Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 10th June 2024.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Barbara Wood
Cllr. Ellen Rutherford
Cllr. David McKenzie
Cllr. David Irwin

In attendance:

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
County Councillor Anne Dale
2 members of the public were present

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.40 pm.

24/72 **Apologies for Absence**
Cllrs. Singer, Carew and Dunhill.

24/73 **Declaration of Interests**
Cllr. McKenzie declared an interest in Item 6: Churchyards – grass cutting.

24/74 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13th May 2024**
It was agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting and the confidential Council meeting were a true record and were duly signed off by Cllr. Howe (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

24/75 **Matters Arising**

(i) *Minute 24/51 – Notice of Vacancy*. It was noted that the notice of vacancy had been displayed for the requisite time and that no request for an election had been made so the vacancy could now be filled by co-option;

(ii) *Minute 24/65(bii) – The Nick Insurance.* The Clerk confirmed that the decision to reimburse the Sandy Bank Residents' Association for part of the public liability insurance costs for the Nick had been made by councillors back in 2007 after negotiations with the Association. A similar arrangement had also been made with the Allotment Association;

(iii) *Minute 24/69(iv) – Institution of Reverend Johnson as Vicar.* Cllr. Howe confirmed that Cllr. Dunhill had attended the institution service for Reverend Johnson and had given a formal welcome address on behalf of the Parish Council.

24/76 **County Councillor Report**
Cllr. Dale gave a report on the following issues:

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(i) *Resurfacing of Sandy Bank.* Cllr. Dale was pleased to report that the resurfacing of Sandy Bank had been completed and she had received positive feedback from residents who welcomed the repair;

(ii) *Right of Way to Corbridge along the riverside.* Having forwarded the Parish Council's letter to the leader of the County Council and other relevant councillors, Cllr. Dale had been informed that the Footpaths Officer was to hold a meeting with Network Rail. There had been further landslips near Corbridge so alternative safe routes needed to be discussed with Network Rail and she confirmed she would update the Parish Council when further information became available;

(iii) *Ultrafast Broadband.* Cllr. Dale noted that Openreach had almost met its target for the number of properties which were needed to pledge their gigabit voucher for the scheme to progress in Riding Mill;

(iv) *Parking at Stocksfield Railway car park*. Cllr. Dale noted that no decision had yet been made by Northern about introducing charges at the car park as discussions were ongoing.

24/77 **Churchyards - Grass Cutting**

A written request from the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for financial assistance to help maintain the village churchyards was received. Unfortunately, the PCC had not yet had time to obtain two quotes and were therefore unable to provide an idea of the likely yearly costs. It was agreed to postpone a decision on this matter until the costs had been fully established.

24/78 **Marchburn Lane Residents' Association - Yearly Meeting**

Cllr. Howe reported that she had attended the yearly meeting of the Marchburn Lane Residents' Association. Issues discussed included: road repairs (sections of the road would be resurfaced shortly but costs had increased 40% since 2022 and to raise funds for future repairs it was proposed that the yearly subscriptions would be raised (PC to pay £150)), grass cutting, pot holes in Millfield Road, public liability insurance.

24/79 **Review of Policy Document**

The following policy documents were reviewed and readopted with minor changes:

- Co-option Policy (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. McKenzie)
- Freedom of Information Policy (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin)
- Model Publication Scheme – it was noted that this document had been updated by the Information Commissioner's Office and the new version was accepted (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin).

24/80 **Climate Change**

A general discussion was held about how to implement some of the actions pledged when the Parish Council declared a climate emergency. Councillors would be keen to see a village climate action group created and decided that the best time to promote this would be once the feasibility of hydro and solar power had been explored further.

24/81 **Finance**

Monthly Accounts

(i) Payments/Receipts

The following payments were agreed (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. McKenzie)

The Woodland Trust – speaker donation	£100.00
Natural Ability – maintenance of edible garden	£126.00
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of Clerk's pay	£1092.40 (inc. VAT £1.67)
RM Village Hall Trust – yearly donation	£2,500.00
RM Village Hall Trust – room hire	£37.50

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Neetfleet – materials (Sadolin)	£68.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (stationery – ink + A4 paper, plants, handyman materials, Mailchimp monthly subs)	£110.07 (inc. VAT £7.37)

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

Nest pension – May pension contribution	£36.50
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (paid in arrears to cover May)	£240.00

The following receipts were noted:

Tees Valley Combined Authority – CEF grant (1st instalment)	£7,475.00
RM Sports Club – yearly rent	£25.00
RM Tennis Club – yearly rent	£25.00

(ii) *Budget report*
The budget report was received and accepted (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Irwin). No issues were identified

24/82 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman:* The Clerk reported that during May the handyman had swept footpaths, begun the programme of re-staining all the seats and benches, cut back growth around the perimeter of the play park and strimmed a number of Rights of Way (NCC contract).

Councillors held a discussion about the amount of time the handyman spent sweeping the footpath from Riding Grange to the speed camera. With the surface of the Slaley Road breaking up, the amount of loose chippings washing onto the A695 was a continuous problem and no sooner had it been cleared, then it needed doing again. It was agreed that this was a poor use of the handyman's hours especially as the footpath was actually the responsibility of the County Council rather than the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Councillor Dale to highlight the issue and ask if the area could be regularly swept by the County Council's own machinery and, for now, it was agreed that the handyman should pause sweeping the footpath until a response from the County Council was received;

ACTION: CLERK

(ii) *Play Park Yearly inspection* – The Clerk reported that the Play Park had been inspected the previous week and the full report was expected shortly. Feedback at the end of the inspection indicated one or two minor problems which the handyman could address. The inspector had indicated he would be recommending the replacement of one of the main uprights on the large climber due to rot and it was agreed that the Clerk would seek an updated quote from Playdale for its repair;

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Trees on the Nick* – The Clerk reported she had yet to receive a response from the joint owner of the ash trees. It was agreed that the Clerk should write again but if no response was forthcoming then the work could not be undertaken as written permission was required.

24/83 **Planning**

Planning applications - it was reported that:

(i) the following new planning application was under consideration:
- 24/00750/FUL – 12 Church Close. Amendment to initial application for 2-storey side extension. PC – no objection;

(ii) the following planning applications had been granted permission:
- 24/01068/FUL – The Hemmel Broomhaugh. Remodelling of existing extension;

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- 24/01030/VARYCO – Land NE of Beauclerc North. Changes to access.

24/84 **Correspondence**

(i) *Cutting back of foliage on the Snicket from Sandy Bank to Marchburn Lane.* The Clerk reported that she had received various communications from residents requesting the footpath was cut back whilst others had asked for it to be left. The footpath was a Right of Way and the contract to maintain it had been given to the Parish Council's handyman by the County Council. Rights of Way had to be kept passable although the Clerk had asked the handyman to try and leave as many of the wild flowers as possible whilst cutting back the nettles and brambles;

(ii) It was noted that the Sandy Bank Residents' Association intended to hold a vegetation clearance session of The Nick on Saturday 29th June;

(iii) *Poor service by Northern Rail.* A letter had been received from a resident about the poor service of Northern Rail including cancelled services and services failing to stop as planned. She asked if the Parish Council would write to Northern. Councillors agreed that the service had been poor for some time and that the Parish Council should write to Northern. Cllr. Dale offered to provide a direct email address for someone at Northern;

ACTION: CLERK/ADa

(iv) *Trees overhanging gardens*. A resident had written regarding a dispute with a neighbour over the safety of overhanging trees. Neither the County Council or the Parish Council had any jurisdiction over such matters and the Clerk was asked to write back to advise the resident to seek legal advice or to contact Citizens Advice.

ACTION: CLERK

24/85 **Minor Matters**

(i) Newsletter. The Clerk reported that she would shortly start working on the next issue of the newsletter and that any ideas for articles would be appreciated. It was suggested that the whole theme of the next newsletter could be volunteering and that it could feature some of the key people in the village that run different groups and organisations.

ACTION: CLERK

24/86 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 15th July.

Public meeting closed at 8.30 pm

24/87 **Confidential Matters**: Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following items.

(i) *Embankment Issues, Marchburn Woods*;
Issues and advice noted. An arboriculturist would be appointed to survey the trees near to the surface slip.

(ii) *Sports Club lease*
Suggestions for the conditions for the lease were noted and the Heads of Terms would now be sent to the Sports Club for discussion.

Confidential Meeting closed: 9.13 pm

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