

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting, Great Ayton Parish Council

Held in the Friends' Meeting House on Tuesday 12th April 2011 at 7.00 pm

Business

1. Chairman's Welcome and Report
2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Councillors' Attendance
5. Guest Speakers
6. The Trod
7. Any Other Business

Present

Cllr R Kirk - Chairman, Mrs J Imeson, Mrs F Greenwell. J Fletcher and D Conroy.

County Councillor Mrs H Moorhouse, Clerk to the Parish Council – Ms J Cumbor.

Guest Speakers - Insp S Sanderson and Sgt S Wilson, Mrs C Loftus (Resident), Ms A Thirkill (Esk Valley Railways Development Company) and Mrs J Roberts (Resident).

13 Electors and Ms B Dumphy (Darlington & Stockton Reporter).

Apologies

Cllr G Readman and Cllr N Waters.

1. Chairman's Welcome and Report

Cllr Kirk welcomed people to the Meeting and advised that they would be given the opportunity to speak later in the Meeting.

Cllr Kirk provided a review of activities the Parish Council have been involved with during the last year, these included:

- A successful Fete with a larger turnout of stalls than seen for a few years.
- Despite the weather the Christmas tree was erected successfully, the Carols went ahead and Santa toured the Village - events were well supported.
- Work continues in partnership with Hambleton District Council (HDC) concerning the battle against dog fouling. At times this seems not too bad and then it returns. It has proved difficult catching dogs in the act. Cllr Kirk commented he had never seen any fouling without someone picking up. A plea was made to the Public to report any incidents to Hambleton District Council to help reduce the problem.
- Seat benches and railings have been painted.
- The Parish Council had successfully campaigned North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to improve the footpath between Easby Lane and Suggitt's field.
- The Environment Agency (EA) and the Parish Council were actively working together to implement flood relief measures, work had already started at the Riverside to build a flood storage area. A Property Protection Scheme, for properties susceptible to flooding, would be administered

by the Parish Council, funded by the EA.

- The Parish Council were very grateful to Howard Atkinson for looking after the Cemetery, the Greens and parks and in general helping to keep the Village tidy.

The Parish Council continue to be active on a regular basis with many things on going. Other Agencies were being engaged and involved to help do things for the benefit of the Village.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 13th April 2010 were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Flood issues Roseberry Crescent

Mr P Greenwell asked what was happening in relation to flood relief measures for Roseberry Crescent. The Parish Council stated that Northumbrian Water Board had been planning a water storage area on Cleveland Lodge land, however matters seem to have gone quiet and it was felt they perhaps had a funding issue in relation to the scheme especially in the present economic climate.

4. Councillors' Attendance

Thirteen regular Parish Council Meetings had been held since the last Annual Parish Meeting and three other Meetings. Attendance was as follows:- Cllr. Kirk 13 +1, Cllr. Mrs. Greenwell 12 + 3, Cllr. Mrs. Imeson 9 + 2, Cllr. Fletcher 9 + 2, Cllr. Waters 8 + 2, Cllr. Readman 12 + 2 and Cllr. Conroy 13 + 3.

5. Guest Speakers

5.1. Police

Insp Sanderson advised that following reduction in Central Government spending the local Police had been reshaped; in doing so the main considerations were to protecting frontline services and ensuring the best possible service was delivered to the Public. This has resulted in Stokesley Police Station now been open 24/7 and new shift patterns. The Public were advised they would see more Officers, at key times, tackling issues before they become problems.

Great Ayton would be serviced by PC William Goldburn, PC Kat Iveson, PC Alistair Gill, PC David Bowley and PCSO Jason Lloyd. The Village would also have access to Sgt Simon Wilson (Lead for Northallerton and Stokesley problem solving); Sgt Neil Foster (driving performance dealing with cross border crime and arrests), PC Glyn Jones and PC Michelle MacFarlane are the dedicated Safer Neighbourhood Beat Managers who will also hold a long term strategic view to problem solving. Insp Sanderson advised that PCSO Jason Lloyd would attend future Parish Council Meetings and when not available they would send a report should another Officer be unable to attend.

Crime figures for the Year April 2010 to March 2011 showed a decrease of 20.1% in crimes, i.e. down from 289 to 231 from the previous year. The Police would strive to reduce the crime further using the additional shift patterns and direct patrols. Operation Wagtail would concentrate on rural and cross border crime

Cllr Fletcher commented that the Great Ayton Problem Solving Group in Great Ayton, made up of The Parish Council, the County Councillor, Broadacres, HDC, the Youth Service and the Police was proving to be very useful in finding out where things were happening and how to deal with the issues. Insp Sanderson said she was pleased with the activities of the Group and continued to support this.

Cllr Kirk thanked the Police for their attendance.

5.2. Great Ayton Railway Station Project

Mrs Loftus and Ms Thirkill presented information relating to aspirations to set up a Friends of Great Ayton Station Group to tidy up the Station area and improve parking. The initial impetus had come from local residents to the Station who had hoped also to purchase a piece of land at the side; unfortunately the owner's price is unaffordable. Willing volunteers from the Community were sought to assist with some of the work and grants from Esk Valley Railway and Northern Rail would be sought.

Ms Thirkill stated Esk Valley was keen to help Communities improve their Stations plus they were campaigning to increase services. It was confirmed Esk Valley were keen to assist Great Ayton and could consider match funding to other grants and volunteer labour provided.

Mrs Loftus advised that a notice board had been designed for the Station that would have information relating to the facilities in the Village, history of the Village and maps of walks in the location. Funding was being sought to make this and erect at the Station. She was keen to receive responses from the Community on what things they would like to see being done at the Station.

The Parish Council and Cllr Mrs Moorhouse confirmed their support for the Project. The Parish Council stated they may be able to assist with funding and finding sources; the Clerk was asked to put this item on the next Agenda of the next Parish Council Meeting for discussion.

Cllr Kirk thanked Mrs Loftus and Ms Thirkill for their presentation. Leaflets and contact details were supplied.

5.3. Save Great Ayton Library Group

Mrs Roberts advised that the Save Great Ayton Library Group were presently waiting to hear from NYCC regarding the results of the Consultation and their review of the situation. In the meantime the Group had continued to be active; three members had attended a Meeting with NYCC to explore the opportunities for a formal joint venture between NYCC and the Great Ayton Community to keep the library open with the view of improving and increasing services and facilities. Mrs Roberts stated the Group did not intend to take on the responsibility of running the library services, these should continue to be provided by NYCC. The Group would look at opportunities for income streams and volunteers to support improvements to the services. Efforts were being made to protect library personnel.

The Spring Edition of The Stream will contain an article about the Save Great Ayton Library Group activities and also a tear off slip for people to complete and return to Members of the Group. The Group's website continued to be updated and a notice board had been allowed in the Library. A further Public Meeting would be planned for May, possibly in the Library.

On behalf of the Group Mrs Roberts expressed thanks to all that had provided support, comments and assistance including the Group who produced The Stream.

Cllr Moorhouse advised that NYCC were listening to the comments and Great Ayton had made a difference.

Cllr Fletcher thanked Mrs Roberts for the update and said progress was heading in the right direction.

Mrs Roberts took the opportunity to thank Cllr Mrs Imeson for her loyal service to the Village as a Councillor for the last 41 years. She went on to say Cllr Mrs Imeson had always had the best interests of the Village at heart and would be greatly missed.

6. The Trod

Cllr Kirk advised that at a Meeting in October 2010 a small deputation of Residents from Wheatlands had attended regarding the anti social behaviour along the Trod and requested that this be closed. The Parish Council had advised that it is very difficult to close a Public Right of Way, they agreed to start a process of investigation with NYCC; this was done and details passed back to the Group. The Parish Council had also stated that they could not support a decision until the wider views of the Village had been sort and a vote taken; a commitment was made to put the item on the Agenda of the Annual Parish Meeting.

There were no representatives from the original Group at the Meeting, although Mr Morgan who lives close by was in attendance. Mr Morgan stated that the original footpath had been diverted on a number of occasions in the past and that the Residents would like the remaining part of this to be diverted through Wheatlands; which is the route the majority of people use. He went on to state that he felt the Trod did not show the Village in a good light due to the litter and dog fouling along the path. Cllr Mrs Greenwell stated she had instigated a large clean up in October and had regularly cleared litter since then, the path seemed to be nowhere near as bad as it had been; she went on to say that she believed it was a nice path and didn't want to see it closed. Mr Morgan said he felt the Residents were also picking up litter.

The Parish Council reiterated previous advise to the Residents that anti social behaviour should be reported to the Police so that history of such activity could be gathered, without this a closure could not even start to be considered.

Mr Brook commented that whilst the Trod had been appalling at one time, it didn't seem as bad now as it was; he felt that it was a pretty little path and perhaps the situation could be improved if it was opened up (i.e. greenery cut back) to make it lighter and activities more visible.

The Parish Council felt that a vote was not relevant seeing as the original Group of Residents were not present. It was pointed out that no decision could have been made at this Meeting only a commitment to take the results of a vote, comments and points back to the regular Parish Council Meetings.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Village Hall

Mr Bell questioned the expenses incurred on the refurbishment of the Village Hall, the original budget, the Hall's future viability and when would it be finished; he went on to say that it was a white elephant and should have been flattened or sold. Cllr Kirk stated that the original budget was £75,000 and to date £41,000 had been spent with a further £10,000 due to be spent. The Parish Council had successfully obtained grants of £9,000 towards the work. Responding to a question

regarding disabled access Cllr Kirk advised that a ramp had been put at the back of the Hall but ramps from the front were not possible due to space, a lift would need to be put at the front on the right hand side and this would cost an additional £15,000.

Cllr Mrs Greenwell said that when the future of the Village Hall was discussed it had been decided that it would be used for the Youths as they were not welcome at other Halls within the Village. Great Ayton has an anti social behaviour problem and it was felt those disaffected need to have some where to go. The Parish Council felt it was incumbent on them to address this issue. Discussions with NYCC and Broadacres concerning a Youth Club were being held; although this might initially be for a younger age group it was hoped this would help discourage anti social behaviour as they grew older. NYCC would assist with some funding for the Club.

Cllr Kirk advised the Drama Group were already using the Hall, although the work on the Hall would not be complete for a couple of months. He also stated that the Village Hall was part of the Village heritage which some wished to retain.

7.2 Public Conveniences & Precept

Mrs Roberts stated she was pleased to see that the Parish Council would be taking over the Public Conveniences and these would not be closed. She felt it was important to keep these open given the volume of tourists and cyclists that visited the Village all year; she for one didn't mind pay a little more in Council Tax through the Parish Precept to keep this open.

Mr Morgan asked if the Village had been victim to the passing down of council rates from the County and District Councils. Cllr Kirk stated this was not the case the toilets would have closed if the Parish Council had not decided to take this over. Mr Morgan agreed he felt it was important to keep them open.

7.3 Snow Plough

Mr Bell asked if the rumours that Great Ayton would be getting a snow plough for the paths were correct. The Parish Council confirmed that this was not correct and the clearing of snow from the paths was the responsibility of NYCC.

Retirement of long serving Parish Councillor

Cllr Kirk stood up to recognize Cllr Mrs June Imeson. It was said that June will be retiring after 41 years of phenomenal service. During this time she had also been a Councillor for NYCC, HDC and North York Moors National Park as well as being involved with various Charities and Trusts. June was a valued Councillor with great influence all around the Village. She was instrumental in starting the traditions that still happen today, i.e. the Fete, Carols and Santa Tour, it is hoped her legacy with these events will live on. It would be wrong to say June's commitment has been second to none; it has been 100 to 0. June has been the "Big Society" her whole life, giving everything to the Village and Community; she is greatly valued by all.

Grateful thanks were given to June on behalf of the Community along with a flower arrangement.

Cllr. Kirk thanked everyone for attending and declared the Meeting closed.