

## **Rochester with Byrness Parish Council**

Minutes for the Meeting of Rochester with Byrness Parish Council held on  
Tuesday 30 January, 2024 *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:** NH – Rochester Village Hall invoice.

**4 Minutes of previous Parish Council meeting on 28 November 2023** – Were agreed and signed as a true record.

**5 Guest speaker** – None

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

### **7 Matters arising**

a) Maintenance of Byrness garages – It was confirmed that the repairs had been completed and Cllrs Softley and Scott agreed it was good quality work.

b) NCC roadside signage at Byrness – It was reported that the over-hanging shrubs were still covering the sign and the Clerk was asked to contact NCC again to have them cleared away.

c) Land between burn and Old School House boundary – The Chair provided a summary of the meeting she and Cllr Softley attended with Frank Charlton as well as Mr Tait from the Old School, Byrness. Additionally the report Mr Charlton provided the Clerk was shared. It was agreed to set up a meeting with the Northumberland Woodland Officer to discuss the development of a Woodland Management Plan and possible funding that would be required to undertake any likely work. The Clerk was asked to follow up with Tyne Rivers Trust and chase the Environmental Agency to examine erosion to the burn and action that could resolve the problem.

d) Byrness flooding incidents and slurry transportation from Byrness sewage plant – Cllr Softley reported that the track to the sewage works was in a bad condition following the frequent use by Northumbria Water Ltd (NWL) during ongoing work. He advised that also it appeared the tarmac on the highways edges through the village were breaking up in places and pot holes were being created. The Clerk advised he had spoken to NWL about the matter and was promised a response shortly. Additionally the Clerk advised he was still seeking further investigation from NWL about the flooding of the gardens of some properties in Otterburn Green.

e) Byrness substation – The Clerk reported that he had spoken to Andrew Webster (NPg) who advised the substation was still being tested. He would speak to his colleague about a specific meeting with Byrness residents about the substation and arrange contacting all when a date and time were arranged.

f) Woodland review in Byrness and potential Woodland Management Plan – This matter was covered under agenda item 7c.

g) Catcleugh lay-by, Bremenium Way drainage & Rochester road flooding – Cllr Scott reported that there had been only a little rubbish left at the lay-by since the damaged rubbish bin had been removed but repairs were still needed on the footpath from the lay-by to the dam and the verge marker posts replaced.

h) Possible EV charging point in Rochester – The Chair provided an update on the proposal advising confirmation had been provided of the suggested locations for EV charging points in both Rochester and Byrness to NCC. A decision on whether the work would go ahead was expected within the next couple of months.

i) Speeding vehicles through Rochester – It was reported that Guy Opperman MP had not as yet provided an update on speeding vehicles following his meeting with the Chief Superintendent in October. Cllr Hall asked when a Police van had last been monitoring the speed of vehicles through Rochester and it agreed it had been sometime. There was agreement the speed camera data should continue to be shared with NCC, Northumbria Police, Guy Opperman MP and Cllr John Riddle.

j) Rochester defibrillator – There was discussion regarding the match funding scheme with London Hearts for a new defibrillator and cabinet for £750. It was agreed to proceed with the purchase and Cllr Softley asked if the old cabinet could be used to replace the Byrness cabinet that was not in such good condition.

k) Roadside gully clearance – The Clerk shared the details of the latest email from Glen Harrison (NCC). Whilst Cllr Softley reported that the gully cleaning vehicle had been through Byrness village the previous week there was disappointment that it was necessary to wait so long for the service in other parts of the parish but it was agreed the Clerk should keep chasing.

l) Parish Council insurance – There was agreement to proceed with the insurance as presented following the clarification of a few points raised.

m) Emergency Plan development – Cllr Hall reported that during the power outage the previous week Rochester village hall opened as a warm hub and seemed to have been a success with a good number of people dropping in. The Chair advised feedback suggested that the hall provided reassurance to the residents that there was a warm place where people could get a hot drink and he advised that it was planned to provide a newsletter highlighting the facilities available during a power outage. It was agreed to progress with the initial draft of the Emergency plan.

n) New X74 bus service replacing 808 & 131 services to Newcastle: There was agreement that the new service was great news for Redesdale providing three journeys into Newcastle, six days a week and also now an opportunity to travel via bus into Jedburgh. It was confirmed that concessionary passes would be allowed for the route to Jedburgh as well as Newcastle and the £2.00 a single trip would be in place until 31 December, 2024 at least.

o) Spring Town & Parish Council conference: It was confirmed that the Chair and Cllr Softley would attend the event.

## 8 Planning

a) 23NP0118: Conversion & extension of existing tack room and its store to holiday accommodation & change of use of main house from C3 (dwelling house) to sui generis (holiday accommodation for over 6 guests): Catcleugh Farm, Catcleugh, NE191TX:  
Following discussion there was agreement not to object the application.

## 9 Finance/accounts for payment

a) Parish finance update & 2024 precept – The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £25,052.50. This included reserved balances for Byrness garages £11,584.30, Byrness allotments, £357, Rochester Roundhouse, £2878 and defibrillator, £777, leaving a current working balance of £9,456.20 before any commitments in agenda item 9b were made.

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

- M. Chilvers salary for December, 2023 & January, 2024 of £376.28 was agreed.
- Payment of room hire at Rochester Village Hall for meeting on 30 January, 2024 for £16.00 was agreed.
- Payment of the invoice for D&P Plumbing & Joinery for £2,285.00 for work on the Byrness garages agreed.
- The payment of £626.95 for the Parish Council insurance was agreed.

## 10 Any Other Business:

a) Cllr Softley whilst acknowledging the most recent LTP request made, highlighted a traffic incident that appeared to be partly as a result of lack of warning and inappropriate location of signage along the A68 near Byrness. He advised of an accident that had occurred as someone attempted to turn right at the junction for St Francis church and that the signage, especially travelling south needed to be better located to provide appropriate warning along what is a very fast section of road. Additionally it was highlighted that road surface markers at both bus stops would help to make the area safer.

**Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 26, 2024, at Byrness Village Hall, starting 7:00pm.**

Meeting closed 8.30pm