

Matfen Parish Council

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

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in Matfen Village Hall on Tuesday 26th September 2017 at 7.00pm.

Present: Stuart Mills (Chairman) of the Council, together with Mr Frank Robson, Mrs Ann Gregory-Smith, Mr Keith Irving, Mr Chris Austin & Mr Hugh Murphy

In Attendance: County Councillor Mrs Veronica Jones & Jo Bramley (Clerk)

0831. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. None.

0832. PRESENTATION FROM KEN McDONALD, GYPSY ROMA TRAVELLER LIAISON OFFICER AT NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL. Ken McDonald has been in this post for a year, prior to that he was in the police force for 30 years. Gypsies have been around for 2000 years and they are a nomadic group. They are an ethnic minority group and in being so are protected. Some are domicile gypsies, this means they have a home and jobs but they are still a traveller and are protected. There is the traditional Roma/Romany gypsy and there is the working gypsy. Ken is governed and tightly guided by the home office and by government guidelines. If an authorised encampment arrives on public or private land Ken has to do a risk assessment for every caravan and family to look at the social aspect i.e. why are they here, how long are they going to be here and where are they from and are there any issues regarding health and do the children need any education. They are entitled to the same facilities and services as the settled community (us) by law. A general misconception is, that crime rises if travellers are around, and this is not factual. It has been a long time since an encampment has been through Matfen however the encampment that came through this year are domicile Roma gypsies and migrate every year to Appleby but this year they chose to come through Matfen. Ken came to see them and they informed him they were only here to rest their horses. By law they can rest their horses for 2 days. Northumberland County Council will only act on private land at the request of the land owner, if it is on NCC land they will make the decision to tolerate or not and to act. Matfen village green is private land and a representative from Matfen Estates had engaged with the gypsies and given them permission to stay for a couple of days. In the instance they had not been given permission, NCC would contact the land owner and ask them if they wished NCC to act on their behalf. They would say yes or no or take our own legal action. Ken has to serve a 77 notice on every van and they would get the tolerated period and have to leave by 8am the next morning. If they didn't leave then NCC would have to instruct their solicitors to get a court date, to get a summons, serve the summons on them and they have 24 hours notice from summons being served (a 78 notice) to move on. The Gypsies have the right to attend court and give their point of view, if they don't NCC serve the notice. This means they are now there for 3-4 days. If they are served the 78 notice they cannot come back to this piece of land for 3 months but they will usually move on before this is served. The type of traveller that was at Matfen were not the anti-social type, they were the traditional Roma Gypsy. Some residents may not want them here but many in the village were supportive of them. Ken wanted to make people aware of the Hate Crime Legislation which is basically any hostility be it words or actions against any minority group, age, disability, gender, race or colour is a criminal offence. Be mindful of what is put on social media. Ken cannot predict if they will come back to Matfen next year and advises about target hardening to try and stop them from getting on to the village green. This could displace them to another area in the village. There is no special protection of village greens. Ken has the details of those that stayed this year and he will make contact with them prior to their migration and ask them to avoid Matfen village. Concerns were expressed at the impact on the community and the village green.

0833. DECLARATION OF INTEREST. Mr S Mills

0834. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th July 2017. It was proposed by Mr S Mills, seconded by Mr C Austin and AGREED to accept the minutes as an accurate record.

0835. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT.

- a) **JOINT MEETING WITH PARISH/COMMUNITY COUNCILS.** 9th October 2017. Mr C Austin to attend this meeting.
- b) **COMMUNITY CHEST.** Has been reopened if you know of any organisations that could benefit from this.
- c) **COUNTY HALL.** A complex with a cinema and indoor bowling, are ideas for the site that was built for the new council office.
- d) **PHOTON BEAM FOR CANCER TREATMENT.** The only one in the country is coming to Bedlington.
- e) **THE ARCH.** A review into Arch is still taking place.
- f) **ACTIVE NORTHUMBERLAND.** Complete review into Active Northumberland that is nearly complete.
- g) **PONTELAND SCHOOL & LEISURE COMPLEX.** It is a complete refurbish and will go to full planning next week.
- h) **POST SIXTEEN TRANSPORT.** Looking at options at how it can be best done and scrap charges for post sixteen transport.
- i) **POT HOLES.** £500,000 has gone into the fund to repair pot holes.

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0836. MATTERS ARISING

- a) **PUBLIC TOILETS.** Mr K Irving is waiting for the quotes to come in and he will circulate once they do. We have a new cleaner however there is no water coming from the taps for her to clean. **Action: Mr K Irving to get a plumber in to sort the water issue out.**
- b) **NOTICE BOARDS.** 3 new ones are needed. **Action: Mrs A Gregory-Smith & Clerk to select and order 3 new notice boards and Mr S Mills to contact Mandy.**
- c) **LAND TO THE EAST OF RYAL CHURCH.** Mr Kelly thanked the parish council for their submission on the planning application and he has submitted his own objection. Mr Kelly wanted to know if Mr Murphy would pursue the longstanding issue with the horizon or whether he should deal with it from New Zealand. We will get the current issue resolved and then start pursuing the horizon issue. Mr Kelly to send Ms Foster at NCC an email informing her of this and to copy Mr Murphy and the clerk into it so we can follow it up.
- d) **ASSETS.** We have a duty of care to make sure that any of our assets are maintained, replaced and safe. We have an annual play area inspection but we should do an inspection at least monthly on each play area. **Action: Clerk to send a list of assets to all and draft a play area checklist/schedule.**

0837. FINANCE

- a) **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.** It was proposed by Mr S Mills, seconded by Mrs A Gregory Smith and AGREED accounts on the list attached be paid.

Payee	Detail	Cheque Issued	VAT	Net of VAT	Cheque Number
Matfen Village Hall	Rental – September 2017	10.00		10.00	100953
Miss J M Bramley	Clerical Services	406.99		406.99	100954
Miss J M Bramley	Expenses	15.10		15.10	100955

0838. CORRESPONDENCE. All correspondence received since the July 2017 meeting had been listed on the agenda and circulated to all councillors.

0839. PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

All outstanding planning applications are listed on each agenda.

Planning Application Reports				
Reference	Applicant	Address	Description	Decision
17/02737/COU	Mr Les Morrison	2 North Side, Ryal	Retrospective change of use from agricultural land to storage area for agricultural machinery & the formation of a soil bund.	Registered
17/02675/FUL	Sir Hugh Blackett	Blackett House, North Side, Matfen	Change of use from office to single 5 bedroom dwelling. Minor internal alterations to suit proposed usage.	GRANTED
17/02676/LBC	Sir Hugh Blackett	Blackett House, North Side, Matfen	Listed building consent for change of use from office to single 5 bedroom dwelling. Minor internal alterations to suit proposed usage.	GRANTED
17/03036/FUL	Mr S Mills	The Garden House, Walled Garden, Matfen	Proposed single storey extensions including new additional front entrance and lobby, south rear west end canopy roof extended to side of existing utility, dayroom and kitchen extension and new sewing room at east end.	Comments by 3 rd October 2017

0840. VILLAGE ISSUES.

- a) **Remembrance Sunday.** Stuart has been asked by John Telford to lay a wreath at the remembrance Sunday service. **Action: Clerk to organise a wreath.**
- b) **White Medical Group.** The closure will affect many people but there is nothing to be done to stop the closure.
- c) **MOLES.** There is a mole issue again. **Action: Clerk to contact pest control.**

0841. ANY URGENT BUSINESS. None.

0842. DATE OF NEXT MEETING. The next meeting is to be held on **Tuesday 28th November 2017 at 7.00pm** in the Village Hall.

Signed as an accurate record _____ Chairman