

North Rigton Parish Council

Meeting held on 6 September 2017 at 7.30 at the Village School

Present: Mary Hopkins (Chairman), Barbara Massey (Vice-Chairman), Tim Bennett, Steve Young, Neil Creeney, Stanley Lumley (County Councillor) and Mike Richards (Clerk).

Also in attendance, Mr Grahame Wright, parishioner.

- 1. Apologies for absence** – An apology for absence was received from Amanda Martyn
- 2. Agenda order variation and Declaration of Interests.**

Councillors had no declarations of interest to make. Councillor Young suggested that Mr Wright's concern be taken as the first item of business. Councillors agreed.

- 3.** Mr Wright outlined the basics of his issues.
 - a) The verges along Brackenthwaite Lane were becoming so overgrown with grass and other vegetation that serious risks were posed for pedestrians being forced to walk on the road with speeding traffic. He was led to believe by NYCC that the responsibility for cutting these verges lies with the Parish Council;
 - b) He was concerned that all Parish expenditure is concentrated on the village, rather than spent on the Parish as a whole;
 - c) Brackenthwaite Lane residents seem to be ignored on other issues also eg the Parish News is not delivered there. He also queried the Parish Council's contribution to the Parish News;
 - d) He noted that the problem of Himalayan Balsam had begun to be tackled on Hall Green Lane – this weed is also present on Brackenthwaite Lane as well as young shrubs and trees which, if not dealt with, could present a significant problem in future years.

In response to a) above, County Councillor Lumley explained the background to NYCC's grass verge cutting policy. The grass cutting policy is split into two: urban and rural. Urban grass cutting takes place on roads with a speed limit of 40mph or less, and rural grass cutting takes place on roads with a speed limit of 50mph or above. Until recently, most urban grass cutting has been provided for amenity purposes only. However, due to reductions in the funding from the government, significant savings have had to be found in the highways budget. This means that NYCC will now only fund grass cutting in areas that is essential for visibility or safety purposes. The Chairman then explained that Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) is only responsible in any village within the District, to cut the grass on Housing areas. HBC also used to cut the verges within the 30mph, up to 6 times pa. This ceased due to financial constraints and the Parish Council had the option of paying HBC or undertaking the task itself. This option was taken up and HBC made interim payments initially to defray costs. These payments ceased and the Parish Council trialled one contractor before settling on Burnett's, who have had the contract for the last two years.

Parish Councils are also responsible and always have been responsible for areas such as Village Greens and Village recreation grounds within their village. Underpinning all the areas of responsibility however, is the factor of budget constraint by which NYCC's ability to maintain grass verges is severely limited. The Clerk has already raised the issue of grass verge cutting on Brackenthwaite Lane with NYCC Highways Dept. but was informed that budgetary constraints did not allow for such action. He will however, raise the issue again, stressing safety concerns. Councillor Lumley agreed to support this action.

The Chairman responded to points b) and c) by explaining that the Parish Council represents the Parish as a whole and any expenditure is for the Parish as a whole, with the major elements of expenditure being the clerk's salary and the maintenance of the Parish garden and grounds. The Parish Council has no involvement with the Parish News – she understands however, that it is not delivered to Mr Wright because his house has no post box. It is for him to take this up with the editor of the Parish News, a copy is always available in the Church, for reference. She stressed that the Parish Council (along with all other relevant parishes) makes an annual voluntary donation to assist with the running costs of the magazine.

Donations to the church for Churchyard maintenance and Remembrance Day wreaths was also raised. The Chairman pointed out that one of the duties of Parish Councils is to have responsibility for graveyards and their maintenance. Without the Church's input, the Parish Council would have to meet the cost of upkeep.

In conclusion, and in response to Mr Wright's main concern, the Chairman agreed that if NYCC ultimately refused, quotations would be sought for the cutting back of all the relevant grass verges within the Parish.

Mr Wright left the meeting at 8.20.

4. Reports on matters from the previous meeting

a) Community Speedwatch – Police action re speeding concerns – The clerk reported that the Police had contacted him to report that they were going to install speed and traffic monitoring equipment to determine the next action necessary. Councillor Young has overall responsibility for traffic and speeding matters and is dealing personally with the Police and NYCC councillors. He reported that he had recently corresponded with County Councillor Don Mackenzie (the Councillor responsible for traffic and highway issues) and the Assistant Chief Constable, again raising concerns about the speed of traffic through the village. It was agreed that to elicit action from the Police and NYCC the details of all traffic related incidents should be collected over time and then submitted to provide evidence for, for example, the implementation of traffic calming measures.

b) Bus Shelter A658 – the Chairman has confirmed that the original contractor is unable to carry out any maintenance or renovation work on the existing shelter. Councillors considered demolishing the shelter due to potential health and safety concerns but, after further consideration agreed to leave the shelter as is. The clerk will contact NYCC to enquire whether they are able to provide an alternative bus shelter (Councillor Lumley thought this unlikely but he would support such an application)

c) Play equipment repair – the Chairman has approached the original equipment supplier but they are unable to assist. An alternative contractor has been located who will supply a quotation for digging out and repairing the equipment as well as repairing the edges which have become raised and are a safety issue.

d) Garden waste bins – two garden waste bins have now been obtained. Due to HBC requirements they have been assigned to the Chairman's home address and she will initially pay the licence and be reimbursed by the Parish Council.

5. Approval and signing of minutes.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 July were agreed as a true record and councillors approved the minutes to be signed by the Chairman.

6. HBC Draft Local Plan

The clerk confirmed that he had submitted the Council's agreed response to the Draft Plan, objecting to the new proposed developments adjacent to Otley Road, which would further exacerbate the traffic issues arising from the original proposed developments, to the west of Harrogate.

Councillor Young reported the success of the petition he had organised regarding speeding in the village, with 138 signatures obtained (80% of those residents living within the 30mph zone) He wished to record formally his thanks to those individuals who had assisted with the petition, namely Barney and Torrie Brockhill, Peter Raybaud, Chris Olding, Oliver Connolly, Tom and Francesca Jenkinson, and Eugenie Keogh.

The Chairman reported that the HAPARA Action Group (all the local parishes and residents' organisations objecting to the Plan) was to meet again and she wondered whether consideration should be given to the possibility of jointly employing a legal expert to advise and act on behalf of the Group in any formal process regarding the implementation of the Plan? Councillors discussed this proposal and it was concluded that it would be expensive with no guarantee of success or benefit but, nevertheless the scope for this should be explored further.

7. Administration

7.1 Internal Financial Control. The clerk informed councillors that he had reviewed and updated the following documents:

- a) Financial Regulations
- b) Standing Orders
- c) Code of Conduct
- d) Risk assessment

Councillors approved the updated documents for adoption.

8. Finance

8.1 Approval of expenditure. Items for approval were:

- £46.80 to M E Hopkins for Garden Waste Licences
- £142.00 to Horticap for additional woodchip. (on behalf of Church);
- £50.00 to HAPARA contribution for hire of hall

Village Festival expenses:

- £33.10 to JK Hopkins for fuel and bar licence

- £127.19 to ME Hopkins for BBQ food
- £121.14 to A Martyn for BBQ food
- £200 to A Scott for beer
- £63.00 to R Ellacott for bottled beer

Councillors approved the above 8 items.

8.2 Approval of future expenditure

- £1349.26 to R S Burnett for grass verge strimming
- £120.00 to PKF Littlejohn for external audit fee
- £75 to Royal British Legion for poppy appeal (3 wreaths)

Councillors approved the above 3 items

9. Planning

9.1 HBC had notified approval of the Bracken Farm application. The application for School House had been withdrawn and the new or extended driveways to Letefield House and the property on Brackenthwaite Lane had been examined by planners and, as both were constructed from permeable materials, planning permission was not required.

The caravan in the field off the A658 had been examined by the Planning Inspector and as it was deemed NOT for residential use, planning approval was not required.

9.2 No notifications of other planning applications had been received.

10. Highways, Footpaths, Verges.

10.1. Grass cutting – parish wide concerns – see 3 above.

10.2 Maintenance of pathways – the pathways down Church Hill and Hall Green Lane have become overgrown with vegetation, causing pedestrians to walk on the road, facing the obvious risk of speeding traffic. The clerk has contacted NYCC Highways to ask for the pathways to be cleared but has received a negative response due to financial constraints. He will raise the issue again, stressing the safety concerns,

10.3 Crag Lane bench. The Clerk has written to the family, commending the quality of the bench, but informing them at the same time that NYCC policy is not to allow roadside memorials. To date, there has been no repetition of the additional “memorial” items.

10.4 Hall Green Lane bench (a “Bradley Bench”). The bench is broken and needs to be replaced or taken away completely. Councillors discussed the options and it was decided to consider a replacement similar to the bench on the village green, which is

virtually maintenance free. Quotations will be sought. Any cost would be met through fundraising via the Village Fete.

10.5.Himalayan Balsam – following previous reports of this pernicious weed growing down Hall Green Lane, consideration now needs to be given to this as a parish wide problem (in ditches and stream beds particularly). The employment of a contractor to address this specific problem will need to be considered.

11. Village Garden, Amenities and Activities

11.1 Water supply to the Garden – all arrangements with Yorkshire Water now finalised. The contractor will commence the works once traffic control measures have been confirmed.

11.2 Contract for grounds and garden maintenance. The quotation from the current contractor (there being no other expressions of interest) was accepted. Councillors were pleased to note that there was no increase in the hourly rate, the only additional cost being the extra maintenance required for the increased size of the area of the village garden.

The Chairman informed councillors that moles were now present in the garden – councillors approved the appointment of a contractor to deal with the problem.

11.3 Community defibrillator – the clerk confirmed that he had been informed by Yorkshire Ambulance Service, that the equipment should be checked at least fortnightly. The Chairman will ensure this is done.

12. Any other business

The Chairman brought councillors' attention to a fundraising event to be held on 13 October, to raise funds for the water supply to the Church, as part of the Community Room project. Tickets will be £15 per head, (to include wine and cheese), available from herself

13. Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 1 November 2017

Wednesday 3 January 2018

at the village school, commencing at 7.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.25pm

Signed

(Chairman)

Date

