

# North Rigton Parish Council

## Meeting held on 1 November 2017 at 7.30 at the Village School

**Present:** Mary Hopkins (Chairman), Barbara Massey (Vice-Chairman), Tim Bennett, Amanda Martyn, Neil Creaney, Stanley Lumley (County Councillor), Victoria Oldham (HBC Councillor) and Mike Richards (Clerk).

- 1. Apologies for absence** – An apology for absence was received and accepted from Steve Young. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Oldham to her first meeting.

- 2. Agenda order variation and Declaration of Interests.**

Councillors had no declarations of interest to make. The Chairman suggested that items 2(a) and 2(b) (matters arising from the previous minutes) be discussed at item 8 to avoid duplicate discussion. Councillors agreed.

- 3. Reports on matters from the previous meeting**

a) Himalayan Balsam – Councillors again discussed the problem of this rapid growing weed and agreed that continued attention was needed to restrict its spread. It was particularly important to prevent seeds “exploding” from the flowers in Summer and this action will be widely promulgated next year. In the meantime, no further action had been taken by the Parish Council other than the work undertaken by the contractor on Hall Green Lane. It was also noted that this weed is also present in other areas, such as bordering the A658 Harrogate Bypass, and it was suggested that this was an issue for either NYCC or HBC. The clerk will make contact as appropriate.

b) Hall Green Lane bench – the Chairman confirmed that the bench frame was sound, but the seating planks had rotted. A decision needed to be made whether to repair or remove and replace with a new bench sometime in the future. Councillors discussed the ramifications of the Parish Council taking on the responsibility for the bench now that the original “owners” (the Bradley family) were no longer around. Some concern was expressed in that should a new bench be installed, the Parish Council would be responsible for maintenance etc. Accordingly, the Chairman stressed that should installation of a new bench be agreed, it must be of a maintenance free construction, such as that on the Village Green. After further discussion, it was agreed that the existing bench be repaired and, following a question raised by Councillor Oldham, the existing plaque be retained on the repaired bench (and also re-affixed to a new bench as appropriate)

c) Bus Shelter A658 – the Chairman reported that, following examination, the shelter can be repaired. Councillors were still unsure whether this was a viable long term option, but Councillor Lumley suggested that the cost of repair should first be ascertained and if this is reasonable a decision can be taken. He also affirmed that the possibility of any funding for a replacement from NYCC was extremely unlikely. It was also suggested that the bus company, Transdev, be contacted to ask for a financial contribution. The clerk will pursue.

- 4. Approval and signing of minutes.**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 6 September were agreed as a true record and councillors approved the minutes to be signed by the Chairman. The only outstanding action related to the routine maintenance of the defibrillator and the Chairman agreed to follow this up and ensure it is completed.

## 5. Administration

The Clerk reported that he had received a communication from Julian Smith's office, informing of this constituency's MP's forthcoming activity, which had been uploaded to the Parish Website. He informed councillors that the MP's activities seemed to be concentrated some distance away from North Rigton, with regular surgeries being held in such locations as Skipton, Pately Bridge, Masham and Ripon. Councillors discussed and the clerk agreed to write to the MP, asking if a more convenient location, nearer to the Parish could be considered. Councillors Lumley and Oldham then informed councillors that they were aware that the MP was holding a coffee morning at 10.30 am on 18 November, at the Hopper Lane Hotel and any interested parishioner would be welcome to attend.

## 6. Finance

6.1 Approval of expenditure. Items for approval were:

- £2336.96 to Yorkshire Water for water supply to the Church
- £45.00 to M Richards for computer repair
- £640.52 to R Burnett for verge strimming
- £66.00 to HBC for ROSPA report

Councillors approved the above 4 items.

6.2 Approval of future expenditure (donations)

- £75 to Royal British Legion for poppy appeal (3 wreaths)
- £100 to North Rigton Primary School in lieu of rent
- £100 to St John's Church for assistance with churchyard maintenance
- £50 to Parish News

Councillors approved the above 4 items

6.3 Half- Year budget report

The clerk presented his summary of income and expenditure to November, compared with the budget. The clerk answered a number of queries raised by councillors. Councillor Oldham asked about the increased costs of verge cutting, and in particular, who was responsible for the ditches along Brackenthwaite Lane? The Chairman responded that the Parish Council now had to assume responsibility for verge cutting in these areas following NYCC's withdrawal, but regrettably the cost of this is not affordable.

Maintenance of hedges and ditches was the landowner's responsibility.

#### **6.4 Precept**

The Parish Council has maintained the Parish Precept at its current level since 2011/12, due to careful financial management and successful fundraising activities. However, now that reserves have been utilised for planned expenditure on various projects and with the increasing financial pressure due to grass cutting costs (as discussed previously) councillors have no option but to apply for an increased precept. The Chairman suggested an increase of £500 be requested and all councillors agreed.

### **7. Community Room**

The Chairman reported that the Community Room had been recently used for a fundraising event, which had been both enjoyable and successful. The water supply is now ready for connection by Yorkshire Water and further developments are planned.

### **8. Planning**

8.1 The clerk reminded councillors that the protocol for processing planning applications requires responses to him from a minimum of three councillors so that an acceptable consensus of opinion (a "quorum") can be gathered. Councillors acknowledged this and the clerk undertook to issue guidance on the steps to follow on HBC's website, for planning documentation to be reviewed.

8.2 Approvals – the revised planning application for School House had been approved (NRPC had no objections) and the application for Bracken Farm had been withdrawn.

8.3 HBC Local Plan – the Chairman reported that she and Councillor Massey were proposing to attend a meeting arranged by HAPARA (Hampsthwaite and Pannal Residents' Association) to formulate a joint response (from all interested parish councils and residents' associations) to the HBC Cabinet meeting on 16 November. After this meeting, the Cabinet will submit its recommendations on the Plan to the full Council.

### **9. Highways, Footpaths, Verges.**

9.1 Traffic and speeding concerns. The Chairman brought councillors up to date on this issue. 95 Alive (the organisation in North Yorkshire which deals with speeding etc concerns, had installed monitoring equipment on Rigton Hill. There were concerns, however, over a number of relevant issues:

- i) the camera was pointing down the hill
- ii) there were a number of obstructions (including roadworks) at the top of the hill which would naturally slow down any traffic, as well as obstructions below the camera which could be seen before being recorded by the camera.

iii) there was no data collected of traffic volume.

The first set of data reported back to the Parish Council indicated the average speed of traffic to be in excess of 45mph, but this was later corrected to be an average speed of 27mph – the error reputedly being that the recorded speed was in kph, not mph! (doubts were expressed subsequently over this assertion, by officers who were said to have commented that the equipment only recorded in mph anyway!) All in all this has been a most unsatisfactory exercise (even though the final conclusion was that North Yorks Police would be taking some form of action) Councillor Young, as the Parish Council Road Safety Lead will be responding vigorously to the Speed Protocol Administrators on the above points and specifically will be asking for the exercise to be repeated but without the flaws. He will also request a site meeting with all officials involved.

9.2 “Zero Carbon Harrogate” – the clerk had circulated a communication from this organisation which had set out plans for the provision of sustainable transport initiatives. Councillors concluded that the report was very much Harrogate/Knaresborough based and rather than being beneficial would have a negative impact on North Rigton and surrounding villages. Councillor Oldham agreed and added that this was a common conclusion, that all benefits fell to Harrogate (eg grass cutting!) with a shortfall to rural villages.

9.3 Grass cutting – parish wide concerns – see minutes of the last meeting. The Chairman had researched the possibility of the Parish Council undertaking responsibility for grass verge cutting throughout the Parish. Factually, there is in excess of 20 miles of grass verges (on both sides of roads throughout the Parish – Brackenthwaite Lane itself extends for some 4 miles) The cost for one cut would clearly be prohibitive and is clearly beyond the current financial capacity of the Parish Council. Accordingly, landowners and householders are again urged to take on this task themselves (the Council acknowledges and thanks those individuals who continue to do this)

*Councillor Lumley left the meeting at this point*

## **10. Village Garden, Amenities and Activities**

10.1 Whale play equipment – as reported previously, is in need of repair. Only one quotation for the full repair (equipment, plus repair of the “wet pour” area) has been received, which is significantly in excess of the expected cost. Given the ROSPA (statutory equipment safety report) which highlighted these and other minor faults, it was agreed that this work should be carried out, but further quotes would be sought. Councillor Oldham suggested that HBC’s Parks and Leisure Department be contacted for a quotation or suggestion of an alternative contractor.

10.2 Water supply to the Garden – all arrangements now finalised and a water meter has been installed. The Parish Council will be responsible for the water bill.

The Chairman then informed councillors that the mole problem had been resolved.

10.3 Playing Field fencing – the Chairman confirmed that repairs to the fencing were not the responsibility of the Parish Council, but she would liaise with the owners on the repairs required.

10.4 Remembrance Sunday – the Chairman reminded councillors of the arrangements and requested other councillors to attend.

10.5 Christmas events – the Village Carol singing would be on 17 December, commencing at 18.30 at the village Christmas tree. Younger families will be encouraged to take part this year. Terry Massey will arrange the banner to promulgate this event etc and Councillor Bennett will organise mulled wine and mince pies with the Square and Compass.

## **11. Any other business**

11.1 Councillor Oldham brought councillors' attention to the proposed introduction of a Community Lottery scheme by HBC, with 60% of the proceeds being made available to local charities.

11.2 The clerk informed councillors of a communication received from a local landowner, expressing concern at the proposed construction of a boundary wall to the Village Garden, which he considered could affect his sight lines. The clerk will respond assuring the landowner:

- a) that there are no plans currently to complete this work, due to budgetary constraints
- b) if, when eventually constructed, the wall will be no higher than the current fence
- c) other sight line concerns should relate to the high wall on the right hand side of the junction in question, which is on his property, and to ask whether he has any plans to modify?

11.3 Book exchange – a communication asking for Parish Council input, had been received from a local resident seeking to establish a system of free book exchange for residents of North Rigton, Huby and Weeton. The Chairman asked the clerk to circulate details of the proposed system to councillors and for councillors then to respond to her with their comments.

## **12. Dates of future meetings**

Wednesday 3 January 2018

Wednesday 7 March 2018

Wednesday 2 May 2018

Wednesday 4 July 2018

at the village school, commencing at 7.30pm.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed

(Chairman)

Date