Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 14th October 2024.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Eileen Carew
Cllr. Barbara Wood
Cllr. Brian Singer
Cllr. Ellen Rutherford
Cllr. David Irwin

Co-opted at the meeting:

Cllr. Lucie Armstrong
Cllr. Bridget Jones

In attendance:

Mrs Catherine Harrison – Parish Clerk
County Councillor Anne Dale (until Minute 24/132)
4 members of the public were present

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

24/124 **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Andy Dunhill.

24/125 **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr. Irwin declared an interest in Item 10(b) – insurance of the Tennis Clubhouse, as he was a member of the club.

24/126 **Co-option of Councillors**

Cllr. Howe introduced Lucie Armstrong and Bridget Jones who had both expressed an interest in serving on the Parish Council and invited them to give brief personal statements outlining their experiences and skills which they could offer as a councillor. A vote was held and it was unanimously agreed to co-opt both Mrs Armstrong and Mrs Jones to the Council. They then signed the requisite forms and were welcomed to the meeting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew).

ACTION: CLERK

24/127 **Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 16th September 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. Rutherford).

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24/128 **Matters Arising**

(i) *Minute 24/110(i) – Lighting on the footpath to the station from Broomhaugh*. The Clerk reported that a quote for a new light on the footpath was yet to be received and both she and Cllr. Dale had followed this up with the relevant officer Cllr. Dale confirmed that if the project was to proceed then she would be able to make a donation from her Members Small Allowance Scheme of £2,000 and councillors recorded their thanks to her for this generous offer.

ACTION: CLERK/ADa

(ii) *Minute 24/112 – Local Transport Plan*. The Clerk confirmed that the priorities decided at the last meeting had been submitted by the required deadline. Cllr. Dale had discussed the idea of a 20 mph limit through the village with the relevant officers but had received a negative response as the A695 was designated a primary route. However, councillors had decided that they felt strongly about the matter and wished this option to be formally considered as part of the LTP and would look for alternative ways to introduce the measure should it be rejected.

The Clerk also noted that she had now received a quote for installing a set of dropped kerbs to aid wheelchair users cross the A695. The quote was for just under £19,000. The work was scheduled to take 5 days and a substantial proportion of the costs were for traffic management measures. Councillors asked that Cllr. Dale raise this with the Highways team as the costs seemed out of proportion to the perceived level of work. Cllr. Dale confirmed that she would do this but also reported that she had submitted the work as one of her suggested priorities for the next LTP.

ACTION: ADa

(iii) *Minute 24/123(iii) – Sports Club / football field hire*. The Clerk reported that football had restarted for the season and that the netting system was being installed as agreed. A meeting with the Sports Club was still to be arranged and Cllrs. Wood and Singer offered some possible dates.

ACTION: CLERK

The Clerk also reported that the Sports Club was still keen to install an additional decked area by the pavilion and had asked the Parish Council to seek pre-planning advice on its behalf. Councillors agreed that the Clerk could make such an application on the understanding that all costs to the Council would be reimbursed.

ACTION: CLERK

24/129 **County Councillor Report**

Cllr. Dale provided a report on the following issues:

(i) *Lighting on the footpath to the station from Broomhaugh:* see Minute 24/127(i) above. Cllr. Dale offered to make a donation of £2,000 towards this project;

(ii) *Full-fibre broadband:* Cllr. Dale reported that she was concerned that certain areas of the parish were not included in the Openreach rollout for ultrafast broadband and that she intended to write to Joe Morris, MP, to highlight the issue;

(iii) *LTP Submission:* Cllr. Dale confirmed that she had submitted a request for dropped kerbs as part of her LTP submission;

(iv) *Public Rights of Way:* Cllr. Dale reported that she had written to a local landowner on behalf of the Parish Council and he had explained that hedging had not been cut last year as it had been too wet and machinery could not access the required areas. He promised that hedge cutting would commence imminently and would look to resolve the issues identified. It was

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agreed that the Clerk should email Cllr. Dale to request a copy of a booklet prepared by the County Council explaining landowners' responsibilities;

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr. Dale also noted that she hoped for an update on the ROW along the river to Corbridge and would provide a report at next month's meeting;

(v) *Allendale Estate:* Cllr. Dale reported that the Allendale Estate was without a land agent at the current time;

(vi) *NCC Conference*. Cllr. Dale reported that she had attended the Town and Parish Council Conference hosted by the County Council;

(vii) *EV charging points:* Cllr. Dale noted that work to install two charging points was almost complete;

(viii) *Gully and roadside ditch clearing:* Cllr. Dale noted a press release which had been issued by the County Council promising an additional £1.4 million to help clear ditches and roadside gullies. Whilst welcoming this funding, she explained that additional revenue funding was required every year simply to keep up with inflation and that a one-off cash boost would not help in the long term.

24/130 **Riding Mill Outdoor Pre-School**

Councillors welcomed Jen Stephenson, vice-chair of the Pre-School and were pleased to hear that the Pre-school was hopeful that it had found somewhere to move to subject to final negotiations. The cost of moving to a new site would be substantial and a community fundraising campaign had been established to raise £10,000 which would help when applying for external grants which might require match funding. Councillors were keen to be kept updated and would be prepared to consider donations to the campaign once plans had been firmly established.

24/131 **Website / New domain name**

There appeared to be a concerted government push to get all parish councils to use a .gov.uk domain address which was supposed to provide reassurance to residents that the site was legitimate and provide better security. It was also noted that if an application was made quite soon it might be possible to claim a £100 grant to help fund the domain transfer. The format of the domain name was quite prescriptive – broomhaughandridingparishcouncil.gov.uk or broomhaughandriding-pc.gov.uk. Such a long domain name might be problematic and various options were proposed – the Parish Council could apply to change the name of the parish to Riding Mill Parish Council (a name often used by organisations now including the County Council on occasion) or a request could be made to the Cabinet Office to allow either ridingmill-pc.gov.uk or, preferably, ridingmill.gov.uk. Councillors agreed that Cllr. Irwin and the Clerk should work with a domain provider to agree the most suitable domain name.

ACTION: DI/CLERK

A discussion was also held about the website but as a number of councillors had not viewed it recently, it was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting giving councillors time to review it.

ACTION: ALL

24/132 **Climate Change**

See item 24/128(vii).

24/133 **Finance**

a) Monthly Accounts

(i) Payments/Receipts

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

Transfer to the bridges fund	£3,500.00
Wellers Hedleys – allotment lease legal work	£1022.40 (inc. VAT £170.40)
NCC – Reimbursement of Clerk's September salary	£1092.40 (inc. VAT £1.67)
Procut Grounds Maintenance – football field line marking	£120.00 (inc. VAT £20.00)
Paul Armstrong – Garden Services – pest control	£185.00
Forvis Mazars – External Auditor fee	£378.00 (inc. VAT £63.00)
Unity Trust – quarterly bank charges	£18.00
Natural Ability – maintenance of edible garden	£126.00
Neetfleet – additional maintenance tasks	£280.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses	£53.93 (inc. VAT £8.99)

<u>Standing Orders/Direct Debits:</u>

Nest pension – September pension contribution	£36.50
Neetfleet – monthly handyman payment (September)	£240.00

The following receipts were noted:

Compensation & loss of interest payment, Nationwide Bank	£442.82
NCC – reimbursement of ROW maintenance expenses	£300
Unity Trust (Bridges fund) – quarterly interest payment	£278.38

(ii) *Budget report*

The budget report was received and approved (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew). Councillors noted the Legal and Audit budget was overspent although some of these additional expenses were to be paid for from funds held in the Reserves (title deed work, Millennium Hall and Allotment lease - £1,175)

b) *Insurance of Tennis club house*

The Clerk confirmed that the insurance liability was not attributed in either party in the lease. She was therefore asked to find out how much it would cost to add the club house to the insurance policy before a decision would be taken at a future meeting.

ACTION: CLERK

24/134 **General Village Maintenance**

(i) *Handyman:* the Clerk reported that in the previous month the handyman had strimmed footpaths, treated tree stumps to stop regrowth, re-sited and secured the play park picnic bench (a requirement from the safety inspection report), treated moss on the bridges, cut back encroaching growth from footpaths around the Riding Grange bus stops and cleared and treated moss to make these areas safer.

(ii) *Grass cutting:* the Clerk confirmed that she had written to the contractor as requested. He had recently undertaken a thorough cut of all areas;

(iii) *Allotment wall repairs*. The Clerk reported that the contractor had commenced work on the allotment wall;

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(iv) *New planter at Broomhaugh.* The Clerk was asked to establish the costs of a planter for the area at Broomhaugh and to check if the County Council would have any objections to its installation;

ACTION: CLERK

(v) *Network Rail – overgrown bushes*. Cllr. Singer requested that the handyman cut back the bushes on Network Rail's land which were overhanging the pavement on the A695.

ACTION: CLERK

24/135 **Planning**

Planning applications - it was reported that:

(i) the following new planning application was under consideration:

- 24/03078/PRUTPO – Holly Lodge, Church Lane. Tree work. PC – no objection;

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

- 24/02682/PRUTPO – Bywood, Church Lane. Tree work.

24/136 **Correspondence**

(i) Two residents of Meadow Park had written to complain about the state of the road surface – the letters were referred to Cllr. Dale;

(ii) A request had been received asking to use Marchburn Woods and other areas of land owned by the Parish Council for a autumn holiday club. This was agreed subject to adequate public liability insurance being in place which would indemnify the Parish Council;

(iii) A resident had written regarding the state of the footpaths due to overgrown gorse bushes – see Minute 24/128(iv) above.

(iv) Countryside Survey – UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. This organisation had surveyed Marchburn Woods since the early 70s and had recently undertaken a follow up visit. A report of their findings had been received.

24/137 **Minor Matters**

(i) *Remembrance Sunday – 10th November*

It was agreed that Cllr. Singer would lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Sunday service and would coordinate arrangements with the Clerk. Cllr. Armstrong offered to contact a scout leader to enquire if the Scouts intended to take part in the service. The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by the nephew of Fred Best – the solider whose war record had been corrected on the memorial plaque – and he would be joining the Remembrance Service this year to honour his uncle;

ACTION: BS/LA/CLERK

(ii) *Christmas tree/events*

It was agreed that the Christmas tree lighting event would be held on Friday 6th December. The Clerk was asked to enquire if Tynedale Lions' Santa could attend;

ACTION: CLERK

(iii) *Request to meet the Parish Council from Joe Morris, Hexham MP*

Councillors were pleased to accept Joe Morris's invitation to hold a meeting. The Clerk was asked to suggest Friday 29th November at 5 pm;

ACTION: CLERK

(iv) *Hustings event for county councillor elections*

Due to the changes in ward boundaries, Riding Mill would be included within the Corbridge ward next May at the local elections which would mean a new councillor would represent the parish. It was agreed to invite candidates standing in the county council elections to a

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hustings event so that residents could raise issues of concern and hear the potential candidates' priorities for the parish;

ACTION: CLERK

(v) *Number of notices advertising Wentworth Grange Care Home*
Councillors noted a proliferation of signs throughout the village advertising the care home. Whilst they did not object to directional signs, the Clerk was asked to check if permission was required for the advertisements and it was agreed that she would contact the home to discuss.

ACTION: CLERK

(vi) *Fencing on the Nick*
The Clerk was asked to check who was responsible for fencing adjacent to the Nick as the fence looked in danger of collapse.

ACTION: CLERK

(vii) *Tennis Club*
In the pre-meeting question time, a resident asked that it be recorded that she had written to the Tennis Club after a parking cone she put outside her property to ensure she could reverse from her drive, was moved on three separate occasions by club members and she felt that this was an intimidatory action. Councillors noted her comments.

24/138 **Date of Future Meeting**
It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 11th November.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm

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