

**MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING OF MATFEN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON  
TUESDAY 28 JULY 2020 AT 7.00PM  
(Draft Minutes Subject to Council Approval)**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Stuart Mills, Chairman of the Council together with Mrs Ann Gregory Smith, Chris Austin, Keith Mavin.

In attendance: Mrs M Senior, Clerk to the Council  
County Councillor Veronica Jones

**720.01 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.** None.

**720.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllrs C Austin, F Robson and K Irving

**720.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None

**720.04 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** – Cllr Mrs Jones gave her verbal update on matters relating to NCC and Matfen Parish.

- **NCC's Covid 19 Response.** Cllr Jones gave an update on NCC's response to the Covid 19 crisis. Although shielding had ended NCC is still helping people who are nervous about going out. NCC had reopened their public toilets and some play areas and libraries and day services are starting to reopen. It was noted that the number of cases in Northumberland remains very low with no deaths in hospitals for 24 days.
- **Roads/Local Services.** The Local Transport Plan had started up again and the £60,000 project in Matfen will be carried out however there is no date for the work to start as yet.
- **Street Lighting.** Cllr Mrs Jones is to fund a streetlight in Ingoe from her members allowance. She is waiting for Cllr C Austin to liaise with the residents.
- **Mootlaw Quarry.** There had been reports of bikers meeting in the quarry. The police and NCC officers had been involved and they had contacted the site owners who had secured the site and installed CCTV.

**720.05 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2020 and 2 JUNE 2020.** It was proposed by Cllr Mrs A Gregory Smith, seconded by Cllr K Mavin and AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on **19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020** be signed as an accurate record.

**720.06 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020 AND 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2020.**

- a) **Benches/Notice Boards.** Minute 520.06b refers. The benches and notice board are still to be installed. No update was available as Cllr C Austin was unable to attend the meeting. **Action: Mrs Senior to contact Cllr C Austin for an update.**
- b) **Street Lighting.** Minute 520.11a refers. Options had been received to replace the 4 columns in Matfen. It was AGREED to proceed with the like for like replacements (Cast Iron Column with lantern) at a cost of £500 per column (total £2000). County Councillor Mrs V Jones AGREED to pay for this from her members allowance.
- c) **Overgrown Lane.** Minute 520.11a refers. Matfen Estates advised that the lane behind the shop to the allotments is a short cut and not a footpath and therefore did not feel it necessary for them to improve it. Matfen Estates offered to provide gravel and a group of volunteers carried out the work to improve the surface. It was noted that this is a temporary fix however it has improved the area.
- d) **Telephone Box.** Minute 520.11b refers. It was AGREED that no further work is required.

**720.07 FINANCE**

- a) **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.** It was proposed by Cllr S Mills, seconded by Cllr Mrs A Gregory Smith and AGREED to approve the expenditure on the list circulated.

| PAYEE                        | DESCRIPTION                                | NET OF VAT | VAT   | CHEQUE AMOUNT | CHEQUE NO |
|------------------------------|--|------------|-------|---------------|-----------|
| Mrs L Paterson               | Public toilet cleaning – March 2020        | 37.50      |       | 37.50         | 101126    |
| Northumbria Pest Control Ltd | Mole treatment – village green             | 144.00     | 24.00 | 120.00        | 101127    |
| Matfen & Ryal PCC            | Replacement cheque 101093 – Lost           | 450.00     |       | 450.00        | 101128    |
| Playsafety Ltd               | Annual play area inspection report         | 118.20     | 19.70 | 98.50         | 101129    |
| Mrs A Senior                 | Clerical services                          | 455.60     |       | 455.60        | 101130    |
| H M Revenue and Customs      | PAYE                                       | 113.80     |       | 113.80        | 101131    |
| Mrs A Senior                 | Expenses – postages/travel/toilet supplies | 114.75     | 5.67  | 109.08        | 101132    |
| J C Accountants              | Internal audit fee                         | 37.20      | 6.20  | 31.00         | 101133    |
| <b>Income</b>                |  |            |       |               |           |
| Barclays Bank Plc            | Bank Account Interest                      | 2.08       |       | 2.08          | 08.06.20  |

Matfen Parish Council  
Ward 1 – Fenwick, Ingoe, Ryal. Ward 2 – Matfen

**720.08 CORRESPONDENCE** received since the May meeting had been circulated to all councillors by email and noted. There was no action to take.

| SENDER                           | DETAILS  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| National Assoc of Local Councils | Rebuilding Communities – Online Event Series                               |
| Northumberland County Council    | Northumberland Local Plan Examination: Consultation on additional evidence |
| <b>Information items</b>         |  |
| Northumberland County Council    | Surface Dressing – June 2020 C341 and U9024                                |
| Highways England                 | A69 Bridge End Improvements – June 2020 & July 2020                        |
| Community Action Northumberland  | CAN eNews – July 2020  |

**720.09 PLANNING**

- a) **PLANNING DECISIONS.** No planning decisions received.
- b) **PLANNING APPLICATIONS.** A request had been received from the applicant at Vallum Farm asking for the Parish Council's support to their application. After discussion, it was felt that this was not appropriate in the circumstances.

| Reference Number | Location  | Proposal  |
|------------------|---|---|
| 20/01776/FUL     | Land parcels to east and west of Vallum Farm, East Wallhouses | Installation of four cabins for provision of visitor accommodation including use and retention of existing access road and bases. <b>No objection</b> |
| 20/01854/FUL     | Land West and North West of High House Cottages, Matfen       | Erection of livestock building and associated infrastructure. <b>No objection</b>   |

**720.10 VILLAGE ISSUES**

- a) **REPORTS ON VILLAGE ISSUES AND HIGHWAYS MATTERS**
  - **Overgrown Hedge.** It was noted that the memorial garden hedge is overgrown and needs cutting back. **Action: Cllr Mrs A Gregory-Smith to contact Matfen Estates.**
  - **Footpath.** The footpath from West End House to the Great Whittington road is overgrown with weeds as well as the gutters throughout the village. It was unknown whether this area had been weed sprayed by NCC and Cllr Mrs V Jones is to follow this up with NCC Local Services. A group of volunteers had cleared this area several weeks ago however it needs attention again.
- b) **TO CONSIDER PROVIDING A LITTER BIN ON THE SPORTS GROUND.** After discussion, it was AGREED that as this is private land then the Parish Council would not be able to supply a litter bin in this area. There would also be problems with the emptying of the bin by NCC.
- c) **TO CONSIDER REPRESENTATIVE FROM MATFEN ESTATES.** It was felt it could be beneficial to the Parish Council and to Matfen Estate to have a representative attend the meetings. Many of the issues discussed concern the Estate and it was felt it would be useful to discuss these at the meeting. It was AGREED to invite a representative of Matfen Estates to attend the meeting and contribute to discussions.
- d) **TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON NEW PLAY AREA.** Cllr K Mavin and Mrs Senior met with Paul Taylor and Ian Greenwell, Contracts Manager, Kompan on 15<sup>th</sup> July to discuss the installation. They advised that installation should take place in 8 weeks and will take approximately 4-5 days to complete. The fence is to be installed after the play area equipment has been installed and Mrs Senior has been in touch with the fencing contractor to advise. It was noted that the trees overhanging the area need to be cut back and Matfen Estates has kindly agreed to carry out this work. Part of the area needs to be seeded and Cllr K Mavin has attended to this. A revised Memorandum of Agreement has been signed between the Parish Council and Matfen Estates. The screening of the area by trees will be carried out once the installation of the play area is complete. It was noted that the Woodland Trust offer packs of free trees to organisations and this will be looked into.
- e) **TO DISCUSS ANNUAL PLAY AREA INSPECTION REPORT AND ACTIONS REQUIRED.** The Annual Inspection Report had been carried out on the play area in Ingoe. It was noted that the grass cutting contractor had weed sprayed underneath and around all of the equipment, killing the grass through the grass matting safety surface. NCC will be contacted to request that weed killing is not carried out around the equipment. Kompan had carried out some work on the equipment where gaps had appeared and will return to carry out some other minor repairs. Mrs Senior is to cut the excess change from the swings. It was noted that the condemned equipment still needs to be removed from

the Sports Ground. The Cricket Club is to remove this on behalf of the Parish Council when time allows. This had been delayed due to the current situation.

- f) **TO DISCUSS TREE WORKS REQUIRED ON MATFEN VILLAGE GREEN.** It was noted that the trees on the Village Green are interfering with the roof of the Village Shop and need to be cut back. An application for work to trees needs to be completed for works to be carried out in a conservation area and Mrs Senior will complete and submit this form. The Coronation Oak also needs work on the lower limbs and the trees overhanging the new play area need to be cut back. Matfen Estates have kindly offered to do some of the work however it may be that the Parish Council will need to obtain the services of a tree surgeon for some of the work.
- g) **TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS REQUESTED BY RESIDENTS.** It was felt that some of the requests on the list of improvement to Matfen could be carried out however some of the issues were the responsibility of NCC. Cllrs S Mills and K Mavin are to meet to go through the list and prioritise the requests to hopefully move them forward. A report will be made to the Parish Council in due course.
- h) **TO CONSIDER REOPENING THE PUBLIC TOILETS.** After discussion, it was AGREED to keep the public toilets closed. It was felt that the Parish Council cannot open the toilets safely and make them Covid-19 secure. The situation will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**720.11 ANY URGENT ISSUES (FOR INFORMATION ONLY).** Nothing to report.

**720.12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.** The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held online on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 7.00pm. The link will be circulated and made available to residents 7 days before the meeting. The advice from NALC/SLCC is still for Parish Councils to meet remotely however should the advice change before the date of the next meeting the venue of the meeting will be publicised in advance.

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Signed as an accurate record