

Minutes of the Ravensworth Parish Council Meeting Held on Monday, 14th April 2025

Present: Councillors A Ayres (Chair), J Cooke, B Hird, A Pledge and C Robinson

1. Declarations of Interest

None received.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Agreed: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2025, which had been previously circulated, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Defibrillator – Councillor Pledge reported that she had now contacted Community Heartbeat, who had apologised for their delay in updating our VETS information. Apparently, the Chief Executive had recently retired which had resulted in a reorganisation within the company. This work had now been completed and the Community Heartbeat staff were confident that they were once again able to offer a good service.

3.2 Dog ‘Poo’ Signage – Councillor Pledge said that she had now sourced appropriate signage asking dog owners to clear up after their pets and, with Parish Council approval, she intended to purchase a selection for placement around the village.

The Chair thanked Councillor Cooke who had now produced an informative leaflet outlining the dangers created by dog owners not clearing up after their pets, which had been published in The Flyer and subsequently delivered to all households in the village.

Agreed: that Councillor Pledge should proceed with the purchase of signs, to be placed appropriately around the village.

3.3 Community Police Officer Attendance

Agreed: that the Community Police Officer be invited to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

3.4. Cars Using the Track and Parking on the Village Green - Councillor Robinson said that she had now approached a local fencing company about the possibility of

installing appropriate low-level fencing adjacent to the track outside the Village Hall. It was felt that trialling this over a small area would confirm or otherwise whether this was a good solution for other parts of the village.

It was suggested by a resident that some kind of chicane would make it harder for cars to speed across the tracks and help to discourage drivers from using them as a shortcut.

Particular concern was expressed about the poor condition of the track and it was felt that remedial work was urgently required.

The Chair pointed out that any remedial work was likely to be very expensive and beyond the Parish Council's affordability.

Agreed:

[a] that the sum of £2,000 per annum be set aside specifically for repairs to the Village track, which will accumulate and therefore put the Parish Council in a better position financially to undertake work, as required.

[b] that the Chair should liaise with a local contractor to develop a plan, including costings, for the provision of a low post and rail fence along the stretch of track outside the Village Hall.

[c] that the Chair should liaise with appropriate specialists about how to best repair and maintain the track so that a costed action plan can be brought to the Parish Council.

3.5. Open Reach Update – It was noted that Councillor Pledge had again been in touch with the manager leading the project at Open Reach to ask about progress, particularly as a letter had now been sent to some residents informing them that Open Reach would be asking the Government to extend the voucher scheme for up to a further year due to the complicated nature of some of the work.

It has been reported that Open Reach is still awaiting a reply from Northern Powergrid as to the status of the poles. The Parish Council has now passed on the contact details of the Northern Powergrid Manager who is hopefully able to help Open Reach move things forward.

The meeting heard that a number of residents in the village had now either had their superfast connection installed, or had appointments for this to happen and it was noted that individuals could check whether their property was connected to the superfast

network through an on-line postcode checker:

[<https://superfastnorthyorkshire.com/post-code-checker>]

4. Open Forum

All matters had already been discussed under 'Matters Arising'.

5. Finance and Payments

The Chair reported that payments made since the last meeting included:

- Zurich - £683.49, which covers the Village Hall building, use and contents insurance, Parish Council insurance and North Yorkshire Grass Cutting for 2024 - £1,668.60.
- Receipts – bank interest of £1.62
- The current balance is £10,071.89 + an outstanding VAT claim.

6. Planning Applications

The Chair updated the meeting as follows:

6.1 Methodist Chapel Conversion – approval had now been given, subject to conditions. The Chair had contacted the County Planning Officer managing this application who had subsequently agreed to liaise with the Parish Council once he had had sight of the Chapel owners' proposals for how they would adhere to the conditions.

6.2 Gayles Quarry – consideration of this application has been deferred until 30th April 2025.

6.3 New Lane Housing – decision awaited.

7. Highways

7.1 White Lines Through the Village – after complaint by the Chair, this work had been redone to what seemed to be a better standard.

7.2 Reference was made to a previous discussion about installing '20 is Plenty' signs, particularly on the bad corner adjacent to Ash Cottage.

Agreed: that the Parish Council should further investigate the feasibility of installing appropriate signs.

8. Village Hall

Councillor Robinson gave a verbal report, as follows:

- The income for the Village Hall is healthy but remains below £5,000 so we are still deemed to be a small charity;

- 5 sessions per week are regularly hired [art, samba, yoga] plus ad hoc bookings that have included birthday parties, polling station, Halloween party from the school PTA, wreath-making, bulb and hanging baskets
- The Hall has been utilised for defib training, and a highways feedback session which was attended by Rishi Sunak who declared that, having been to many village halls, ours was the best he had ever visited. Rishi had offered to attend again if he could help with any future fundraising or campaigns.
- The picture prints that had been donated to the Village Hall by Pat Baker were now being displayed on the walls, with very positive feedback;
- Ravensworth Village Hall fundraising has been low-key in 2024, the main events being soup/desserts once every month [September to May] and wreath-making;
- Andrew Ayres was thanked for organising a free carol and brass event in December, which had been very enjoyable, even though attendance had been disappointingly low;
- The aim is still to install a disability access door to the building and a quote has now been received for £12,000 + VAT. If approved by the Parish Council, a grant application will be submitted.
- The Village Hall AGM had taken place in November 2024 and thanks were extended to Joan Hawes who remained Chair, and Karen Ritzema as Secretary.
- Carol expressed her appreciation to the friends/volunteers who were always willing to 'roll up their sleeves' and help.

Carol expressed her hope that the year ahead would be a good one.

Agreed:

- i. **that Carol be thanked for her report.**
- ii. **that the estimate of £12,000 + VAT be accepted for the disability door and that Carol should proceed with a grant application.**

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Vouchers from Northern Powergrid - The Chair reported that Northern Powergrid had written to all residents informing them that, following a number of recent power cuts and as a gesture of goodwill, they had allocated each household in Ravensworth a £30 meal voucher for use at The Bay Horse, Ravensworth.

Subsequently, several residents had contacted Northern Powergrid and had secured a £30 cheque instead of the voucher. In the light of this, RPC had made everyone aware of this alternative. Unfortunately, it emerged that PowerGrid's Customer Services Department had acted erroneously by issuing cheques and that the only offer available was the meal voucher.

9.2 Takeaway Fish and Chip Van

A resident brought up the possibility of asking the mobile fish and chip van that currently delivers to several neighbouring villages whether it can call at Ravensworth.

Agreed: that Councillor Robinson should investigate.

9.3. Postal Collection Boxes

Reference was made to a previous proposal that the Parish Council should apply for a postal collection box to be installed next to the Village Hall.

Councillor Robinson said that she had asked for further information about this service but had not yet received a reply. She agreed to enquire further.

9.4. Proposed Work by Northern Powergrid to Poles Adjacent to Park House – the Chair informed those present that the date had changed and work would now take place on 27th May.

9.5. Annual Council and Parish Meetings.

The Chair said these would take place on Monday, 12th May. Reports on any community activities e.g. yoga classes, art club, samba band would be welcome at the Parish Meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.15 pm