

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council

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

Tuesday 25 July, 2023 *At Rochester Village Hall*

1 Attendance: S Chapman (Chair), P. Scott, N. Hall, P. Softley, M. Kelly (from 7.25) & M. Chilvers (Clerk).

2 Apologies: There were no apologies.

3 Declaration of Interest: N. Hall 9c (payment for Rochester Village Hall)

4 Minutes of previous Parish Council Annual and Ordinary meetings on 30 May 2023 –

Were agreed and signed as a true record.

5 Guest speaker – There was no speaker at this meeting.

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

7 Matters arising

a) Maintenance of Byrness garages – The Clerk reported that he was still attempting to get a quote from Chris Mowatt for the agreed work. Cllr Softley advised he may be able to obtain a quote from another source and this was agreed by all.

b) Resurfacing of the 'Ride' at Byrness – The Chair confirmed that the work on the Ride as well as at the low river path had been completed by Forestry England with some materials remaining.

c) NCC roadside signage at Byrness – The Clerk shared an email he had received from Glen Harrison (NCC) advising the new signage should be in place within the next couple of weeks.

d) Resident parking in Byrness – It was highlighted that a resident had placed a sign requesting people did not park outside their property in Byrness. An email on the topic was shared with Councillors from Paul Jones (NCC). Mr Jones highlighted that the signage had no legal standing and that residents had no right to be able to park outside their property on the highway. He provided details of parking permit schemes but it was agreed by all the criteria he detailed would not apply in Byrness. It was agreed there was nothing the Parish Council could do but monitor the situation.

e) Byrness back field grass cutting – Thanks were expressed to Craig MacNeil for cutting the grass and all agreed the area was looking much better.

f) Rochester Roundhouse – There was no update to provide on this topic.

g) Catcleugh lay-by, Bremenium Way drainage & Rochester road flooding – The Clerk shared an email from Glen Harrison (NCC) advising he was hopeful that someone would be in the area within the next few weeks to assess and plan what work was required at both Catcleugh and Bremenium Way. The Clerk also provided details of an email he had received from Adam Keen (NCC) highlighting the damaged litter bin at Catcleugh lay-by and the cost for replacing it. There was agreement that the bin should be taken away however no replacement would be installed at this time.

h) Possible EV charging point in Rochester – The Chair reported that the owners of Rochester Relish whilst agreeable to having an EV charging point in their car park, would wish to lock the gates when the cafe was closed which would deny the charging point being used. As it was part of the criteria the charging point needed to be accessible 24/7 an alternative location was being considered. Lord Redesdale had provided his permission for the land at the old garage to be used and the Clerk advised he was waiting for the next steps from NCC Climate Team.

i) Speeding vehicles through Rochester – The Clerk shared the data received from NCC following the recent speed survey in both Rochester and Otterburn. The data confirmed that being provided from the two speed indicator devices in Rochester with the 85thile as high as 43.64mph and at one location over 94% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit. Highest speeds recorded were over 84mph at the location near the cafe. Whilst NCC would be in touch shortly it was agreed to submit a request for work to be undertaken as part of the LTP to introduce measures to reduce the speed of the majority of drivers passing through the village

j) Condition of pavement and stone wall along main road in Rochester – The Clerk reported that he had received confirmation from NCC that the area was regularly assessed and at present was

not considered in need of any work. It was highlighted that 40 tonne wagons were regularly using Bremenium Way and were further damaging the road surface and drainage system.

k) Local Transport Plan Programme 2024/25 – There was agreement to submit requests for 1) safety measures to reduce the speeding of vehicles through Rochester, 2) safety features introduced to warn drivers of the junction to Byrness from both directions along A68 and that drivers may be turning.

l) Community defibrillators – The Chair reported on the feedback she had received that the Rochester defibrillator would cost a considerable amount to be repaired. There was discussion regarding the quotes received for a replacement and how best to fund it. There was agreement for the Clerk to investigate possible funding options and to consider the option to purchase a bleed pack for £85.00 + VAT assuming it would fit in the existing cabinet with a defibrillator.

m) Community Dark Sky gazing telescope from NNPA – The Chair reported that Duncan Wise had brought the new telescope to Rochester and provided a demonstration. This was funded from the last of the budget from Revitalising Redesdale project. Whilst it was not possible to store it at the village hall it would be available for community events within Redesdale and enquires should be made to either the Clerk or the Chair.

n) Mobile library service in Redesdale – The Clerk provided details of the new van that was being trialled and how people could provide feedback to NCC. Additionally the Clerk advised the timetable for the fortnightly service could be found on the Parish Council website.

o) Redesdale Archaeology Society – The Clerk shared the email from Bob Jackson thanking the Parish Council for its letter of support.

p) Otterburn RTC sports centre seeking Trustees – The Clerk provided details of the RTC seeking new Trustees and a Chair. If there were insufficient number of Trustees then the RTC would have to close.

q) Liddensdale Wind Farm scoping report – Following discussion it was agreed to request that the Parish Council was included in all future consultation and correspondence. It was also agreed to make contact with Newcastleton Community Council.

8 Planning

a) 23/02166/FUL: Retrospective application for erection of BBQ hut and tree planting: Elishaw Farm, Elishaw Moor, NE191JH: This matter was discussed between meetings and a response provided to NCC. The majority of Councillors agreed to object the application on the same reasons as the original application for which it appeared none of the concerns had been addressed.

9 Finance/accounts for payment

a) Parish finance update – The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £24,731. There was discussion about creating a reserve for replacement of the defibrillators and whether the allotment tenants would possibly be agreeable for some of the allotment rent to be used for this purpose when it had reached a certain figure.

b) Donation policy – It was agreed that the Clerk would write to NALC to determine whether there was, or likely to be in the near future, a recommended donation policy provided by them. In the meantime it was agreed to post the details identified by Cllr Softley on the Parish Council website.

c) Payments – The following payments presented were all agreed.

- M. Chilvers salary for June & July, 2023 of £376.28 plus expenses for stamps of £3.30.
- Payment of room hire at Rochester Village Hall for meeting on 25 July, 2023. The Clerk advised he was waiting for the invoice.
- Payments of £174.00 + VAT and £328.00 + VAT to Chris Mowatt Landscaping for grass cutting in Byrness were agreed.
- Payment of Councillor training events. The Clerk advised he had not received the invoice for £30.00 for the training attended by S. Chapman, P. Softley and N. Hall

10 Any Other Business:

a) Cllr Scott asked about the waiting list for the allotments and the Clerk provided up-to-date details. It was agreed he would approach the person at the top of the list to establish their eligibility.

b) Cllr Scott agreed to contact the contractor to get them to return and make good the damage at the church car park in Byrness.

Date of Next Meeting. WEDNESDAY 4 October, 2023, at Byrness Village Hall, starting 7:00pm.

Meeting closed 9.00pm