

NYMET ROWLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 178th meeting of the Parish Council, held via remote VTC Zoom link on Wed. 18th November 2020 at 7.30.

Present:- Councillors Anthony Odhams (Chair), David Gruncell, Viv O'Dell, Clerk Roger Cooper, County Cllr. Margaret Squires, Lapford Cllr. Peter Heal, M.O.P.s Roland Smith, Oliver Williams, Mark Wooding.

Apologies:- Babs Channing, Winnie Rookes who could not take part as she does not have a computer. (DALC advise that providing councillors present apologies, they can stay in post, and this is not time limited)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September were approved and signed.

Matters arising:-

1. Pothole/road maintenance. Repairs to a number of potholes were made recently during visits by contractors, including a severe one near the Cleaveanger Farm entrance. But none on Barton Hill. These were in response to submissions made on the Highways Reporting Portal – important to include photographs.
2. Snow warden scheme. RC said that there is nothing further to report on this matter at present, and before any decision is taken to proceed he would like to ask Cllrs. Channing and Rookes for their opinions.
3. Village Hall car park repair donation. RC has again spoken to the VH Chair who says they are waiting for Pike Construction to do the work.
4. Change of priority at Eggesford Cross junction. Nothing to report, Cllr. Margaret Squires to make enquiries.
5. Hawkridge Bridge, Clotworthy, repairs. RC has made contact with the Contractor, who told him that he is expecting this work to be resuming very soon, that the person responsible at Devon Highways had been seconded to Covid work, which is why there has been this very long delay. RC read out a letter to Highways expressing the Councils great concerns about safety, and has since had an email advising that work would be starting very soon. Cllr. Squires to pursue this.

Finance Report:-

Bank balance. The Current A/C balance is £1,306.11 and the Deposit £550.29, there are no outstanding payments due. RC asked if the Council wanted to make donations to the Village Hall and St Bartholomew's Church. AO said that the Hall is not needing funds but the Church has no funds left at all, so it was agreed to send £250 towards maintenance. DG said that he would arrange the purchase & erection of a Christmas Tree.

New Business.

New tree planting project & hedge at Barton Farm entrance. AO raised a suggestion of planting more native deciduous trees in the village at suitable locations. It is well understood that sighting these trees would need to fit with landowners' situations and machine trimming of hedges etc. The possibility of recruiting volunteers was explored. They would help plant and be responsible for the subsequent care until properly established – watering in dry periods etc. Potential volunteers will be approached.

Concern was also raised about the condition and wellbeing of the replacement beech hedge whips planted at the new Barton Farm entrance. Although largely hidden by nettles some appear to be fairing satisfactorily. A condition of planning approval for the entrance was the planting and ongoing care of these is clearly the responsibility of the farm owner.

Salt box maintenance. AO said that he has inspected the boxes which are all nearly full.

Large amounts of mud on the village roads. All attendees entered into an extended discussion about the terrible state of the roads particularly after maize harvesting has taken place. This is primarily the result of the seasonal wet conditions and very large transport machinery used by contractors etc. A very thick layer of mud and stones was left on the road from the car park to the farm entrance and beyond. Complaints to the PC were made, notably by elderly or infirm residents who were unable to walk on, or use the road. Other people did not feel safe walking either there, or on a thick slick of mud from the entrance to the slurry pit down to the bend in Nymet Woods. Whilst an attempt was made to scrape off the road at the time, that was nowhere near sufficient to deal with the problem and the road edges are still covered in heavy deposits weeks later. Being expected to walk or drive on this afterwards, was clearly unreasonable. As was relying on the weather or waiting until a scheduled visit of the Devon Highways road sweeper in December, to clear up the mess

It was pointed out that the previous farm owner was very diligent in clearing up after stock & machinery movements. Whilst residents are very understanding of the difficulties, there are limits to their tolerance and this is always very unpleasant to have to live with. It was suggested that we contact the National Farmers Union who publish guidance on this matter. Failing that, then it may well need to be referred to the Police or Local Authority.

A further point was raised about the almost continual, unpleasant run off from the farm entrances adjacent to the Church, and especially the new entrance. This has been recognised as a serious problem for a long time. The drainage detailed in the planning approval for the new entrance, was specifically intended to deal with the existing problem emanating from the farm and entrance, but clearly the situation is persisting.

The PC is to raise these matters with the relevant landowner to try and reach agreement to ensure that any future mud is effectively removed and corrective action is taken in respect to the effluent run off.

Support for those self isolating from COVID-19 risks was reviewed again. Owing to the kindness of volunteers in the village, with shopping, collections etc, it was felt that sufficient coverage was in place.

Cllr. Squires advised the meeting that the Hele Cross Planning Application 20/1170 is scheduled to be discussed at the Planning Meeting on Wednesday 2nd December. Given that the PC consultee submission was comprehensive and objective, it was suggested that this document is sent to the Chair of the meeting in order to be read out.

Date of next meeting, Wednesday 20th January 2021 at 7.30 pm by Zoom.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.