the difficulty always being one of maintenance, and in the last twenty years, maintenance had regressed within the parish. There are two issues, being tidying and maintenance, and the Parish Council could apply for their own funding to improve the parish. It was agreed the Parish Council would support the proposals for pots/tubs, and it was advised parishioner speak to Britain in Bloom representative at Ponteland.

It was agreed the Parish Council should apply to the Ray Wind fund to carry out minor maintenance, such as leaf clearance works to improve the parish. In other parishes there are volunteers who meet up on a weekly basis to carry out such tasks, and Village Hall representative to research this and report back to the Parish Council in due course. Several years ago, some discussion had taken place about creating a strategy for this, such as landscape pattern for the village, with some ideas to be written up by parishioner. Parishioner asked if they could plant daffodils at Meadowlands, which was agreed and as the grasscutter struggles to cut part of the grass at Meadowlands, parishioner would be prepared to purchase a flymow for the Parish Council to aid with cutting, and which was gratefully accepted.

Cllr Jim Brown to retire tonight after twenty year’s service, being a vital member of the committee and the community.

The meeting closed at 8pm.