

Draft minutes of Neasham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 1 July 2025, 6:30PM, in Neasham Reading Room

## **PRESENT**

C Bayes, C Chapple, B Crossen, G Crute, M Hannaford, K Sandick, L Tostevin, P Walters, Clerk J Walker, 2 Members of the public

## **ABSENT**

P Dunn, E Miller

## **25/050 - WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Councillors to the meeting. Apologies for absence were accepted from P Dunn, E Miller (both unwell).

## **25/051 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

## **25/052 - MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the of the Ordinary meeting held on 3 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **25/053 – PRESENTATION TO THE MEETING BY AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE**

Jamie Grant and Lee Davis Flood Resilience Community Engagement Officers for the Agency, introduced themselves and gave a presentation explaining that they were looking to build up a local group of volunteer flood wardens. This would not be an emergency service, but would be a two way line of communication between the Agency and the village with an agreed plan on courses of action “before, during and after” flood alerts. They would send out application packs for new volunteers. There would be a meeting on 15 October for all volunteers in the region including new recruits. M Hannaford enquired whether the agency would mark a gauge in one of the sluices which would assist in assessing the rise in water levels and was informed that it would be raised at an EA meeting

## **25/054 APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEERS TO SUPPORT THE CHAIR FOR THE YEAR 2025/26.**

It was previously confirmed that B Crossen would continue to act in the role of Asset Overseer. G Crute suggested that the role and scope of the overseers support needs to be reviewed and it was agreed to hold a special meeting immediately after the next ordinary meeting on 2 September.

## **25/055 VACANCY FOR CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

1. The current position is that the process is largely being led by Cllrs C Bayes and M Hannaford and although applications are being considered no appointment has been made.
2. G. Crute reported that following decisions at the Extraordinary meeting on 27 May and subsequent Recruitment Committee meetings, it will be necessary to update the present approved form of Clerk's Contract of Employment. It was resolved that Cllr Crute could make any necessary amendments required subject to approval by the Council's Chair.

## **25/056- PACT MEETING**

G Crute had attended the June meeting which had been held in the Reading Room. Traffic issues in the village had been referred to but there no further action that can be taken by the parish council. It was noted that the reminder for the meeting had only been sent out on the day of the meeting, which possibly is the reason for low attendance. There had been problems with parked cars in Hurworth and owners were being advised to ensure they were locked or garaged to prevent theft.

## **25/057 – ROADS AND FOOTPATHS**

1. L Tostevin confirmed that if Highways consider that any signs or marking can be installed to improve safety at the Dinsdale Park road junction, it will be carried out under the maintenance schedule later in the year.
2. A survey of suggested locations for the installation of dropped kerbs for improved accessibility throughout the village had been deferred because of involvement with the Duck Derby. This will be required as part of a submission to Darlington BC.

## **25/058 – ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

D Inch (Catchment Manager) had conceded repair is required to the safety fence running along to top of the east bank to Kent Beck and which they are looking to carry out any necessary repairs to the full length of the fence as soon as possible, hopefully in

the summer period. Neasham PC consider these repairs are an urgent safety requirement and will respond to Agency again if not carried out in the very near future,

## **25/059 – VILLAGE GREEN**

1. The plants and manure for the flower tubs had been purchased and were within budget and had been, planted up. Many thanks to Pam and Paul for arranging this, in particular to Paul for his work in planting. Also to Geoff and Liz Conlin for the watering of the tubs, particularly in view of the dry weather.
2. One tub had been vandalised and has been replaced and planted up by Paul.
3. Additional works had been proposed to the existing garden areas, although despite the drought they were looking relatively good, especially the rose garden. Approval for additional work to these areas had been given previously and this approval remained open if needed.
4. The “Duck Derby” event on 21 June on the Village had been a great success both in the raising of funds for the Reading Room and for the enjoyment for all attending.
5. One of the barrier posts preventing vehicular access to the green had been vandalised and which has now been replaced.

## **25/060 - PLANNING**

1. Applications received since last meeting:-  
25/00534/FUL Erection of attached garage at 2A Dibdale Road, Neasham DL2 1PF - **APPROVED**  
25/00191/FUL Conversion of former agricultural land and outbuildings to form educational and recreational facilities including new access road at Neasham Hall, Sockburn Lane, Neasham. - **APPROVED**
2. Decisions posted since last meeting: - None.

## **25/061 – RISK MANAGEMENT**

1. Scheduled Inspections due in May/June:- Duck Derby electrics pre- and post use (May/June), General Inspection of Electrics and Pat Testing (May/June). None required as no Neasham PC equipment used.
2. Two defects raised in May/June (Vandalised tub and broken barrier post) have now been closed.
3. Unfortunately no test certificate is available for the power supply to village green junction box, it was agreed to approach the water authority for copies of test certificates, regardless as to whether there would be a cost implication.

4. Risk management report for Q1 had been circulated.
5. The Vice Chair had inspected the defibrillator on 12 June as requested by the Circuit and confirmed that its status was "Ready", also that the pads were due to be replaced in November.

## **25/062 – FINANCE**

1. Previously approved payments made in June:- K Sandick (£26.89) Assembly Refresh etc, Neasham Nurseries (£403.20) Flowers for village tubs, Clerk (£575.42) Salary Q1, HMRC (£143.86) PAYE, Prefix Solutions (£15.95) Replacement tub, Neasham Nurseries (£24.00) Compost, Neasham Nurseries (£46.69) Additional flowers, Screwfix (£15.98) Concrete glue for monument, Eden Landscapes (£35.00) Replace barrier post.
2. The notice advertising the dates for the accounts being available for public inspection from 9 June to 18 July was posted on 8 June. Access is by appointment only.
3. We have received a letter from NS&I requesting our bank details in order that they can close the account and forward the balance to ourselves by BACS payment. The details have now been forwarded.
4. Finance Report for 1Q 2025/26 had been circulated.
5. The review of the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders has been deferred. until after the Autumn break. G Crute stated that the changes to the Standing Order would be minimal, but the Financial Regulations would be more extensive. It was agreed to defer these amendments until after the new clerk is appointed.
6. The clerk had contacted the local branch (CLCA) representing NALC for their invoice which has normally been received by now. Their response was that because of disappointing numbers attending their meetings they are having discussions as to whether they should continue and until that is resolved they will not be invoicing members. G Crute had attended several meetings and said that their location in East Cleveland would be discouraging to attendance. Regardless it would not a simple matter for them to discontinue as they were the local organisation representing NALC who would require a substitute local organisation to be in place.
7. The insurance cover renewal is due in September which will be the third and final year of the long term agreement. Enquiries for renewal should be looked at various companies in June/July 2026.

## **25/063 REACHING OUT, COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS**

The Chair stated that he hoped to have the first draft of the proposed village newsletter ready for September, final version October, printed in November ready for delivery first week of December. Suggested contents to date included history of the Reading Room including photographs, pictures from the Women's Institute who were an early user of the facilities, dedicated page for Reading Room, Flood Wardens, advertising for Bens Plants, Christmas events, plus any other subject agreed by the chair for inclusion. The unusual layout of the Reading Room with two front and two rear doors was explained, which was so that it could be readily converted into two properties if necessary.

## **25/064 – WARD COUNCILLOR MATTERS**

1. P Walters reported that the Government were carrying out a review on the representations on local councils with the numbers of councillors proportionate to the electorate in which they serve. It was also reported that the following events would be held in July at the South Park:- 6/07 Proms in the Park, 13/07 World Cultural event, 16/07 Gold Tea event (including free tea). There are also many upcoming events at Hopetown and suggested anyone interested should look at their website for the list of events.
2. L Tostevin reported that Sue Snowdon the County Durham Lord Lieutenant had been appointed as a Dame (DCVO – Dame Commander of the Royal Victoria Order). Darlington BC had commenced a Home Strategy Consultation investigating the need for more homes, standards etc. It was stated that Ben Houchen (Tees Valley Mayor) will be hosting a "Mayors Question Time" on Radio Tees in which he will take questions from the public for one and a half hour, the first of which will be on 23 July.

## **25/065 – CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Various emails from NALC regarding Chief Executive's Bulletin (12/06,19/06, 26/06), Events Newsletter (12/06,18/06). G Crute stated that it would be a good idea for the members to look to attending some of the NALC training courses.
2. Email from RECCC (18/06) – Cyber Threat May and (25/06) - Courier Threat Updates.

## **25/066 – OTHER VILLAGE MATTERS**

1. J Chapple had contacted P Allen regarding obtaining representation on the airport committee, who did not have the information to hand but would get back to him. L Tostevin stated she would follow this up. J Chapple felt it would be a good idea for Neasham to be represented because of the airport's huge development.

2. G Crute had identified errors on two members Register of Members Interests published on the Darlington BC website, which have now been corrected. There was an inconsistency on members response (some stating yes, some no) on ownership of property including private houses, to be clarified when next reviewed.
3. M Hannaford referred to the cherry tree in the verge that could affect the telephone wires above it and it was agreed that it was not dead and should be retained for as long as possible.
4. C Bayes raised the issue of the traffic approaching Teesway from New Lane with limited visibility of pedestrians walking along a footpath crossing the road unseen by the fast approach cars and asked if any warning notices could be installed. It was also suggested that "no barbeque" signs be installed on the village green. A further suggestion made was that the Reading Room Chair be invited to the next meeting to discuss co-operation in the forthcoming year.
5. B Crossen pointed out that there were two dog waste bins that were full and urgently required emptying, particularly the one adjacent housing.

## **25/067 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date of the next ordinary Parish Meeting is Tuesday 2 September 2025. The meeting concluded at 8.00pm.