

DRAFT MINUTES OF RAVENSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2025

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

Apologies: It was reported at the meeting that Councillor Hird had not presented her apologies for absence. It has subsequently been noted however that Councillor Hird had previously informed the Chair that she was on holiday.

1. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was noted that Item 8 referring to the framing of pictures in the Village Hall was inaccurate in that the pictures had been bequeathed already framed.

AGREED: that subject to the above amendment, the Minutes be approved and signed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Open Reach - The Chair reported that since the last RPC meeting he and Councillor Pledge had met with the Comcore Project Manager (the company doing the underground fibre infrastructure work on behalf of Open Reach). We had expressed our concern about the plans and spent time guiding him around the village. The Chair had subsequently had a telephone conversation with the Open Reach Project Manager and made it clear that legally the company could not erect poles on the Village Green. She was unable to offer any alternative way forward at this point

Councillor Pledge, in the Chair's absence, had emailed the Open Reach Project Manager in early January to ask what progress had been made, particularly as the underground work was now progressing.

She had informed Councillor Pledge that the poles to the rear of the properties around the Green which carried power and telephone cables were maintained by Northern Powergrid and were believed to be due for replacement. She had requested information about this from Northern Powergrid and was awaiting a reply.

AGREED: that if no further response has ,been received by the beginning of March, a further email be sent to Open Reach asking for an update.

3.2. Defibrillator – Councillor Pledge referred to a statement she had made at the last meeting, that the amended VETS list had been updated by Community Heartbeat in mid-October and was now operational. Unfortunately, she had subsequently received an email on 31st January to say that the update had in fact just been done. She had therefore written to Community Heartbeat expressing our concern regarding the delay, particularly as the consequences could have been serious if anybody had needed help with a medical emergency. No reply had been received yet.

AGREED: that Councillor Pledge should contact Community Heartbeat to chase up a response.

4. Open Discussion

4.1 Dog Fouling – the Chair referred to a letter he had received from a parent of the primary school about dog fouling on the Village Green and its potential danger to children. The following points were raised:

- Dog ‘poo’ is regularly found on the Village Green, which children do not spot as they are playing and running around.
- There was an acceptance that the problem is being created by a few thoughtless dog owners, with the vast majority clearing up after their pets.
- Whilst villagers are encouraged to challenge those who do not clear up after their pets, it is very difficult to see what is going on after dark.
- If dog owners let their dogs run across the Village Green ‘off the lead’, they are not in a position to see where their pets are going to the toilet, particularly after dark.
- Should ‘poo’ bags be located near to the bins?
- There are sufficient bins in the Village (by the Village Hall, on the road down to Tofta, by the seat on the Village Green) so there is no excuse for not picking it up,
- Could signs be located in prominent positions around the Village?
- Should a letter be sent to everybody in the Village explaining the problem and asking for support?

AGREED:

(a) that Julie Cooke should compose a leaflet explaining the dangers to children and others being exposed to dog ‘poo’.

(b) that Audrey Pledge should investigate appropriate signage asking people to clear up after their dogs.

4.2 Cars Using the Cart Track and Parking on the Village Green – several residents expressed concern about the damage being caused by cars parking in various locations on the Village Green. Vehicles were also now being driven across the Village Green to manoeuvre into a parking place, rather than reversing from the track or road.

It was noted that careless and thoughtless driving of vehicles on the track continued to erode The Green, especially at corners and bends and resulted in the tracks becoming wider and more pitted.

There is signage on the tracks showing a 5 mph speed limit and ‘for access only’,

It was suggested that visitors to the Village be encouraged to park outside the Village Hall where there is grasscrete, or on the roadside, rather than on the grassed areas of the Village Green.

It was suggested by Councillor Robinson that wooden, knee-high posts could be placed intermittently, using local tradesmen.

AGREED: that the Chair would explore commercial companies for ideas and costs.

5. HIGHWAYS

5.1 Speeding Through the Village – concerns were expressed that the speed at which vehicles travelled through the Village remained excessive, particularly on the bend just beyond Ash Cottage.

5.2 A66 Upgrade – the Chair referred to an online petition which had been created. Those who are in support of the upgrade were asked to sign the petition which would be submitted to the Government in due course. Links to the petition were available via the Village Website (www.ravensworth.village.com).

5.3 Road Between Ravensworth and Gayles (Flats Bank) – a resident was concerned that the road was becoming busy and dangerous. The meeting heard that more traffic was now using this single track road and frequently travelling at unsafe speeds. The problem was exacerbated by the increasing number of electric vehicles because pedestrians simply did not hear the cars coming.

The meeting discussed the dangers caused by vehicles travelling in excess of the speed limit and the Chair mentioned that representations had been made to our County Councillor in the hope that the speed limit through the village could be reduced to 20 mph, but this did not seem to be likely. It was noted that the village

could buy speed signs that light up to indicate a motorist's speed and asking them to slow down, but the cost precluded this as an immediate way forward,

5.3 Community Policing - It was noted that the recent crime report had included the offer of a visit to a parish council meeting by the Community Police Officer.

AGREED: that the Community Police Officer be invited to a future RPC meeting.

6. Finance and Payments

The Chair reported a current balance of £12,422 in the Parish Council account, although he reminded the meeting that the invoices for insurance and grass cutting were due, and that he would be submitting a VAT claim shortly.

The meeting noted that there would inevitably be unforeseen costs throughout the year, including the upkeep of the track and village green and it was felt therefore that £10,000 in the bank was not excessive and was in fact a good working balance.

7. Planning Application

71 New Lane – ZD24/00537/FULL/Full planning permission for demolition of greenhouses, erection of dwellings including access, rerouting of watercourse – still awaiting a decision.

6.1 Proposed Chapel Conversion – ZD24/00551/FULL/Full planning permission for change of use from a Methodist Chapel into a retreat and prayer centre run by the Ravensworth Chapel Trust – the Chair reported that he had now formally submitted the Parish Council's response and said that a decision by the planning authority was awaited.

The Chair stressed how important it was that the owners of the Chapel engaged with RPC prior to the commencement of any work, to manage and minimise any disruption to their neighbours during construction and beyond.

8. Village Hall

There was nothing to report.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chair reported that the next meeting would be held at 7.00 pm on Monday, 14th April.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35 pm.