

Otterburn Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council held on 6 February, 2024

Held at Otterburn Memorial Hall

MINUTES

Present – George Peto (Chair), Ruth Appleby, Andrew Shone, Joanne Nichols, Steve Bloomer & Denise Corkin

In Attendance—Martin Chilvers (Clerk), Steve Crawley.

1. **Apologies for absence** – There were no apologies.
2. **Declarations of interest** – None were declared
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** – The minutes of the last 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:** None were raised.

6. Matters arising

a) item 6a: Ray Windfarm update: The Clerk's Report was received and agreed. The Clerk provided details of the grant paid to B4RN for the superfast broadband installation across the first phase within the catchment area of Ray Wind. Anyone wishing to learn more about possible grants should initially refer to the website <https://raywindfund.co.uk/> or contact Jo Willis on either admin@raywindfund.co.uk or 07762 179579.

b) item 6b: Road safety in the Parish: The Clerk shared the latest email from Neil Snowdon (NCC). There was disappointment and frustration at the continued lack of progress of this apparently relatively simple project for NCC. The Councillors asked the Clerk to contact Cllr John Riddle to ask if he can assist in getting some progress to the project and if necessary write to the Leader of the Council, Glen Sanderson and / or Guy Opperman MP.

c) item 6c: Electric power supply in the Millennium Green: The Clerk's Report was received and agreed.

d) item 6d: Northern Powergrid energy resilience grant funding & emergency plan: The Clerk confirmed that the work on the generator had been completed and was ready in case of a power outage. He advised that a flyer was being created that would be put through each property in the Parish highlighting the facilities that would be available at the Memorial Hall in case of an emergency incident.

e) item 6f: Redevelopment of the Otterburn public toilets: The Clerk's Report was received and agreed. The Clerk was asked to contact NCC regarding the opening times of the toilets and whether it would be possible for them to be open 24/7. It was agreed to monitor the situation to ensure the promised new signage was installed

f) item 6g: Proposed maintenance work at the Play Area: The Clerk's Report was received and agreed.

g) item 6h: Otterburn Welcome pack: Cllr Corkin provided an update on progress of this project following feedback she received from Cllr Bloomer and the Clerk.

h) item 9a: Community Transport in Redesdale: Cllr Appleby reported on her conversation with Caroline Clarke (Church & Community Partnership) through her position on the Patient Partnership with the Bellingham Surgery. She reported that there were ongoing meetings and a further one scheduled with Adapt the following week to discuss the introduction of community transport within the local area for people needing assistance to reach health appointments and other vital services.

7. Finance

a) Finance update: The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £15,633.82 prior to agreement of the items below.

b) Clerk's salary and expenses for December, 2023 & January, 2024: The payments of £423.28 & expenses of £11.38 were agreed.

c) Payment to C. Mowatt for grass / hedge cutting: The payment of £450.00 + VAT was agreed.

d) Reimbursement to Mr Hartshorne of materials for repair of map on external wall of Memorial Hall: The payment of £25.00 was agreed as also was a payment of £8.97 for bulbs for the flower boxes.

e) Payment of the Northern Powergrid invoice for power connection to the Millennium Green: The Clerk advised he had not as yet received the invoice for £1,710.61 + VAT but there was agreement to pay when it had been received.

8. Planning

a) There were no application to consider this month.

9. New Business

a) Solar light at the play area: The Clerk reported that the solar light was no longer working again. It was agreed given the age of the item and the number of times it had been repaired to purchase a replacement. The options were discussed and the Councillors agreed to purchase the same type as that on the footpath past Snaiths depot. The Clerk was asked to approach Ray Windfunds for a possible grant to assist with the purchase.

b) Litter pick event for spring 2024: It was agreed to hold the next litter pick event on Saturday 16 March at 9.30 meeting at the bench near the public toilets. There was discussion about the two signs advertising Odin Tactical and the Coach House Hotel that were both in a poor condition. The Clerk was asked to write to the owners of both in regards of having them removed.

c) Power outage and flooding following recent storms: There was disappointment expressed that there appeared to have been no positive progress when during the recent power outage for 20+ hours mobile and internet services were lost very quickly. It was agreed to write to Guy Opperman MP seeking assistance for an improved communications network in and around Redesdale especially as BT appeared to have increased the speed of their transfer of copper telephone connections to digital.

d) Roadside gullies and drains: The Clerk shared the latest contact from Glen Harrison (NCC) regarding the need for roadside gullies and drains in Otterburn as well as across Redesdale to be cleared. The initial request had been made in September 2023 but continued excuses were being given for the work not as yet being undertaken.

e) New X74 bus service for Otterburn: The Clerk provided details of the new service that replaced the 808 and 131 services from 29 January, 2024. Details could be found on the Parish Council website and Facebook.

f) Town & Parish Council spring conference: Cllr Corkin advised she may be able to attend the event.

g) Community map on external wall of Memorial Hall: There was agreement that the map look much better now and thanks were expressed to Mr Hartshorne who made the repairs.

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

a) Cllr Corkin asked on behalf of a resident about the opening times of the public toilets. Whilst it was noted that there had been an incident during the redevelopment it appeared the opening times were sometimes inconsistent one day to the next. The Clerk was asked to approach NCC for the details.

b) Cllr Appleby provided details of the Chatty Cafe scheme and highlighted the closest location presently was the Fountain Cafe in Bellingham who operated the Chatty Cafe on Tuesday mornings from 10.30 to 11.45. It was agreed to post the details on the Parish Council website and Facebook.

c) Cllr Appleby provided details of an initiative at the Bellingham surgery to provide 1:1 assistance to clients to use digital services where possible such as repeat prescriptions in an effort to reduce the amount of paper used.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council to be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12 March, 2024 at Otterburn Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm.