

Minutes of Neasham Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 5 November 2024, 6:30PM, in Neasham Reading Room

PRESENT

B Crossen, P Dunn, M Hannaford, E Miller, K Sandick, L Tostevin, P Walters, Clerk J Walker

ABSENT

G Crute

24/097 - WELCOME

K Sandick welcomed Councillors to the meeting. Apologies for absence were accepted from G Crute (Unwell).

24/098 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

24/099- MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 1 October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

24/100 – VACANCIES ON PARISH COUNCIL

1. Unfortunately the parishioner who was interested in the filling vacancy on the council was unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that the clerk should inform the interested party that the members would be pleased to greet her at the December meeting.
2. The official notification advertising the vacancy on the parish council, arising from J Weighell's passing, had been posted 28 October, with the closing date for receipt of requests set as Monday 18 November 2024.

24/101 – PACT MEETING

L Tostevin and P Walters had attended the PACT meeting on 9 October in the Middleton St George although little of significance to Neasham had been discussed. The next meeting will be held in Hurworth on Wednesday.

24/102 – ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

1. L Tostevin reported that Highways had carried out the re-surfacing works to the Brass Castle/Dinsdale Park junction and that the overall appearance would probably improve when road markings done.
2. Re-instating road markings along the road from Dinsdale Park junction to Middleton St George are still outstanding, although it was thought that these may be carried out this week.

24/103 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Chair reported that the Agency's operatives had been spending a lot of time in the area of the village recently, but it was unclear what project they were working on.

24/104 – VILLAGE GREEN

1. P Dunn reported that the works to the Memorial Garden and adjacent area had been completed. This included including relocation of seats, with associated alterations to pavings and alteration of the rear upstand to the Memorial Garden bed. There was one plant growing through which they would replace at a later date. P and P Dunn were congratulated on an excellent job. The season end emptying the flower tubs has been carried out.
2. Trimming works to the leylandii around the pumphouse had been carried out by Miss Tree.
3. Replacement notice board for Low Dinsdale ordered in September, the clerk had contacted the supplier for an update on delivery date. The board has been manufactured and the awaiting delivery of the header, anticipated delivery of unit is week commencing 11 November.
4. The Chair agreed to remind the contractor about the removal of the Sockburn noticeboard.
5. It was agreed that the Chair's name be added as the contact on the floatation device and defibrillator (if required), the chair to provide the tags. The Chair also agreed to provide any necessary cover required for inspecting the devices whilst the regular volunteers are on holiday.

24/105 – PLANNING

1. Applications received since last meeting:-
None.

2. Decisions posted since last meeting:
None.
3. The Vice Chair had responded to an email from the Darlington BC Rights of Way officer requesting assistance in identifying ownership of a strip of land forming a footpath near Dinsdale Spa and advised him that their legal department should be in a position to help him with.

24/106 – RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Scheduled Inspections due in October:- Trees (the Vice Chair had reported that he had completed approximately 50% of the inspection), Planters (completed), Village Green (outstanding – the clerk agreed to forward hard copies of the inspection sheets to Councillors Crossen and Hannaford).
2. Although no defects had been raised in October, B Crossen reported that he had noted that vegetation was encroaching onto the floodbank footpath. Consideration was given as to whether individual residences could clear the path adjacent to their properties and it was agreed to review the matter at the February meeting to consider the alternatives.

24/107 – FINANCE

1. Previously approved payments made in October:- Clerk £28.30 (Stationary etc), R Heward £200.00 (Maintaining bridge verge), P Dunn £56.73 (Plants etc), Pretty Gardens £200 (Pavings & seats), Miss Tree £160.00 (Trim hedge).
2. M Hannaford had completed the Change of Mandate form to add him as an authorised signatory to the Barclay's bank account for the clerk to forward to the bank. Confirmation of identity will be required.
3. A further form had been received from NS&I requiring signatures from the proposed signatories to the account (K Sandick, M Hannaford, J Walker). Which was completed for forwarding to NS&I.
4. The clerk tabled a preliminary draft budget for initial discussion and invited members to forward any suggestions they wish to be included. The budget must be agreed at the December meeting in order to meet the December deadline required by Darlington BC for the submission of precept requests. The Vice Chair had suggested a stainless steel plaque in memory of J Weighell, but any decision was deferred to the December meeting when detailed proposals and costings could be presented.
5. The Chair reported that R Heward had offered to carry out the maintenance work to Kent Beck bridge verges for a further year at the same cost of £200 as the current year, which was accepted by the members.

24/108 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS ARISING FROM PASSING OF J WEIGHELL

1. Informing contacts of Neasham Parish Council of change of official address and other details including website is ongoing.
2. A request to HM Land Registry to amend address details in respect of K Sandick and M Hannaford has been submitted by the Vice Chair.

24/109 – REACHING OUT AND COMMUNICATION

1. The Order of Service for the Remembrance Day service on 10 November prepared by the Vice Chair together with notes on individual actions had been circulated and all participants were fully briefed on their involvement. Should the Vice Chair be unwell on Sunday, L Tostevin would look after dignatories and other duties re-arranged. It is hoped that the Vice Chair will have recovered by Sunday, but it was agreed to review the position on Friday.
2. The Chair reported that he not had the opportunity to discuss the arrangements for the Christmas event in detail with the Reading Room, but he was confident that it would be as successful as the previous year. His item of concern was the numbers that potentially could attend, following that success, and was planning to suggest an admission by ticket only arrangement to limit numbers to acceptable levels. The Chair was granted approval of a budget of £50 to purchase additional lighting for the village green.
3. The Vice Chair had indicated that he was satisfied with his input on Facebook and was pushing events on it.

24/110 – WARD COUNCILLOR MATTERS

1. L Tostevin stated that central government are passing a bill that requires local authorities to re-cycle food waste. In Darlington households will receive a food caddy to collect waste in the kitchen with a new style external food waste bin. This will be implemented by April 2026.
2. As the parish council had not received the consultation edition of the Darlington Borough Council - Council Plan 2024/27, the Vice Chair feels that it is important for members to examine the final document and be given the opportunity to comment at the December meeting and consider whether this issue should be raised with Darlington BC. L Tostevin agreed that it was unfortunate that no consultation had taken place, but future consultation documents would be circulated including the imminent document on Homelessness and Sleeping Rough.

3. L Tostevin reported that the Darlington BC will shortly have an amendment in their constitution that will require a DBS check to be made on councillors at a cost of approximately £20 per member which will probably be rolled out to include parish councils.

24/111 – CORRESPONDENCE

1. No NALC documents had been forwarded to Neasham PC since 18/09. When queried by the Clerk their local office confirmed that there had been a “mix up” in their filing system and they immediately forwarded the following NALC communications:- Setting Up a Youth Council, Example Notice of Re-Entry for Allotments, Newsletter, Chief Executive’s Bulletin (23/10, 24/10) all of which have been circulated to the members.
2. Email from Citizens Advice (14/10) with advice on scam awareness.
3. Emails from Point North:- Survey on grant application experience (15/10), News, Updates and Funding Opportunities (25/10).
4. Email from RECCC (22/10) setting out Economic and Cyber Crime advice.

24/112 – OTHER VILLAGE MATTERS

There were no other matters that members wished to raise.

24/113 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next ordinary parish meeting is Tuesday 3 December 2024. The meeting concluded at 7.38pm.

Minutes signed on 3 December 2024 by K Sandick