



Broomhaugh & Riding Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Church Cottage, Church Lane, on Monday 9th December 2024.

Councillors present:

Cllr. Christine Howe (Chair)
Cllr. Andy Dunhill
Cllr. Barbara Wood
Cllr. Lucie Armstrong

Cllr. Brian Singer
Cllr. Eileen Carew
Cllr. Bridget Jones

In attendance:

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

Cllr. Howe opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

24/154 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs. David Irwin and Ellen Rutherford.

24/155 Declaration of Interests

None.

24/156 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 11th November 2024

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

24/157 Matters Arising

- (i) *Minute 24/142(ii) – Decked area by sports pavilion.* The Clerk reported that the pre-planning advice received from the County Council had confirmed that planning permission was required for an extension to the decked area of the pavilion. The Club had also asked for permission to install an additional storage container. This too would require planning permission and the Club had asked that the Parish Council submit an application on their behalf. Councillors had no objection in principle to doing so but asked to review all paperwork in advance;

ACTION: CLERK

- (ii) *Minute 24/142(iv) – Meeting with Joe Morris, MP.* It was noted that the meeting had had to be cancelled due to an additional debate in parliament. It was hoped that the meeting could be rescheduled shortly;

- (iii) *Minute 24/144 – Website / New domain.* The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to the potential new web host company regarding a .gov.uk domain address and whilst they could help the Parish Council acquire the domain name and host the website, they would not maintain the current website as it was not in their company format, and this could cause complications. On contacting the current web host and explaining the plans to move to another company, they then agreed to match the lower quote and use their contacts to obtain the .gov.uk address. As this was a simpler solution, the Clerk had asked them to proceed;
- (iv) *Minute 24/147(e) - Insurance of tennis clubhouse.* This had been actioned and insurance was now in place for the clubhouse;
- (v) *Minute 24/150 – Healey Estate Woodland Management Plan.* The Clerk reported that there was currently no plan available to share with councillors but that she had written with the suggestion of reopening the permissive path through Helister Woods;
- (vi) *Minute 24/151(iv) – Presentation on behalf of Tynedale Hospice at Home.* Tynedale Hospice had been delighted to accept the invitation to speak at the annual Parish Meeting and this meeting was now confirmed for Thursday 15th May 2025.

24/158 County Councillor Report

Cllr. Dale provided a report on the following issues:

- (i) *New light for footpath.* Cllr. Dale was pleased that she had been able to provide support for this project and noted that the funds should have been received by the Parish Council. The Clerk confirmed that the £2,000 donation had been paid;
- (ii) *EV Chargers* – Cllr. Dale had been notified that the chargers were now fully operational and working correctly;
- (iii) *Right of Way along the river to Corbridge* – Cllr. Dale was expecting a report from the Footpaths Officer shortly which she would share with the Parish Council;
- (iv) *Parking at Broomhaugh* – Cllr. Dale had been contacted by members of the public concerned that a resident intended to alter their garden and create a parking area in front of their house. Cllr. Dale confirmed that this change would need permission as it involved access on to a public highway and she had referred the complaints to the relevant officer. Cllr. Howe suggested that the enforcement officer review the Design Code, included in the Neighbourhood Plan, as it states that all designs should conform to sustainable urban drainage;
- (v) *Ultrafast Broadband* – Cllr. Dale reported that not all areas of the village were included in the rollout and she had referred the matter to Joe Morris, MP.
- (vi) *Local Transport Plan* – Cllr. Dale reported that a meeting had been held to review the LTP submissions. No projects had been confirmed as yet although she hoped that road surface repairs would be made to Meadow Park and possibly the Slaley Road. She was also hopeful that the Council would set aside funds to allow for the installation of a number of dropped kerbs. The suggestions regarding lowering the speed of traffic through the village had not been successful as data held by the County Council seemed to show that this was not a significant problem;
- (vii) *Approach to the station* – In the pre-meeting discussion, it was reported that a wheelchair user had fallen due to the deep potholes on the approach to the station. Cllr. Dale agreed to report the problem.

ACTION: ADa

24/159 Light on footpath to Broomhaugh

It was reported that a quote for the installation of an additional light on the footpath had been received and that a decision had been made by email to accept the quote. Cllr. Dale had kindly

offered a donation of £2,000 to help fund the project although it had to proceed in this financial year to guarantee the funds. Councillors had therefore agreed to accept the quote using the funds set aside in the capital expenditure budget for 24/25 and taking a small amount of money from the Reserves. This decision was unanimously ratified at the meeting (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Singer).

24/160 **North-East Local Transport Plan**

Councillors welcomed Malcolm Chainey (Neighbourhood Plan Transport sub-group chair and also chair of the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership) to the meeting and received his written comments on the North-East Local Transport Plan Consultation. Mr Chainey explained that the North East Mayoral Combined Authority had control over the Metro system and had powers to regulate buses in the region but that railways remained outside its control. The delivery plans listed 327 separate interventions, intended to be delivered in three bands: 2025-2027, 2027-2032, and 2032-2040, but all were subject to funding and powers.

It was suggested that the Parish Council described what it was looking for in terms of an integrated transport model, suggestions included: short-term – direct bus link to Prudhoe railway station (the No. 10 bus only serves Prudhoe Front Street), long-term – every train would stop at Riding Mill. Better provision for bikes on trains, current ticketing was inefficient and the Parish Council would support a ticketing system similar to London's Oyster Card. Councillors highlighted the need for a useable service and agreed to explain how poor the current service was as part of the response to the consultation. The general feeling was that if the service improved, the number of passengers using it would increase.

Councillors agreed to send further comments to the Clerk for collation.

ACTION: CLERK

24/161 **Budget and Precept Requirements**

A document showing current budget spending and proposed spending for next year was received. Councillors also received a document showing Reserve account movements. After discussion the budget was unanimously agreed as follows (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Dunhill):

Budget Category	Proposed budget for 2025/26	Last year's budget 2024/25
Staff Costs	£14,500	£13,950
Insurance	£1,800	£1,600
General Admin	£2,250	£2,050
Professional Fees	£3,900	£1,000
Donations/Grants	£5,750	£3,600
Maintenance	£13,300	£17,800
Capital Expenditure	£5,500	£1,000
Miscellaneous	£1,800	£800
Bridges sinking fund	£3,250	£3,500
Additional funds to the reserves	---	£4,300
TOTAL	<u>£52,050</u>	<u>£49,600</u>

Points to note:

- Staff Costs: This was increased to cover the anticipated national pay award for 25/26;
- Insurance: This was increased to cover the addition of the tennis clubhouse to the policy;

- Legal & Audit: This budget category was increased to allow for legal costs in preparing a new lease for the sports club and for conducting a full survey of Parish woodlands (undertaken every 3 years);
- Admin budget: this was increased to allow for increases in room hire costs and likely rises in subscription charges;
- Maintenance Budget: Councillors considered the basic yearly maintenance costs and, in addition, set aside funds to cover additional tree work and a potential increase in the handyman's monthly fee;
- Donations: Councillors considered a new request from St James Church to assist with the upkeep of the churchyards as they were no longer able to rely on volunteers. Councillors were supportive of the idea and increased the budget by £500 to £3000 although the exact split between the Church and the Village Hall Trust was delayed until councillors were able to view a set of recent accounts and gained an understanding of what funds the VHT held in Reserve;
A grant of £2,000 (£1,650 plus £350 septic tank service costs) was awarded to the Sports Club for primarily maintenance of the football field and cricket pitch;
£1,100 would continue to be set aside to help smaller village groups and local charities;
- Capital expenditure projects: It was agreed to set aside £5,500 for future projects including a contribution to the County Council to assist with the installation of dropped kerb stones, improvements to mirrors for those exiting Dene Terrace and Underwood Road and minor landscaping improvements at Broomhaugh;
- Miscellaneous budget: It was agreed to set the usual budget of £800. An additional sum of £1,000 was set aside for possible donation to the Pre-school should its move to a new site progress;
- Councillors agreed to continue to set aside money for the future replacement of either Marchburn Lane bridge or Millfield Road bridge and agreed a budget of £3,250.

Precept Calculation

It was agreed that no funds would be taken from the Reserves and that the Precept would be set at £52,050, an increase of £2,450 (5%). This was proposed by Cllr. Howe, seconded by Cllr. Dunhill and unanimously agreed.

ACTION: CLERK

24/162 Finance

a) *Monthly Accounts*

(i) Payments/Receipts

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

RM Sports Club – grass cutting reimbursement	£220.00
Robson Print – newsletter	£376.00
Clear Insurance Management – tennis clubhouse insurance	£117.20
Northumberland County Council – reimbursement of salary	£1,495.28 (inc. VAT £1.67)
Unity Trust Bank - monthly bank charges	£6.00
Box-It North – archive storage	£25.55 (inc. VAT £4.26)
Natural Ability – edible garden maintenance	£84.00
Trevor Bell Horticultural services – parish grass cutting	£675.00
Trevor Bell Horticultural services – football field grass cutting	£150.00
Neetfleet – quarterly play park inspection	£90.00
Catherine Harrison – reimbursement of expenses (Mailchimp monthly subs, Christmas event, A3 photocopying)	£75.30 (inc. VAT £3.56)

Standing Orders/Direct Debits:

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

The following receipts were noted:

NCC – Members Allowance Scheme – light on footpath	£2,000.00
Holiday accommodation donation (ID1)	£50.00

(ii) *Budget reports*

The budget reports were reviewed and approved. No new issues were identified.

(b) *S137 Grants*

A paper was received detailing requests for funding from voluntary organisations and local village clubs and groups. Requests were received from three new organisations which, whilst worthy, were deemed not to have as much impact on residents as some other organisations. It was therefore agreed that priority would be given to local groups and the remaining funds distributed between five other applicants as detailed below. (Proposed Cllr. Howe, seconded Cllr. Carew):

- Tuesday Drop in Group (£150)
- Parish Hall - Garden Invaders (£150)
- Riding Mill Tennis Club (£150)
- Tynedale Hospice at Home (£100)
- Sport Tynedale (£100)
- Great North Air Ambulance (£100)
- Citizens Advice Northumberland (£100)
- Age UK Northumberland (£100)

ACTION: CLERK

(c) *Holiday-let accommodation*

The Clerk reported that a letter had been sent to owners of holiday-let accommodation in the village requesting a donation of £50 be made to the Council. This was because these businesses were registered for business rates and no element of these funds were awarded to the Parish Council unlike council tax. It was noted that, so far, there had only been a limited response.

25/163 Climate Change

There were no new issues to note.

24/164 General Village Maintenance

- (i) *Handyman:* the Clerk reported that in the previous month the handyman had cleared leaves and trimmed footpaths, tidied around seats and had washed a number of road signs. He had also conducted a quarterly playground inspection which had identified one minor issue on a springer which he would investigate;
- (ii) *Townscape ideas at Broomhaugh:* Cllr. Howe outlined a plan for landscaping the area by the eastbound bus stop at Broomhaugh. Although the Parish Council wished to discourage parking in this area, some councillors felt that it was unavoidable at times and restricting access to the area could cause problems e.g. for utility workers or the County Council. It was agreed to explore the suggestion further with the County Council before deciding on a

planter but that a number of small trees should be planted towards the rear of the area if the County Council approved.

24/165 **Planning**

Planning applications - it was reported that:

- (i) the following new planning application was under consideration:
 - 24/04062/VARYCO & 24/04063/VARYCO – Riding Farm. Change to location of bat void. PC – no objection;
- (ii) the following planning applications had been granted permission:
 - 24/03078/PRUTPO – Holly Lodge, Church Lane. Tree work.
 - 24/03351/LTP – 1 Hollin Hill Terrace. Change to pantry wall.

24/166 **Correspondence**

- The Clerk had sent a resident a map of the suggested parking arrangements for tennis club members following a query;
- A request had been made to the Parish Council for information about who owned the land behind the Millennium Hall and the Clerk had confirmed that the land was not registered and ownership was unknown;
- The Director of Shepherds Dene had written regarding the holiday accommodation initiative and asked if it would be possible to meet to discuss future engagement with the village and the Parish Council. The Clerk had responded and would organise a meeting early in the new year.

24/167 **Minor Matters**

- (i) Hybrid meetings – it was noted that the government was consulting on enabling remote attendance at public meetings and councillors were encouraged to make a personal response.

ACTION: ALL

24/168 **Date of Future Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Monday 13th January 2025.

Public meeting closed at 8.40 pm

24/169 **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) Sports Club lease / football field hire
- (ii) Marchburn Wood – tree work.

Confidential Meeting closed: 9.07 pm