

CRAKEHALL WITH LANGTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 September 2021 in Crakehall Village Hall.

Councillors present: Councillors Mr D Shaw (in the chair), Mr A Beal, Mr J Wilson, Mr J Neale and Mrs J Randall.

Also present: District Councillor Mr M Barningham and two parishioners

Clerk: Mr C McGee.

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs S Stirke, Myra Shield and District Councillors Mr C Les and J Noone.

Pre-meeting Items

No items were raised by those present.

1.0 Police Report

The Police Report – copy attached as Appendix 1 - had been circulated to all members. Cllr Shaw highlighted the key Crime and ASB data.

2.0 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed by those members present as being accurate and signed by the chairman.

3.0 Any Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3.0 Parish Clerk's Report

The clerk referred to a number of items in his written report:

a) Repairs to fences

After the discussions at the last meeting, the clerk emailed NYCC's Area 2 Highways Office on 24 July 2021 about the Mastil Lane fence and asked for a timescale for repairs to all three sets of railings. Despite three further emails advising of the additional damage to the railings alongside the beck and asking for a reply there has been no response. It was agreed that the clerk should now contact the Chief Executive and, if that does not provide a satisfactory outcome, the press should be notified.

b) Work to Trees

The application to Hambleton District Council to gain approval for work to a tree at the junction of Station Road and the A684 and an alder tree on The Batts has been made but the application also now includes some additional work to:

- Trees on the beck-side overhanging the garden at Brookside
- Trees on The Green and The Batts – this includes the removal and replacement of a young oak tree on The Green. However, after some discussion, it was agreed that this tree should not be replaced.

This follows concerns expressed by the owners of Brookside and professional advice from Rennison Tree Services. And very recently, Paul Kind has expressed some concerns about poplar trees on The Batts. It was agreed to get these looked at when the work to the other trees is being undertaken. An application to HDC will be necessary if work is recommended. Cllr Shaw also noted that, with regard to the tree on The Green where upper branches were still encroaching into a tree in the churchyard, Rennison's advice was that there was little that could be done, or indeed, needed to be done.

c) Heavy Vehicles Using Langthorne Road

At the last meeting, the suggestion of writing to the farms in Kirkbridge to advise them of the concerns was discussed but, on balance, not felt likely to have a useful outcome. The owner of Crakehall Hall was advised (as he had made the suggestion) and he commented that he did not think the council was being robust enough in its response. Councillors decided not to re-visit their decision as no new information had been presented.

d) Road Markings on the A684

The clerk had been advised by NYCC that the contract for this scheme has now been awarded and a programme for this work is awaited. It is hoped that the works will commence in mid-late October. It was agreed that the clerk should continue to monitor the situation and contact NYCC again in October 2021 if nothing further has been heard from them by then.

e) Allotment on Mastil Lane

The clerk confirmed that, as agreed at the last meeting of the council (in the confidential session), he had applied to the Land Registry to register the allotment on Mastil Lane in the name of Crakehall with Langthorne Parish Council. He had also noted the interest of the current tenant in the land and that he believes that he owns the land by virtue of "squatter's rights". It will be for the Land Registry to make a decision on the matter.

f) Wildflower Area

There had been much praise for the Wildflower display this year so thanks were given to Cllr Neale and Paul Kind for their excellent work. One resident had suggested that it might be extended to include the grass bank between the road bridge and the footbridge (as this would be a good location for some more flowers). It was felt that it would be too tricky to cultivate that area in exactly the same way as the main wildflower area but Cllr Neale will discuss with Paul Kind the possibility of a less intensive approach which may still yield some colour.

g) Fire damage

The council was very disappointed to note fire damage to the picnic table near the Play Park on The Batts and also to the Wooden Shelter (although this fire appears to have been less successful). Cllr Neale indicated that he is conscious of the outstanding work to the shelter roof and that he hopes to undertake the work very soon.

h) Lamppost Planters

Bedale Tourist Information Centre had asked the council if it required any more containers for the flowers attached to lampposts and fences through Crakehall. The council agreed to consult Kay Dennis before responding and to thank her for the excellent displays this year.

i) Planning Applications

- a) In accordance with Standing Orders the council has responding to two Planning Applications since the last meeting:
- Ref: 21/01870/FUL – 3 new French windows, glazed Juliet balconies and new windows throughout at Mill Cottage, Hackforth Road, Little Crakehall – no objections were raised.
 - Ref: 21/01878/FUL – Construction of an agricultural barn for the housing of livestock at Cherrytree Farm, Crakehall – no objections were raised.
- b) The council has also been notified of two decisions:
- Ref 21/00715/FUL: Subdivision and Extension of Existing Dwelling to form 2 Dwellings at The Cottage Hawkstone Little Crakehall – granted.
 - Ref 21/01409/TPO: Proposed work to Oak tree subject to Tree Preservation Order No: 15/00004/TPO2 at Land to The Rear Of 1 Moorfields, Little Crakehall – granted.

4.0 Traffic Flow Through Crakehall

Cllr Shaw reported the latest data from the Vehicle Activated Sign and police patrols in the village and other related matters:

- The last recorded visit of a police patrol was on 28 June 2021 when 41 offences were noted in 1 ½ hours. The number of visits this year remains very low compared to last year.
- The latest deployments of the VAS showed 85th percentile speeds as follows:
 - The Green - 31.2 mph
 - Hackforth Road - 29.2 mph
 - Little Crakehall – 32.5 mph

These results would not trigger any further action by the police or the Highways Authority.

- Cllr Shaw also mentioned an exchange of correspondence with a resident of Little Crakehall who was concerned about dangerous driving on the Hackforth Road and who felt that the Parish Council should be doing more to resolve the issue. Cllr Shaw referred to data from the VAS at that location and that it showed virtually no speeding vehicles and, as above, an 85th percentile speed under the 30mph limit. Councillors felt therefore that the concerns were perceptions rather than reality and that the council could do no more than it already does to put pressure on NYCC to bring about change in locations where it is judged to be necessary.
- And finally, Cllr Shaw referred to a recent article in the D&S indicating that the new Police Commissioner had commissioned research into the effectiveness of current measures attempting to reduce speeding vehicles in North Yorkshire. He also expressed interest in increasing the number of 20 mph zones so there may be an opportunity to re-visit the application made recently for such a zone on the A684 through The Green.

5.0 Parking round The Green

At its last meeting, the council agreed that:

- A meeting be arranged with the Head of the School about this issue so that the various suggestions for improvement could be explored further.
- Cllr Shaw would re-examine the possibility of getting a School Patrol Officer in light of the statistics provided by the school.
- The clerk would contact NYCC with the suggestion that the lane running alongside The Old School House should be designated for “Access by Residents Only” (rather than “Residents Parking Only”).

By way of updates:

- Cllr Shaw and the clerk met the Executive Headteacher outside school at 3.00 pm on 10 September 2021 and reported that they had observed a busy but orderly half hour period when children were being collected over two departure times ten minutes apart. All suggestions previously made were considered but the most noticeable issue was the parking of cars on The Green outside Crakehall House. This led to a suggestion from the Head that mesh might be laid over this area and that it could then be designated, (along with the strip on The Green over the road and meshed area beyond the church), as a recommended area for parking. This might have the advantage of extending the area available for the Police Speed Patrol Vehicle and could be used for other events where additional parking was required. Councillors considered this option but were concerned that designating areas on that side of the A684 may increase the number of children crossing the busy road and create liability issues for the council if cars were damaged mounting kerbs. On balance therefore it was agreed that no action be taken at this stage but the situation be monitored over the winter period. There was a view that parking on The Green was

self-limiting in that in wetter conditions drivers may be reluctant to park there in case they got stuck.

- Cllr Shaw had done some work on the criteria for qualifying for a School Crossing Patrol and believes that applying 75 pupils and an average of 215 per half hour (from the council's traffic data) to the Site Viability Graph puts the data point within Area B – "SCP site not justified at initial assessment (Apply Part 4 of the procedure to verify the position)". Part 4 of the procedure referenced involves giving weight to various criteria and a complicated equation which no matter how generous the assumptions regrettably still lead to a shortfall in terms of qualification
- NYCC responded to the suggestion that the lane running alongside The Old School House should be designated for "Access by Residents Only" (rather than "Residents Parking Only") with a brief statement:

Access to a publicly maintained carriageway cannot be restricted to private use only. I am therefore unable to process your request further.

Further correspondence was then exchanged about the costs of an assessment for a "Residents Parking Area" but this was dismissed by NYCC. In summary:

The issues that you are describing would not be resolved via a resident's parking scheme.

- Notwithstanding the comments above about plastic mesh to protect the grass on The Green it was agreed that Cllr Shaw should purchase some more mesh to take the benefit of currently reduced prices. It was very likely that more mesh would be needed anyway in new locations and / or as a replacement in areas where it had broken.

6.0 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacons

The council noted that 2022 will be the year of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and all local councils were being encouraged to take part in the lighting of Beacons on the 2nd of June 2022 in celebration of this. The council decided that:

- A beacon would be lit – Cllr Neale to organise given that he is storing the beacon from when it was last lit.
- The community be invited to organise events to celebrate the Jubilee probably on Friday 3 June 2022 which is the designated Bank Holiday. (Thursday 2 June is designated as the Spring Bank Holiday in 2022). The council would welcome ideas from individuals, groups and / or organisations and will consider paying a small grant to support events.

7.0 Bus Improvement Strategy

Councillors noted that North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) is currently consulting stakeholders on a Bus Service Improvement Plan, as part of the implementation of the Government's "Bus Back Better" strategy and CPRE and Action for Yorkshire Transport have identified six key elements which they believe should be included within the plan. However, the council noted that the closing date for submissions had passed.

8.0 Councillors' Reports on their areas of lead responsibility

This item provided an opportunity for councillors to share any information or concerns about matters that fell within their areas of lead responsibility (and which had not already been raised elsewhere on the agenda).

Cllr Beal advised that he hoped to attend a meeting of the YCLA on 20 October 2021 and then reported a number of issues relating to the play parks:

- There is rotten wood on the seat near the church wall

- On The Batts, the shelter roof remains in need of repair / replacement, the picnic table has been damaged by fire and the yellow spinner needs wood replacing.
- At the Village Hall, the car park gate does not self-close and the road gate has dropped making it difficult to bolt, the picnic table has loose wood on the seats, the planter needs removing and the sign board is rotting and the muster sign peeling. The last item is a Village Hall Management Committee responsibility. The clerk advised the work is scheduled to the fence in this area so he will ask the contractor to attend to the other issues at the same time.

Councillors then discussed grass cutting and how to move forward beyond April 2022 when the current contract expires. Three options had been identified:

- 1) Roll forward Farm and Land Management Services' Contract on an annually renewable basis. This has the advantage of simplicity (and ease of administration) but there have been concerns this year about the quality of service received. If this option is contemplated some reassurances on quality and the frequency of cutting would be required. And it's likely that the company would seek an increase on their current rates of payment.
- 2) Undertake a full tendering process based on a detailed specification (as undertaken in 2019). This is quite an undertaking and therefore time-consuming. However, the basis of the tender documentation and specifications were produced in 2019 and would only need updating.
- 3) Consider the possibility put forward by some residents for grass to be cut by volunteers. In many ways this is an attractive proposition because it's probably undeniable that volunteers would be more likely than outside contractors to take pride in their work and the appearance of the village. However, there are difficulties – the job requires all grass to be cut and strimmed not just The Green. And a tractor would need to be bought (or leased) and insured for use by volunteers (and on the road to get from site to site).

It was agreed to return to the matter in November but before then the clerk was asked to contact the current contractor to seek their comments about the difficulties this year (and also any likely price increase for 2022/23. Cllr Neal also requested information on current pricing and the number of cuts that have been undertaken each year since the contract began.

9.0 Financial matters

9.1 A summary of all Income and Expenditure from 30 June 2021 to 31 August 2021 and a budget monitoring report showing performance against the planned budget for 2021/22 were considered. At 31 August 2021, the council had £5582.87 in its current account and £7080.62 in its savings account, a total of £12663.62. The Budget Monitoring Report anticipated further income of around £6833 and further expenditure of around £8485 before the end of March 2022 (thus enabling the unallocated contingency / reserve to stay around the £10000 mark as previously agreed). These were agreed as reasonable assumptions at this stage.

9.2 Councillors had been advised, at the meeting in May 2021, that the headstone on Mrs Precious' grave had been damaged for some time (probably by a hedge-cutter), and given that funding had been provided for maintenance, it was agreed that estimates for a repair or replacement should be sought. Pickards provided an estimate but at the last meeting it was agreed two further estimates be sought. The current situation was:

- Pickards advised that a repair was not possible and that a replacement would cost £1700 plus VAT (to include lettering and fixing).
- Watson Memorials suggest that the only way to preserve the existing memorial is to reduce the height from the top, re-face the memorial removing all the current lettering and re-engrave

from the new top position. The memorial would be cut to the same shape but approximately 4" to 6" lower than it currently is depending on the depth of the damage. The memorial would need to be removed and re-fixed to be able to do the works with the memorial to be off the grave for around 4 to 6 weeks. The works would cost £1180.00 to include all the works stated above and the memorial fixed back on the grave to the latest safety standards.

- Dales of Thirsk suggested replacing the stone with a new one or cutting and reshaping the headstone below the lettering and re-lettering the re-sized headstone. An estimate was awaited (despite reminders).

Councillors were advised that the council was left a sum of £2000 in 2011 (being £100 / year for 20 years) to cover costs of maintaining Mrs Precious' grave (specifically hand strimming of the kerbed grave). The sum remaining in the 2021/22 budget is £800 (but, in reality, there has been no additional expenditure relating to the maintenance of Mrs Precious' grave). The council discussed the possibility of a less expensive repair but, taking all matters into account, it was agreed that:

- A repair or replacement should be paid for by the council using the funds left by Mrs Precious' estate (unless an insurance claim was possible).
- The quote from Watson Memorials was preferred but should not be pursued until the quote from Dales of Thirsk has been received (or attempts to obtain the quote exhausted).

9.3 The council received notification on 5 August 2021 from PFK Littlejohn that they had "received and logged the notification of exempt status for the year ended 31 March 2021 submitted to us for Crakehall with Langthorne Parish Council" and that "there is no review to be performed and consequently no auditor certificate and report, or any other closure documentation, will be issued by us for this reporting year". As usual, during the period for the "exercise for public rights" various documents as required had been made available on the website.

9.4 Councillors noted the clerk's research into the legality of the council making gifts and / or donations and / or grants to individuals, organisation and charities and were pleased to note that the payment of honoraria to individuals working for the benefit of the parish would seem to be entirely legitimate. Councillors then considered the question of gifts which may seek to recognise the contribution of an individual over many years and paid at the end of that period. The clerk's research revealed that a number of parish councils clearly believe that such gifts / payments are deemed to be legal under Sections 137 and have established policies to provide criteria and consistency in making such awards. The council agreed that the clerk should draft a policy for consideration at the next meeting.

9.5 The clerk had reported some time ago that Unity Trust Bank had reduced the interest on its savings account to 0% and that, since then, he had been looking for an alternative available to councils which would provide at least some interest on the capital. He advised that Redwood Bank is used by a number of councils and that they had available three Business Accounts with interest rates and accessibility as follows:

- 35 days' notice – 0.70%
- 95 days' notice – 0.80%
- 1 year's notice – 0.90%

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme applies and a minimum deposit of £10000 is required. It was agreed that an account is opened as soon as possible for the 35 days' notice account.

10.0 Matters of Urgency (as agreed by the Chairman for matters raised before the meeting)

There were no matters of urgency.

11.0 Any Other Business (for information only)

Cllr Barningham reported a number of developments:

- Hambleton District Council are looking into the feasibility of a 3G football pitch in Bedale. They have allocated £250K for pitch and looking for others to contribute.
- HDC hopes to re-start Parish Liaison Meetings in the spring.
- There are plans for “de-carbonising” the Leisure Centre in Bedale including the installation of Solar Panels.
- The latest proposals for the new Unitary North Yorkshire County Council provide for two councillors to represent the area stretching from West Tanfield to Crakehall including Bedale.

In response to a question from Lionel Green, the clerk confirmed that he had not yet received the Decision Notice about the housing development off the Hackforth Road although it was shown as “approved” on Hambleton’s website. Cllr Barningham suggested that discussions about Low Cost Housing and Section 106 were probably not yet completed.

Lionel Green also commented on the presence of Giant Hogweed on The Batts.

Paul Kind had expressed some concerns about the extent of weeds in the beck and wondered if they needed to be sprayed or removed. He also wondered if the beck needed further dredging. It was agreed to try to seek some professional advice about this (probably from the Environment Agency) and return to the issue at the next meeting.

12.0 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 7.30 pm.

**Chris McGee
Clerk to the Council
September 2021**

After the meeting, the Chairman presented Cllr Jess Randall with a Dingle Crystal Bowl (bought with personal donations made by councillors and the clerk). This was a gift to commemorate her recent marriage to Matt Randall. Many congratulations to them both.

These are Draft Minutes until approved at the next Parish Council meeting.

Appendix 1

Hambleton Command : Town and Parish Council Report

Town or Parish: Crakehall, Hackforth, Snape and Watlass

Report Completed By: 6782 Lees

Data Reporting Period: August 2021



Crime and ASB Data

Anti-social behaviour 2 incidents

Auto crime 0

Burglary : Commercial : 0 Residential : 0

Criminal Damage 1

Theft (including from shops) 1

Violence Against the Person 0

Other crimes including Drugs 0

TOTAL THIS PERIOD 4

We urge residents to be on lookout and report suspicious activity or vehicles at the time any suspect activity occurs using the national 101 non-emergency number.

Always dial 999 in an emergency or if a crime is in progress.