

Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd February 2014 held at Gayle Institute at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs J Blackie (Chairman), Mrs S Alderson, Ms D Allen, Ms A Caygill, A Fawcett, Ms CM Grainger, W Head, Mrs S Mason KM Nugent, A Sunter

In Attendance: Mr I King (Clerk), Ms Martha Holmes (Yorkshire Energy Partnership), the Rev. Janet Park and two members of the public

Apologies: Cllr S Hunter

1. **The Minutes of the Meeting of 13th January 2014 were accepted as a true record, and signed by the Chairman. There were no Matters Arising.**

2. **Oil Richmond**

The Chairman introduced Martha Holmes, and asked her to address the meeting. She explained that Oil Richmond is a Heating Oil Co-operative joint venture between the Yorkshire Energy Partnership (YEP) and Richmondshire District Council (RDC). Oil Clubs have already been established in Patrick Brompton and the Reeth area, and they are keen to set up more in any interested localities.

Oil users are asked to register with YEP (oilrichmond@energypartnership.co.uk or phone 01904 545 020) which will then co-ordinate ordering to benefit from bulk buying savings. The Partnership takes a 1p per litre referral fee from the supplier to pay its costs. This is a year-long project, after which local people will take over the running of the co-operative. She anticipates savings of up to 5p per litre for individual consumers. Gas oil and Aga additives can also be included.

3. **Chairman's Items**

a. **24/7 Consultant-led maternity and children's services at The Friarage Hospital**

The Chairman tabled Richmondshire District Council's report, suggesting alternatives to the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) radical downgrading of services at the Friarage, which are universally hugely unpopular throughout the Upper Dales. This was based on extensive research on hospital services in remote rural areas of the South West of England and in Scotland.

The report has been backed by local MP, the Rt Hon William Hague, who wants the local CCG to make it work. Cllr Blackie described two occasions on which he had tried to alter the timing of a meeting by 30 minutes with the CCG, and, on both occasions they had been totally uncooperative.

Cllr Blackie believes that the CCG is doing everything it can to block any alternatives to its own proposals, and that its corporate mind is firmly made

up. The decision will be made at a meeting on February 27th, which will be addressed by Cllr Blackie.

b. Tour de France update

Cllr Mrs Mason said that she had little to add since the last meeting. Due to lack of commitment the Committee has decided to set up a "Food Court" area near Bear Interiors at the top of the Market Place rather than have a long table running down its length.

Cllr Blackie confirmed that all the income and payments for Tour de France events organised by the local Committee would go through the Parish Council books so that they would be properly accountable, and there can be no possibility of paying out more than the funds we hold in the Parish Council bank account for them.

c. Play Park Toddler area

The Chairman confirmed that orders had been placed for the surfacing, fencing and contract work by Mr P Iveson, and that the project was well within its budget of £8000.

The meeting authorised an interim payment of £500 to Cllr K Nugent for his work on the project and the construction of the Play Hut. He confirmed that he has negotiated a 5 year warranty on the blue safety surfacing.

It is anticipated that the Toddler Area will be completed by the beginning of March, and that there will be an official opening to which Mr / Mrs Hayhurst and representatives of the Fagg Family will be invited.

d. Consultation by the YDNPA on introducing a delayed Article 4 Direction on Barn Conversions to commercial use and dwellings

The Chairman explained that the Government is trying to liberalise planning conversions of rural agricultural barns to either commercial use or for dwellings, this including all National Parks. This has the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) up in arms, and it is proposing an Article 4 Direction which would require that planning permission is still needed despite the initiative launched by the Government.

This needs full public consultation, and directly contradicts the Government's initiative. The Council felt that barn conversions for either commercial use (such as an ice cream parlour) or for housing would be of benefit to local people and businesses.

Cllr Fawcett felt that the YDNPA's proposal indicates the total lack of trust that the Authority has in local people. He commented that nobody wants the remote fellside barns to be developed, but roadside barns are lying unused and derelict when they could have a useful purpose. There is a desperate need for affordable housing for local people, and barns could usefully be developed for family members.

Council resolved to formally strongly object to the Article 4 Direction, and delegated its Chairman, Cllr Blackie, to formulate its response. He undertook to circulate this to the Council members before its submission.

e. Hawes Methodist Church

The Chairman invited the Rev. Janet Park to address the meeting. She said that the Hawes Chapel will close after its last service on April 27th. There is a lot of local concern, but it really is not viable, attracting a congregation of only 12-15 people.

The main community concern, however, is the War Memorial. The Church Organ was installed as a result of public subscription in 1923 and there is a brass plaque recording it as being

"In grateful memory of the men of this town and neighbourhood who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-1918".

The organ itself can be relocated to another church by the Methodists themselves, but they would like the plaque to remain on public display in Hawes. The Council reacted favourably to this idea and it was felt that there should be widespread public consultation on the form and location of a new War Memorial for Hawes. Funding may be forthcoming from the War Graves Commission or the British Legion.

It would be appropriate for the plaque to be displayed somewhere local on a temporary basis (eg the Upper Wensleydale Community Office) while the consultation progresses.

f. Modernising / Streamlining the work of Hawes & High Abbotside Parish Council (Phase 2)

The Chairman had emailed the Councillors with a proposal to modernise and streamline the Council's workload. This included:

■ the reduction of the number of Council meetings from 12 to 8 per year - continuing as the first Monday of the month in January, February, March, September, October and November each year with another two, one in mid May and one in late June or early July. There would be no scheduled meetings in April, August or December.

■ As now, there is always the possibility of calling an emergency meeting should the need arise.

■ The Council would improve its use of email communication to keep Councillors in touch with any developments between meetings, which would reduce the number of routine items needed to be added to meeting Agendas.

■ Meetings would be strictly timed to last no longer than 2 hours, finishing at 9.15pm, unless there was an imperative public interest to prolong discussion.

■ Cllr Blackie suggested that this would only work if there is some additional delegation to himself as Chairman to act executively, but only on matters of routine or consultation where he would be clear that he knows the views of the Parish Council.

■ He said that if these proposals were to be accepted they could start with the March 2014 meeting; and that it should be on a one year trial basis.

Cllr Nugent expressed his concerns, feeling that the additional delegation to the Chairman might dilute the role of the Council as a whole. He was also concerned with the increased reliance on electronic means of communication, feeling that discussions are better face to face rather than by email.

Cllr Head felt that reducing the number of meetings from 12 to 8 is not "democracy in action". While understanding the Chairman's need to reduce his workload he thought that some meetings could continue with the Vice Chairman officiating, and that local residents expect monthly meetings to represent their views.

Cllr Blackie pointed out that the Council had cancelled three meetings in the past year, and this had not seemed to affect the democratic process. Very few Parish Councils meet monthly.

A Resolution to adopt these reforms for a trial period of 12 months from March 2014 was passed with 8 Councillors voting in favour and Cllrs Nugent and Head opposing.

Also agreed that the Parish Council's Office Hours should be altered - the Parish Clerk (Ian King) or a Councillor will be available in the Upper Wensleydale Community Office on Tuesdays from 2 - 3pm and on Fridays from 11am - noon.

4. Chairman's Roundup

- a. **Notice Boards.** It was agreed that the Parish notice boards at Hardraw, Appersett and Simonstone should be replaced.
- b. **Bus Services.** Cllr Blackie reported that the County Council had proceeded to cut local bus services in spite of the public consultation process. It was hoped that the community bus service might help with early morning services to enable people to attend the GP Surgery in Hawes.

c. Highways Items

The Clerk read out a reply from the Highways Department to the list of issues raised at the last meeting. It was noted that the white lining at Cockett's Hotel has been completed although I appeared the Highways Office was unaware of this.

With regard to the raised footpath and wall on the Hawes side of Haylands Bridge, the Department had denied that this was part of the publicly maintained highway, but local Councillors disagreed, claiming that former Parish and County Councillor Dr King had donated the land to the County Council.

NYCC Corporate Director for Highways, David Bowe, had not been able to attend this meeting in response to the Council's invitation, due to a prior engagement. He had emailed the Clerk asking for the opportunity to discuss the Parish Council's concerns on the telephone to decide the most appropriate person to attend.

Councillors summed these up as:

- wanting to discuss why we are not receiving the right level of service
- the lack of engagement between the Highways Department and local Councils
- highways issues relating to the Tour de France
- why the Council regularly submits a list of Highways items which are repeated month after month while little is resolved.

The Clerk agreed to transmit these to David Bowe. He also agreed to inform the Department of the poor state of the repaired road surface at Brunt Acres, which is already lifting.

d. Police Issues

The Clerk had circulated a Police Update from Inspector G Crocker. It was noted that there is now a problem of trail bikes parking outside the Penny Garth Café and photographic evidence will be passed to the appropriate authority.

5. YDNPA Planning Applications

R / 48 / 51d Staggs Fell Cottage, Simonstone – Full planning permission for the installation of a staircase and upper floor, and changes to window and door arrangement on North and South elevations. **Supported.**

6. YDNPA Planning Issues

- a. GTEC Building, Upper Wensleydale Business Park. A local resident, Ian Woolley, had called into the Community Office at the end of

January. Cllr Ms Grainger had recorded his complaint and this was now brought to the Council. He had written to the YDNPA Planning Department, received an acknowledgement but nothing further. He sent a reminder in late December and, again, received an acknowledgement but nothing afterwards in response to his complaint.

The Chairman confirmed that the NPA's standing rules require a definitive response to a letter within two weeks. Mr Woolley is concerned that the original plans for the GTEC Building included the planting of shrubbery on the South side to act as a screen. No planting has yet been started. He hoped that the Council would pursue this matter. **Agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr Richard Graham, YDNPA Head of Development Management, deploring the failure of his department to respond adequately to correspondence and to chase up the missing planting.**

- b. Discussion on the YDNPA call for the identification of possible development sites within the Parish was deferred until the March meeting.

7. Correspondence

- a. **YDNPA** - Offer of the chance to invite a member of the Authority Member to attend a meeting of the Parish Council. **Agreed that the invitation should be extended.**
- b. **Hawes Cricket Club** - The Cricket Club has a new Committee with interesting ideas, and had written to the Chairman appealing for a donation. **Agreed unanimously to donate £250.**

8. Any Other Business

- a. Cllr Ms Caygill reported that the streetlight by the Bus Shelter in Little Ings, Gayle, is not working. Cllr Head confirmed that this has been reported on at least four occasions, and it was surmised that the contractors are awaiting a part.
- b. Cllr Mrs Alderson requested that the Keep Clear signs by Dyers Garth be repainted. She also reported there is a big hole in the road at the entrance to Busk Farm on the Gayle to Kettlewell road - there is water coming out of a pasture further up and it is running down the road and causing the road to be washed away.
- c. Cllr Sunter reported that a hole has appeared on Shutt Lane, the road up to Sedbusk. Water is flowing under the wall, which is under threat.

Clerk to report all the above items to the appropriate authorities.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.