

Woolsington Parish Council

Chairperson of the Council: George Pattison
Clerk to the Council: Andrew Richardson

39 Wellburn Road
Washington
Tyne & Wear

NE37 1BZ

Tel: 07791014441

woolsingtonpc@gmail.com

Minutes of Electronic meeting of Woolsington Parish Council held via Zoom on Wednesday 13th January 2021

Present: Councillor G. Pattison (Chair)
Councillors J. Couchman, A. Hay, B. Hunter, L. Kennedy, J. Littleton,
L. McGuinness, S. Pattison, J. Robinson, J. Sabarre, A. Thomas and
L. Wright.

In attendance: A. Richardson – Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

N/A.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 11 November 2020 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

Item 122: The Clerk provided an update with regard to the lease on the land next to the Galafield Centre. In order for WPC to relinquish the land, Property Services have advised it would take a deed of surrender that both parties would need sign and would require a council delegated decision. The City Council's Legal Services are progressing the documentation. This will initially be sent to the Clerk, however WPC may need to employ a solicitor.

4. Woolsington Parish Area Biodiversity Plan

Progress Report 2020/21

Cllr Couchman provided an update on the 2020/21 Biodiversity project. The Parish Council has accomplished most of its targets for this year despite all the issues associated with Lockdown, and all 4 primary schools have benefitted from underspend caused by delays to the Bedeburn and Bank Foot Projects.

Following a proposal at the last meeting that the Bedeburn underspend could be used for spring bulbs, despite enquiries, unfortunately this isn't possible due to no availability of bulbs and Grounds Maintenance very busy elsewhere.

On the plus side, two rowan trees have been planted in Callerton by Ground Maintenance.

Outline for 2021/22

Cllr Couchman provided some really positive news about Bluebell Dene and spring bulbs. Discussions have been held with Costain-Jacobs (main contractor for the A1 upgrade) following their offer to get involved with a community project. A site visit to the Dene was held, also attended by Cllr G Pattison and Cllr McGuinness. Costain Jacobs are keen to help with supply and planting, and a site on a slope close to the main footpath to Bankfoot metro has been selected, Costain Jacobs will provide the bulbs, mini daffodils, and a team of volunteers to plant in the autumn, with a date to be confirmed. Communications have also been held with Caroline Herbert at the Galafield, as this will provide the opportunity for community involvement.

An end of year financial statement will be presented at the next meeting, however to date the Parish Council has acquired in sponsorship for the Biodiversity Project, £1650 from Banks, Taylor Wimpey £500 twice, an estimated £2500 from Costain Jacobs for Bluebell Dene, plus also negotiated 10% discount on purchase of plants for the Parish from Cowells

Cllr Couchman requested a Woolsington Parish Council decision for restoration work at Bankfoot. Residents of Bank Foot have requested that the Plough that is situated in the middle of the bed at the bottom of Brunton Road is repaired. It is a central feature for the location and the hinges are damaged, and it is proposed that the cost is £50 is to come out of the 21/22 budget allocation. The members approved this decision. An update following a request from Members at the last meeting regarding the schools, letters have been received to confirm the Biodiversity plans from Cheviot, Simonside and St Marks, Farne to follow.

Parish Ponds Scoping Study

Cllr Littleton provided a summary and update of stakeholder discussions since the meeting in November, when it was agreed to ring-fence CIL funding for the removal of Water Soldier vegetation from the Parish Ponds. A variety of meetings have taken place with a number of interested parties and agencies, all of which have been extremely positive. These are:

- The Land Owners/Land Agent (Abbie Curtis), Northumberland Estates. Initial discussions with Northumberland Estates have been very positive and permissions are likely, subject to a method statement and risk management strategy being provided by the contractor.
- Newcastle City Council Planning raised no objections. The Ecology Team is fully supportive of the proposal as this would re-oxygenate the water, they would also require details of the method statement to be provided by the Contractor. Discussions would need to take around the use of bins, litter removal and fly-tipping, Cllr Hay has previous experience in litter cleaning projects, so hopefully this can be utilised.
- The Environmental Agency is very supportive of the Ponds Project subject to some clarifications about ecology.

The Ouseburn Corridor, has been nominated as one of 3 National Projects by the Environmental Agency, two others being the Upper Thames and Ilkley.

The Ouseburn Corridor project is to be shaped and monitored by the use of a Citizens' Jury, the Jury being chosen from community members from the catchment area. This is excellent news for Woolsington Parish Council, it implies that the Environmental Agency will be investing considerable funding in Woolsington Parish. The Ouseburn has been selected because of its issues with flooding risk, pollution, agricultural run-off, litter and fly tipping, flooding and large-scale housing development in its upper areas. The Environmental Agency has expressed interest in the Parish Ponds Project as it will help deliver some of the objectives of the Ouseburn scheme. Cllr Littleton and Cllr Couchman have been invited to provide input at the Citizens' Jury meeting in January 2021 to consider the adoption of the Ponds Project and make recommendations.

If successful, the Parish Ponds Project would be endorsed as a deliverable in the Ouseburn scheme and this could lead to significant funding opportunities. Advice from the Environmental Agency was to undertake Community Consultation, which has started and the response has been overwhelming and very positive.

Cllr Robinson queried the questionnaire and how this has taken place, Cllr Littleton advised via social media, email, WPC website, leaflets in Galafield Centre and also face to face interviews at the Ponds. Cllr Sabarre asked about the responses, Cllr Littleton advised 125 responses have been received up to now.

Cllr McGuinness advised that she had already completed the questionnaire, and encouraged other members to do so.

- Northumbrian Water have also expressed interest, as the potential for improved access to waterways is one of the prime objectives for its current priority programme.

- Action for Children, in partnership with New Writing North and Newcastle City Council Arts Development Team, are applying to the Arts Council to fund an ambitious community development project in Newbiggin Hall, this is to be led by Caroline Herbert at Galafield.

It has been identified that Social Prescribing and community-based activities are currently underdeveloped in this locality. The Newbiggin Hall Thriving Communities Partnership aims to increase the range of social prescribing opportunities available locally for children, young people and adults through a programme of activities strongly rooted in the community e.g., activities based around fresh air and exercise, art, poetry, study of nature, learning about conservation and biodiversity. This fits with the aspirations to transform the Galafield Centre into a vibrant multi-functional hub.

Their views are that Biodiversity Project, in particular the Parish Ponds Project, presents opportunities to support social prescribing outcomes, given that one of the main deliverables of Social Prescribing is biodiversity and nature (known as Green Prescribing)

In summary, the WPC Biodiversity Project and Ponds Project are now included in scope of the Newbiggin Hall Thriving Communities Partnership. This is excellent news for the Newbiggin Hall Ward and the Parish as hopefully it will lead to funding and jobs.

- An expression of interest letter has been received from the Executive Head of Farne and Cheviot Schools of which he is fully supportive of the Ponds Project, in which it mentions the Ponds provide a vast educational opportunity for both formal and informal study, across the school, there could be links to the Ponds Project from Early Years to the whole school age range, looking at sustainability and biodiversity. This is excellent news as it's a school commitment to include working with the Parish Council on Biodiversity and conservation in their curriculum, which would utilise the Parish Ponds as an outdoor working location.
- Four specialist contractors have been approached, with two responses up to now, both in budget, Aquatic Solutions quotation looking favourable. Cllr Littleton outlined what the next steps were.

5. Planning Matters

The Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest and left the meeting for the following planning items.

The Clerk provided an update on planning applications received which had previously been circulated to members.

Redlands Main Road.
 12 Woolsington Park South.
 10 Woolsington Park South.
 Peel House Main Road.

6. Police Update

The Clerk read out a written update around crime and anti-social behaviour which had been provided by Northumbria Police for the month of December.

20 incidents in the Callerton Ward.
 45 incidents in the Woolsington & Bankfoot Ward.
 164 incidents in Bedeburn/Newbiggin Hall Wards.

7. Financial Matters / Accounts for Payment

Approval was given to the following payments, itemised in the Report of the Clerk circulated with the papers for the meeting –

Clerk Salary	December/January	£	748.80
HMRC	December/January	£	187.20
PFK Littlejohn – External Audit		£	360.00

For Information purposes only as already approved via Biodiversity Project: -

NCC Environmental Services	£	420.00
----------------------------	---	--------

For Information purposes only as agreed at previous meeting: -

Action for Children's Services	£	9217.00
PLAYin NEWCASTLE	£	8671.00
St Marks RC Primary	£	800.00

The Clerk shared the financial statement document and estimated budget to enable members to set an appropriate precept.

It was Resolved: That the Precept for the financial year 2021/2022 be set at £20,000

8. Any Other Business

Cllr S. Pattison updated the members on the “Ask for ANI” (Action Needed Immediately) codeword scheme developed by the Home Office to provide a discreet way for victims of domestic abuse to signal that they need emergency help.

Cllr S. Pattison also alerted the members to some homophobic abuse that had been occurring in the West Thorp area, YHN and the police were involved which resulted in the victims being removed their home.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 10th March 2021 at 6.30pm online via Zoom.

Chairman

Date