

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council

Minutes for the Meeting of Rochester with Byrness Parish Council held on

Tuesday 31 January, 2023

At Rochester Village Hall

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

2 Apologies: There were apologies from M. Kelly.

3 Declaration of Interest: N. Hall re Rochester Village Hall donation request.

4 Minutes of previous Parish Council meeting on 28 November, 2022 – Were agreed and signed as a true record with an agreed slight amendment highlighted by Cllr Softley.

5 Guest speaker – n/a

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

7 Matters arising

a) Revitalising Redesdale, Evaluation report, ongoing work – The Chair made reference to the Evaluation report that had been shared with all Councillors. The Chair also provided an update on the panels at the various locations within the parish before providing details of the proposal for additional lecterns at Byrness car park and The Three Kings. The sign in Byrness would replicate the sign at Blakehopeburnhaugh and it was agreed with Lydia Speakman that the Parish Council would submit the planning application to NCC.

b) Road signs at Carter Bar – The Chair advised there was no update since the last meeting.

c) Northern Powergrid substation in Byrness – The Clerk reported that after speaking to Chris Mitchell of Northern Powergrid extensive testing was still taking place at the substation. It was agreed Andrew Webster (NPg) would attend the Parish Council meeting in March at Byrness to present to local residents the operational details as to how the substation will work. The Chair agreed to speak to Andrew regarding the possibility of EV charging points being installed.

d) Northumbrian Water treatment works legacy for Byrness – The Clerk advised that the agreed slide had been ordered and should be installed early spring.

e) NCC / Forestry Commission Great Northumberland Forest tree planting – There was no update to share this month.

f) Footpath outside 27 South Greens, Byrness & possible disabled parking bay – It was confirmed that NCC had completed the work and the path was much improved and safer for residents to use.

g) Maintenance of Byrness garages – The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Chris Mowatt who had scheduled to undertake the work on Friday 17 February. It was agreed he would contact the garage tenants to highlight the work.

h) Tree maintenance in Byrness – It was confirmed that Frank Charlton had done a good job with the ash tree and the overhanging branches on the track to the substation. The quote for the felling of the large dead tree at the car park in Byrness was agreed by the Councillors. It was highlighted by Cllr Scott that the barrier around the car park was broken, and the Chair advised she would speak to the residents who had helped install the barrier to see if it could be repaired.

i) Resurfacing of the 'Ride' at Byrness – The Chair advised that the work had been delayed because of the weather and she would contact Alex MacLellan for an update.

j) Condition of NCC roadside signage at Byrness – Cllr Scott highlighted that the sign for Byrness village was missing at the bus shelter on the A68 and provided a photo of the double-sided sign that had been there. There was discussion regarding the condition of other signs in the village and it was agreed no action was required at the moment. It was noted that a requested, as part of the Local Transport Programme, had been made for 'warning' signs on the A68 for the Byrness junction.

k) Moles on Parish Council land, Byrness – It was noted that there were several mole hills near the allotments but someone had set traps. Additionally, it was reported that there were

also mole hills near the car park at Byrness. Cllr Hall reported that there were also moles at the war memorial in Rochester and the Chair advised that a local person was dealing with these on an ongoing basis.

l) Possible information board at the car park, Byrness – This topic was covered under item 7a.

m) Rochester Roundhouse: including Woodland Trust hedging, star cairn & wild-flowers – The Chair reported that the star cairn had been completed and the wildflower seed had been received. The Clerk advised he had received the first batch of hedge saplings and a further set would be received in March. It was suggested the Clerk should write to Landmarc to see if any volunteers could help plant the saplings. The Chair provided details of a potential booking for a scout group to use the Roundhouse. She also advised that there would be a wallpaper map added to the interior wall of the building and a local walk leaflet was being published.

n) Grit bin in Rochester – The Chair reported that the residents in Rochester were grateful for the installation of a grit bin at the bus stop opposite the cafe in Rochester, funded by the Parish Council.

o) Damaged roadside signs and flower box in Rochester – The Chair provided an update on the accident that had damaged the signs. Replacements had been ordered by NCC. The company that owned the lorry that ran into the signs had also agreed to pay for a replacement flower box.

p) Heating of Karbon & Johnnie Johnson properties in Bremenium Way – The Chair provided an update on the position regarding the 7 Karbon and 6 Johnnie Johnson houses after hearing from Guy Opperman MP. A representative from Johnnie Johnson had made a visit to their tenants that day but as yet he had not had a positive response from Karbon Homes.

q) Catcleugh lay-by, Bremenium Way drainage & Rochester road flooding – It was reported that the Catcleugh lay-by footpath would be repaired in March when traffic lights would be installed for the work. There was no update on the other matters at this time.

r) Town, Parish & Community Council Conferences – The Chair provided a summary of the event that she attended in Hexham and the details received from the speakers representing various departments of NCC.

s) Preparing for possible emergency power cuts – There was discussion on the possible impact and what the Parish Council could do to assist residents.

t) EV Charging points, possible funding – There was discussion following receipt from NCC of possible funding. A possible location was identified in Byrness and locations suggested for Rochester.

u) Update of the Code of Conduct – The Chair made reference to the previous meeting and highlighted the Code of Conduct and received agreement when asked if all Councillors would manage their Councillors duties as detailed within the document. It was also agreed that matters raised by parishioners should be emailed to the Clerk.

v) Parish Council vacancies – There was discussion about possible interest from local residents to fill the current vacancies on the Parish Council.

8 Planning

a) There were no planning applications to consider this month.

9 Finance/accounts for payment

a) Parish finance update and 2023-24 precept – The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £31,360.45 that included reserve balances for the Byrness garages (£13,103) and allotments (£302.07 as well as £2,500 grant funds for the Carter Bar signage, £2,864.74 for the Byrness Northumbria Water legacy and £2,679.78 for the Rochester Roundhouse. It was noted that the Rochester defibrillator battery required replacing immediately and the Clerk was asked to purchase a new item.

b) The following payments presented were all agreed.

- M. Chilvers salary for December, 2022 & January, 2023 of £304.82 was agreed.
- Payment to Frank Charlton for tree work in Byrness of £187.50 + VAT was agreed.
- The payment of £12.00 to Rochester Village Hall was agreed for room hire for the meeting.

- Payment of £192.22 + VAT to Glasdon Ltd for a grit bin in Rochester was agreed.
- Rochester Village Hall. Donation request for coronation event. Agreed by all for £500.

10 Any Other Business:

a) The Chair reported that Horsley & St Francis PCC were seeking a Treasurer which is a volunteer role and would be expected to take approximately two hours a month.

b) Cllr Softley provided an update on the planned work at the Byrness Village Hall. An acceptable quotation had been received and work was expected to start as soon as approval had been received from National Lottery. A request was made for materials to be stored on the Parish Council land near the Hall during the work and whilst it was agreed to add the matter to the March meeting agenda it was not expected to be a problem.

c) Cllr Softley highlighted the matter of the covenants in Byrness and agreed to put the matter in 'lay man' terms with the hope that the Parish Council can find guidance as to what action may need to be taken.

Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 28 March, 2023, at Byrness Village Hall, starting 7:00pm.
Meeting closed 8.45pm