



Minutes of Meeting held at 6.45 pm on Monday 12th July 2021

Present: Cllrs. J. Littlefair, T. Britcliffe, D. Simmons, J. Quarmby, K. Brown and K. Park.

In Attendance: M. Ireland, Clerk, Ward Cllr. Riddle, 2 residents

1. Apologies: Cllrs Geddes, Ward Cllrs. Cassidy and Cook, PCSO Hestor

2. Public Forum: A resident raised concern about the state of the bridleway running from the top of Butts Lane which was now very overgrown; he had been in contact with Chris Scaife at HBC who agreed to have it cut. However, he was concerned that the area around the pond, which was once very attractive, was now also very overgrown, but as this was on private land, HBC could do nothing about it. Cllr Britcliffe noted that the owner was not keen to have walkers on his land as damage had been caused in the past. The resident offered to maintain the site on a regular basis if the owner was willing to have it restored. Cllr Littlefair agreed to speak to the landowner.

The resident left the meeting.

Another resident raised concern about the flooding at the lower end of Front Street. Northumbrian Water had been out to investigate and had jet-washed the drainpipe, however they were concerned to note that the map of the underground pipes they had was incorrect as many of the drains in the village were not recorded. He noted that the manhole cover outside his house lifted after heavy rain which showed the water was not clearing properly. The Chairman noted that Messrs Seymour and Harkness had attempted to sort out the drains only a couple of years ago. The resident further noted that the gutters along the road, and drains from these, had not been properly cleaned out by HBC for a long time.

The Charman invited Cllr Riddle to give his report at this time, as he had been on a recent walk about around the village with Ward Cllr Cassidy and Kieron Bostock, HBC officer.

Cllr Riddle reported that he had made this visit on 22nd June; the visit had been organised by Cllr Cook, who unfortunately had not been well on the day. He was informed that the HBC officer had specifically excluded the Parish Council from inclusion in the walk about – noted with dismay by Parish Councillors. The visit had included:

- an inspection of the pavement in Butts Lane – no potholes of depth required for resurfacing.
- the resurfaced stretch road in Butts Lane – Parish Cllrs noted that HBC had resurfaced the wrong stretch!
- the triangle in Butts Lane where flooding was worst - Cllr Brown noted that Butts Lane didn't flood until the drain was cut at the entrance to Burns Road.
- the area outside the Raby Arms which was prone to flooding (the area of concern raised by the resident).

The resident also raised concern about the number of vehicles speeding through the village and noted that the vehicles were usually driven by parents dropping off/picking up children from the school. The Chairman informed that he had raised this issue at the last Rural Crime Forum.

The resident left the meeting.

Action: Cllr Littlefair to speak to landowner about the pond area.

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Police Report: PCSO Hestor had emailed a report to the Clerk, which she read out to the meeting: Over the last few months, the main subjects mentioned were drug taking in the Raby Arms car park, drug taking in the 'school' car park and parking issues near the school. He had checked these repeatedly and found nothing. Staff at school had been spoken to and stated no issues with parking and, if problems did arise, they would contact parents. No reported incidents of drug taking at Raby Arms site on the police system in the past year, only one of possible drug taking at school car park and no reports of issues with

parking at school. All issues of parking must be reported to HBC in the first instance. All drug offences to police. ***If residents witness drug-taking, please call police on 101 to report, and, if possible, get a description and possibly registration number of the vehicle but, do NOT approach the vehicle or occupants.***

Cllrs felt the report to be incorrect as several incidents had been reported in the last few weeks. Cllr Britcliffe reported an incident that had taken place on 2 July, when an elderly lady had spotted 2 youths stealing lead from her own and a neighbour's properties. It had been reported to the police and fortunately picked up on CCTV, though the culprits were masked.

The Clerk noted that Cleveland Constabulary were carrying out an on-line consultation on policing for the next 2 weeks; Cllrs were encouraged to complete this as were residents. Cllr Simmons agreed to put the information on the Hart Hub. Cllr Littlefair noted that the Police Call Centre was a complete waste of time; since it had been revamped it was worse than ever! **Actions:** Cllr Simmons to put police consultation info on the Hart Hub, Clerk to obtain telephone/messaging contact for PCSO Hestor.

- 5. Minutes Meeting held 14th June:** Cllr Britcliffe proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr Quarmby and unanimously agreed. It was resolved to accept the amended minutes.

6. Matters Arising:

- (a) **Access to Village Field** – The Clerk read out a letter from the Chairman of the Northern Lights Academy Trust, following their Board Meeting on 8th July. The Academy Board had agreed to meet 50% of the legal fees involved in granting a licence for access to the field, to a maximum of £250. Cllrs were pleased to agree and awaited a draft of the licence, on which they would seek professional advice before signing. **Action:** Clerk to write to Trust agreeing to go ahead with the licence.
- (b) **Car Park Gate** – The Chairman reported that he had spoken to the Head Teacher, Katie Hill, about the possibility of having an electricity meter, to power the proposed car park gate, installed on school premises, to be paid for by the PC. Mrs Hill promised to respond before the end of the school year. Whilst he was at the school, he also asked her to consider having the lights positioned so that they covered the school side of the car park as well as the school grounds.

At this point, 7.25pm, the Revd Janet Burbury and Mrs. Ann Anne Johnson arrived, with apologies for being late, to make a brief presentation to the Parish Council. The Chairman allowed them to do this immediately.

The presentation was about the proposed community garden at St. Mary Magdalene church, part of a larger development of the PCC, to improve access to the history and archaeology of the site. The developments included a museum inside the church, which was to be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, however, whilst they supported the concept of a garden, they were not willing to fund this element of the project. Hart is one of only a few accessible heritage sites in the area, and the proposed garden would be a safe and quiet place for people, especially children, to contemplate and develop their knowledge and appreciation of nature, and would include a willow maze along which explorers would find various interactive information boards and so forth. The request was not for funding rather, in order to demonstrate that the Hart community supported the project, for a letter of support to be sent to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Councillors unanimously agreed to this and the Clerk was requested to write accordingly. Several further suggestions were made as to how the community could show support, including volunteering to plant the willow slips. Cllr Park offered to extend the drawing/plan he had produced for the original project, to include the garden, which offer was gratefully received. **Action:** Clerk to write letter of support.

6. (c) **Chare Wall** – Cllr Park reported that little progress had yet been made. He had received only one response to date from a contractor interested in rebuilding the wall.
- (d) **Proposed Play Area** – The Chairman reported that Rev. Janet believed the Diocese would not support the use of the old vicarage tennis courts as a play area. The Clerk reported that Gentoo were willing to transfer ownership of two small pieces of land at The Darlings to the PC, provided the PC took full responsibility for its future maintenance. She suggested that before accepting the offer, residents in The Darlings should be consulted. This was unanimously agreed and the Clerk was asked to draft a consultation paper for circulation to the Darlings residents, explaining that we have the opportunity

to obtain the land and asking what they would wish to use it for, providing a play area as one example. **Action:** Clerk to draft consultation document as requested.

7. Chairman's Report: The Chairman reported that he had:

- Observed the jetting of the drains at the bottom of Front Street;
- Noted the crime reported earlier – the attempted theft of lead;
- Been very disappointed that the Parish Council had been excluded from the Ward Councillors' walk around the village with Kieran;
- Spoken to the school about the gate power supply and external lighting;
- Attended the HBC Audit & Governance Committee, where the main theme of the work this coming year was to be Child Poverty;
- Received a flier, apparently sent to every household in Hart, from a resident in Holyrood Crescent, inviting them to join a free app called 'Nextdoor Hart'. He was concerned that this was unnecessary as Hart already had a Neighbourhood Watch scheme and the Hart Hub.
- Several Hart Parish Councillors had attended an afternoon tea with our new MP, Jill Mortimer, at the invitation of the Chairman of Elwick PC, Hilary Thompson. The invitation had been extended to all rural parish councillors, for a purely social event. All had found Jill to be very positive and approachable. He asked the Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Mrs. Thompson, on behalf of Hart PC, for arranging and hosting the meeting. **Action:** Clerk to send Thankyou letter.

8. Ward Councillors' Report: The Clerk read out the report from Cllr Cassidy, in which he mentioned the 'walkabout', the defibrillator problem, that a new drainage system was to be installed in Butts Lane which will hold an increased water capacity, though the work is not due to start until Autumn/Winter this year. They had looked at the area near the Raby Arms that was subject to flooding, and noted that a report was due from the Council. They had also discussed the traffic on the A179 regarding speeding vehicles, officers suggested a mobile camera van, however, he (Cllr Cassidy) had advised there was nowhere for such a van to park. The walk had had to be cut short due to them having to move their cars parked without permission in the Village Hall car park. Cllr Riddle reported further on the defibrillator issue, and that he had himself purchased a replacement battery as HBC had taken no action. An officer had, wrongly, claimed the machine was the Parish Council's responsibility, but this had been proved incorrect. He had been concerned to hear from Mrs. McGuckin, that HBC had no records of the defibrillator ownership; (Clerk's note – fortunately the Elwick PC Clerk had kept a record!). Cllr Britcliffe thanked Cllr Riddle for purchasing the battery and hoped he would claim the cost back from HBC. He strongly suggested there needed to be a formal investigation into this very serious issue, as this was a case of negligence on the part of HBC, and lives could have been lost. All present agreed. **Action:** Clerk to write to Director of Public Health at HBC requesting a formal investigation.

9. Maintenance Committee Report: Cllr Park spoke to the 'To Do' report circulated in advance of the meeting; most of the issues remained unchanged from his May report. He reported on the following:

- Speeding issues in Butts Lane - HGVs and cars; 3 cars speeding up Butts Lane near missed two groups of walkers
- Quad bike driving in Butts Lane without care and attention around a walker with children and horse riders
- A black BMW speeding in Butts Lane, along Magdalene Drive and doing 'doughnuts' in the parish council car park
- Footpath in Butts Lane from Front Street to Magdalene Drive not fit for purpose
- Hart Lane /A179 roundabout flooding issues
- Speeding through the village from west entrance off A179
- Recent drainage works in Butts Lane have been ineffective and made the flooding worse
- Hart Village entrance sign on A179 and road markings not visible at west end of village
- Grass cutting quality is very poor; long grass left at road edges and beside dwellings, no clearing up of grass debris and no weed control.

He noted that the signs on the A179 roundabout had been repaired on 21 May but a recent collision (21 June) with 2 bollards on the island at the Hart Lane access to the A179. He noted that 2 posts had been installed, opposite the Worset Lane access to the A179, but no sign had yet been erected.

Action: Clerk to forward report to HBC and to write to school about parking issue.

- 10. Financial Reports:** The Financial reports to 5th July were presented by the Clerk. It was **resolved** to accept the reports.

Receipts:	£	Payments:	£
Interest on Business Account	0.03	Affordable Landscapes (5 Cuts)	1,092.00
		D.M. Ireland (salary April-June)	576.00
		HMRC (PAYE)	<u>144.00</u>
Total	0.03	Total	1,812.00

The Clerk reported that she had written to HSBC about the lack of response to the request for Internet banking despite the forms having been completed and submitted several months earlier. She also noted that Grantscape, who manage the Red Gap Community Fund, had not supported the request for new laptops, from any of the parish councils, as they believed this should be met from the Precept. After a brief discussion it was agreed that Cllr Simmons should request her husband to look at the current laptop to see if its performance could be improved. **Action:** Cllr Simmons to make request for laptop review.

- 11. Correspondence:** Pear Technology had provided optional dates for the refresher training on the Digital Mapping software; two sessions would be held, max 6 people at each, one in the morning and another the same afternoon; this meant approx. 3 places per parish council. Other PCs had indicated a preference for 25th September, and Hart agreed. Cllrs Quarmby and Simmons would not be available during the day, Cllr Park was interested and Cllr Littlefair would be available for the pm session only. Cllr Britcliffe to check his availability. **Action:** Cllr Britcliffe to notify Clerk as to his availability on 25th September.

The Clerk informed that the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was to be a 4-day Bank Holiday, 2-5 June 2022. She suggested the parish Council should start thinking about how they planned to mark the occasion. She had seen an advert in Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine for commemorative mugs, to be printed with a Council's name and wondered if this might be considered? The price was based on units of 36 mugs, at £5.55 per mug plus P&P. All felt this was a very good idea and Cllr Britcliffe suggested that a mug be presented to every household in the parish. Cllr Simmons wondered if the school would be doing something similar. She noted that the Village Hall & Events Committees were already planning for the event; the Clerk suggested the PC should join this planning group. **Action:** Clerk to purchase mugs, Cllr Simmons to propose to Village Hall Committee, PC membership of Jubilee Planning Group.

- 12. Planning Applications:** H/2014/0405 – Land between A689 and Brierton Lane – south-west extension. After some discussion it was **agreed** that no objection would be made, as the proposal had been included in the Local Plan; however, it was strongly felt that the developers should make a financial contribution to a western by-pass for Hartlepool, between the town and villages of Dalton Piercy and Elwick.
- 13. Annual Parish Meeting:** Agreed to 6.30 pm on 20th September, subject to the availability of the Village Hall.
- 14. Matters of Concern to Councillors:** Cllr Quarmby raised concern about the state of two village footpaths, which were badly overgrown. Cllr Simmons raised a similar concern about the footpath opposite the Raby Arms- Milbank Close. After a brief discussion it was **agreed** that a Maintenance Working Party would be arranged for a Saturday morning, ASAP, to cut back the growth. Cllr Littlefair offered to bring a weed killer spray. **Actions:** Cllr Simmons to organise the Working Party and put out a call for volunteers on the Hart Hub, Cllr Littlefair to bring sprayer.
- 15. Date of next meeting:** 6.45 pm Monday 13th September 2021 at Hart Village Hall

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

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