**WIDDRINGTON STATION & STOBSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL ZOOM MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8th March, 2021 COMMENCING AT 6.30. P.M.**

In attendance were Councillors Mrs M Willoughby (Chair), D Baron, K Batson, A Carrier, G Tate.

Northumberland County Councillor Scott Dickinson

Parish Clerk

**1.** **To receive apologies for absence**

 none

**2.To receive declarations of interest**

 Cllr Batson declared a non-pecuniary interest in regard to any matters relating to the Stobswood Welfare.

**3. Minutes of the Parish Council ZOOM Meeting held on the 8th February, 2021 for approval and adoption.**

Cllr Batson proposed to approve and adopt the minutes. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Baron and carried.

**4. Matters Arising on the Minutes**

none

 5**. Reports from Outside Bodies**

 Cllr Tate stated that he had attended a Major Incident Course and suggested that the Parish Council consider the formation

 of a Community Group to be available to assist with helping those affected if an incident occurred. Such a group had

 been referred to before and with those who had volunteered to assist with giving assistance during the Covid 19 Lockdown

 would be very useful. Further consideration would be given to the matter in due course.

 **6. Correspondence Received**

Letter from Citizens Advice Northumberland with a request for a donation.

 Reference was made to the time when the Citizens advice attended at the Widdrington Community Centre every Monday

 morning to be available to give advice to residents of the Parish. With the problems that had arisen with the Government’s

 Covid 19 Lockdowns etc it was considered appropriate for Citizens Advice Northumberland to be requested to consider

 providing further sessions perhaps one morning per month.

  **7. Planning Applications**

 a) Ref 20/04175/FUL Retrospective – Construction of porch to front of property, garage to side of property and

 construction of 1.85m high boundary fence at 51 East Acres, Widdrington Station, NE61 5NS Applicant Geoff Philips,

 notification received from NCC confirming permission granted.

. b) Ref 20/03884/FUL – works to provide a new enlarged convenience store to include a single storey extension, installation

 of plant and other external alterations at the Co-op and the Widdy Chippy Co-op Building, Grangemoor Road,

 Widdrington Station. Applicant M K SIPP Trustees UK Ltd, Notification received from NCC confirming permission granted.

 The Clerk reported that he had contacted Richard Laughton the Planning Case Officer for the application to express

 concern that the application had been dealt with in accordance with the NCC Planning Delegated Authority Process. The

 concern in regard to the position of the tenant of the Widdy Chippy was also raised. The Planning Officer stated that the

 Landlord and tenant situation was not a Planning Matter although the Landlord should be encouraged to endeavour to

 maintain the Fish and Chip Shop as an asset to the community and perhaps alternative accommodation should be

 offered. However, this matter was no reason to refuse the application. The Planning Permission gives the Co-op three

 years to carry out the approved works. County Councillor Dickinson stated that he had submitted a number of questions

 to the Planning Officer in regard to the application and was awaiting a reply. Cllr Mrs Willoughby had made

 representations to the Land Agents for the property since February 2020 when information became known that the Co-

 op had plans to enlarge the convenience store and the Landlords were requested to confirm if the Chip Shop business

 was going to be relocated and if so where in the village. No confirmation of the situation has been received from the

 Land Agents and further correspondence was issued to them on the 11th January, 2021 following reference to the Co-

 op plans in the Northumberland Gazette. Still no details in regard to the Fish and Chip Shop have been issued.

 **8. PCC, County and selected Parish Elections to be held on Thursday 6th May, 2021**

The Clerk advised that the Widdrington Station Community Centre had been booked to be used as a Polling Station. A

 timetable for the Local Government Elections had been received. The publication of the Notice of Election would be from

 Friday the 26th March, 2021. The Delivery of nomination papers to the Elections Officers can be made from Monday the

 29th March to 4.00pm on Thursday the 8th April, 2021 – the times and locations will be included on the notice of

 Election. Nomination Packs are available on the Northumberland County Council Elections Website.

 **29.**

 **9. Parish Council Events 2021.**

 **VE Day, VJ Day and Armed Forces Day Saturday 26th June, 2021**

Last year the 75th Anniversary of VE Day Event had to be postponed owing to the Covid 19 Government Restrictions. On

 Monday the 22nd February, 2021 the Prime Minister announced the Government’s roadmap that will see Covid 19

 restrictions eased over four steps, spread across at least four months that are linked to data which will act as a checklist

 that must be met before moving onto the next step of reopening. In regard to Step 4 which will be no earlier than the 21st

 June, 2021 the Government expects to be in a position to remove all legal limits. Large events with restricted capacity

 maybe allowed from the 17th May, 2021. The hire of the Marquee for the Community Park for the day has been booked

 together with P A, sound and Lighting Systems as well as a number of Entertainers provided by Station Entertainments.

 Cllr Mrs Willoughby stated that many in the entertainment industry have been hit very heavily on a financial scale during

 Covid 19 and the Government’s Restrictions with no bookings, no earnings and no entitlement to the Government’s

 furlough payments or benefit payments. Station Entertainments fall into this category and has had no financial help

 throughout the past year, therefore they are not in a position to make payments up front to the performing entertainers

 as normal. Cllr Mrs Willoughby therefore proposed that the Parish Council pay Station Entertainments invoice in the sum

 of £2,450.00 in advance with a clause that should the event have to again be cancelled the Parish Council will be

 reimbursed with immediate effect. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Batson and carried.

 **10. Parish Council and Community Centre Websites – items to be considered for inclusion.**

Cllr Carrier advised that he had received a request for details of the activities held at the ATAC – Area Training and Activity

 Centre located on the Mile Road, Widdrington Station should be included on the Parish Council Website. It was considered

 that the ATAC Website should be included as a link on the Parish Council Website in the same manner as other websites.

 Cllr Carrier confirmed that he was currently working on the new website for the Widdrington Station Community Centre

 which he would submit to the next Parish Council Meeting.

 **11. Finance**

 i) Parish Clerk’s financial statement – monthly update – Bank of Ireland Account Balance as at 28.02.2021 £63,190.00

 reconciled with Bank Account statement for February, 2021

 ii) Payments Approved by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council in accordance with the Covid 19 restrictions

 arrangements were issued to the Councillors with the meeting Agenda. (Details Attached)

 iii) 2020 Audit Report – Approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending the

 31.03.2020.

 At the Parish Council meeting held on the 14.12.2020 the Clerk reported that notification had been received from the

 Auditors dated the 29th November, 2020 stating that the Parish Council had submitted its Annual Governance and

 Accountability Return together with supporting documentation prior to the 30th November, 2020; however, the

 Auditors had not been able to complete the review work in time to enable the Parish Council to publish the required

 documentation in line with the statutory requirements. Once they have completed the review a final report will be

 provided with the certificate of completion detailing any qualifications and ‘other’ matters. It was further reported

 that the final review was still awaited. Information had been received from the Auditors that it was necessary for the

 Council to approve the details of the AGAR, therefore copies of the return had been included with the Agenda for the

 meeting.

 Cllr Mrs Willoughby proposed approval and was seconded by Cllr Carrier and unanimously resolved to approve as

 follows: -

 **Statement of Accounts, Annual Return for the year ended 31st March, 2020 and signed by the Chair**

 **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement**

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation

 of the accounting statements- **Yes** 2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness – **Yes** 3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or on its finances - **Yes** 4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations – **Yes** 5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required-**Yes** 6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems-**Yes** 7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit-**Yes** 8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements-**Yes** 9. Trust funds – the statements were not applicable to the Parish Council.

**Section 2 Accounting Statements for 2019/2020**

**Approved and Signed by the Chair of the Council**

 **30.**

**Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Elector’s Rights – Accounts for Year Ending 31st March, 2020**

The Clerk referred to the Prescribed Notice which was displayed on the Parish Council Notice Boards for the period 1st September, 2020 to the 12th October, 2020 giving the Parish Electors the right to inspect accounts on reasonable notice by application.

iv) **Widdrington Community Centre – Statement of Financial Accounts as at 28.02.2021 (Details attached to Agenda)**

The Clerk reported that Government Grants totalling £11,334.00 had been received during the course of the year in regard to Covid 19 restrictions preventing the Community Centre to be open.

The Bank Balance at the 31.01.2021 stood at £8,759.99 with income considerably reduced.

  **12. To consider any urgent business which shall be limited to circumstances in which the Council’s responsibilities**

 **cannot be met or the Council’s interests are likely to be prejudiced, if the business is deferred to the next**

 **available meeting.**

 The following matters were raised: -

 Condition of roadway at Stobswood and Mary Street re speed humps and opposite Grange Court Widdrington

 Station. Lack of dropped kerbs in regard to the new entrance off Grange Road for the Gleeson Housing Development.

 Speed Humps at School Crossing proper pedestrian crossing required to increase safety. Still speeding problems on

 the Mile Road. NCC Cllr Dickinson confirmed there had been an increase in complaints in regard to the road ways

 which were being looked at by officers. He also confirmed that a speed sign giving the speed of passing traffic is to

 be located on the Mile Road.

 Request for a financial contribution towards the cost of grass cutting and maintenance of the Graveyard at St John

 The Baptist Church, Ulgham received from Ulgham Parish Council which is to be considered at the next meeting to

 be held in April, 2021.

 **The Meeting Ended at 8.00 pm**

 **31.**