

NEWBROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 6th January 2016

05-01-01 **Present** Cllrs IS Hunter (Chair), J Annan, MD Newson, A Smith and HA Walton.
Also Present: Clerk, R Macfarlane and Cllr RM Gibson and four members of the public.

05-01-02 **Apologies** Cllrs MW Gibson and KE Bell

The Chairman on behalf of the Council welcomed MD Newson to the meeting. Cllr Newson having been co-opted to the office of member of Newbrough Parish Council, has made the necessary declaration under section 83(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 before a member of the proper office of the Council.

05-01-03 **Declaration of Interest**

Cllr RM Gibson all planning issues.

05-01-04 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of Newbrough PC which was held on 4th November 2015 were approved by the Council then signed by the Chairman.

05-01-05 **Matters Arising**

Public Access Defibrillator.

Cllr Hunter informed the Council that the application for grant aid will be pursued via Community Trust and The Stephen Carey Fund.

Pavingstone Work

The contract (Phase II) for work around the Whitebeam trees is expected to start soon.

Stanegate Chronicles

Cllr Hunter will liaise with NCC Archivists at Woodhorn to investigate possible grant aid to digitise the Chronicles.

Cobblestones

The Clerk has contact NCC Highways regarding the loose cobbles surrounding the Red Lion Inn.

Council Website

TWDA Website designers have started to develop the new website and councillors are invited to contribute. The Clerk will apply to NALC for grant aid.

05-01-06 **Public First Focus**

Presentation - Prudham Quarry

Katie Wood, R & K Wood Planning LLP and Robert Charlton, Borderstone Quarries talked about their pre-consultation process in advance of an imminent planning application. Borderstone Quarries are intending to apply for planning permission to extract sandstone, mainly for restoration purposes, from Prudham Quarry.

Presentation - Prudham Quarry (continued)

This prestigious stone was used in buildings locally notably Newbrough War Memorial and Newbrough Town Hall and as far afield as Newcastle (Railway Station), London and Edinburgh (Waverly Hotel and Station). The application will be to extract about 5000 tonnes for 5 years with not more than fifty vehicle movements in a year. The work will be carried out in two month blocks with no activity in the breeding season. They will have to be sensitive, as required by NCC planning authority, to the presence of industrial archaeology heritage and natural restoration. The stone will be taken out of the quarry to the north past Frankham Fell Boarding Kennels & Cattery then to the B6319 past St Aidan's and down the Mossy to the A69. They want the stones in large blocks so the process will involve the use of black powder (2 to 3 ozs) for blasting that Mr Charlton assured would not create a loud noise. Members of the Council were invited to Milknock Quarry to observe similar blasting and the associated mining activities.

05-01-07 Communications

NCC Area Committee West, NALC News, CANNY News, Northumberland Community Development Network, War Memorials trust Bulletin, Society of Local Council Clerk's Conference and newsletter, Animal Boarding Establishment Policy Consultation, Rural Services Network newsletter. The Chairman read out the letters of thanks for grant aid from - Newbrough Town Hall, Sick Children's Trust, Warden and Newbrough PCC, Sport Tynedale, Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, N&W Sports Association and Newbrough School, Great North Air Ambulance, Tynedale Hospice at Home and CAN

Community Action

The Chairman expressed his delight at the announcement that CAN's 'Warm Hubs' project has won a national award Northumberland Award. A formal presentation of the award will take place at the Town Hall in Morpeth on Friday 15 January at 1pm.

Neighbourhood Area Application

The County Council has approved the application from Acomb Parish Council for the designation of a neighbourhood area for the purpose of neighbourhood planning activity in the Parish of Acomb. The Council decided after the parish's input to the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy, SHLAA Assessment and the Conservation Area Character Appraisal it would be a logical progression to be designated a neighbourhood area for the purposes of planning.

05-01-08 Footpaths

It was reported that there was some storm damage to parish footpaths and the Council will wait for an appraisal from the Rights of Way Officer.

05-01-09 Reports

Northumberland County Council

Cllr Gibson made some proposals for a new interactive-sign initiative.

Sportsfield Association

Cllr Walton informed the Council of the current situation at the Cricket Club and the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the grounds especially repairing the boundary fence. There is some concern about the litter and mess left near the bottle-bank skip.

05-01-10 **Roads**

Cobblestones - The Clerk was asked to contact NCC Highways regarding the loose cobbles surrounding the Red Lion Inn.

School Run - Traffic Speed Survey

A number of parents are very concerned with traffic speeding along the road between Fourstones and Newbrough. After their initial complaint there was notable police presence at the beginning of school time. A commissioned traffic speed census, yet to be analysed in detail, gave initial data showing average speeds of 34.6 mph westerly and 31 mph easterly. These speeds are not high enough to automatically trigger the necessity for a mobile speed camera; however other factors might ensure this.

05-01-11 **Planning**

Neighbourhood Area Application

The Council will extend an invitation to David English to attend the next meeting to explain the process and provide further information.

05-01-12 **Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service**

Recent Storm and Flooding

It was noted that the parish had experienced a number of problems with the recent flooding of roads and the Desmond Storm in particular. Reports that several people had been given help, advice and reassurance by members of the Fire and Rescue Service were heard by the Council. The Council asked the Clerk, on behalf of residents to write to the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service to offer grateful thanks for the work carried out by the Service; especially by the Haydon Bridge firemen.

Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service Consultation 'Working Towards 2020'

Haydon Bridge Fire and Rescue Unit.

Newbrough Parish Council objects most strongly to the proposal put before Northumberland County Council's Cabinet meeting on the 19th November 2015, at which members proposed changes to the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Services, especially the suggestion to close the Haydon Bridge based Unit. The Clerk was asked to write to Alex Bennett, Chief Fire Officer, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service to inform him that Newbrough Parish Council is very concerned about the proposed changes to Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, especially the suggestion to close Haydon Bridge based Unit and the loss of its fire engine. The Council believes that this down-sizing and reduction in crew size will place residents at greater risk.

05-01-13 **Finances**

Bank Accounts 1st January 2016 BMM £337.70 Community £17222.15

Payments Approved Council expenses £56.54 (vat £5.41), NTHC £30

05-01-14 **War Memorial**

There are funds set aside for the development of the War Memorial area and the Council is inviting ideas from the community.

05-01-15 **Annual Audit**

The Council received information from Nalc concerning the future of External Audits for parish councils. The Audit Commission ceased to exist on the 1 April 2015 and a new company – Smaller Authorities’ Audit Appointments Ltd - has been created to take over the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for smaller authorities from 2017. The Chairman pointed out that although Internal Audit will remain largely unchanged, changes are planned for External Audit, and before 31 March 2016, all local councils must decide whether to join the new audit arrangements which are being planned nationally, or whether to make their own arrangements. The Council RESOLVED to join the new SAAA Ltd arrangements.

The Council already complies with the proposed format and the common inspection period is already part of the Council’s practice. The post- 2017 annual external audit will be very similar to the current format: with a 4-page annual proforma with pages to be completed variously by the council, the internal auditor and the external auditor. It is expected that for Newbrough PC, there will not normally be an annual external audit, although the Council will still need to compile and publish the 4 page proforma, and an external auditor will still need to be available in case any elector wishes to ask questions which have not been answered by the council itself. Some minor changes such as the Audit timetable for a common inspection period are already part of the Council’s practice.

The Clerk will apply to DCLG/NALC Transparency Fund, to acquire new equipment and a new website, in order to comply with the new ‘Transparency regulations’.

05-01-16 **School Transport**

There are at least ten families in Newbrough and Warden who car-share in order to transport their children to and from school. It is unclear why concessions are granted to some pupils and not others causing growing dissatisfaction amongst parents. It also seems that young people from Newbrough are now being denied even a paid seat on the school bus to Hexham, despite there being spare seats on the Primrose coach.

This NCC policy is divisive and is causing untold stress to working parents. The service bus (283) timetable is incompatible with school hours at QEHS Hexham.

Since NCC have direct responsibility for schools and an indirect influence on service bus schedules, the Council wonders whether schedules could not be modified to suit new school transport policies.

The present situation is detrimental to the NCC sustainability/carbon footprint policies and is disruptive to these parents’ work schedules. Also during dark winter days there will be security concerns about these children 'hanging about' at QEHS both early and late, but perhaps the biggest risk at present is of death or injury in the traffic management around St Josephs and QEHS. The Council will invite someone from County Hall to attend the meeting in March.

05-01-17 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

This will take place at 7.00 pm, Wednesday 9th March 2016

The Meeting was closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed Chairman

Date...9th March 2016