

ULGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the annual meeting of Parish Council held in Women's Institute Hall

Monday 16th September 2024

Councillor J Scott (in the Chair)

Councillors P Barton, G Brown, H Shaw, D Wilson

Also in attendance: 19 parishioners

Apologies: Cllr David Towns

35/24 Questions from Parishioners

1. A resident was asking about the removal a sycamore tree that was close to and affecting the boundary wall between themselves and The Forge Inn. The owner of The Forge Inn, who was present advised she would take advice and let the parishioner know.
2. A resident highlighted continued speeding through the village - there are now 4 volunteers trained to use a speed gun within the village and currently working with our local neighbourhood police team.
3. There are concerns by residents regarding the number of caravans and motorhomes turning into Woodlands, presumably using satnav - to write to Peter Clark, owner of Kirk Field Banks and ask for better signage. ACTION Deb Wilson
4. The owner of The Forge asked the Parish Council if there was a decision to renew the ACV on her property. She voiced her frustration at the parish council in relation to the ACV, comments in the previous minutes regarding the value she placed on her property and general communication. To be discussed further in item 6 on the agenda.

36/24 Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Monthly meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 15th July 2024.

28/24 Roundabout cost remains outstanding. ACTION Deb Wilson

RESOLVED: The minutes be approved

37/24 Planning

- (i) Tree Preservation Order: T4 - Lime; reduce lower north westerly branches (x2) by 50% - Glenrosa Ulgham Northumberland NE61 3AT

38/24 Correspondence

- (i) Invite to the Town and Parish Council Autumn Conference Thursday 3rd October

Booking no later than 5pm on Friday 27th September.
Open to 2 delegates - Cllr Shaw and Cllr Scott to attend

(ii) Roadworks - following a query regarding why only half of the road through Ulgham has been resurfaced. An email from NCC quote "The area team put the whole road to be done. However, there was a designer who designed this with it being over a certain amount of Money, and with the budget that was available, that was all that could be included in this financial year. We will be looking to carry out some future works when further funding comes available as the previous Micro asphalt surface as you know failed throughout the whole village".

(iii) NCC Strategic Transport Team - funding opportunity - to improve the regions bus network - to improve/replace existing bus stop infrastructure within their areas - reply by Friday the 20th September 2024.

Plan to apply to refurbish the bus top at west end of the village. ACTION: Deb Wilson

(iv) Sisters and North Steads Community Windfarm Fund - deadline for applications is 23rd September

(v) Letters from resident re The Forge - 2 emails, to be discussed under item 6

(vi) Local Nature Recovery Survey - forwarded to David Parkin for any contributions

39/24 The Forge

An ACV highlights to NCC planning that the parish council value the asset as being beneficial to the community. Whilst the parish council were hopeful that a compromise agreement would have been reached by now, there is a deadline for the ACV to be put in place. An ACV mitigates against the risk of full development of the site and losing the asset altogether, although any development plans would need to be approved by Northumberland County Council and would be therefore open for general discussion.

The PC are under pressure to survey the village, in order to do this they will need firm proposals and plans to present. There have been discussions with SRS regarding development of the plot, unfortunately talks have broken down, a summary of talks to date can be provided on request.

Following the update in the August newsletter, 10 residents have contacted member of the parish council, 8 residents voiced their support for an ACV and two formal emails were received. The summary of the emails are:

1. *the state of the Forge Inn and its grounds - fed up with the deteriorating site and blot on the village landscape.*
2. *they feel it unacceptable that the parish council are relying on a survey over 12 months old.*

3. *significant concerns re PC intention to renew the ACV, without an up to date and informed mandate from the village, particularly as renewing the ACV risks a potential developer who may be able to deliver a compromised offer, simply walking away.*

The PC equally agree the site is an eyesore for the village and have offered to cut the grass and tidy the carpark at no cost to the owner. This offer has been rejected, but the owner has replied stating they will arrange for the work to be undertaken themselves.

The survey referred to was initiated 4 years after the ACV was initially placed on the premises, and whilst 12 months ago, had a very good response rate, which was overwhelming in favour of supporting the ACV. If and when there are firm and reasonable proposals to present, the parish council will survey the village, however in the meantime an ACV mitigates against the risk of full development of the site and losing the asset altogether.

The PC maintain that supporting a pub/community hub is in the best interests of the village and will apply to have an ACV placed on The Forge Inn in due course, acknowledging that this may be attached to a compromised plot in the future. The PC do not currently envisage any reason why this would need to be withdrawn or requested to be lifted, however both options will remain available and be considered should a valid reason be justified.

40/24 Alncom Broadband - A project to bring fibre broadband to the village.

Alncom has funding allocated by BDUK (Building Digital UK), a project sponsored by the government to supply fibre broadband to villages in Northumberland.

It is a 'demand led' project and as such needs interest from our village to make it viable for Ulgham.

Alncom are currently working on flyers, but in the meantime if anyone is interested, they can gain more information and consider registering their interest at:

Website: www.alncom.co.uk

Telephone: 01665 604816

Email: info@alncom.co.uk

According to one resident, whilst Alncom can't offer fibre at present - they are offering a rolling month on copper broadband and will switch when fibre is available.

41/24 Northumberland Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

12 week period of consultation on its Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Comments to be with County Council before the 18th of October 2024.

Thank you to Mike O'Brien for his help in drafting a response.

42/24 Reports from Ulgham Village Groups

- (i) UVA - thank you to everyone who has helped to water the plants this year, our litter pickers have had more than usual too so a huge thank you to them. There is to be a meeting on 24th September, the main discussion will be planning for firework night. So well - fund 2 youngsters Joe with his African project and
- (ii) Meadows - nothing to report
- (iii) UCBS:

Since the last update to the PC in July, I am able to confirm the owner of the Forge has accepted an offer from Sincera Retail Solutions, but the Forge is NOT at this point sold. UCBS have been working with Sincera in an attempt to reach an agreed compromise, one which will provide a reasonable building for a community pub/hub/café/ shop with good frontage for passing trade and parking and ideally good outside space, most importantly owned by the community/UCBS to secure its long term future. Unfortunately, communications have broken down without reaching a fair compromise.

In regards to the ACV, it obviously provides a degree of protection to secure a pub in the village for generations to come, should a compromised pub be agreed it is expected the ACV will only apply to the pub aspect of the plot, and the remaining land available for development would not be constrained by an ACV.

Given the passage of time, changes and emerging options since the last village survey (August 2023), UCBS actively support a further canvassing of the village regarding a further 5 year ACV once firm and acceptable options are available to them to share with all residents.

A very recent development, is a further interested party has just been introduced by UCBS to the owner with a proposal which looks to be much more sympathetic to both the village and UCBS, ensuring UCBS would own, at a reasonable price a much more attractive proportion of the plot. This party has no concerns whatsoever with an ACV remaining on any compromise pub solution. Early days, but positive progress.

43/24 Accounts for Payment - to authorise payment of the following:

- (i) Strimming of the playground - August £70
Expecting invoice for gravel for Meadows

In August we paid:

- (i) Share for grass cutting at Churchyard £1305
- (ii) Strimming of the playground - June £35 and July £70

44/24 Reports from Chairman and Members

Regarding the Northumberland Water letter -and potential refurbishment of sections of our sewer network within the village, can we ask them to be more specific. ACTION: Deb Wilson

Speed training for those completing their training with the police is booked for 2nd October

Police have been made aware of poachers in the area

45/24 Date of next meeting

Monday 21st October 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the WI Hall.

SIGNATURE:

DATE: