Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the AGM of the Parish Council held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 15th May 2023.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. David Irwin
Cllr. Brian Singer
Cllr. David McKenzie
Cllr. Jill Mills
Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Eileen Carew

In attendance:

County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 23/71)
Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
2 members of the public were present.

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.35 pm.

23/56 **Apologies for Absence**
Cllr. Stephen Lightley.

23/57 **Notice of Resignation**
Cllr. Howe reported that Pam Bridges had decided to resign from the Parish Council having served as a member for almost five years. Councillors recorded their thanks to Pam for her contribution and sound advice. The Clerk would write a letter of thanks from the Council.

ACTION: CLERK

A Notice of Vacancy was currently displayed and, if no election was requested by parishioners, the vacancy could be filled by co-option after 23rd May.

23/58 **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**
Nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2023/24 were sought. Cllr. Singer proposed that Cllr. Howe should remain as Chair and Cllr. Howe proposed that Cllr. Singer should remain as Vice-Chair. These proposals were seconded by Cllrs. Mills and Carew respectively and agreed unanimously. Cllr. Howe was duly elected as Chair and Cllr. Singer as Vice-Chair. Cllr. Howe signed an Acceptance of Office Form for the position of Chair.

23/59 **Declaration of Interests**
Cllr. McKenzie declared an interest in item 16(c) - the award of a grant to the Scout group;
Cllr. Irwin declared an interest in item 13 – the Tennis Club, as he was a member.

23/60 **Delegation of responsibilities**
It had previously been agreed that the Chair could delegate to councillors the Chair's authority to take decisions in specific areas, subject to approval at future PC meetings and working in conjunction with the Clerk. The areas of responsibility were reviewed and the following highlighted changes were agreed:

- Planning Sub-Group – Cllrs. Dunhill, Howe, Singer & Mills (3 from 4 would review each planning application)
- Legal/FOI/GDPR matters – Cllrs. Mills + Dunhill

- Appraisals – Cllrs. Carew & Singer
- Website monitoring/development – Cllr. Dunhill
- Handyman/ Amenity matters/ Play park inspection – Cllrs. Howe & Dunhill
- Accounts – Cllr. Lightley
- Sport & Recreation – Cllrs. Singer and Lightley (Cllr. Howe would act as a reserve)
- Edible Riding Mill/Spinney – Cllrs. McKenzie and Dunhill
- East Tynedale Forum representative – **Rota basis – all councillors**
- RM Play & Regeneration Group – Cllr. McKenzie + **Cllr. Lightley – to be confirmed**
- Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership representative – Cllr. Dunhill
- Marchburn Lane Residents' Association representative – **Cllr. Howe**
- Footpaths Group – Councillor Dunhill
- Children/Youth issues – Cllrs. McKenzie and Singer
- Village maintenance sub-group – Cllrs. Dunhill, Carew and Howe
- Neighbourhood Plan – Cllrs. Howe and Irwin

23/61 **Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Code of Conduct**

(i) It was unanimously agreed to re-adopt the following document with minor amendments:

- *Standing Orders* (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill);
  Amendment to Item 5.7.2. "Contracts exceeding £25,000 would require additional safeguards". This change was to mirror the amount specified in the revised Financial Regulations.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) It was unanimously agreed to adopt the revised Financial Regulations prepared by NALC subject to minor amendments:

- *Financial Regulations* (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin)
  Amendment 1 – 2.2 – remove "or a cheque signatory"
  Amendment 2 – 3.2 – To remove mention of a three year forecast and instead to specify "The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's expected revenue and capital receipts…"

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) It was unanimously agreed to re-adopt the following document without amendment.

- *Code of Conduct* (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

23/62 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 17th April 2023**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting were a true record and were duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

23/63 **Matters Arising**

(i) Minute 23/48 – Defibrillator Provision in the Parish.

The Clerk confirmed that the order for a defibrillator for the sports pavilion had been placed and it should arrive shortly. An online Zoom CPR training session would be held and members of the cricket and football clubs would attend. The training would also be made available to any interested residents.

The Sandy Bank Residents' Association was also continuing with its plan to install a defibrillator on Sandy Bank. It now proposed to site the defibrillator at the junction near Alnmouth Cottage. This land was owned by the Parish Council rather than the County Council and the Clerk was meeting with representatives to confirm their plans;

(ii) *Minute 23/51(ii) – Dene Terrace Project*.

The Clerk confirmed that the contractor had been appointed for this work and hoped to begin within the next 2-3 weeks. She had also ordered the planter which would arrive by the beginning of July.

23/64 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Dale reported on the following issues:

(i) *Signage* - Cllr. Dale confirmed that additional 20 mph signs had been installed on Sandy Lane/Sandy Bank at the request of residents. The flashing 20 mph sign at Broomhaugh had been replaced and she had been informed that the obsolete signage would be removed shortly;

(ii) *Grass cutting* – Cllr. Dale had received a number of emails from residents complaining about the lack of grass cutting on County Council land. She confirmed that the County Council did intend to cut the areas but that there had been a break in at the Prudhoe depot and machinery stolen. The team were catching up on the work but sports fields, playgrounds and areas around road junctions had to be the main priority for now;

(iii) *Potholes* – Cllr. Dale reported that there continued to be a problem throughout the County for which she blamed a lack of resources;

(iv) *Broomhaugh Woods* – Cllr. Dale confirmed that she would arrange for dog fouling signage to be installed at the entrance to the woods;

ACTION: CLERK/ADa

(v) *Neighbourhood Plan* – Cllr. Dale continued to press for a meeting with the Planning team at the County Council to discuss the housing element of the plan;

(vi) *Lack of road markings* – In the pre-meeting discussion, Cllr. Carew had reported that road junction markings were poor around the Slaley Road and Prospect Hill junctions and Cllr. Dale agreed that she would ask an officer to review this on safety grounds.

ACTION: ADa

23/65 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Howe confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan was still undergoing external examination by the appointed examiner and she hoped to share their comments at the next meeting.

23/66 **Weir Footbridge**

The Clerk reported that a second contractor had failed to provide a quote to install the recycled plastic bridge kits at the weir. However, they had provided a cost for their own bridge made from steel and timber. As agreed at the previous meeting, Councillors had reviewed this information via email and decided to proceed with their initial decision to install a bridge manufactured by Bison Bridges and made from steel and recycled plastic and they accepted the quote from 4Nature to install the bridge. This was unanimously ratified at the meeting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin). 4Nature hoped to install the bridge in mid-July and was working with the Clerk to find a secure storage location for the bridge kits until required

23/67 **Play Park Update**

The Clerk confirmed that the work was progressing; the handyman had fitted the new toddler swings and was currently remaking the roof panels for the small play unit. The replacement platforms were due to arrive shortly. It was agreed that the handyman should complete wood staining the old units in the hope that it might prolong the life of the wood for a further few years. The two new springers were due to be fitted in early July.

Cllr. Dale asked the Clerk to check if her financial contribution had been received from the County Council and to notify her if it had not.

ACTION: CLERK

23/68 **Tennis Club**

It was confirmed that Cllrs. Howe and Singer and the Clerk had met with Tennis Club representatives. The Club confirmed that the suggested preferred parking map had been circulated to all members and that the Club would continue to ensure that the information was passed to visiting teams and to those attending coaching sessions. In the pre-meeting question session, a resident confirmed that the number of cars parking by the double courts had reduced although they did query why the club's membership paperwork still directed users to park on Millfield Road. This comment would be relayed to the Club but overall it was felt that the Club was proactively trying to manage the parking.

Feeding of animals on amenity land - Club representatives confirmed that someone was leaving chicken bones and cat food on the amenity land which was attracting vermin and causing issues for dog owners. At the last meeting, it was agreed that the Parish Council should request that residents follow the Countryside Code on parish owned land which stipulated no feeding wild animals. This message would be actively promoted in the newsletter and on the website. The Club agreed to remove the sign if the problem ceased but if it continued then the Parish Council would likely need to involve the public protection officer at the County Council as the vermin created a public health issue.

23/69 **Northumberland Electoral Review**

It was noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBC) had proposed new electoral arrangements for Northumberland from 2025 including the suggestion that the parish of Broomhaugh & Riding should be moved to the Corbridge ward rather than remaining in Stocksfield. The proposals were open to consultation until 10th July 2023 and it was agreed that the Clerk should publicise the consultation and ask for residents' views. Any representation to the LGBC would need to focus on community issues.

ACTION: CLERK

23/70 **Climate Change**

At a recent meeting organised by the County Council it had been disclosed that their Climate Change group had been disbanded due to a lack of funding. This was viewed as hugely disappointing. Councillors also commented on what they felt was a lack of a clear strategic policy on climate change from the government.

23/71 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23**

(i) It was noted that the Internal Auditor, Mrs Margaret Weatherley, had raised no issues of concern after auditing the accounts and a copy of her report was received;

The following documents were received in advance of the meeting and were unanimously approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllrs. Irwin/Dunhill):

(ii) the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23
(iii) the draft annual accounts for 2022/23
(iv) the Accounting Statement for 2022/23
(v) the Explanation of Variances

(vi) It was noted that the dates for the Exercise of Electors' Rights to view the accounts would be from Monday 12th June until Friday 21st July.

ACTION: CLERK

23/72 **Finance**

(a) *Annual grant to the VHT*

Councillors authorised the yearly grant payment of £2,500 to the Village Hall Trust. [This amount had previously been agreed when setting the budget in December 2022]. (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

ACTION: CLERK

(b) *Coronation Grant to support event held by the Scout*

It was agreed to make a grant to the Scouts to cover costs incurred in holding a Coronation event on Monday 8th May. Receipts totals were received and a payment of £130.46 was approved (Proposed Cllr. Dunhill, seconded Cllr. Howe).

ACTION: CLERK

(c) *Insurance*

(i) Yearly Insurance - The Clerk reported that she been notified of the insurance premium for 2023/24 which included a large increase. She planned to query the amount and would provide an update shortly.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) Sandy Bank Residents' Association – insurance of The Nick

It was agreed that the parish council should make its annual contribution to part cover the public liability insurance of the Nick (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill).

ACTION: CLERK

e) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) Payments/Receipts

The following payments were authorised (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill):

Club Cricket Charity – defibrillator cabinet and maintenance agreement	£681.40
The Gleam Team (Andrew Hoscik) – power washing of play park	£478.00
Nest Pension – April pension contribution	£30.69
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk's April pay	£1006.37 (inc. VAT £2.50)
Sandy Bank Residents' Association –The Nick public liability insurance	£153.83
Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership – annual membership	£10.00
Neetfleet – playground inspection, seat repair, play park update	£230.00
Village Hall Trust – yearly grant	£2,500
Village Hall Trust – contribution to water charges (power washing of play park)	£50.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (travel costs to auditor, No dogs sign for play park	£47.93 (inc. VAT £6.19)
Margaret Weatherley – internal audit charges	£100.00
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (paid in arrears to cover April)	£240.00

The following receipt was noted:

Northumberland County Council – S106 contribution- playground update	£2,082.00

(ii) *Budget reports*

The Clerk provided an overview of budget spending. No issues were identified.

23/73 **General Village Maintenance**

Handyman - The Clerk confirmed that the handyman had swept footpaths, repaired a seat by the Riding Grange bus stop, continued with repair work to the play park and undertaken a quarterly playground inspection.

23/74 **Planning**

(a) *Planning applications*

It was reported that:

(i) the following planning application was under consideration by NCC:

- 23/01525/LBC – 7 Hollin Hill Terrace. Consent for the partial removal of two internal walls. PC – no objection.

(ii) the following planning application had been granted permission by NCC:

- 23/00731/FUL – Kingmead, Sandy Bank. Installation of a lift shaft to provide wheelchair access to 1st floor.

(iii) Land south east of The Manor House – proposed construction of 13 dwellings.
the applicant had appealed against the decision to refuse planning consent. The planning sub-group had submitted a response to the Planning Inspectorate confirming that the Parish Council was against the current proposal mainly due to the problems of access but that with a redesign it could be a viable site.

23/75 **Correspondence**

(i) A letter from Mrs Nelson was received thanking the Parish Council for agreeing to pay for the room hire for the Coronation Lunch event. The event had raised over £1,700 which had been donated to two charities.

23/76 **Minor Matters**

(i) *Coronation Events*

It was agreed during the pre-meeting discussion that the Clerk would write an article for the Parish News recording the Parish Council's thanks to all those involved in staging the Coronation events and decorating the village. The events had been a huge success due to a lot of hard work by many residents and groups.

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Balsam Bashing*
The Clerk confirmed that the Tyne Rivers Trust would be holding a volunteer balsam bashing session on Friday 7th July.

(iii) *Removal of Tree Preservation Order*
The Clerk reported that the County Council had sent notification that three trees to the west of Riding Grange were no longer subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

23/77 **Date of Future Meeting**
It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 12th June 2023.

Meeting closed at 8.55 pm