

# Kirkby Fleetham with Fencotes Parish Council

**Minutes of meeting – 20th May 2021 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Parish Councillors: Mrs Herbert, Mrs, Booth, Mr Coop, Mr Jones, Mr Walker and District Councillor Phillips.

1. **Apologies:** County Councillor Wilkinson
2. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 16th May 2019** were accepted and signature agreed.

Acceptance was proposed by Cllr Booth and seconded by Cllr Jones.

### 3. **Chairman's Report**

I think we can all agree that the last year has been a year like no other, thanks to Coronavirus. In May 2020 all parish council annual meetings were cancelled as were the annual parish meetings . Tonight therefore I will try to summarise what has been going on in our parish and what your parish council has been doing over the past 2 years.

In May 2019 we had an election at which 5 councillors were elected for 4 year terms -Chris Coop, Gary Jones, Pat Bradley, Alison Booth and myself. Alison remained as chair until stepping down in October 2019 since when I have been acting as chair, ably assisted by Gary as vice chair.

Sadly, early in 2020 our clerk Christine Mitton advised us of her wish to retire after 12 years of sterling service to the parish. After dealing with advertising, applications and interviews, we duly appointed our new clerk, Nathen Lowe of Great Langton. After a handover period with Christine, Nathen took office in September 2020. On behalf of the council and parishioners I would like to express sincere thanks to Christine for her hard work, expert advice and great support over her 12 years in the job. Thank you also to Nathen for filling the gap so efficiently with a lot to learn quickly and the difficulties of the Covid pandemic.

In October 2020 Pat Bradley resigned as a councillor as she and Bernard were moving away from the village. Our many thanks to Pat for her work for the parish during her time in office. After advertising and interviews, Chris Walker of Great Fencote was co-opted as our 5th councillor.

Since March 2020 all council meetings have been conducted remotely on Zoom and much business by email due to Covid restrictions. These have just been lifted for all local government hence tonight we meet in person again for the first time. At the beginning of the first lockdown we were grateful for the offer by Laura Waddington to set up and supervise a Covid Support scheme for the parish, involving volunteers liaising with anyone needing help due to being unable to leave their homes. This help is still available, and we thank all those who have given time and worked hard to serve our community.

Councillors have been busy over the 2 years with routine business such as revising and updating our standing orders, financial regulations, terms of reference and many necessary policies to keep us compliant legally. The parish precept has been discussed and as it was increased last year it has been reset at the same level for this year. Many planning applications have been scrutinised and responses made.

Gary registered our parish with the National Neighbourhood Watch scheme , liaises with our local police as needed and has successfully initiated a Community Speedwatch team. Progress on this was delayed by Covid but now we expect team training by the police and the start of operations soon.

The maintenance of our village greens is ongoing with mowing to be arranged, trees to be monitored and trimmed as needed, and last year 2 dead trees on Fleetham green replaced. One of our football goalposts in Fleetham was damaged and disposed of, the other one renovated, and the bus shelter roof repaired. Issues of parking on our greens have been discussed and the current no parking signage and bylaws are under review. Damage to the green near Fleetham school junction was repaired by Hambleton Council and we liaise with Hodgsons who run the service bus which caused the damage. This was due to difficulty negotiating the tight turn when cars were parked too near the junction. A request was made to parishioners not to park within 10 metres of the junction as required by law.

Treework has been organised on several dangerous branches around our lanes and the memorial lime trees in Todd Lane have needed some maintenance work as well as the hanging of poppies each November.

In October 2019 councillors and some parishioners visited the Allerton Waste and Recycling Plant and learnt a lot about what happens to our rubbish.

In September 2019 the planning application was received from Lightsource BP to build a solar farm at South Lowfields. We recommended approval but with strict conditions on some aspects of the construction phase especially the transport route through the parish and permission was granted in January 2020. Liaison with Lightsource has involved many meetings and much discussion, alongside informing parishioners of progress through the construction and dealing with worries about the frequency of large vehicles, the wrong route sometimes being used and severe damage to our verges throughout the very wet winter. Thankfully construction is nearing completion and we are informed that the solar farm will be ready for inputting power into the national grid by around the end of June. Lightsource BP offered a Community Fund for use by the parish for the benefit of parishioners. A contract for this was signed with the company in March 2020 and we expect the money will be given to the Parish council to administer sometime in July if all goes to plan. We have had several applications for grants from this fund to develop projects around the parish and decisions about allocation will be made once the money has been received and is in the bank. Suggestions include a Lych Gate for the Fencote burial ground, a recreation area, oak tree plantings around the lanes, reinforcement of St Mary's parking area, a seat for the churchyard. A search for land suitable for a recreation area for the parish has been unsuccessful so far, which is very disappointing as the chance of funding for land purchase or long term lease using some of the solar farm Community Fund will be lost.

In July 2020 St Andrew's church in Great Fencote shut and was put up for sale. Possible use for affordable housing or other community use was investigated but nothing eventuated, it remains empty and is currently no longer on the market. The maintenance of its closed churchyard is carried out by Hambleton, including mowing, some tree works and recent repair of a damaged wall.

The new burial ground adjacent is owned and maintained by the parish, and the Burial Authority consists of all the parish council along with the churchwarden. This is now Simon Edens who has recently replaced Sheila Minto and Derek Garner whom we thank for their contributions over the years. We organise the mowing, hedgecutting, refuse bins, maintenance of the site, and our clerk liaises with families and undertakers when burials are requested, including marking out plots for the grave diggers as needed and completing all the necessary paperwork. Plans for a Lych Gate to improve the entrance have been drawn up, passed by the planning department and the tendering process for builders is in progress.

St Mary's churchyard, also closed, is maintained by the parish council. Until recently the short grass areas have been mowed for us free of charge by the groundsman for Kirkby Fleetham Hall, and we extend our thanks to the hall owners for this service. Councillors have been trying to manage some of the churchyard in an environmentally friendly way for the support of flowers and wildlife, by developing meadow areas, cutting less frequently, and involving us in many work

parties . We now have someone mowing for us from April until about October according to a plan for the different areas, but there will still be working parties needed especially for the autumn clear-up and any help will be appreciated. A group of ladies have been working very hard recently on clearing vegetation from the old gravestones and memorials, cleaning the inscriptions and documenting them all- we thank them for this important work in preserving our local heritage.

Last year we received a grant to recover and renovate a historic road sign in Great Fencote. Gary led this project, even painting the lettering himself, and the signpost was erected opposite St Andrews church in October.

The Great British Spring Clean – litter picking around the parish- had to be cancelled for March 2020 and 21 due to Covid, but we hope it will be reinstated later this year and we will be asking for volunteers.

The Community Defibrillator sited at the village hall has been reported as taken out several times, we are grateful to Kath Burgin for checking it regularly and the parish council have purchased new pads for it as needed.

Last winter as you know was very wet and Swale flooding at Morton bridge caused big problems in the parish due to traffic diversions. Councillors were involved in several meetings with district councillors and highways in order to improve diversion routes and signage . Much has been promised including early warnings of Morton bridge closure to our local communication networks, and we look forward to new signs being evident before next winter.

Killerby Quarry development has been progressing steadily with the footpath diversion and the new section of road on Low Street completed. In January 2021 Tarmac applied for additional planning permission for an aggregate bagging plant, ticket office and welfare building which was passed with some recommendations for increased screening from local properties. As about half of the aggregate bagged is to be brought in from other quarries, this could cause some increase in vehicle movements eventually.

Communications have been had with RAF Leeming about the amount of disturbance from night flying during the Swiss Air Force training exercises. They apologised but these exercises are necessary and may be ongoing as Leeming is apparently being used as a base for training by other countries as well.

Recently North Yorkshire Highways have offered help to parishes to set up Quiet Lane projects and we are grateful to Nicky Walsh for becoming our Local Champion to take this forward with help from Councillor Annabel Wilkinson. The proposal is to improve safety for all non-motorised users of Kirkby Lane and Greengate Lane near Kirkby Fleetham.

Our local public footpaths are well monitored by our enthusiastic local walkers and councillors have helped ensure repairs to a stile near the Black Horse and a wooden footbridge near Greengate farm.

So after a busy and challenging 2 years we look forward to a brighter and Covid free year ahead. Very many thanks to our clerk Nathen , my fellow councillors and the help and support of many in the community.

#### **4. Financial Report**

##### **Parish Council Account**

The starting balance at the beginning of the financial year 2020/21 was £7,375. During the year £7,328 was spent on the Parish, £5,645 on maintenance costs which included grass cutting, hedge cutting, wages, room rental, insurances, green bin and training etc, £1,361 on loan repayments on the Burial Ground, £179 on election expenses and £142 on planning permission for the Lychgate. The Parish received a Precept of £7,000 and received a further £935 of income. At the end of 2020/21, £7,983 was carried forward in the Parish Council Account.

##### **Burial Authority Account**

The starting balance at the beginning of the financial year 2020/21 was £10,403. The Burial Authority received £6,405 of income.

At the end of 2020/21, £16,808 was carried forward in the Burial Authority Account.

That leaves a total surplus in both accounts of £24,791. In 2012 councillors agreed to hold a contingency fund of £3,000 for unforeseen expenditure. This leaves a balance of £21,791 between the two accounts available towards future developments or improvements.

#### **5. Review of Time Capsule**

Currently the capsule contains information on the Village Hall, Parish Council, Women's Institute, Guides and Brownies, Kirkby Fleetham Primary School and Mr R Barker's Book. Information is either on paper or memory sticks.

A plaque indicating the position and contents is displayed on the Village Hall wall in front of the flagpole. It was agreed that the seal and contents should be reviewed every 5 years, the next date for review will be in 2021. The clerk will arrange a review.

#### **6. Open Discussion**

There were no open discussions.

**Meeting closed at 7.30pm.**