

ROTHBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Rothbury Parish Council held on Wednesday 11th September 2024 commencing at 7pm in the Dovecote Room Jubilee Institute

Those Present: Cllr Colquitt (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Arkle, Cllr Mrs Dawson, Cllr Devlin, Cllr Sutton, Cllr Old, Cllr Milne, Cllr Gordon

In Attendance: C Miller (Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), D Nicholson (Council Development and Support Officer), five members of the public

RPC/171/24 Apologies for absence

No formal apologies were received.

RPC/172/24 Declaration of Members Interests

Cllr Devlin declared an interest in agenda item **RPC/176/24/02 Approval of Planning Application received**

- 23/03886/FUL: Land East of Whitton View – Construction of 40 dwellings and associated infrastructure including new access to Whitton View, SUDS and creation of landscaping and ecological mitigation area (amended description 7.5.24)

RPC/173/24 Chairman's Opening Remark(s) (for information)

Chairman reminded all to remain constructive, respectful and on topic. Questions asked during the public question session should be made in good faith. The session is not an opportunity for the public to make statements about the council or individual Cllrs, or refer to County Council business.

RPC/174/24 Approval of Minutes of previous meeting held 14th August 2024

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held 14th August 2024 were a true record.

RPC/175/24 Garden/village maintenance and related issues

RPC/175/24/01 Monthly gardening report. Members are asked to consider report and issues arising

Members considered the report and matters arising relating to maintenance of green in front of Bewick's, bin at bus stop, and seating at Beggar's Rigg.

- 1.Members agreed the bin/ground at Queens head should be repaired. Clerk to advise gardeners/County Council.
- 2.Members agreed the damaged seating at Beggars Rigg should be replaced.
- 3.Members agreed gardeners should advise Bewicks the night before grasscutting is planned in order for seating to be removed.

RPC/175/24/02 Waste bin at Ladies Bridge. Members to receive update from County Cllr in relation to possibility of County Council emptying a bin in the area

No update available.

RESOLVED:

1.Chaiman to contact County Cllr and request update.

RPC/175/24/03 Bike Track. Members to consider inspection report from P Laing

Report had been received indicating urgent jobs were required to clear the tracks and fall areas of loose rocks and installation of two-rail fence up the middle of the site. Less urgent work involved bringing in whin-dust mix for surface repairs to both tracks.

RESOLVED:

1.The Clerk was requested to engage with P Laing and agree a schedule of urgent repairs at a cost not exceeding £500.
2.Should £500 be insufficient, the Clerk was given authority to agree additional funding in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

RPC/175/24/04 Drain at Addycombe Play area. Members to consider clarification received from County Council.

County Council had confirmed the land does not belong to them and are unaware of who owns it. County Council confirmed they did not maintain the site and their gulley sucking equipment would be unable to access the play area. Any drain blockage/maintenance would be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED:

Cllr Sutton to inspect drain and report on current condition.

RPC/175/24/05 Improvements to staff facilities. Members to approve works required to blocked drain, prior to drainage survey.

Company had attended site however the survey could not be fully carried out due to a drain blockage and the company not having the necessary equipment to clear this. Confirmation awaited of further date the company could re-visit the site with the appropriate machinery. It was believed there could be a septic tank on site which may not comply with current standards. If this were to be the case, upgrade works would be required. The Joint Burial Committee were in agreement in giving the company 15 working days to complete the job.

RESOLVED:

1.Clerk would contact alternative company and seek price for unblocking/survey works should original contractor be unable to fulfil the contract within 15 working days.

It was resolved to consider the following agenda item next due to resident attendance.

RPC/178/24 Traffic Management, Public Signage and information Boards Working Group. Members to receive update.

Site meeting had been held between the Traffic Management Working Group and County Council Officer Richard McKenzie, who had already submitted a bid to Borderlands Place Programme for village centre improvements. Several areas of the village were discussed. Safety concerns West end entrance at RAFA House and Hawthorn Terrace; High Street parking/one-way system. Vehicle priority system at Bridge Street, and traffic calming on bridge end when turning right, due to an increase in traffic visiting the hospital. Consultation would be carried out if proposed works were financed and approved.

RPC/176/24 Planning

Public comments can be submitted via Northumberland County Council website:

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

CLLr Devlin advised he would leave the room if the Council were to consider the approval for Land East of Whitton View.

RPC/176/24/01 Planning Applications received

- 24/02771/FUL: Gimmerknowe – demolition of greenhouse and single storey porch; construction of two storey extension – no objections.
- 24/02753/LBC: Lloyds Bank House – listed building consent for internal, external repair and maintenance of building with minor internal alterations – no objections
- 24/02785/FUL: 4 Walby Hill, Change of use from C2 (Care Home) to Sui Generis (6 Bedroom Holiday Let) and installation of rooflights. Several residents of Walby Hill had submitted written objection to the proposals. The number of bedrooms had been reduced to six with the provision of 3 available car parking spaces - County Council Highways seeking further clarification relating to the number of parking spaces. The previous reasons for refusal regarding access and parking provision had not been addressed. There appears to be misleading information contained within the documentation. The Site Location Plan includes land and public access driveways not owned by the applicant. The proposed scheme fails to address highway safety matters in relation to appropriate parking provision and is not in accordance with Policies TRA 2 and TRA 4 of the Northumberland Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

RESOLVED:

1. Members were in full agreement with resident concerns.
2. Clerk to submit Parish Council objection to County Council.

- Planning Application 24/02847/FUL 7 Model Buildings – rear second-storey extension above existing flat roofed off-shoot to accommodate sun room – no objections.
- Planning Application 24/02970/FELTPO: Anton Dell, Hillside – Tree Preservation Order Application – no objections.

RPC/176/24/02 Approval of Planning Application received

- 23/03886/FUL: Land East of Whitton View – Construction of 40 dwellings and associated infrastructure including new access to Whitton View, SUDS and creation of landscaping and ecological mitigation area (amended description 7.5.24).
- 24/02388/FUL: Whitton Bank Cemetery, New storage shed – Parish Council the applicant.

RPC/176/24/03 Coquetdale Neighbourhood Plan. Members to receive update.

All Parish Council’s had now confirmed their involvement or otherwise. It may well be the land will not be continuous and two separate Neighbourhood Plans required. A consultant would be engaged once the legal process of defining the boundaries had been completed.

RPC/177/24 Finance

RPC/177/24/01 Payments. Members are asked to approve the following payments. Chairman is asked to consider and sign the approved schedule against payments to be made.

PARISH COUNCIL BANK ACCOUNT				
PAYABLE TO	DETAILS	AMOUNT (GROSS)	NETT	VAT
Jubilee Institute	Additional meetings, July Additional meeting, August	£108.00 £15.00		NIL
Employee	September Salary	£1102.51		NIL

Nest	Employee pension, paid 2/10/24	£117.21		NIL
Northumberland Estates	Six months rent, land for bike track	£125.00		NIL
M Evens	August village maintenance Expenses	£1020.00 £91.87		NIL
UCCT	August shoppers bus	£80.00		NIL
BURIAL BANK ACCOUNT	DETAILS	AMOUNT (GROSS)	NETT	VAT
R&D Edmondson	Stiga, fit mulching plug to deck Drive belt	£183.91 £50.88	£153.26 £42.40	£30.65 £8.48
Employees	September Salary	£1986.11		NIL
NEST	September Pension (paid 2/10//24)	£178.81		NIL
M Evens	August cemetery maintenance	£824.00		NIL
Eon	Quarterly electricity charge	£211.53	£201.46	£10.07

RESOLVED:

Members approved the payments.

RPC/177/24/02

The following payments have been made as per Financial Standing Order 5.6: Continuing Contracts and Obligations. Members to note payments. Chairman is asked to consider and sign the approved schedule against payments made.

CEMETERY BANK ACCOUNT	DETAILS	AMOUNT (GROSS)	NETT	VAT
Spar/Shell	Fuel 19/8/24	£53.51	£44.59	£8.92
Spar/Shell	Fuel 2/9/24	£50.27	£41.89	£8.38

RESOLVED:

Members approved the payments.

RPC/177/24/03

Budget/actual spend figures and bank reconciliations. Members are asked to consider the most recent budget/actual spend figures for Rothbury Parish Council and Rothbury Parish Council (RJBC)

RESOLVED:

Members were in agreement that the reports were a true record. Cllr Devlin signed bank reconciliations.

RPC/177/34/04

Virement of funds, Cost Centre 500. Members are asked to approve transfer of funds of £3000 from Unforeseen budget (4995) to Grasscutter budget (4750), and transfer of funds of £3500 from Repairs and renewals budget (4740) to Grasscutter budget (4750) to cover cost of replacement sit on grasscutting machinery

RESOLVED:

Members approved the virement of funds.

RPC/177/24/05 **Dedicated Parish Council office. Members are asked to consider options for dedicated Council office located in Jubilee Institute. Meetings would continue to be held in the Dovecote Room.**

Clerk advised the Blaeberry room was available to the Parish Council for their sole use, at a cost of £1500/annum.

RESOLVED:

1. Members resolved to enter an agreement with the Jubilee Institute Committee to lease the Blaeberry Room, with Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.
2. Clerk to give consideration to office protocol and produce document for consideration at next Parish Council meeting.

RPC/177/24/06 **Sit on grasscutting machinery, Whitton Bank Cemetery. Members to consider quotations for replacement equipment.**

Three quotations had been received. The Joint Burial Committee had requested contractors be asked to provide warranty and maintenance options.

RPC/179/24 **Parish Council Governance Review. Members to receive update**

S&DO to arrange an informal meeting to explain the governance review procedure. Clerk had visited a Town Council in Northumberland to discuss internal controls.

1. S&DO to circulate list of dates for informal meeting.

RPC/179/24/01 **.gov email addresses. Further to internal audit recommendation, members to re-consider introduction of Parish Council and Parish Councillor .gov email addresses**

All Parish and Town Councils were being encouraged to move to .gov status. Further information relating to any security issues and use of personal equipment would need clarified before a decision could be taken. S&DO suggested the matter could be raised at the forthcoming Parish and Town Council conference at County Hall 3/10/24.

RESOLVED:

1. Cllr Devlin to produce a report on the .gov email address system for consideration at next Parish Council meeting.
2. S&DO to ask Northumberland Association of Local Councils if they could offer advice.

RPC/180/24 **County Councillor update. Members to receive update.**

County Councillor not present.

RPC/181/24 **Borderlands Place Programme. Members to receive update.**

Next meeting to be held 10/10/24.

RPC/182/24 **Local Transport Requests 2025-2026. Members to consider resident feedback and approve items for inclusion**

Clerk reported there had been no resident feedback.

RESOLVED:

1. Members agreed to include the items discussed at the traffic management site meeting between Traffic Management Working Group and Richard McKenzie, covering High Street re-organisation, Bridge Street priority system, West end approach and bridge end.

RPC/183/24 **Northumberland County Council. Members to consider consultation Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

Improvement plan had been circulated to Climate and Nature Transport Group.

RESOLVED:

- 1.As a member of the Climate and Nature Transport Group, Cllr Milne to produce report for consideration at next Parish Council meeting.
- 2.Clerk to upload link to the consultation via Parish Council Facebook and website pages.

RPC/184/24 **Off road scramble bike users on Carriagedrive. Members to receive update regarding concerns received relating to use of the carriagedrive.**

Cragssides Estates had advised they were looking into concerns raised.

RESOLVED:

- 1.Clerk to contact Cragsside Estates and request update.

RPC/185/24 **Biodiversity Plan. Members to consider adopting biodiversity policy**

Draft document had been circulated. Parish and Town Councils should consider what they can do to conserve and enhance Biodiversity; agree policies and specific objectives and act to deliver the policies and achieve their objectives

RESOLVED:

- 1.Further consideration to be given to a biodiversity policy during the Parish Council governance review.
- 2.Draft biodiversity policy to be circulated to community group Climate and Nature.

RPC/186/24 **Procedure for delegation of authority. Members to consider and approve formal procedure and proforma(s) in relation to delegation of authority.**

There had been concern the procedure would be a convoluted process. A simple delegation process had been given during tonight's meeting. A proforma/procedure would be considered during the Governance Review for more complex issues.

RPC/187/24 **Northumberland County Council H.R. Advice Service. Members to consider and agree Terms of Reference.**

RESOLVED:

Members approved the Terms of Reference.

RPC/188/24 **Northumberland County Council. Members to receive information relating to funding for bus stops**

Clerk advised the North East Combined Authority had successfully secured funding to improve the regions bus network, with the County Council receiving an allocation to improve bus stops. Parish Council matched funding would greatly improve any chance of securing funding.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed a new bus shelter was not a present requirement.

RPC/189/24 **Camper vans. Members to discuss provision of overnight facility in the parish**

Further to County Council consultation relating to use of the Haugh Car Park as an overnight camping facility, member concerns had been raised relating to emptying waste into the river. The County Council were currently engaging with organisations to look at funding opportunities relating to grey waste facilities such as Northumbrian Water Community Fund and Forestry England.

RPC/190/24 **Matters relating to Internal audit and engagement of internal auditor**

RPC/190/24/01 **Members to receive report from Joint Burial Committee relating to matters raised pertaining to Whitton Bank Cemetery year ending 31/3/24**

The Joint Burial Committee had considered the recommendations and action plan relating to the Burial Committee and were in agreement with the action proposed by the Parish Council via the governance review.

RPC/190/24/02 **Members to receive report from Joint Burial Committee relating to engagement of internal auditor year ending 31/3/25**

Members discussed drawing up a specification for internal auditor services year ending 31/3/25. A document listing requirements of the auditor and a description of Rothbury Parish/Rothbury Parish Council would be required, in order to invite interest for audit services.

The Joint Burial Committee had considered the matter and were minded to engage a local auditor with experience of burial committees, should a suitable person be available.

RESOLVED:

1.Clerk to draft document in order to recruit internal auditor, in consultation with Cllr's Devlin, Sutton, Old and Gordon.

RPC/191/24 **Telegraph Lines Village green. Members to be advised poles have been sited on village greens, and that the landowner has a right to object**

Poles had been sited on two parts of the village greens. Notice had been displayed on the poles stating "You have the right to object to the apparatus if BOTH a. You are an occupier of or have an interest in, any land neighbouring the land on or over which the apparatus is kept AND b. because of the nearness of that neighbouring land to the land on or over which the apparatus is kept. The enjoyment of that neighbouring land is capable of being prejudiced by the apparatus, or any interest in that land is capable of being prejudiced by the apparatus."

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the Clerk would contact the Open Spaces Society who the Council were a member of, to seek their views.

RPC/192/24 **Uniting for The Coquet – the launch of the Coquet River Action Group (CRAG)**

CRAG is a newly formed umbrella organisation currently bringing together nine local groups – including Parish Councils, environmental groups & Women's Institutes, as well as the Northumberland Rivers Trust to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the River Coquet. CRAG launch event to be held in Swarland Village Hall, 12/9/24 at 715pm. Members agreed river quality is of high importance. Cllr Dawson to attend the meeting as a member of the W.I.

RESOLVED:

1.Members agreed the group should be invited to a future Parish Council meeting.

2.Clerk to advise CRAG of future Parish Council meeting dates.

RPC/193/24 **Climate and Nature. Members to receive invitation to Great Big Green Event 14/9/24 and screening of Six Inches of Soil 13/9/24**

All members were invited to the events, however Six Inches of Soil had now sold out.

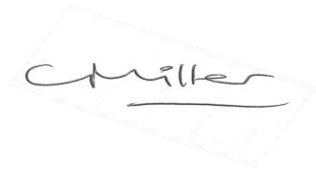
RPC/194/24 **To receive urgent items/items for next Meeting**

Cleansing of Donkin's Lamp to be added to next meeting agenda. Road closure notice for Remembrance Day required - Chairman to advise Clerk of the details in order to submit application to County Council. Lighting on one village green tree required loosening, village gardener to voluntarily assist Christmas Lights Committee.

RPC/195/24 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Rothbury Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 9th October 2024 commencing 7pm in the Dovecote Room Jubilee Institute.

The meeting closed at 855pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Miller". The signature is written on a light-colored rectangular background that appears to be a scan of a piece of paper or a digital signature pad.

Claire Miller, Claire/RFO

DRAFT