

## Eglington Parish Council

Clerk Lesley Long, 5 Meadow Riggs, Alnwick NE66 1AP

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### MINUTES

Minutes of the electronic meeting of Eglington Parish Council held on Wednesday October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Present:** Chair Cllr D Alston (DA) , Cllrs P McIver (PM), D Biesterfield (DB), A Gray (AG), G Leishman (GL).

**In attendance:** County Cllr W Pattison (WP). Clerk Lesley Long.

**20/72 Public Participation** - There were no questions from parishioners

**20/73 Apologies** - Cllr G Grahamslaw. Cllr J Lawson had submitted a letter to the Clerk requesting leave of absence until May 2021 owing to her inability to take part in the Zoom electronic meetings. The Council APPROVED her request.

#### **20/74 Meeting with Rob Murfin (RM) Head of Planning, Northumberland County Council.**

The Parish Council had invited RM to attend to discuss various planning matters and specifically: [ add text of the 'issues email we sent his office ahead of the meeting]. RM said that he was keen to establish more effective ways of working with parish councils and to involve the community in the planning process. EPC had raised this issue last year in the context of the Rock Midsteads planning application. He is liaising with Stephen Rickitt of NALC, to look at how to improve communication and to offer a programme of training and guidance to parish councillors on how to make representations most effectively. He observed that evening Zoom training sessions with other councils, had resulted in a better understanding of the respective roles and concerns of all parties involved.

Referring to the recent Govt White Paper – Planning for the Future, he stated that the proposals therein will require a wider involvement of the broader community in the Neighbourhood and Local Plan process, rather the current model which tends to only engage select groups of residents and individuals who respond to planning applications.

In response to councillors' concerns that planning officers did not take their representations into account, Mr Murfin explained that officers were bound to following an evidence based approach when assessing an application and to consider if objections raised would stand scrutiny at a planning enquiry -see above. He accepted that NCC Planning needed to look at ways to better explain the planning process and will organise training on how Highways decisions are made.

On the question of whether councillors and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties would receive responses from the planning team to their representations, RM explained that his planning team were dealing with the highest number of applications they had ever received. Therefore, he is implementing a 'Responsive System' whereby parish councillors and third parties will receive an acknowledgement that their question had been received and passed to the appropriate planning officer, and that a response would follow as soon as practicable.

RM explained that for a planning officer to respond to a representation or question – it needs to have been posed in a clear and specific manner and not be Any response from a planning officer might need to be qualified, depending on where the application was in the evaluation process and whether the officer required further information before giving a definitive answer.

It would appear that senior Councillors had not undertaken any retraining of the sought EPC considered necessary following the Rock Midsteads application and which EPC understood RM to then have offered.

Signed CHAIR.....

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Councillors asked when the Rock Midstead logging routes were due for review; the last consultation was in 2018. RM undertook to speak with the NCC Network Management team to clarify the process for triggering another review of the route. **ACTION – RM**

RM confirmed that when the EPC Neighbourhood Plan is formally adopted, the Parish Council will become a statutory consultee. This will trigger the involvement of the Planning Committee in the application evaluation process.

In respect of the EPC approved Design Code, which is not yet part of a formal Neighbourhood Plan. RM affirmed that planning officers were aware of the EPC Design Code. At present the Design Code can only be considered as a ‘material consideration’ as it does not carry the weight of ‘development plan’ status. EPC was pleased to note that this was now common ground. RM advised that when making representations on future applications, councillors should tie their comments to the interpretation of specific content within the EPC Design Code to better inform the planning officer’s evaluation.

Going forward, RM suggested that the best way for the EPC Design Code to be effective, would be for applicants to see the Code before applying for planning permission. He undertook to find out if planning officers giving pre-planning advice, could direct applicants to the Design Code. He will respond to the EPC with the outcome. **ACTION – RM**

RM agreed to further investigate the formulation of some specimen planning conditions to be applied to planning permissions where the Design Code is engaged. **Action RM**

The Chair thanked RM for attending and said that it would be very useful to continue the conversation.

**20/75 Minutes of the Meeting on August 26<sup>th</sup>**, 2020 were approved as a true record.

**20/76 Declaration of Interest** - DM declared an interest in an item in Cllr Wendy Pattinson’s October Report.

#### **20/77 Matters Arising**

- a. **South Charlton Village Hall Lease.** AG reported that Northumberland Estates have installed the drainage tank, but it has not yet been connected.
- b. **Meeting with Neil Snowden of NCC** - DA reported that there was still no date for installation for the speed limiter sign for the western end of the village. WP confirmed a similar situation in South Charlton. She will continue to press for action before the end of the financial year and advised the Clerk to send regular reminders to NCC.  
**ACTION - WP & Clerk**
- c. **Rural Broadband** - The Clerk had circulated a summary report prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk and DA would liaise to send letters to residents advising them of their options for faster broadband. It was agreed that the letter would be copied to Lilburn Estates Ltd as they might wish to upgrade broadband speeds in their tenanted properties.  
**ACTION - DA & Clerk**
- d. **Hedge Trimming** - DA and PM confirmed they had approached the residents as agreed at the last meeting. **Agreed no further action.**
- e. **Noticeboards** - DA undertook to refurbish the Eglington PC noticeboard and AG will tackle the South Charlton board. **ACTION – DA & AG**
- f. **Design Code** – the decision to print copies for the village halls has been deferred due to the present closure of the village halls where they were to be made available to members of the public.

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- g. **Collapsing Mud Bank on Footpath Leading from The Terrace** - Agreed that the Clerk would follow up with NCC's Mitch Young to discuss how best to tackle slippage of the bank on to the footpath.

**20/78 Disputed Footpath Boundary** - Referring to a letter from a resident disputing the boundary of his property, DA stated that he had consulted the 1860 map, Land Registry and the relevant 1992 planning application and confirmed that the property boundary does extend to the edge of the road. He will respond in writing to the resident.

**20/79 Energy Efficiency** - GL delivered his report and recommendations. As a first step, it was agreed that guidance for parishioners on the grants schemes available be posted on the website and in Hear Abouts. GL will create a checklist for parishioners and will pass it to AG for publication. GL will give an update at the next meeting. **ACTION GL, AG & Clerk**

**20/80 Neighbourhood Plan** - DB reported that an update has been included in Here Abouts. The Steering Group have continued to meet with Sarah Branningan of NCC Planning, and arrangements for the Consultation process are under discussion. The draft Landscape Report is progressing.

**20/81 Sign for Community Field Gate** – DA reported this has been erected at the entrance and states that no vehicles are allowed on the field, except by direction of the Parish Council or ECA.

**20/82 Remembrance Day Wreaths.** The Clerk confirmed she had ordered wreaths which will be delivered to DA who will arrange for them to be passed to the two village churches.

#### **20/83 Planning Matters**

- i. **20/01917/FUL** (*circulated*)  
**Proposal:** [Erection of a general purpose agricultural building](#)  
**Location:** Land north of Middlemoor Windfarm control building  
**Applicant:** Armstrong  
**EPC Decision** – The meeting approved a NEUTRAL response to the proposal. **ACTION – Clerk**
- ii. **REF TR010058 – Highways England.** To note the receipt of the Notification of an Application for a Development Consent Order (DOC) in respect of the A1 Morpeth to Ellingham Widening Scheme. Clerk to post the notification and date for any responses on the PC website.  
**ACTION – Clerk**

#### **20/84 Finance**

- a. The following invoices and payments were approved:
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|---|---------|
| • Retrospective approval Greenfingers Inv 1993 – 2 grass cuts in August (VAT £18) | £108.00 |
| • Greenfingers Inv 2056 – 2 grass cuts in September (VAT £18)                     | £108.00 |
| • ICO Data Protection Registration Renewal Fee                                    | £ 40.00 |
| • Clerks salary for Aug & Sept (25.75 hours)                                      | £215.23 |
| • Clerks Expenses Aug – Sept including webhosting renewal fee (VAT £36)           | £280.90 |
- b. The Council noted the increased in the Clerks' hourly rate from £10.16ph to £10.44ph
- c. The Financial report was received.
- d. The Lloyds bank signature mandate will be amended to remove former councillor W Purvis and former Clerk A Smith. The new Clerk L Long and Cllr. A Gray will be added to the mandate.

**20/85 County Councillors Report** - WP referred to her report circulated before the meeting. She confirmed that the Eglington – West Ditchburn Road will be resurfaced on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The Summit for coastal villages is taking place on 11<sup>th</sup> November with final details yet to be confirmed. EPC has not been expressly invited but councillors may ask to join if they wish. She is pursuing the matter of the 30pmh speed limit in South Charlton and advised the Clerk to contact Neil Snowden

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and Robin McCartney in mid-November, if there had been no further progress. It was pointed out that her comments on the question of small business rate relief were misinformed.

### **20/86 Highway Matters**

- i. The three LTP 21 -22 Priorities were agreed as:
  - The installation of a vehicle activated speed limiter sign at the eastern end of Eglingham village
  - Installation of red rumble strips to slow vehicles approaching Eglingham
  - Resurfacing and repairs to all the footpaths in South Charlton which are causing trip hazards (other than the pavement to be repaired with WP Members Small Improvement Grant)  
**ACTION – Clerk to inform NCC**
  
- ii. **Request to reduce excess signage in South Charlton** - The Clerk reported that Robin McCartney, NCC Highways Infrastructure Manager, had confirmed that a team would look at the signage when they were next in the village

**20/87 Neighbourhood Services** – The Parish Council APPROVED expenditure of approx £40 - £50 to NCC to move the dog waste bin in South Charlton from the end of a resident’s garden to the telegraph pole across the road.

**20/87 Correspondence** – the following items had been received:

- Letter from Hope FREE Tree Project working with FOE Alnwick & the Woodland Trust
- Thankyou letter from Hospicecare North Northumberland for the recent S137 grant of £225

### **20/88 Any Other Urgent Business**

- a. DA reported he had spoken with a resident who had expressed an interest in becoming a parish councillor. DA will circulate the applicant’s information to the parish councillors ahead of the next meeting. **ACTION – DA**
- b. AG reported that Geoff Osmond who has been on the Hear Abouts team since the beginning had tendered his resignation. The Parish Council recorded an official vote of thanks and appreciation to Mr Osmond for his invaluable contribution over many years.

**20/89 Date and Time of Next Meeting** – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November via Zoom at 7.30 pm

Signed CHAIR.....

Date.....