

## **Rochester with Byrness Parish Council**

Minutes for the Meeting of Rochester with Byrness Parish Council held on Tuesday 26 July, 2022  
*At Byrness Village Hall*

**1 Attendance:** S Chapman (Chair), P. Scott, M. Kelly, P. Softley, N. Hall & M. Chilvers (Clerk).

**2 Apologies:** There were no apologies.

**3 Declaration of Interest:** S. Chapman & P. Softley both items 7g and 9f.

**4 Minutes of previous Ordinary Parish Council meeting and Annual Parish Meetings on 31 May, 2022** – Were agreed as a true record.

**5 Guest speaker** – not applicable

**6 Opportunity for members of the public to raise matters** – None was raised.

### **7 Matters arising**

a) Revitalising Redesdale update on progress – The Chair advised that the latest Steering Group had been cancelled and it was not presently known when the next would be. The Chair provided details of events scheduled in the forthcoming months. Cllr Softley whilst acknowledging the Revitalising Redesdale project was due to finish at the end of the year expressed disappointment that more events had not been planned to run from Byrness.

b) Road signs at Carter Bar – The Chair reported that the project was now fully funded and that the Parish Council had received a £2,500 grant from Cllr Riddle. It would be co-ordinated through NNPA.

c) Northern Powergrid substation in Byrness – The email from Chris Mitchell of Northern Powergrid was shared with the Councillors highlighting work was progressing along planned timelines and that he would highlight when / if any significant work was due that may impact on the Byrness residents.

d) Northern Water treatment works legacy for Byrness (play area & benches) – Cllr Softley confirmed the recycled plastic bench had been delivered. Both Cllrs Softley and Scott had spoken to a number of parents of young children and it was agreed that the Clerk would look to obtain a quote for a star springer, a slide and, if provided by the company, parallel bars suitable for children.

e) Maintenance work on trees near 31 and 32 South Greens – The Clerk advised he had received notice from Frank Charlton he would look to attend to the work next month.

f) NCC / Forestry Commission tree planting – The Chair advised there was no update on this matter to report at this meeting.

g) Footpath outside 27 South greens, Byrness – The Clerk provided an update on the matter following receipt of emails from NCC. The Clerk advised he had written to Cllr Riddle but had not as yet received a response.

h) Mole trapping in Byrness Parish Council owned land – The Chair provided an update following notice that a recent mole trap had been interfered with. The Parish Council insurers had advised not to allow traps to be set on Parish Council land unless the contractor had their own public liability insurance. It was highlighted that the contractor did not have this cover. The Chair advised the approximate annual premium cost for such insurance was £127. It was agreed that to employ someone else was likely to incur a higher cost to include travel spend. It was agreed the Chair would contact a contractor in Kirkwhelpington for a quote and meantime Cllr Softley advised he would speak to the local resident who initially raised the concern.

i) Maintenance of Byrness garages – There was agreement that the garages should be treated again this year and the Clerk was asked to obtain a quote for the work and materials. Cllr Softley advised that whilst the sprayers were still OK the nozzles required replacing.

j) Rochester Roundhouse including Woodland Trust hedging, metal gate, star cairn, wild-flowers and request by Redefest to use the building on 5 & 6 August – The Chair provided an update on various topics including the plans for Revitalising Redesdale to install the Interpretation within the building that will be on the back wall. The Chair advised the saplings had been dug in until ready for planting but some of them did not look very healthy. The work on the metal gate was almost complete but Alan Graham needed to finalise a few aspects. It was agreed that the gate was now more in keeping with the Roundhouse. All Councillors agreed for Redefest to use the Roundhouse on 5 & 6 August.

It was reported that the star cairns were waiting for permission by the local authority planning but work was scheduled to start in the autumn. The Chair advised that Helen Hill was due to cut the grass on 2 August in preparation for Redefest and volunteers to help rake up would be appreciated. The Chair also reported that she had received an email from Sue Manson asking to hire the Roundhouse on behalf of Northumberland Wildlife Trust for an event on 13 August for a group from Newcastle originally from Hong Kong. Whilst there was agreement to the request it was requested that a risk assessment was provided prior to the event and that due to the dry weather the request for the fire pit to be used was declined.

k) Weeds in the roadside gullies – The Clerk advised that he had received an email from Glen Harrison (NCC) advising the work should be undertaken within the next couple of weeks. It was agreed to raise the matter with Andy Olive (NCC) when he visits on 9 August if not carried out before. The Chair thanked Cllr Hall for his work to remove weeds along the main road in Rochester.

l) Storm Arwen review report – Disappointment was expressed about the outcome of the report from NCC. There was a feeling it had been a ‘tick box exercise’ and that little had been undertaken to ensure the problems endured in the aftermath of Storm Arwen would not occur again. Particular reference was made to the lack of communications and that very little had been done to ensure that mobile coverage would be any better during the next storm or that a backup plan was in place should there be power outages. The Chair reported on the difficulties Rochester village hall committee were having with their electricity provider in their efforts to make the building better prepared for power outages.

m) NCC Climate Change Toolkit – There was discussion about the report presented by NCC. Disappointment was expressed that there was little guidance or reference to rural areas such as Redesdale. It was highlighted that improved bus service, electric vehicle charging points improved property insulation and even car share schemes were all missing from a rural perspective.

n) First Responder role and defibrillator maintenance – It was noted that there is no First Responder in Redesdale. The Clerk provided details he had received about the role and training required. There was discussion about possible First Aiders in the local community who may be able to assist at public events.

o) Parish Council vacancy – It was noted that there are currently two vacancies in the Byrness ward and one in the Rochester ward.

p) Date of the November Parish Council meeting – There was agreement for the Clerk to confirm whether the meeting should be held on Monday 28 or Wednesday 30 November. Cllr Softley proposed that the Byrness Parish Council meetings be held on Mondays in future to avoid a clash of users at Byrness village hall.

## **8 Planning**

a) The Clerk highlighted the planning application received that day – Construction of 2no detached holiday cottages: Land north of 14 Bremenium Way. Rochester. Both the Chair and Cllr Kelly declared an interest on the matter. It was agreed Cllrs Scott, Softley and Hall would consider the application and share their comments with the Clerk.

## **9 Finance/accounts for payment**

a) Parish finance update – The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £28,088.27. This included £2,500 received from Cllr Riddle for contribution towards the Revitalising Redesdale Carter Bar signage project, £12,092.63 balance of the Byrness garage reserve, £284.65 balance of the Byrness allotment reserve and £3,333 balance of the Northumbria Water legacy budget for Byrness community. The Clerk advised that left a working budget of £9,877.99.

b) The following payments presented were all agreed

- M. Chilvers salary for June and July 2022 of £304.82 was agreed.
- Payments to Chris Mowatt Landscaping Ltd for grass cutting for £208.80 x2 in Byrness was agreed
- Donation request from Horsley & St Francis church for graveyard maintenance was agreed at £200.00 for each location.
- Payment of room hire at Byrness Village Hall on 26 July, 2022 of £14.00 was agreed.

- Payment of invoice from Low Carbon Products Ltd for supply of recycled plastic picnic bench for Byrness play area for £468.26 + VAT was agreed.
- Payment of invoice from A. Graham for £300.00 for work on the metal gate at the Rochester Roundhouse was agreed.

**10 Any Other Business:**

a) Cllr Scott highlighted that dog mess being left near the bridge in Byrness was becoming a problem again. It was agreed to put more leaflets and posters around the village including asking the owners of the holiday cottages to add leaflets in their properties.

b) The Councillors agreed to submit three priorities for the LTP 2023/34 to NCC. These were 1) greater enforcement of the Rochester 30mph 2) installation of signage to improve safety of Byrness junction from A68 3) 20mph speed restriction within the Byrness village.

**Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 27 September, 2022 at Rochester Village Hall, starting 7:00pm.**

Meeting closed 8.45pm