

Minutes of Rothbury Parish Annual Assembly held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7pm in the Dovecote Room, Jubilee Institute

**Those Present:** J Sutton, A Arkle, H Woodburn, H White, C Dawson, C Miller (Clerk), three members of the public

**1/18 Apologies for Absence**

R Armstrong, A Graham, S Bridgett

**2/18 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 were agreed as a true record

**3/18 Matters arising from Previous meeting**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

**4/18 Chairman's Report from C Dawson**

“At the May Elections in 2017 seven councillors chose not to stand again. Steven Bridgett and I were the only original councillors left. Avril Graham and Jeff Sutton put themselves up for election. This left 5 vacancies, and we were joined by Richard Armstrong, Hannah White, Ashley Arkle, Hilary Woodburn and Peter Dawson who rejoined the council after 5 years break. This year has been a learning curve for me. Having to work with new councillors with different ideas and personalities hasn't been easy. Therefore I decided to stand down as chairman as I feel the current council needs a more forceful personality at the helm. I wish Jeff Sutton well in his year as chairman. In 2017 the council decided to demolish the toilets on the riverside. This decision has been very divisive and will be revisited at the June meeting. As regards to the playpark, councillors White and Dawson and the clerk had a meeting with NCC. We have been unable to obtain the land by the hospital so it is intended to update the current site, NCC have asked that we eventually take over the site and they will provide half the funding with the parish council providing the rest. It is intended to start work in the next financial year 2019. We offered local businesses £100 to open their toilets to the public, only one has taken up the offer. The fight to reopen the beds at the Rothbury Community hospital continues. NCC health scrutiny Committee referred the CCG's decision to close the beds to Jeremy Hunt. We will find out the outcome in June. As part of the Northumberland Estates development at Hillside West the developers agreed to provide illuminated speed signs for Rothbury. The developers of Cragside Gardens will provide a sign to the entrance to the village. The affordable part of the development has been started, half will be given to a social housing firm for rent and the rest will be for sale. The parish council has submitted ideas to the local transport plan including a crossing at the war memorial and a disabled parking space outside the coop. Councillors Dawson and White met NCC with regard to traffic on Bridge Street. We have also submitted a new parking plan for the village. A tree survey has been carried out, and we are hoping to devise a plan of works this year. I would like to thank all the councillors for their work, in particular Peter Dawson for his work on the cemetery and the commemorative flower bed. I would also thank Steven Bridgett for his work as vice chairman. My thanks are also due to Claire Miller who has as always been a great help to me.”

**5/18 Public Participation**

Parishioner asked, in her role with litter picking, who would be responsible for the Coplech burn, which is in need of clearance works. Clerk to contact County Council to ascertain who is responsible for this. The Parish Council facebook page was discussed, and appeared to be useful to the

community. H White explained a page where no comments could be made had been set up due to unacceptable postings received from person(s) when the page was initially set up, and is intended to be for information purposes. It was there to give members of the public updates and an opportunity for them to keep up to date and attend Parish Council meetings to be informed on matters they maybe interested in.

Parishioner asked in what capacity the County Cllr, who is also a Parish Cllr, had commented on facebook regarding problems with refuse on private land at the Thrum Mill, and which had been blown up out of all proportion on social media. J Sutton replied this had been done on a private facebook page and not connected to the Parish Council. Further parishioner stated with experience in these matters, personal comments do still fall back on the organisation the person represents, and the Parish Council should be aware of how it is perceived in the parish. Social media usage had previously been discussed at a Parish Council meeting with the County Cllr stating he would continue to post on facebook any matters he wished to. Thrum Mill landowner concerned about comments relating to their private land and had tried numerous ways to control litter. It was reiterated the discussions on facebook had not been authorised by the Parish Council.

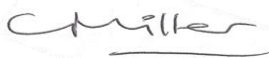
The closure of riverside W/C's of deep concern, even more so with only one business taking up the offer of £100 to open their facilities to the public and the issue is to be discussed further at the June PC meeting. H White replied the W/C's were in an unacceptable state with the Parish Council paying to maintain them at high cost, and parishioners are funding for person's arriving on bus trips to use facilities and then leave the village, and there are still facilities open on Bridge Street.

There had been a comprehensive plan on parking and traffic flow displayed in the Jubilee Institute four years ago, with parcels of land identified for parking, and no action taken since by the County Council. J Sutton replied this does need to be looked at as regards pedestrian crossings, road safety and parking. However, a pedestrian crossing had been included in County Council budget 2018-19 and the parking issues would need to be resolved after this crossing was insitu.

Parishioner had contacted clerk to state for many years the view of Rothbury, when approaching the bridge from the South had been blighted by the two dead trees growing on the island immediately downstream, completely spoiling the fine lines of the bridge. However it was thought these trees were self seeding and had been cut back in the past, had always been there and not caused a problem previously. This issue had been discussed on social media with most people commenting the trees should remain.

#### **6/18 Any Other Business**

There was no other business and the Annual Assembly closed at 730pm.



Claire Miller, Parish Clerk