

Otterburn Parish Council

Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12 March, 2024

Held at Otterburn Memorial Hall

MINUTES

Present – Andrew Shone (Chair), Joanne Nichols, Steve Bloomer & Denise Corkin

In Attendance—Martin Chilvers (Clerk), Steve Crawley, John Hartshorne & Chris Keay

- 1) **Apologies for absence** – There were apologies from George Peto & Ruth Appleby.
- 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:** Mr Keay asked whether there was an update on the introduction of superfast broadband in the Otterburn area. He advised he had seen on the Go-Fibre website that there was a message “Sorry not digging in that area yet”. The Clerk was asked to contact iNorthumberland for a progress report.

6. Matters arising

- a) item 6b: Road safety in the Parish: The latest email from Neil Snowdon (NCC) was shared and discussed. There was further disappointment at the lack of progress of what NCC advised themselves was a small and easy project when it first started several years ago. There was agreement among the Councillors to escalate the matter to Glen Sanderson (Leader of NCC) as well as Guy Opperman MP and Cllr Riddle.
- b) item 6c: Electric power supply in the Millennium Green: The Clerk provided an update on progress of the project with materials purchased and communications from Northern Powergrid. He advised that a date had not as yet been provided by NPg as to when they would connect the power.
- c) item 6d: Memorial Hall emergency warm hub/Northern Powergrid grant: The Clerk reported that the Memorial Hall was already for any power outage and the generator had been tested. The last few items had been purchased as part of the NPg grant. The Memorial Hall committee together with Cllr Bloomer and the Clerk were investigating broadband that could be provided to the hall including emergency connection during power outage.
- d) item 6e: Redevelopment of the Otterburn public toilets: The Clerk reported he had been advised all work had been completed at the toilets. He was still in contact with NCC regarding the installation of the new signage promised that it was hoped would stop the lay-by at the bottom of Bankfoot being used as a toilet, and would update when he had further information.
- e) item 6g: Proposed maintenance work at the play area: Mr Hartshorne advised that the weather had not been appropriate to undertake the agreed work but that it was still in hand to complete ASAP.
- f) item 6h: Community transport in Redesdale: It was agreed to postpone this item to the next meeting so Cllr Appleby could provide an update following a meeting with Caroline Clarke (Church & Community Partnership).
- g) item 9a: Solar light at the play area: The Clerk confirmed the new lantern had been delivered and this should be installed in the next few weeks.
- h) item 9b: Litter pick event on 16 March: The Clerk confirmed timings and location. It was agreed to ask Cllr Peto to highlight the event on the Parish Council Facebook again. There was discussion on the areas in the village that required attention.

7. Finance

- a) Finance update: The Clerk advised the current bank balance was £13,629.66 prior to agreement of the items below.
- b) Clerk’s salary and expenses for February, 2024: The payments of £269.36 & expenses of £5.99 were agreed.
- c) Reimbursement to the Clerk for purchase of electric cabinet & conduit for power to Millennium Green: The payments of £301.50 + VAT and £24.97 + VAT respectively were agreed.
- d) Payment of the Northern Powergrid invoice for power connection to the Millennium Green: The payment of £1,710.61 + VAT was agreed.
- e) Payment of solar light lantern for the play area: The Clerk advised he had not as yet received the invoice.
- f) Payment of invoice to J. Hartshorne for work in the village: Mr Hartshorne advised he would provide an invoice when the work was complete.

8. Planning

- a) 24/00596/FUL: Installation of a Vaillant Arotherm Plus 10kw air source heat pump (ASHP) to provide heating & hot water: The Gables, Leslies Drive, Willow Green, Otterburn, NE191HT: Mr Keay provide background to the application. After consideration the Councillors all agreed to support the application.
- b) 21NP0071: Barn Owl Lodge, Lodge 19, Otterburn Hall – The Clerk shared with the Councillors the details he had received from National Park Planning Authority advising that the appeal from the applicant for this

rejected application had failed and that the work to reverse the alterations were required to be completed by June 2024.

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 9 April, 2024 at Otterburn Memorial Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm.