

**Minutes of ordinary meeting of Rothbury Parish Council held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2021 commencing 7pm in the Dovecote Room Jubilee Institute**

**Those Present:** Cllr Sutton (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Dawson, Cllr Milne, Cllr Mrs Arkle, Cllr Devlin, Cllr Bridgett, Cllr Mrs Milne, Cllr Colquitt, Cllr Hooks, C Miller (Clerk)

**RPC/134/21                      Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**RPC/135/21                      Declaration of Members Interests**

Cllr Mrs Dawson declared an interest in W.I. request regarding Green Week.

**RPC/136/21                      Minutes of previous meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 be accepted as a true record.

**RPC/137/21                      Garden/village maintenance and related issues**

**RPC/137/21/01                  To receive monthly gardening report**

There were no matters arising from the monthly gardening report.

**RPC/137/21/02                  To receive update on noise complaint at riverside play area**

County Council were greasing the offending equipment and the problem had eased. Mosquito anti-alarm loitering equipment that can only be heard by teenagers would cost approximately £1500, however an electricity point would be required. It was resolved Clerk would contact County Council to enquire whether such equipment could be plugged into the nearby street lamp. Should a system be installed, resident consultation would be required.

**RPC/137/21/03                  To approve quotation for professional to carry out tree survey**

One quotation had been received, with further contractor to submit price to carry out tree survey in village centre/closed graveyards and Whitton bank cemetery.

**RPC/137/21/04                  To receive update on request for dog waste bin at Middle School to be moved to its original position**

Clerk had contacted developer with no response received, and it was resolved to re-contact them, copying in C Barnes of Northumberland Estates and County Cllr, stating the Parish Council would action relocation of bin, and bill the developer directly.

**RPC/137/21/05                  To receive update on County Council grant application for tree planting**

Outcome of grant application awaited.

**RPC/137/21/06                  To consider request for commemorative seat at riverside**

Confirmation of seat type and plaque wording had not been received, item to be removed from agenda.

**RPC/137/21/07                  To consider repainting of white seat at bridge end**

The seat requires repainting with something other than a water based paint, and it was resolved this would be actioned by gardeners when time permits.

**RPC/137/21/08                  To consider request from Rothbury W.I. to hang green bunting around the village green railings during Green Week, commencing 18/9/21, and to provide equipment for people to write pledges**

The WI wish to get involved in consciousness raising around issues involving the environment and climate change, proposing to create green bunting to hang around the metal railings around the green and the war memorial areas during Green Week commencing 18/9/21, and to provide equipment for people to write pledges on bunting flags

about what steps they intend to take themselves. After discussion, it was agreed bunting could be hung for one week, on the Armstrong Cross railings only, the W.I. would be responsible for monitoring the comments, and if offensive would need to be removed within 24 hours.

**RPC/137/21/09 To consider maintenance of Donkin's Well area**

Further to requests for maintenance, Clerk confirmed the concrete posts and chains as far as the old car park entrance, handrail and fence at Donkins well, and the bulb planting were the PC's responsibility, and it was resolved the area would be added to the gardeners schedule.

**RPC/138/21 Riverside W/C Facilities**

**RPC/138/21/01 To receive update on land for proposed new toilet block**

Clerk to chase up land issue with landowner.

**RPC/139 Rothbury Bike Track, to receive progress report on construction of bike track**

Progress has been made with preparing the land for development with the next phase the build, involving roughing out of area and shaping the track with material from the quarry, lead by contractor T Mason & Sons.

**RPC/140/21 Planning**

**RPC/140/21/01 To consider planning applications received**

- No applications had been received.

**RPC/140/21/02 To note approval of planning application received**

- 21/02128/FUL: 25 Woodlands, Construction of attached garage to side of existing dwelling
- 21/02049/FUL: The Copse, Hillside, New freestanding timber car port
- 21/02256/FUL: 2 Police Houses – two storey side extension

**RPC/140/21/03 To receive update on Mid-Coquetdale Neighbourhood Plan**

Informal meeting had been scheduled 26/8/21 at 330pm.

**RPC/141/21 Finance**

**RPC/141/21/01 To approve the following payments**

PARISH COUNCIL				
PAYABLE TO	DETAILS	AMOUNT (GROSS)	NETT	VAT
BWP Creative Ltd	Website hosting 6/7/21 to 5/7/22	£144	£120	£24.00
M Milne	NALC Training event	£5.00		
A Milne	NALC Training event	£5.00		
Employee Costs	July Salary/HMRC	£813.02, listed on agenda, however this required amendment to £762.58		
	Expenses	£161.49		
UCCT	June shopping bus	£64.00		
	July shopping bus	£80.00		
M Evens	July gardening	£1200.84		

M Ackroyd	Internal auditing fee	£450.00		
Brendan Teasdale Masonry	Haw Hill graveyard repair	£11736	£9780	£1956
Northumberland Estates	Rent for riverside play area	£50.00		
RAW Clark	Professional charges in relation to lease at Whitton Bank with Northumberland Estates	£744.35		£120.00
RAW Clark	Professional charges in relation to lease at Whitton Bank with Northumberland County Council`	£763		£120.00
M Warcup	Professional charges in relation to lease at Whitton Bank	£1569		£260
<b>JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE</b>				
<b>PAYABLE TO</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>AMOUNT (GROSS)</b>		<b>VAT</b>
Employees/Nest/HMRC	Salary/Pension	£5203.31		
Hedgeley Services	Fuel	£60.35	£50.29	£10.06
M Evens	July cemetery work	£1192.50		

It was resolved to approve the payments, excepting the payments to RAW Clark and Warcup, as £1500 had been transferred in 2019 to RAW Clark for the Warcup fee. Clerk had queried this with RAW Clark and awaiting a response.

**RPC/141/21/02 To approve transfer of funds between Rothbury Joint Burial Committee budgets:**

<b>Transfer from/Amount</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Transfer to</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Reason</b>
General reserves £150	£17350	Insurance	£1000	Rise in insurance premium
	<b>Revised Budget General Reserves</b>		<b>Revised Budget Insurance</b>	
	£17200		£1150	

It was resolved to approve the transfer of funds.

**RPC/141/21/03 To consider the most up to date financial statements for Rothbury Parish Council and Rothbury Parish Council (RJBC) – receipts and payments; budget; bank reconciliation**

It was resolved to accept the most recent financial statements for RPC and RPC (RJBC) as a true record. Cllr Mrs Arkle to sign bank reconciliations.

**RPC/142/21**                      **To consider outstanding issues as follows, further to Public Interest Report 2016 – 2017**

**RPC/142/21/01**                  **Joint Burial Committee's not being body corporate**

The National Association of Local Councils had confirmed the process to abolish the Joint Burial committee was straightforward, with all constituent Parish Councils firstly having to agree to the dissolution, who could then pay an annual fee to RPC, or to have no further involvement with the cemetery, whereby their parishioners would be charged double burial fees. However, there was an issue with Snitter still being part of the Burial Committee, but having no Parish Council, which would likely entail the County Council co-opting some Cllrs to form a Parish Council to deal with the matter. Rothbury Parish Council had agreed to the dissolution 9/6/21, minute reference: PC/108/21/04. Thropton Parish Council had agreed to the dissolution at their meeting held 12/7/21. Whitton & Tosson, Hesleyhurst and Hollinhill Parish Council's to officially confirm their intentions in due course. Clerk had contacted Monitoring Officer at County Hall with no success for assistance with creating a Parish Council at Snitter, therefore S Rickitt of Northumberland Association of Local Council's had agreed to liaise with County Council at a meeting scheduled for September 2021.

**RPC/142/21/02**                  **Deeds of Assets**

RPC resolved to engage a solicitor at the council meeting on 11/3/20, with RAW Clark duly engaged. Resolution of matter dependent on RAW Clark/Land Registry.

**RPC/142/21/03**                  **Leased land**

Resolution of matter dependent on Northumberland Estates, who are to amalgamate all PC leases into one, excepting for the Bike Track lease.

**RPC/142/21/04**                  **Training**

Seven of the current nine Parish Cllrs and the Clerk had carried out NALC training on Introduction to Local Councils.

**RPC/143/21**                      **To consider outstanding issues relating to internal audit year ending 31/3/20**

**RPC/143/21/01**                  **To amend lodge tenancy into the name of Rothbury Parish Council**

Turvey Westgarth to action.

**RPC/144/21**                      **To receive update on outstanding external audit reports 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021**

Outstanding external audit reports were still awaited.

**RPC/145/21**                      **To receive internal audit report 2021 and consider recommendations**

**Rothbury Joint Burial Committee**

***New Recommendation 1 MEDIUM***

For payments presented to the Board to be set out in 3 columns, net cost: vat added : gross cost rather than just the 2 amounts as at present – recommendation agreed.

***New Recommendation 2 HIGH***

It is evident that the Clerks role has grown over the years and it might now be an opportune moment to review both her hours of work and pay – Staffing Committee to initially discuss.

***New Recommendation 3***

For the Board to arrange completion of the PATS test on any equipment that still needs testing – there was no equipment at the Cemetery that required PATS testing.

**Rothbury Parish Council**

***New Recommendation 1 MEDIUM***

To monitor options for other bank accounts not requiring a monthly charge/service fee – to be reviewed later in the year.

#### **New Recommendation 2 MEDIUM**

It would be of assistance to any auditor for the prices to be set out in 3 columns, net cost: vat added : gross cost rather than just the 2 amounts as at present – recommendation agreed.

#### **New Recommendation 3 HIGH**

To obtain quotes from an established stonemason/sculptor to carry out a condition survey and reinstatement valuation of the War Memorial and Village Cross with the view to obtaining a more realistic quote from the Council's Insurers, or a firm of specialist insurers, to include them on the Council's All Risks cover – as part of the Heritage Lottery funding application, it was planned the structures would be included in refurbishment works, however it was resolved to obtain a quote for a condition survey and reinstatement valuation.

#### **New Recommendation 4 LOW**

That the Council considers the inclusion of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 Act in its policy documents – it was resolved a document would be adopted.

#### **New Recommendation 5 MEDIUM**

To monitor the Council's reserves in order to ensure that they are maintained at an acceptable level – reserves monitored on a monthly basis.

#### **New Recommendation 6 MEDIUM**

It is recommended that the Council should review the allotment rents annually although it is accepted that the Council might take the view that the rents should remain unchanged – review of current rent of plots to be added to next agenda.

#### **New Recommendation 7 MEDIUM**

That Councillors are encouraged to attend training sessions to improve their understanding of the Council's work – seven out of nine current Cllrs had carried out training, Clerk to circulate details of future training opportunities, when received.

#### **New Recommendation 8 HIGH**

It is evident that the Clerks role has grown over the years and it might now be an opportune moment to review both her hours of work and pay – Staffing Committee to initially review.

#### **RPC/146/21 To receive update on Borderlands Growth Deal**

Tony Kirsop of County Council in charge of the project, and who would be attending the September Parish Council meeting.

#### **RPC/147/21 To consider priorities for Northumberland County Council Local Transport Plan 2022-2023: Current Parish Council requests being resurfacing of Station Bank, Gravelly Bank and Addyheugh to Craggside, with Gravelly bank included in 2021-2022 plan. Priority traffic system in Bridge Street – not included in 2021-2022 plan; Traffic reorganisation at High Street – included in 2021-2022 plan, subject to resolution of village green issues.**

It was resolved to request resurfacing from Knocklaw to Craggside; resurfacing of Hillside road and priority traffic system in Bridge Street.

Landscape architects had been commissioned to produce 3D plans for traffic reorganisation at High Street.

R McKenzie of County Council dealing with village green issue, with removal requiring permission from Secretary of State and green of same area to be replaced within the parish. County Council had agreed they would fund any application to the Secretary of State for de-registering of village greens. The Open Spaces Society would object, if replacement land was already accessible to the public, however Northumberland Estates had offered a one acre piece of land within the village which would pacify the Society. The Parish Council would be consulted on the plans before public consultation, and It was agreed to invite Richard McKenzie to the October Parish Council meeting, and request sight of the proposals before this meeting.

#### **RPC/148/21 To receive County Councillor update**

There were caveats on the land at Rothbury Middle School where the swimming pool is located. County Council Estates Department were carrying out an assessment with options being to repair the pool; to repair the whole

facility; or to build a new facility, with report to go to County Council Executive Team, then to relevant Cabinet Member, for inclusion in forthcoming budget. If the option is to repair, this would be actioned a lot sooner. The North of Tyne Community hub funding had been considered, with £one million funding available for community hubs in Northumberland. Active Northumberland had given a presentation where the County Cllr had pointed out the swimming pool in its current capacity was not fit for purpose for the local population, however numerous other areas within the County do not have any such facilities.

Interactive speed calming measures, road realignment and resurfacing were to be actioned 16/8/21 at the Garleigh Bank development.

**RPC/149/21                      Whitton Bank Cemetery**

**RPC/149/21/01              To approve quotation for electrician to carry out safety checks/install new power points in sheds**

It was resolved to accept the quotation for £1230 for electrical works to the Cemetery sheds, and to which the Joint Burial Committee had considered at their meeting 9/8/21.

**RPC/149/21/02              To approve quotation for replacement door/frame repairs to sheds**

Quotation still awaited.

**RPC/149/21/03              To receive update on proposals regarding diverting the stream, to enable the current extension land at the burial ground to be utilised for burials**

Cllr's Sutton, Devlin and Clerk to contact/meet with Northumberland Estates to discuss proposals for diverting the stream. If deaths and burials occur at the current rate there is approximately 10-15 years worth of land left for burials.

**RPC/149/21/04              To approve quotation for purchase of mini digger for grave preparation**

Three quotations awaited, Chairman to meet up with local suppliers.

**RPC/149/21/05              To approve training requirements for cemetery staff**

The cost to train one cemetery worker in hands on training and assessments to enable staff to develop a knowledge and understanding of safe practices and procedures would be £1624.50; with two personnel £2364.50, and it was resolved to organise the training for the current staffing personnel. Staff who carry out the training would not have the qualification to train others. Kirkley Hall were currently on summer recess, with Clerk to re-contact them in the middle of September to organise PA6 application of pesticide training for directly employed member of staff.

**RPC/149/21/06              To consider request for a memorial wall plaque for still-born area**

The Joint Burial Committee were in agreement with a plaque for the still-born area, and would finance the approximate cost of £150. It was resolved the Parish Council were in agreement with this.

**RPC/149/21/07              To consider purchasing equipment to assist with computerised burial records**

Records were becoming electronic, and it was resolved equipment and internet access would be purchased for use at the Cemetery, with quotes to be provided.

**RPC/150/21                      Annual review of Staffing Committee Terms of Reference**

It was resolved the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference were sufficient for the current needs of the Parish Council.

**RPC/151/21                      To consider repainting Youth Shelter**

The youth shelter is covered in graffiti, however it was previously agreed to move the shelter to the Bike Track once constructed, and County Cllr confirmed the lamp is to be removed by the County Council.

**RPC/152/21                      To consider communications between Parish Council and residents**

Residents were interested in Parish Council proceedings, with comments received nothing is now printed in the Northumberland Gazette. There is a web presence, however some people prefer paper information. Cllr's Devlin and Colquitt to research options for various communication channels.

**RPC/153/21                      To consider plans for 2022 Queen Elizabeth celebrations, including beacons**

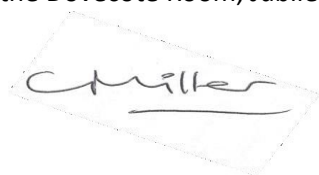
The Parish Council should consider organising an event. The Street Fair Committee could assist, with Clerk to contact representative. Local schools were involved in the Green Canopy planting scheme

**RPC/154/21                      To receive urgent business/items for next meeting**

There was no urgent business/items for next meeting.

**RPC/155/21                      Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Rothbury Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 commencing 7pm in the Dovecote Room, Jubilee Institute



Claire Miller, Parish Clerk

The meeting closed at 9pm.