

ULGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held in the Women's Institute Hall on Monday 16 January 2023

Councillor Mrs H Shaw (in the Chair)
Councillors G Brown, J Scott and Mrs D Wilson
Also present County Councillor D Towns
Also in attendance 4 parishioners
An apology was received from Councillor Mrs L Newman

Councillor Mrs Shaw reported that Councillors Scott and Mrs Wilson would be late for the meeting as they were attending an NCC/Parish and Town Council conference in Alnwick.

55/22 QUESTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS

A resident reported that he had submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman as discussed at the last meeting.

A resident asked if there was any update about the Forge pub which was in a poor condition.

A resident asked County Councillor Towns a question. He referred to a meeting some months ago when a County Councillor from Warkworth had been in attendance. He had advised the meeting that Councillors on an NCC planning committee could not get involved with any applications.

Councillor Towns replied that members of the planning committee could not pre-determine anything re applications to be discussed otherwise they would not be allowed to take part in the discussion. He pointed out that not every application goes to committee, many were determined by delegated authority. The more controversial applications do go to committee and if a Councillor chooses to express an opinion outside of the decision-making process, then they cannot take part in the discussion at the meeting.

It was up to parish councils to decide whether it was more useful to have a discussion at their meetings on an application or leave it for him to deal with it at the NCC meeting.

The resident also asked whether the County Council had published their Value for Money statement yet?

Councillor Towns replied he thought it would be published this year.

A resident asked if there was any news about the grit bin that had been requested at the last meeting. The application had been made in the residents name and he would be advised of the outcome.

The same resident asked if the Council knew who had been cutting down trees in the area. One of his trees had been cut back without his permission. The Council had no knowledge of anyone cutting back trees, it was unlikely to be NCC at this time of year.

56/22 MINUTES

Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th December 2022.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

57/22 CORRESPONDENCE

(i) NALC newsletters

The Clerk had printed off two briefings received from NALC today. Information was included in relation to some briefing sessions that had been organised and also the procedure for parish and town councils to provide grit bins via the County Council.

(ii) NCC Planning Enforcement Strategy

This document had been circulated prior to the last meeting in December. Members had read the document and did not believe that a response was required.

58/22 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023-24

Notification had been received from NCC that precept requests had to be made to them by 27th January 2023.

A draft budget together with two options for the precept had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

In relation to Ulgham the tax base figure had gone down again for 2023-24 from 173.08 this year to 169.24 in 2023-24.

This meant that if the precept was left the same as the one for 2022-23 (£11,400), due to the change in the tax base figure, this would mean an increase on the Band D figure of 1.98% or £1.31 per annum. The Band D figure would be £67.36 per annum in 2023-24 up from £66.05 in the current financial year.

A further option 2 would be to leave the Band D figure the same for this year (£66.05) which would mean a reduction in the precept to £11,178, a reduction of £222.

After some consideration, the Council decided to go with the first option and leave the precept the same for 2023-24.

RESOLVED –The budget be approved and a precept request of £11,400 be levied on Northumberland County Council for 2023-24.

59/22 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

(i) Ulgham Village Committee

Members were reminded that the UVA AGM was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 24 January. One of the items to be discussed was the newsletter. A news sheet had been distributed for this month and it was likely to be the same in February. Dialogue was being sought with the printer to obtain comparison costs between printing and photocopying.

60/22 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

- (a) Clerk, January 2023 salary, mileage, - £154.66
- (b) HMRC – PAYE payment, Clerk - £91.60

61/22 REPORTS FROM CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

Councillors Scott and Mrs Wilson had attended the NCC/town and parish council conference in Alnwick today. There was an opportunity to speak to both highways and planning officers. Councillor Scott had mentioned signage to the highways officer. There was an outstanding sign agreed in a previous LTP submission and signs that had not been replaced following the storms last year. He had been assured these issues would be dealt with.

Various attendees had mentioned issues with planning. There were concerns raised about the inconsistency of decisions made at times.

Councillor Mrs Wilson had invited the head of Planning to come to a meeting with the parish council to discuss recent decisions and how they were made.

A further update on the attendance at the conference would be available for the next meeting in February.

Councillor Brown advised that he had reported the barrier at the ford leading to Ulgham Park. The work was carried out within two days as it was badly damaged.

Councillor Towns mentioned a boundary review for county divisions in Northumberland. One of the proposals was to have a separate division for Pegswood due to the increase in the number of residents following significant housebuilding. Ulgham would be in a division with areas such as Longhirst, Hebron, Fairmoor and part of Widdrington Station.

62/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday 20 February 2023 in the WI Hall, Ulgham at 7.00 p.m.