

## Minutes of the Parish Council held in Matfen Village Hall on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Present:** Mr Keith Mavin, Chairman of the Council together with Mr Frank Robson, Kevin George and Justin Dempsey, James Barber and Sarah Greaves.

**In attendance:** Mrs Mandy Senior (Clerk)

- 0721.01 **RESIDENTS.** present raised the following matters and where relevant they are listed together with the actions that will be taken, if required. In due course, if necessary, reports will be made back to the Council.
- a) **Parking on Southside.** Several emails had been exchanged with a resident regarding the state of the verges around Southside. The verges are regularly churned up by vehicles and no maintenance is carried out by NCC Highways. The resident had met with the Highways Inspector however no update had been received. Councillor Mrs V Jones is to contact the officer for an update.
  - b) **Felled tree.** A discussion took place over the responsibility of the trees on the village green and opposite the Village Hall. This will be clarified with NCC.
- 0721.02 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** None received.
- 0721.03 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST.** Nothing to declare.
- 0721.04 **COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT.** Cllr Mrs Jones gave her verbal report in matters relating to Northumberland County Council and Matfen Parish.
- a) **Community Chest.** Applications for the Community Chest Grant from NCC is open to voluntary organisations. The grant will fund up to 75% of the cost of the project.
  - b) **Members Funding.** Cllr Mrs V Jones can fund capital projects from her Members Small Scheme Allowance. This funding can be used for highways projects such as the bid for a reduced speed limit at Fenwick where the costs will be covered if the scheme is agreed.
  - c) **Matfen Entrance Signs.** Cllr Mrs V Jones suggested she could fund improved entrance signs for Matfen should the PC agree. **Action: PC to discuss at a future meeting.**
  - d) **Weedkiller.** The PC questioned whether environmentally friendly weedkiller could be used. Cllr Mrs V Jones to request a briefing from NCC on maintenance of verges and weedkilling.
- 0721.05 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021.** It was proposed by Cllr F Robson, seconded by Cllr K George and **AGREED** to accept the minutes as an accurate record.
- 0721.06 **ACTIONS TAKEN FOLLOWING THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021.**
- a) **Jubilee Garden.** Minute 0521.15a refers. The work on the Jubilee Garden cannot progress until the recommended tree works have been carried out. A risk management profile will be prepared on what the area will be used for.
  - b) **No 74 Bus Service.** Minute 0521.15b refers. Normal service appears to have resumed.
  - c) **Public Toilets.** Minute 0521.10d refers. It was agreed to reopen the public toilets with immediate effect. The clerk had contacted the cleaner who is happy to continue to clean them when they reopen.
  - d) **Matfen Hall.** Minute 0521.15d refers. Cllr K Mavin had contacted Matfen Hall to introduce himself and discuss the various issues. Following the initial email from Matfen Hall there had been no further response to arranging a meeting. Cllr J Barber to pass on the contact details of the operations manager to Cllr K Mavin.
  - e) **Grass verges in Ingoe.** Minute 0521.15c refers. Cllrs S Greaves and J Barber had walked around the verges of Ingoe with a view to suggesting areas for wildflower areas. It appears that the areas are already zoned where the edge of the verges are cut back for safety reasons with the wider verges being left to grow. NCC has an obligation to cut back verges on junctions, corners and other areas for road safety. **Action: Cllr Mrs V Jones to investigate the protocols for leaving grass verges uncut.**
- 0721.07 **FINANCE**
- a) **Accounts for payment.** It was proposed by Cllr J Dempsey, seconded by Cllr F Robson and **AGREED** accounts on the list attached be paid.
  - b) To consider request for sponsorship from Matfen Cricket Club. Cllr J Dempsey advised that this request can be disregarded.
  - c) **To consider request for donation from Citizens Advice Northumberland.** After discussion, it was **AGREED** to a donation of £50.00 to Citizens Advice Northumberland. The clerk will arrange payment.
  - d) **To consider request for financial support to Sport Tynedale.** After discussion, it was **AGREED** to donate £50 to Sport Tynedale. The clerk will arrange payment.

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Payee	Details	Chq Issued	VAT	Net of VAT	Payment
Playsafety Ltd	Play area inspections	164.40	27.40	137.00	300002
Matfen Village Hall	Hall rental	15.00		15.00	300003
Unity Trust Bank	Bank account charges	18.00		18.00	DD
Mrs A Senior	Clerical Services	469.23		469.23	BACS
H M Revenue & Customs	PAYE	117.20		117.20	BACS
Northumberland ALC	Councillor training	30.00		30.00	BACS
Tynedale Vermin Control	Tree works	1950.00		1950.00	BACS
Mrs A Senior	Postages, stationery, travel	135.12		135.12	BACS
Woodsman Arboricultural Consultancy	Tree survey	420.00	70.00	350.00	BACS
Mrs A Senior	Play area inspections	75.00		75.00	BACS
Matfen Village Hall	Hall rental – July	15.00		15.00	BACS
<b>Income</b>					
Barclays Bank	Bank account interest	0.08		0.08	09.06.21

0721.08 **CORRESPONDENCE.** All correspondence received since the May meeting had been listed on the agenda and circulated to all councillors.

- a) **Green Rigg Wind Farm.** Applications are open for Community Groups to apply to the Green Rigg Wind Farm Grant Fund. Suggestions for funding were new cricket net, improvements to the Jubilee Garden and tree planting.
- b) **Local Plan Examination – Consultation on Main Modifications.** The consultation runs from Wednesday 9 June 2021 until 5:00pm on Wednesday 4 August 2021. It was noted that there are no modifications relating to Matfen Parish.

0721.09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

Reference Number	Address	Description
21/00677/FUL	Land west of Rose Cottage, Kearsley Farm, Ingoe	Conversion of poultry building to create 3no private dwellings together with 3no sewage treatment plants and access track. <b>GRANTED</b>
21/01153/FUL	Woodside, Matfen	Construction of new porch roof and front door. <b>GRANTED</b>
21/02036/FUL	School House, Paddock Close, Matfen	Installation of 3no rooflights, enlarged kitchen window and rear door
21/02401/FUL 21/02402/LBC	South Hall, Ingoe	Ground floor internal alterations including removal of existing staircase to back hall/office and construction of new floor with plaster board ceiling below; formation of boxing for soil pipe within downstairs WC, make good modern panelling as necessary; replacement of modern timber fireplace to drawing room with new marble fireplace to match study fireplace. First floor internal alterations including removal of existing staircase to games room as above; formation of new ensuite to existing games room/new bedroom; construction of stud wall with new door, architraves and skirting to match existing. Installation of new cast iron effect external soil waste pipe; removal of existing wall and door forming under stair cupboard to first-second floor staircase and installation of new newel post and balustrade. Second floor internal alterations including formation of new bathroom within existing bedroom. Construction of stud wall with skirting to match existing; formation of new door opening in existing stud wall, installation of new door and architrave to match existing. Installation of new soil waste pipe to run internally in boxing to ground floor WC and connect to existing drainage; removal of existing wall and door forming cupboard to existing bedroom. Make good plaster to walls and skirting.

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#### 0721.10 VILLAGE ISSUES AND HIGHWAYS MATTERS.

- a) **To consider request for open access to the defibrillator.** A request had been received for the PC to consider leaving the defibrillator cabinet unlocked and readily accessible for immediate use. This is common practice for areas and there is no issue from an insurance point of view. After discussion, it was AGREED to arrange for the defibrillator cabinet to be left unlocked.
- b) **To consider request for a memorial bench outside the Village Hall/Shop.** A request had been received for a memorial bench in memory of a family pet to be placed outside the Village Hall/Shop. After discussion, this request was declined. Several requests had been received over the years and the PC had declined all requests.
- c) **To discuss and consider actions arising from the tree survey and consider replanting to replace any felled trees.** The tree survey had been received from Woodsman Arboricultural Consultancy which had identified 6 trees requiring immediate attention (4 being PC responsibility) and 4 medium priority trees. Costs will be obtained from local contractors for the work required. A management plan for the remaining trees will be put in place.
- d) **To consider priorities for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan 2022-2023.** Northumberland County Council is once again giving Parishes the opportunity to submit 3 priorities for inclusion in the LTP 2022-2023. After discussion, it was agreed to submit the following priorities:-
  - Fenwick – 30mph speed limit.
  - Matfen Piers to Vallum Farm. Road resurfacing.
  - Improvements to Standing Stone corner – resurfacing and safety improvements.
- e) **To discuss footpath access used by parishioners, currently closed.** Several discussions had taken place among residents and the PC regarding access routes through Matfen Hall wood which had now been blocked off. It was noted that this was private land, and the landowner was allowed to do this. Cllr K Mavin had spoken to the Public Rights of Way Officer, NCC who advised that if a route has been used for a number of years, then residents/PC could challenge the decision of the landowner to close off the route. Residents/PC would need to provide evidence that the routes have been used in excess of 20 years, providing history of access. It was noted that these particular routes have been given as a privilege rather than a right of access. It was unfortunate that these particular routes had been closed without any communication with the Parish Council or the residents. Cllr K Mavin is to contact the representatives of Matfen Hall to discuss the routes and see if a compromise could be reached.
- f) **To discuss maintenance plan for Parish Council assets.** Over the years various items had been added to the Parish Council Asset Register with no maintenance plan in place for the asset. The Cricket Club had carried out various improvements to equipment and assets over the last two years and it was suggested that the Parish Council could make an annual contribution to the Cricket Club for maintenance of equipment. There would be no labour costs as the work is carried out by volunteers. It was AGREED to make a contribution of £300 per year, this would be reviewed annually.
- g) **To discuss how to improve communications within the village/parish.** The website needs to be better utilised with the news page linking to the Matfen Village Facebook page. Cllr J Dempsey to arrange for the clerk to become an admin on the Village Facebook page. Any posts will have the comments turned off.
- h) **To receive reports from councillors on any village issue/highways matter which require attention.** It was noted that NCC had not cut the grass in the play area. Thanks were expressed to Phil and Mark Chaffer who had tidied the area and cut the grass. There had been a problem with access to the area via the maintenance gate. **Action: Mrs Senior to contact NCC**  
Repairs to the fence around the water course had still not been repaired. **Action: The clerk will chase NWL.**
- i) **To replace picnic bench in Ingoe.** It was noted that the picnic bench had been relocated to Matfen and a replacement is required for Ingoe. **Action: The clerk to order a new picnic bench for Ingoe.**

0721.11 **TO DISCUSS HOW THE PARISH COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS.** It was noted that Matfen is fortunate to have some willing volunteers to carry out various jobs in the village. It was AGREED that a delegated powers policy should be created to allow the Chairman and Clerk to authorise items of

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expenditure up to £100 without the need to consult other councillors. **Action: The clerk will prepare a Delegated Powers Policy for agreement at the next meeting.**

0721.12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS [FOR INFORMATION ONLY].** It was agreed to place the following items on the agenda for the July meeting; improve communication within the village/parish; look at information for the website and gallery; maintenance plan for Parish Council assets.

0721.13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** The next meeting is to be held on Tuesday 21<sup>ST</sup> September 2021 at 7.00pm in Matfen Village Hall.

Signed as an accurate record \_\_\_\_\_