

CLAXTON AND SAND HUTTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

.....
DATE OF MEETING: **21st June 2010**

.....
COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Mrs V Tidball (Chair), Mrs H Wood, Mrs T Calpin,
Dr C Hall,

PARISH CLERK: Mrs Laura E J Edwards

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

.....
CHAIRMANS INTRODUCTION:

VT welcomed the Councillors, County Councillor Clare Wood and the parishioners to the meeting.

ITEM 1: MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting and the APM held on 10th May 2010 and had been circulated previously amongst the Councillors and published on the notice-boards. The Councillors accepted them as correct and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

NB Proposed actions are highlighted in Blue.

ITEM 2: PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman invited parishioners to raise any issues not appearing later on the agenda.

Freda Goodrick raised concerns over the large oak tree on the verge near Whey Carr Farm in Sand Hutton. Freda explained that there were various dead branches which may fall onto gardens / footpaths. LE to contact John Clayton at RDC to request a site visit to examine the state of the oak tree and request to be informed when he will examine the tree.

ITEM 3: Update on County Hall Issues followed by Update on Parish Councillor Vacancies

In a slight change to the agenda, the Chairman invited County Councillor Clare Wood to update the meeting on the latest news on the implications of a new government for our region.

Budget Cuts – Councillor Clare Wood explained to the meeting that under the new regime, all budgets would be under pressure with widespread cuts in many departments. The full extent of the cuts is not yet clear but some of them will start to happen in this financial year ie 2010/11. The savings approximately equate to £65M over 5 years with cuts in both revenue expenditure and in capital projects. The comprehensive spending review will clarify where the savings will have to be made and so further details will emerge over the autumn. It will involve the loss of jobs in local government departments.

Transport – The transport department will be hit hard – it is already trying to recover from a £4M overspend on repairing roads damaged by the harsh winter weather. The Local Transport Plan 3 is now in consultation but the approach in the future will have to factor in a probable 30% reduction in funding. The focus will be ‘Manage / Maintain / then Improve’, and so improvements are unlikely as there are still so many roads to repair.

Adult Social Care and Schools – NYCC is under pressure in other areas too for example the ever increasing costs of adult social care to cope with our aging population. Claxton has seen the start of other cost reviews eg school transport – every route is being reassessed to check whether bus passes should be issued. Overall, Clare Wood suggested that Sand Hutton and Claxton should approach the

future with a 'help each other' attitude and seek ways to achieve parish goals through community co-operation.

Footpaths – Clare Wood referred to email queries from Helen Wood about funding for an inter-village footpath – one of the key aims from the Parish Plan. Clare confirmed that in the current, financial climate, that kind of project was highly unlikely to attract funding but that did not exclude trying to achieve the footpath ourselves. LE queried whether, in the spirit of 'doing it yourselves', the County would assist Parish Councils by relaxing some of the rules and bureaucracy that tends to hinder such projects. Clare sympathised with those thoughts and said that she would support us to negotiate with departments such as Highways, if required.

Highways Issues – Clare Wood highlighted to the meeting that she had caught up with Richard Marr, Area Manager and asked about the various outstanding highways actions. The 30mph public consultation should have started now so that should be in place by late summer. The 'children at play' sign is on the way to us. The single track signs for Whinny Lane are in the depot but still waiting for contractor time.

Playing Field – Clare Wood reiterated her support for using the school playing field at weekends etc and getting local children active. LE explained that we had 2 volunteers to check the field but need to clarify what that would involve / qualifications etc with Brian Jennings. LE to copy Clare Wood into email exchanges with Brian Jennings etc so that she is up-to-date with the issues.

Footpath – Following from earlier discussion, a parishioner queried whether we could develop our own footpath between the villages eg a rustic mown strip rather than a kerbed path. LE and VT reminded the meeting that Richard Marr had discussed a similar idea last June and suggested that part of the verge could be handed over to another owner but there were costs involved. The key problem for that stretch of road is the large number of drainage channels and gulleys. CW and LE to remind Richard Marr of the rustic footpath idea and see whether it is feasible, given the drainage issue.

VT thanked Clare Wood for her input and then CW left the meeting.

Parish Councillor Vacancies – LE reminded the meeting that there are currently 2 vacancies for Parish Councillors following the resignations of Pete Tidball (Claxton) and Richard Morrill (Sand Hutton). Following the Ryedale District Council elections procedure, the 'Notice of Vacancy' posters are on the notice boards. If 10 individuals apply per post to Ryedale by 29th June, an election would be required. However, if 10 people do not contact Ryedale, the Parish Council should be able to co-opt 2 new members at the next Parish Council meeting.

ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

LE introduced the discussion on the following outstanding matters:

NYCC HIGHWAYS ISSUES:

Drainage / 30mph zone and other Richard Marr issues – LE explained that Richard Marr was currently on annual leave and so the update provided by Clare Wood (see item 3) was the most up-to-date news on the outstanding issues.

LE to continue to follow up actions with Richard Marr.

Road Safety Questionnaire results – Again, the issues of playing field and triangular warning sign were discussed in item 3 with Clare Wood and there was nothing further to add at this stage.

Potholes and Road Surface problems – LE reported that Neil Jefferson had also been away recently but had confirmed that his focus is still repairing local road surfaces following winter damage. Some good news was that a maintenance team had carried out patching and pothole filling

on Whinny Lane in Claxton last week.

LE to remain in contact with Neil and monitor progress of repairs and then report back to the next meeting.

Restoration of village signs – **LE** reported that she had spoken to Neil Jefferson about the rules concerning the restoration / repairs of signs. Neil confirmed that the black and white metal post and way markers would have to remain in situ whilst repaired as they are set very deeply into the verge. The Highways department would not object to a volunteer repairing the post or signs but if work was carried out next to the Highway, high visibility clothing and warning signs would need to be used. Neil would be happy to provide these if given advance notice. Neil again highlighted that the entrance signs to the villages are not part of the Highways Department remit. If we waited for Highways to repair the black and white post, the wait would be approximately 1 year. **LE / VT** to contact Gavin Fielding to see whether these rules would prevent him wanting to repair the signs and which signs he would be willing to restore.

OTHER VILLAGE ISSUES:

- **Community Police Officer and Ryedale Policing** – Speed monitoring has been occurring on local roads and the police were observed stopping and questioning drivers on Main Street, Claxton in recent days.
- **Bus passes for Claxton children to attend Sand Hutton school** – **LE** reported that families were still waiting for the results of their appeals against the decision to withdraw the bus pass to attend Sand Hutton School. As we heard from Clare Wood, this is linked to a review of all school transport provision in light of budget cuts.
- **Tree on Claxton village green** – **LE** and **HW** explained to the meeting that John Clayton from RDC has been out to examine the ailing cherry tree on Claxton village green. **HW** happened to see him carrying out the examination and he confirmed that the tree was dying, as we had suspected. Various Councillors discussed possible options for the tree including felling and replacement, retaining the stump as a ‘play tree’ or leaving the felled trunk on site. **LE** to chase John Clayton for an official report on the degree of disease etc on the tree and then report to the next meeting.

PARISH PLAN UPDATE

- **School playing field** – This topic was debated with Clare Wood in Item 3. **LE** and **HW** to meet to cover outstanding actions eg contacting Brian Jennings to confirm queries over field inspections etc. The successful use of the Claxton village green was raised, following the cold, but enjoyable picnic on the green. There was a brief discussion about the pros and cons of using the village green as more of a community play area. **LE** to start investigating fencing 2 sides of the village green eg permission, costs, maintenance implications etc.
- **HW** then highlighted to the meeting that we should all consider the progress made on key Parish Plan objectives. Although progress on some areas has been frustrating and slow eg playing field, FERA bicycle store etc, other areas are seeing very positive results. For example, the Village Hall Committee is very active, encouraging use of the Hall by different local groups and helping with village events. The Heritage Group is very strong and has held some excellent events and organised the Heritage Trail leaflets. Local events such as the village show and the picnic on Claxton green demonstrate that people want to participate in village social life. There are some issues highlighted in the Parish Plan which have seen less development eg appearance of the villages, facilities for elderly people and green energy and recycling. A new government may have an influence on some of these areas. **HW** wanted to recognise all those who continue to support the Parish Plan and are working towards the Plan objectives.
- **Development of village website** – **LE** highlighted that the current method of waiting until

the minutes were approved before posting on the website was not working as people needed to see them prior to the next meeting. After some discussion, it was concluded that 'draft' minutes should be posted prior to the meetings and then approved minutes posted with any amendments, after the meeting. VT emphasised that it was very important the Parish Council information on the website was impartial and factually correct and should come from one source eg the Clerk. LE to work towards directly posting to the website, following some further training from PT. HW is still hoping for more contributions from organised groups within the Parish but was pleased that there was now a link to the school website from the Parish site.

- **DEFRA planning proposal** – LE reported that District Councillor, Keith Knaggs has been in contact following the last Parish Council meeting and had asked his contacts in Planning about the FERA application status. The application is on hold until the applicant responds to some significant concerns raised by the Highways Agency.

ITEM 5: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

LE delivered a brief overview of the finances. A copy of the accounts spreadsheet had been supplied to each Councillor.

Cash Position as at 18th June 2010 (including cheques issued):-

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| Current Account | £1,723.16 | |
| Deposit Account | £1,519.65 | Includes Parish Plan funds of £536.95 |

- Invoices paid /receipts received since previous meeting:
 - Expense = £27 NALC annual subscription for 2010/11
 - Expense = £163.89 – Npower electricity charges – up to Sept 09???
 - Expense = £294.38 – Annual Insurance premium renewal Aon Limited
 - Expense = £35 – Rural Action Yorkshire Subscription 2010/11
 - Expense = £11 – Clerks and Councils subs 2010/11
 - Expense = £12.50 – York and N Yorkshire Playing Fields Association
 - Expense = £14.10 – Posts for dog waste bins

LE reminded the meeting that the saga over Npower invoicing still continues. The latest batch of invoices does not cover the correct time periods and also include some unexplained credit notes. LE to investigate the invoices and credits further.

- **Annual Accounts 2009/10** – LE was pleased to report that the Internal Audit of last year's accounts had been completed and that no issues were found. LE wanted to thank John Thompson on behalf of the Council for carrying out the Internal Audit and for completing the audit in such a timely manner. LE then referred Councillors to the year-end spreadsheet and the Annual Return statement which must be authorised by the Council prior to 30th June for the external auditors, Mazars. LE ensured that Councillors were confident that the Return reflected the figures that they are familiar with and obtained agreement that they were happy to submit the accounts.
- **Annual Accounts 2009/10 – Governance** – LE highlighted to the meeting that the Council must also be confident that there are adequate financial controls in place. LE went through each point of the Governance Statement and all Councillors agreed that it could be signed off. VT and LE signed the audit statements.

LE to submit the signed Return and other required documents to the auditors, Mazars, prior to 14th July.

LE to complete the outstanding VAT claim form as mentioned in the internal audit letter.

ITEM 6: GENERAL BUSINESS SECTION

RYEDALE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING MATTERS:

LE reported on the following planning applications:

- Update on the planning application discussed at the last meeting –
 - Mr P Stott, 17 Main Street, Sand Hutton – Application withdrawn.
 - Mr I Bensalem, The Old Chapel, Main Street, Claxton – Application approved on 25th May with 10 conditions.
 - Mr Rickleton, Warren House, Hall Drive, Sand Hutton – Awaiting decision.

RYEDALE DISTRICT COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:

- The next Parish Liaison meeting is at 7pm 28th June, Malton – LE to attend the meeting on behalf of the Council.

OTHER CORRESPONDENCE:

- £2m wildlife community fund – the fund might be relevant to the School who wish to develop a wildlife area.
- NALC summary of new government actions – it was noted that there were some interesting proposals amongst the very long list of new government actions and that the next year will be period of considerable change.

ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **War Memorial** – Anne White highlighted to the meeting that the War Memorial between the two villages is looking neglected with overgrown weeds and piles of dead hedge clippings. VT confirmed that the War Memorial maintenance is the responsibility of the Parish Council. There was a discussion between Parish Councillors and also parishioners over possible approaches to maintenance / surface materials but it was concluded that the existing gravel just needed improving. VT to ask Richard Morrith if he would spray the gravel area to control the weeds. PT kindly offered to collect the hedge trimmings in his trailer.
- **Road Signs** – VT appealed to Parish Councillors and parishioners to trim vegetation around road signs in the village to ensure they are visible to road users.
- **Grass Cutting** – A parishioner informed the meeting that the wide triangle of verge at the bottom of Kirk Balk Lane was not well cut during the last grass cutting session. LE to include this information in grass cutting contract review process.
- **Dog waste bins** – Anne White queried why there were two dog waste bins in Claxton and why they were close together? VT responded by referring Anne to the minutes of earlier meetings where this issue had been discussed at length. The dog waste bins were obtained using grant funding, following complaints from residents in Claxton. The Dog Warden had been involved and advised us how to improve the situation.

ITEM 8: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday, 2nd August 2010 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall, Sand Hutton.

=====
Questions to: Laura E J Edwards
Clerk to the Parish Council,

Email:laura.edwards@claxtonandsandhuttonparishcouncil.org.uk

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme – please contact Clerk, or in her absence the Chairman, if you want to know any information about this Council and its workings.