

Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of 6th July 2015 held at Gayle Institute at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs J Blackie (Chairman), Mrs S Alderson, Ms D Allen, G DiDuca, A Fawcett, S Hunter, Mrs A Rhodes, A Sunter, I Woolley.

In Attendance: Mr I King (Clerk), Amy Ellis (NYCC Highways Customer Communications Officer, Area 1 - Richmond), Sharon Fox (same job for Ryedale), Kathryn Beardmore (Director of Park Services, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority), Fiona Rosher (DCM Manager), and 31 members of the public.

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Ms A Caygill and B Fawcett.

1. The Minutes of the Meeting of 27th April 2015.

Cllr Di Duca said that he had not made the observation in Minute 4 “that the footpath through the graveyard was often used by employees of the Wensleydale Creamery”. **Subject to this amendment the Minutes were accepted as a true record, and signed by the Chairman. There were no Matters Arising.**

2. Highways

Amy Ellis, NYCC Highways Customer Communications Officer, was introduced by the Chairman and welcomed to the meeting. She said her role was to be the first point of contact between the Richmondshire Highways Office and the 83 Parish Councils in the District. She felt this was best delivered by her going out to meet the Parish Councils and she had chosen Hawes & High Abbotside as her first outing. After vividly describing a day in the life of a busy Highways office she then answered questions before there followed a discussion on the perennial highway issues raised by Councillors.

These included the dangerous overhanging trees at Haylands Bridge, the poor condition of the road junction of Gayle Lane with the A684, the overgrown vegetation on the A684 at its junction with the Hardraw road in Appersett which prevents proper visibility for drivers turning towards Hardraw. The Chairman, Cllr. John Blackie reminded the meeting a motor cyclist had lost his life here some years ago directly because of this poor visibility.

The salt store at the Auction Mart was raised and dealing with the problem is to be resolved before winter to ensure that salt does not continue to leach into the environment. The Keep Clear signage at Dyer’s Garth will be repainted soon and it was noted that it is 3 years since the Council reported the poor condition of the road lining where the one-way cobbles section of the A684 meets the Market Place.

A repeated request was made for slippery road signs by the ford at Gayle as 5 motorcyclists had fallen into the river recently whilst crossing it. A suggestion of a 20mph speed limit along Burterset Road was made and Amy responded there is no funding for new speed limits but a Speed Concern form could be completed on the NYCC website.

There is an actionable issue on Gayle Old Lane at its junction with The Wynd, but this is awaiting resolution with utility companies. It was noted that there are some potholes in the Market Place from the Crown Hotel to Bear Interiors, and that the Keep Clear signs there need refreshing. The Chairman repeated again a request that the Disabled Bays in the Penny Garth Car Park needed repainting, and he would pursue this with both NYCC and Richmondshire DC.

3. Dales Countryside Museum

The Chairman, Cllr. John Blackie, had invited Kathryn Beardmore (Director of Park Services) and Fiona Rosher (DCM Manager) to discuss the proposals from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) to open a café in the Dales Countryside Museum (DCM). Many members of the public who were present had come to express their opinion on this development.

The Chairman said that he would be abstaining from any vote on the issue at this meeting because it was likely to lead to a planning application he would need to decide in his role of member of the Planning Committee at the YDNPA. Despite owning a Café / Bistro / Tea Room in the centre of Hawes he had been advised by the Solicitor at the YDNPA he was allowed to participate in the debate at the Planning Committee if and when a Planning Application comes forward.

Cllr. Blackie said that the proposals had first arisen in 2008 and had generated a lot of opposition then. A Local working group had been established but the plans had fizzled out due to a lack of finance.

Mrs Beardmore outlined the new plans for a café to be operated by a franchise holder with 30 covers inside and possibly another 10 covers on the platform. She explained that the DCM needs to generate more income to offset a 38% cut in Government funding for the YDNPA over the past 5 years.

She said the YDNPA had made up its mind to offer a franchise but wanted continued community and local business involvement if the offer was taken up. If no person comes forward the proposal is dead in the water as the YDNPA does not have the funds to equip the café from scratch. This would be up to the franchise holder to make this investment.

The timetable is for a franchise to be agreed in January 2016 for a start later in the year. Mrs. Beardmore said there have been many changes since 2008. Visitor numbers to the DCM had dropped by 50% between 2009 and 2014, and the number of coaches visiting the DCM Car Park has dropped from 35 per week to 10.

Surveys show that most visitors come to Hawes to shop and have a wander around, and come across the DCM by chance. Many visitors are elderly and would not make the walk into the town. All the businesses in the Town Foot area have seen a decline in their foot fall, especially since the unavoidable re-location of the Post Office, and most are keen to see the café developed.

The YDNPA undertook a survey of 76 businesses in Hawes, and received 19 responses. Of these 12 were in favour of the café and only 2 were strongly opposed. 2 Town Foot business

owners had emailed the Chairman in support of the café, and the Rope Works thought it a good idea as well.

Theresa Belton from The Laburnham Tea Shop, said that the plan “will kill the town”, and argued that people do at present walk up from the DCM and into the town centre, and use the cafés there.

Cllr Sunter asked if it was only intended to be a café, not anything bigger. Kathryn Beardmore said that this was the case – it would be a service to museum visitors.

Ian Helliwell from Karian Gifts said that the Town Foot area is a disaster, and that footfall has dropped drastically in recent years. He argued that the Museum could lose its status as the Arts Council does expect there to be a café these days.

Another local business person said that the 30+ covers would damage other local businesses, and they were afraid that the outer edges of the town will get all the business, while the centre suffers.

There was a discussion about a promise made when the DCM was first planned that there should be no café. Cllr. Blackie was sure this was the case even though it pre-dated his time on the YDNPA, which was from 1996 onwards. Bob Blades from The Wensleydale Pantry Café repeatedly demanded that the YDNPA should formally apologise to the people of Hawes if the café were to be established as it was breaking its promise to the local business community.

The Chairman ended by summarising the discussion. He reminded the meeting that the fear in 2008 was that Hawes could become a town of 2 thriving ends (the Creamery and the DCM) and a declining Town Centre, and the new proposals could have the same result. He acknowledged the argument that the YDNPA had a captive market for the potential custom for the DCM Café as it operated the first port of call for visitors, the Car Park, yet it was in part business ratepayers who are funding the Authority.

On the other hand there is no doubt it is a business opportunity for someone who could very well be a local person or an already established local business, but he warned that it is likely to be divisive. He said there was a danger it would not stay a small scale operation, as there was plenty of room for outside tables at the DCM, so its seating capacity would need to be strictly prescribed and enforced.

The Chairman had already secured the commitment of the YDNPA as one of its Members to work closely with the Parish Council and to keep the local community informed, and Mrs Beardmore confirmed this. She agreed to return to the Parish Council once the formal planning application was submitted, assuming the franchise is to go ahead.

2 items of business from the last meeting had been held over for Kathryn Beardmore’s visit. She agreed that a clothes bank for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance could be located in the DCM car park. She also agreed to consider the location of a litter bin near the dog waste bin at the DCM, though normally the YDNPA does not provide litter bins on its land as they encourage visitors to take their litter home.

In response to a question she added that the YDNPA is aware of the problem of local youths racing their cars around the DCM car park late at night.

4. YDNPA Planning Applications

a) R/56/363D Land to west and south of Hawes Youth Hostel for a 40 unit Extra Care scheme at the rear of Lancaster Terrace

The Chairman recounted the history of planning applications on this site. The Parish Council is on record as opposing this development as it does not regard it as a suitable location. Basil Allen said that this was the wildest area for weather in Hawes and agreed that the hill is too steep for elderly people. Dr Malcolm Hamer said the field drains poorly and if surfaced the runoff could flood the houses near the school. He was also worried about the impact of this runoff on the town's sewage system which is overloaded already.

Council resolved unanimously to strongly oppose this application on the grounds of:

- Site access – highways concern as it is on a bend on a steep hill
- Location – accessing the site to/ from the town is too steep a footway to meet the needs of its intended residents, and is too exposed to the elements
- Too far from the GP Surgery at the other end of the town
- Flood risk at the site, and the dangers of run-off to other areas of the town
- Possibility of overloading the already overloaded sewage system serving the town
- Source of light pollution
- Threat to a local historical site – the Royal Observer Corps bunker located there was used during the Cold War
- Detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
- Detrimental impact to the landscape locally and in long-distance views
- The YDNPA Local Plan now published specifically rules out the site on grounds of unsuitability in landscape terms and that it does not link well to the town centre
- An alternative site has been put forward and is being investigated by the YDNPA

b) R/56/468 2 Hume Cottage, Appersett. Full planning permission for erection of white PVC conservatory. **Supported.**

5. Gayle Green

The Chairman reported on his dealings with the Lords of the Manor of Bainbridge, who had been very supportive of working with local people and the Parish Council to improve the Green's appearance and facilities. The need for continuing car parking space is recognised, but it is felt that a project could be established to improve the area on an enduring basis.

Many of the old vehicles and equipment have already been removed, as has the builder's rubble. Cllr Blackie proposed calling a meeting in Gayle in the Autumn to see if there is support for such a project. There was general agreement amongst the members of the public present that more needs to be done, and that all the residents of Gayle need to be involved in the consultation.

Council resolved unanimously to hold a Public Meeting in Gayle in the Autumn, and called on those people who still have scrap material on the Green to continue removing it.

6. Correspondence

a) Andrew Fagg and Emily Rowe Rawlence

The Clerk read out a letter from Andrew and Emily thanking the Council for its donation to the National School project and saying the community meeting room there will soon be available.

b) Butterwick House Hospice – Appeal.

No-one present knew of any local person who had benefitted from this Hospice, and the Council declined to support it financially.

c) Bookseller in the Market House

There was another letter of complaint about the bookseller in the Market House which has been forwarded to Cllr Di Duca, who is Chairman of the Market House Trustees.

A discussion on the huge detriment this trader brings to the reputation of the town as welcoming and friendly will be held at the September meeting, as written complaints about the bookseller's attitude are now well into double figures. Verbal complaints about him and the way his business operates are now far too numerous to count.

7. Chairman's Items

a) Local Plan

The Chairman announced that the Local Plan had been unanimously approved by the YDNPA at the end of June. One of its key points is that roadside barns may now be developed as dwellings, either for local occupancy or for a premium for sale on the open market. This was generally welcomed, and generated a deal of discussion.

b) Cemetery

Discussion was deferred to the September meeting.

c) Invitation to the local MP

Discussion on the plan to invite Rishi Sunak MP to a future meeting, and to prepare questions for this meeting, was deferred to the September meeting.

d) War Memorial

A site meeting had been held. Work is to start at the end of August when the tractor floral display has been removed.

8. Financial Matters

a) Agreed to pay the following Account – Cojont Trading Ltd – Petrol for Mowing - £23.00

b) Noted the payment of the following Account– UWCP Ltd – Office Administration services for the Parish Council for 2014-15 and 2015-16 - £1000

c) Agreed to add Cllr A Rhodes to the list of Signatories for the Parish Council Bank Account

9. Any Other Business

a) Defibrillator. Cllr Hunter urged support for the installation of a Defibrillator in the Old School at Hardraw.

b) Thanks. Cllr Mrs Alderson asked that a letter of thanks should be sent to the Hawes Club for their donation to the Defibrillator in Hawes. Clerk to action.

c) Website. Discussion on the establishment of a Parish Council website was deferred to the September meeting.

Meeting closed at 10.21pm.

Date of next meeting: Monday 7th September 2015 at 7.15pm in Gayle Institute.