

WIDDRINGTON STATION & STOBWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL ZOOM MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14th December, 2020 COMMENCING AT 6.30. P.M.

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

3. Election of Chair and acceptance of Office until the next Annual Parish Council Meeting following the Local Council Elections to be held in May, 2021.

The Chair asked for nominations. Cllr Batson proposed Cllr Mrs Willoughby, the proposal was seconded by Cllr Carrier and resolved.

Cllr Mrs Willoughby accepted the office of Chair of the Parish Council.

4. Election of Vice Chair and acceptance of Office until the next Annual Parish Council Meeting following the Local Council Elections to be held in May, 2021.

The Chair asked for nominations. Cllr Mrs Willoughby proposed Cllr Batson, the proposal was seconded by Cllr Tate and resolved.

Cllr Batson accepted the office of Vice Chair of the Parish Council.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council ZOOM Meeting held on the 9th November 2020 for approval and adoption.

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

6. Matters Arising on the Minutes none

7. Reports from Outside Bodies none

8. Correspondance Received

a) Letter from NCC Cllr Scott Dickinson (attached to Agenda) Christmas Greetings Card and thanks to the Parish Council and community for the work carried out throughout the year, especially given the circumstances everyone finds themselves in with COVID. He really appreciates all the efforts on behalf of the community.

b) GP Recruitment for Widdrington Station Surgery. Details received from Michael Thewlis of the NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group in regard to work he is doing with Widdrington Surgery to help them recruit a GP Fellow (Details were attached to the Agenda)

The information was received and when appropriate details would be included on the Parish Council Website.

9. Planning Applications

a) Ref 20/02850/FUL Retrospective Planning Application: Construction of a garden shed and boundary fencing at Hazeldene, Grange Road, Widdrington Station, NE61 5LZ . Notification received from NCC Planning advising permission granted.

b) Gleeson Development proposed Car Park and Land for the proposed extension to the Widdrington Community Centre.

The response to the Parish Council's Formal Complaint to the Northumberland County Council's determination of the Gleeson Planning Application and the Section 106 Agreement had been included with the Agenda. The main feature of the response was that the Principal Planning Officer accepted that an oversight had arisen from ambiguous wording within the recommendation put to members of the NCC Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on the 4th February, 2020. Unfortunately, the resolution was not explicit in differentiating between the car park and the separate area of land to be gifted by Gleeson to facilitate the extension which they had allocated £70,000.

Solicitors acting for Gleeson had been instructed by them to draft the Section 106 Agreement and the legal parties for both Gleeson and the Northumberland County Council were not made aware of the discrepancy and were not instructed to include the gifted land within the drafting of the Section 106 Agreement. Unfortunately, as the decision on the application has been issued and the Section 106 agreed the oversight cannot be rectified stated the Principal Planning Officer who apologises that the situation has arisen, however with the right levels of communication between the Parish Council and Gleeson is hopeful that a mutual compromise can be reached. If the Parish Council are dissatisfied with the response there is the right to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 of the Northumberland County Council's Complaint procedure.

Disappointment was expressed at the response especially with reference to the Draft Section 106 Agreement and that at no time was the Parish Council requested to confirm that the details of the Draft Agreement were in accordance with Gleeson's commitments agreed at meetings held between the Council and representatives of Gleeson including the Public Consultation Meeting.

In view of the acceptance by the Principal Planning Officer that there had been an oversight from the ambiguous wording with the recommendation at the NCC Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on the 4th February, 2020 Cllr Mrs Willoughby proposed that the Parish Council's formal complaint proceeds to Stage 2 of the NCC Complaints procedure. Cllr Batson seconded the proposal which was duly carried unanimously.

- c) Development of the Land formerly occupied as Avala Park Residential Care Home, Mile Road, Widdrington Station. Cllr Mrs Willoughby reported that the Company who owned the land which they were to develop for residential dwellings had gone into Liquidation.

10. New Parish Council and Community Centre Websites.

Cllr Carrier had been making progress on the new Websites and gave a presentation. Cllrs and the Parish Clerk would require Parish Council email addresses, details of which would be forwarded. He was currently including photographs of the Parish Council Projects including the recently installed Bus Shelters and the Memorial Garden as well as the Christmas Tree and other projects. He was liaising with MorpethNet in regard to the transfer of details from the current Websites. Cllr Carrier was thanked for his work on the new Websites

11. Finance

- i) Parish Clerk's financial statement – monthly update – Bank of Ireland Account Balance as at 30.11.2020 £79,744.52 reconciled with Bank Account statement for November, 2020. Payment of £6,000 has been arranged by NCC Cllr Scott Dickinson from the Members Small Schemes Fund towards the cost of Play Equipment at the Widdrington Station Community Park
- 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.

At the last meeting the Clerk advised that the report and certificate was awaited from PKF Littlejohn External Auditors. The period for the issue of the report and certificate had been extended to the 30th November, 2020 by the Government's Covid 19 Regulations. 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.

- iv) Budget and NCC Precept for 2021/2022 Current year's Budget Statement and Expenditure had been issued with the meeting Agenda.

The budget for 2021/2022 was recommended to increase to £61,590 from the current year's budget of £58,870 together with a recommendation that £52,000 is levied on the Northumberland County Council for 2021-2022 an increase of 3.5% on the current year's precept. Any expenditure during the year in excess of the precept will be met by the Council's Bank Account Reserves. Although COVID 19 Restrictions have reduced the Parish Council's Events activities during the year it is hoped with the COVID 19 Vaccine roll out that normality will return by the Summer. Cllr Mrs Willoughby proposed that the recommendations are approved; Cllr Baron seconded the proposal which was carried.

13. 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.

Details had been received of an offer to provide a seat/bench at the Widdrington Community Park in memory of the Late Peter Davison Obrien who passed away in early March, 2020 and his best friend Alfred Dodds, who passed away in October, 2020. These Gentlemen helped the community of Widdrington Station in the late 70s and 80s by starting the Scout Group. The two of them brought the community together.

Cllr Mrs Willoughby proposed that permission is given for the seat/bench to be provided at the Community Park.; the proposal was seconded by Cllr Batson with the request that a picture of the seat is required and that the Parish Council Handy Person will assist with the installation.

Meeting closed at 8.00 p.m

The next ZOOM Meeting to be held on Monday the 8th February, 2021 commencing at 6.30 pm.

signed ----- Date-----

