

Minutes of electronic meeting of Rothbury Parish Council held at 7pm on Wednesday 10th February 2021

Those Present: Cllr Sutton (Chairman), Cllr Tuckey, Cllr Milne, Cllr Mrs Dawson, Cllr Hooks, Cllr Devlin, Cllr Mrs Arkle, C Miller (Clerk), four members of the public

RPC/17/21 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

RPC/18/21 Declaration of Members Interests

There were no Declaration of Members Interests.

RPC/19/21 Minutes of previous meeting held 13th January 2021

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th January 2021 be accepted as a true record.

RPC/20/21 Community Services

RPC/20/21/01 Garden and village maintenance – to receive monthly gardening report; to consider permanent wire at War Memorial steps to ease with leaf clearance

Steel tubing permanent wiring for War Memorial would be too costly, with gardener suggesting a cheaper option of wood and green coated wire which could be stored when not in use. A further option could be barbed wire stakes with chicken wire.

RPC/20/21/02 To report on progress with bike track planning application for access

Access proposals had been developed in conjunction with the Highways agency engineers to be a much safer alternative for children to enter and leave the bike park. The project team will be applying for the necessary planning permissions for the new development.

RPC/20/21/03 To approve commemorative seat policy and consider removal of permanent flower holders from commemorative seat on village green

It was resolved to adopt the commemorative seat policy. Clerk had contacted family and asked for the permanent flower holders to be removed from the seat on the village green, however this had not occurred and replacement flowers had since been displayed. Clerk to re-contact family, include a copy of the policy and further request they remove the permanent holders.

RPC/20/21/04 To receive update on relocation of youth shelter/removal of solar lamp

Agenda item to be removed until bike track completed when relocation of shelter would be revisited. It was confirmed the solar lamp was the responsibility of the Parish Council.

RPC/20/21/05 To receive concerns regarding footpath flooding at riverside

Cllr Arkle had witnessed hazards to pedestrians due to a puddle accumulating on the riverside footpath near to the footbridge. The path had been lifted once to alleviate standing water, however it is a constant problem, and Clerk would bring to the attention of the County Council.

RPC/21/21 Planning

RPC/21/21/01 Planning Applications received

Public comments can be submitted via Northumberland County Council web-site:

Northumberland.gov.uk/Planning.aspx or via post to: Development Control, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF

- 20/03983/FUL: Thrum Mill Farm – Upgrading septic tank to water treatment plant after collapsed tank and pipework on existing system – no objections.
- 20/04263/LBC & 20/04262/FUL: 3 Market Place, Removal of existing concrete paving's to rear of property and replacement with increased area of natural stone paving's, construction of garden shed – no objections.

- 20/04450/FUL: Pondicherry House, Siting of a single, secluded Shepherds Hut for holiday accommodation and family use in the gardens of Pondicherry House – there were no objections, however there was concern this would set a precedence.

RPC/21/21/02 Approval of Planning Application received

No approval of planning applications had been received.

RPC/21/21/03 To receive update on Mid-Coquetdale Neighbourhood Plan

Project currently on hold.

RPC/21/21/04 Northumberland County Council – Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2021-2023 Consultation

On-line consultation available with comment required by 14/2/21.

RPC/22/21 Finance

RPC/22/21/01 To approve the following payments:

PAYABLE TO	DETAILS	AMOUNT	CHQ/BACS
UCCT	December shoppers bus	£80.00	BACS
M Evens	January gardening	£172.50	BACS
Employee	Salary	£734.66	BACS
Northumberland Estates	Allotment rent	£100.00	BACS
	North river bank rent	£50.00	
PAYMENTS RELATING TO ROTHBURY CEMETERY			
PAYABLE TO	DETAILS	AMOUNT	CHQ/BACS
Employees	Salary	£2570.66	BACS
HMRC	PAYE	£1146.85	DDebit
Nest	Pension	£126.86	DDebit
R&D Edmondson	Oil/Work clothing	£79.74 (inc £13.29 VAT)	BACS
R&D Edmondson	Repairs to brushcutter	£110.46 (inc £18.41 VAT)	BACS
T W Alderson	Keycutting/salt	£45.00 (inc £7.50 VAT)	BACS
M Evens	January burial ground clearance works	£1511.25	BACS

It was resolved to approve the payments.

RPC/22/21/02 To consider the most up to date financial statements - receipts and payments/budget/actual income & expenditure; bank reconciliation; and internal controls relating to Rothbury Parish Council and Rothbury Joint Burial Committee

It was resolved to accept the most recent financial statements of Rothbury Parish Council and Rothbury Joint Burial Committee as a true record.

RPC/22/21/03 To discuss and approve grant requests to the following: Citizens Advice Bureau; Bailiffgate museum & Gallery – Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council the power to incur expenditure which in their opinion is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants

Citizens Advice Bureau – CAB had enabled 214 parishioners during 2020 - it was resolved to defer the request until March RPC meeting should other grant applications be received before the year end; Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery – financial statements still awaited.

RPC/22/21/04 To consider works required to riverside wall and removal of tree stumps associated with works

Information had come to light and it appeared the wall could possibly be the responsibility of the Church. As the works would cost in excess of £25K a schedule of works/specification had to be placed on Government Contract Finder inviting tenders. Due to the possible urgent nature of the works it was agreed to contact the company who had carried out the original wall inspection and ask for their opinion of the current state of the structure, and which would be fenced off if found to be in a dangerous condition.

RPC/23/21 To consider Action Plan dated 13/01/21, further to Public Interest Report 2016-2017

RPC/23/21/01 To consider and approve Action Plan dated 13/01/21 and confirm the following issues were outstanding:

It was resolved to accept the Action Plan dated 13/1/21.

RPC/23/21/02 Deeds of Assets – being actioned by Parish Council solicitor

RPC/23/21/03 Leased Land – dependent on Northumberland Estates and NCC leases being approved for the bike track .

RPC/23/21/04 Joint Burial Committee not being a legal entity/abolishment of Joint Burial Committee – action to be taken during f/y 2021-2022 .

RPC/24/21 Audit of Accounts year ending 31/3/20

RPC/24/21/01 To consider further action required on matters from internal audit reports for Rothbury Parish Council and Rothbury Joint Burial Committee year ending 31/3/20:

1. Transfer of funds from Lloyds Current Account, to another unrelated Bank to a level where any remaining deposits in the account are not likely exceed the £85,000 FSCS limit at any time – It was resolved that a banking relationship will be maintained with the National Westminster Bank Plc (the **Bank**) in accordance with the mandate and that:

The individuals identified as **authorised signatories** may, in accordance with the **signing rules**, sign cheques and give instructions for Standing Orders, Direct Debits, Electronic Payments, Banker's Drafts and other payments on the accounts even if it causes an amount to be overdrawn or exceed any limit.

Any **authorised signatory** may give other instructions or requests for information to the Bank in relation to the accounts; opening accounts with the same **signing rules** and **authorised signatories**; closing accounts; or other banking services or products.

The Bank may accept instructions that do not have an original written authorised signature provided the Bank is satisfied that the instruction is genuine and subject to any other agreement the Bank may require for those instructions.

The organisation will provide to the Bank a copy of its constitution and any amendment to the constitution, certified as correct by the Secretary.

This mandate will continue until the organisation gives the Bank a replacement mandate.

It was resolved to accept the parameters for operating the bank account.

2. Annual review of staff pay including possibly the job descriptions (if appropriate) and staff performance - to be carried out by Staffing Committee
3. Councillor training - sessions currently available through NALC to improve understanding of the Council
4. Re-valuation of Cemetery Lodge – to consider quotation received from Turvey Westgarth for re-evaluation of lodge – quotation for revaluing of the lodge had been received at £395 + VAT, which the Joint Burial Committee were in agreement with. Insurance company advised a five yearly valuation, and it was resolved the quotation would be accepted; Turvey Westgarth to amend lodge tenancy into the name of RPC.
5. Boundary wall around the cemetery is included in insurance policy – to consider sum for inclusion of boundary wall into policy – after discussion it was resolved to include a sum of £10,000.

Planning permission for change of use for cemetery extension – to approve engaging professional to submit full planning permission - The planning application submitted for change of use was invalid and a full application was required containing a flood risk assessment, existing and proposed site (block) plans, with a fee of £461 required). Alternatively, a fee of £150 could be paid for a pre-planning application where a Planning Officer could advise what

is needed to be submitted and the possibility of gaining planning permission. It was resolved to seek quotations for a professional to submit the planning application.

6. To review bank signatories relating to the Joint Burial Committee bank account – there were currently three signatories on the account which the Joint Burial Committee were in agreement with and which were considered sufficient at the present time,

RPC/24/21/03 Update on request for an itemised invoice, and a rebate on the auditor fees, given the length of time taken for the external audit reports for year ending 2018 and 2019 to be signed off and released by external auditor

Auditor had given apologies for not responding sooner but had been ill for most of January, further delaying the external audit reports. Once complete, a breakdown of time charged would be shared with the Council, and as stated in an earlier email exchange, some of the auditors time would be charged at the lower rate and the costs capped.

RPC/25/21 To discuss if necessary, correspondence received

No correspondence had been received.

RPC/26/21 To receive County Councillor update

County Councillor not present.

RPC/27/21 Issues relating to Rothbury Cemetery

RPC/27/21/01 Approval of Cemetery Fees and Charges from 1st April 2021

Joint Burial Committee had deferred reviewing the fees until their next meeting April 2021.

RPC/27/21/02 To approve quote for mechanical digging of graves

Joint Burial Committee were in agreement for I Longstaff to be engaged to dig graves mechanically which would drastically reduce manpower time/cost, and it was resolved the quotation of £70/grave would be accepted. In the future, a mini-digger could be purchased and staff trained in its use.

RPC/27/21/03 To approve the following BACS/Direct Debit payments 2021-2022 due to contractual obligations Employee salary and pensions; HMRC PAYE; British telecom, telephone bill; Npower, electricity; Anglian Water, water & sewage charge; Northumberland County Council, renewal of garden waste bin;

Joint Burial Committee had reviewed the above at their meeting 8/2/21, and it was resolved to approve the system of payments.

RPC/27/21/04 To approve weekly purchase of fuel for grasscutting equipment 2021-2022 using bank account debit card

Joint Burial Committee had reviewed the above at their meeting 8/2/21, and it was resolved to approve the system of payments.

RPC/27/21/05 To approve quotation for removal of tree stumps

Quotation for removal of tree stumps at cemetery had been received at £770, which the Burial Committee were in agreement with and it was resolved this would be accepted.

RPC/27/21/06 To approve quotation for perimeter wall repair

One quotation received, with two awaited.

RPC/27/21/07 To approve electrician be engaged to carry out safety checks/install new power points in sheds

Joint Burial Committee had agreed to the above at their meeting 8/2/21 and it was resolved to request quotes to engage an electrician to carry out safety checks/install new power points in sheds.

RPC/27/21/08 To approve purchase of paint for sheds

Joint Burial Committee had agreed to the above at their meeting 8/2/21 and it was resolved to purchase paint for sheds.

RPC/27/21/09 To approve replacement door/frame repairs to sheds

Joint Burial Committee had agreed to the above at their meeting 8/2/21 and it was resolved to seek quotations.

RPC/27/21/10 To approve quotation for fence repair

Joint Burial Committee had agreed to price for fence repair at their meeting 8/2/21 and it was resolved to accept the quotation of £735.00.

RPC/27/21/11 To approve Risk Assessments for Cemetery

Joint Burial Committee had reviewed Risk Assessments at their meeting 8/2/21 and it was resolved to approve the documents.

RPC/27/21/12 To approve quotation for computerised burial record system

Clerk advised this would be costly and with Cllr Devlin producing spreadsheet records, was not required at the present time.

RPC/28/21 Annual review and approval of Asset Registers

Asset Registers for RPC and RJBC reviewed and accepted as a true record, with Joint Burial Committee agreeing at their meeting 8/2/21 to accept the burial asset register.

RPC/29/21 Annual review and approval of Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments reviewed and it was resolved they were acceptable for the current needs of the Parish Council.

RPC/30/21 To approve amendments to Publication Scheme regarding display of draft minutes; removal of information being printed in local press and addition of several policies and procedures

It was resolved to accept amended Publication Scheme.

RPC/31/21 To approve RPC Sickness Absence Policy

It was resolved to adopt Sickness Absence Policy.

RPC/32/21 To approve RPC Health & Safety Policy

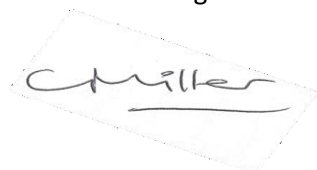
It was resolved to adopt Health & Safety Policy.

RPC/33/21 To receive Urgent Business/Items for Next Meeting

No items.

RPC/34/21 To confirm Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Rothbury Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 10th March 2021 commencing 7pm.



Claire Miller, Parish Clerk

The meeting closed at 815pm.