

ULGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Women's Institute Hall on Monday 21st March 2022

Councillor J Scott (in the Chair)

Councillors G Brown, Mrs H Shaw and Mrs L Newman

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs D Wilson and County Councillor D Towns

Ten parishioners were also in attendance.

70/21 QUESTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS

A resident raised the issue of the rights of way in the Parish. She had found that it was possible to get funding to improve the rights of way. Some brashing would improve some of them hugely. The one on the east side of the village next to the river was impassable.

The resident suggested carrying out a survey which she was happy to co-ordinate. She felt that the volume of work from the aftereffects of storm Arwen would take up the time of the limited resource NCC had for rights of way.

The Chairman reported that NCC used to pay the parish council to have the footpaths cleared but it was now difficult to find anyone to do the work. If there was funding available this should be investigated. He was happy for the resident to co-ordinate a survey of the paths and report back.

The resident reported that some of the margins left by local farmers were very small and made it difficult for people to use the designated rights of way.

Another resident stated that it was the responsibility of NCC to clear the paths and he felt landowners did nothing as they did not want walkers on their land.

Councillor Shaw stated that NCC had also suggested finding a group of volunteers who were usually dog walkers to carry out some work on the rights of way however, the Parish Council had been unable to find anyone who wanted to get involved.

The resident who had raised the issue proposed trying to get a group of volunteers together who were willing to do the work to clear some of the vegetation from the paths.

A resident stated that a lot of the paths do not seem to exist anymore. Land was ploughed up to the edges of the path.

Councillor Mrs Shaw felt it would be useful to have a survey and to give it to NCC who could then write to the landowners to remind them of their responsibilities in relation to rights of way.

The Treasurer of the UVA asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to fund 50% of the cost of producing the new bi-monthly newsletter in the sum of £120. This was agreed.

Councillor Mrs Shaw mentioned there had been some comments from people saying that they would prefer a monthly newsletter.

The Chairman then introduced Nicola Sanders from Sanders Plant and Waste Management who was in attendance to discuss the company plans for the haul road.

Ms Sanders stated that the company had taken over the haul road. They wanted to get it filled in but there had been a lot of problems. There had been a change of personnel at NCC and

some knowledge appeared to have been lost. Planning was not yet in place as to how to fill it in. The bridges that run along the haul road are not in the boundary of the haul road and did not belong to the title. The company were working with NCC to resolve this issue.

Ms Sanders wanted to understand what residents were expecting of the haul road, she was receiving mixed messages. The plans originally said there was a bridleway in there and she asked if this was still wanted? She also knew that there were concerns about the use of trail bikes in the area.

She said it would take about three years to fill in the haul road due to planning, environmental permits and materials and then work could start on the bridleway. There is the question of whether the bridges would be filled in which would likely be an NCC liability.

Work would start at the Stobswood end of the road and finish where the company would put a new access point at Cockle Park where the compound was going to be. The company wanted to work in the summer months as they would be moving clay which could get messy in wet weather.

In terms of materials, the company was in competition with the work to dual the A1 and work was currently underway to source what was needed now although this may not be possible. The tarmac and stone would be removed from the road and clay and topsoil would be used to fill it in. There was a requirement from NCC that the materials were removed to a 6-metre depth and then filled in. This was an obligation in respect of the environmental permit.

Some of the material had already been taken out.

She offered to supply the parish council and residents with more information once the Council had passed the plans.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council's had commented on the original pre-application as it appeared that the bridge was to be filled which meant going over the road. In the last pre-application the bridge was to be left open which Councillors agreed with.

Ms Sanders stated that the company had to pick up the application that was submitted by the previous owner. The issue was about the structure of the bridges and who owns the land underneath and because there was so much background information this had proved difficult to resolve. It would likely end up being the responsibility of the County Council and end up with a compromise of a partial fill in.

A statement was made about the proposal for a Pegasus crossing which would require land on either side of the road.

Ms Sanders said that this was a proposal from NCC. What they think should be happening changes so much and that is why this application has stalled. The problem was there were new officers at NCC who were trying to deal with historic planning issues.

Ms Sanders did have some concerns about trail bikes using the bridlepath if it was 3 metres wide but she was advised this was a statutory width and the bikes were using it anyway.

Ms Sanders said she was willing to come back to another meeting in a few months' time with more of an update. She said the company were committed to a bridleway if it was going to be used.

It was stated that it would be used as it helps to get horses and cyclists off the road.

Ms Sanders was thanked for attending the meeting.

71/21 MINUTES

Members were asked to approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21 February 2022.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

72/21 CORRESPONDENCE

(i) NCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Consultation

The Clerk had previously circulated this information. Responses to the consultation were required by 15th April.

This was not thought to be relevant to Ulgham parish.

(ii) Community Action Northumberland (CAN) newsletter

The Chair reported on a newsletter that had been received from CAN on 18th March. This included some interesting information about energy suppliers and direct debits. The newsletter stated that the energy price cap was increasing by 54% however some firms were asking customers to increase their direct debit payments by substantially more. The information stated that customers do not have to agree to this. The customer can decide how much the direct debit is based on predicted use or pay by a variable direct debit, only paying for what was actually used per month. The newsletter was encouraging people to read their meters and submit it to their energy providers on the 31st March. This shows the provider how much energy was used before the price cap increase came into effect. It was suggested that a photograph of the meter reading and the serial number of the meter in case providers were overwhelmed with people submitting readings. This would provide evidence at a later date.

It was suggested that the information could be printed out and/or put on the website. It may be important enough to put out a flyer.

73/21 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

A meeting had been held on 3rd March which was well attended. The main discussion was about the Platinum Jubilee and also thanking those who had held office in the past.

A Meadows group was being formed and a walk around would be held soon.

A small group from the UVA was meeting the following day about the Jubilee.

The UVA wouldn't formally meet until September but if another meeting was required it would be called.

The main projects for the UVA were the hanging baskets, the bid for money for new planters for the village and also picnic tables for the field.

74/21 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

It was noted that the following accounts were now due for payment:

- (a) Clerk, March 2022 salary and mileage - £154.66
- (b) HMRC – PAYE payment, Clerk - £91.60
- (c) Ulgham WI – Room hire from May 2021 to March 2022 - £140
- (d) UVA – 50% contribution towards cost of bi-monthly newsletter £120

75/21 REPORTS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

Councillor Brown mentioned the problems he had trying to get through to the County Council about the hedges at Orchard Close. He was concerned that the parish council could not contact the correct people. He did manage to get through to someone and the work was carried out quickly, but he felt that communications needed to be improved for parish councils accessing the County Council.

76/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting date would be Easter Monday. It was agreed that the date would be advertised once it had been agreed. It was hoped this could be held on Monday 25th April.