

Otterburn Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council held on 7 March, 2023

Held at Otterburn Memorial Hall

MINUTES

Present – Ruth Appleby (Chair), Andrew Shone and Joanne Nichols

In Attendance—Martin Chilvers (Clerk)

1. **Apologies for absence** – There were apologies from Gemma Cook & George Peto
2. **Declarations of interest** – None were declared
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** – The minutes of the meeting, having been circulated, were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.
4. **Public Question Time** – a) Cllr Riddle was unable to attend.
5. **Opportunity for members of the public to raise matters**: Nothing was raised.
6. **Matters arising**
 - a) item 6a: Ray Windfarm update: The Clerk's Report was received and agreed. Anyone wishing to apply for a grant should look at the website <https://raywindfund.co.uk/> for details.
 - b) item 6b: Road safety in the Parish: The Clerk advised that whilst the proposed work in Otterburn was still to happen, NCC were unable to provide a timescale for when the work will start.
 - c) item 6c: Revitalising Redesdale update: The Clerk reported that a representative from Natural England had assessed the required work to improve the steep and muddy sections of the Otterburn trail. It was hoped quotes for the work would be received soon and Lydia Speakman would be appointing a contractor for the work.
 - d) item 6d: Local Otterburn directory map: The Clerk reported that he had received received quotes for the possible stand of the proposed map. The Councillors felt this was expensive and agreed to progress with the grant application for the map only at the this stage and consider how it would be displayed if a grant application was successful and then when map was completed.
 - e) item 6e: Electric power supply in the Millennium Green: The Clerk reported that additional information had been requested before a decision was made on the grant application for the installation of power into the Millennium Green.
 - f) item 6g: Northern Powergrid energy resilience grant funding: The Clerk reported that Northern Powergrid had advised the grant cheque should be received very soon so that work could begin on the Memorial Hall.
 - g) item 6h: Parish roadside gullies and drains: The Clerk advised the drains along the main road had been cleared that day and he would be checking other areas of the village in the next few days.
 - h) item 9b: EV charging points at the Memorial Hall: The Clerk reported that he had received confirmation from John Bourn of Transport North East that it had been agreed a charging point would be installed at the back of the Memorial Hall. A Memorandum of Understanding was being drawn up for the Memorial Hall committee to enter into.
 - i) item 9d: School flashing light and other roadside signs: The Clerk's report was received and agreed. It was highlighted that work had begun on repairing or replacing the signs that required attention.
 - j) item 9e: Spring litter pick event: The dates suggested for the event unfortunately were unavailable for the majority attending. There was agreement that as there was generally less litter than in previous years an official date would not be organised on this occasion. The Clerk would arrange for a communication to be shared making available litter pickers, gloves and bags for residents to use when out walking should they choose.
 - k) item 9f: Street parking during Le Petit Château open days: The Clerk reported that despite attempting to contact Duncan Fisher and James Martin on two occasions he had had no response. It was agreed to continue to invite them to a Parish Council meeting to agree how to best to manage the volume of vehicles at the open days whilst keeping the pavements safely accessible for pedestrians. In the meantime it was agreed pictures would be taken of the problems caused and shared with the Police should the situation occur again.
 - l) item 9g: Footpath towards Otterburn school: It was noted that NCC had undertaken some work that day but the path had not had the growth removed to regain the original width. The Clerk was asked to contact Geoff Cairns (NCC) to highlighted the further work required and ask if he can contact the land owner for them to remove the growth from the private land overhanging the footpath.
 - m) item 9h: Percy Cross maintenance work: Thanks were expressed to Thomas Tuyarts and Caroline Hey for their work tidying the area at Percy Cross. It was agreed regular maintenance work was required during the summer to keep the area around the log seating neat and the footpaths clear of debris as well as the edges well defined.
 - n) item 9i: King Charles III coronation events, including 'Big Help Out': It was highlighted that the Memorial Hall committee were arranging an 'afternoon tea' similar to the popular event held for the Queen's Jubilee in 2022.

With the limited resources the Councillors present agreed they could not commit to arrange an event to mark the coronation. Consideration was given to possible volunteer events on the Bank Holiday Monday but no ideas were presented at the meeting.

7. Finance

- a) Finance update: The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £13,482.35.
- b) Clerk's salary and expenses for February, 2023: The payments of £262.87 & expenses £4.00 were agreed.
- c) Reimbursement to A. Shone for payment for 'visitotterburn' domain: The payment of £35.98 + VAT was agreed. Cllr Shone advised he would attempt to transfer the title into the Parish Council name.
- d) VAT reclaim to HMRC: The Clerk confirmed the sum of £2,159.75 had been received.
- e) PAYE charge refund : The Clerk confirmed the £100.00 charge had been refunded by HMRC

8. Planning

- a) There were no applications to consider at this meeting.

9. New Business

- a) Dog mess signs: There was agreement to the wording of the bespoke signage to place along the trail and for two signs to be purchased
- b) Identification required for voting at elections: The Clerk shared details of the new arrangements from May 2023 and advised leaflets would be received from NCC to share. He would also make arrangements for details to be posted on the Parish Council website and Facebook.
- c) Parish Council vacancy: The Clerk reported that the Councillors would be able co-opt a new Councillor to fill the vacancy. There was discussion as to how to 'advertise' the role, the timescales for interest to be registered and the process to follow to fill the vacancy.
- d) Grass / hedge cutting in 2023: The Clerk reported that the contractor needed to increase the costs of the agreed work by 6 – 7% on 2022 costs and this was agreed by the Councillors.
- e) Children's Play Area possible development: There was agreement to hold a summer Parish Council meeting at the Play Area and research the available space and type of equipment and age range to work for. It was agreed an idea of a zip wire would not be possible due to lack of space and high insurance premiums for such items.
- f) Road surface markings: It was reported that a number of road surface markings required refreshing and it was agreed to establish a list before approaching NCC.
- g) Youth voice in Otterburn: It was agreed to postpone this item until the next meeting.

10. Any other business / Matters for discussion at the next meeting of the Parish Council

- a) Cllr Nichols highlighted that there had been a further accident at the narrow bridge on the B6320 just behind the Otterburn Mill and asked whether it would be possible for traffic lights to be installed to make the area safer.
- b) It was highlighted that a large number of children's toys were being left about the village and were a trip hazard especially for the elderly. It was agreed to post a message asking for the owner to remove the toys otherwise they would be disposed.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11 April, 2023 at Otterburn Memorial Hall.
Meeting closed at 8.15pm.