

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF CHOPPINGTON PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2017

## Members present:

Cllr H Allsopp  
Cllr K Grimes  
Cllr G Huntley  
Cllr A Iley  
Cllr P Vaughan  
Cllr L Watson (part of meeting)

## In attendance:

Mr D L Nicholson, Parish Clerk and Mrs A Brindley, Deputy Parish Clerk and County Councillor D Ledger.

### CD&E 016/17      1.      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Barrell (work commitment), Cllr J Foster (NCC commitment) and Cllr J Rowell (illness). The meeting accepted that these were valid reasons for absence.

### CD&E 017/17      2.      **MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTEREST(S).**

No declarations were made.

### CD&E 018/17      3.      **PUBLIC QUESTIONS.**

None received.

### CD&E 019/17      4.      **TO RECEIVE AND ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2017.**

The minutes were received and accepted as being a true record.

### CD&E 020/17      5.      **MATTERS ARISING.**

1. Cllr A Barrell's name was added to the list of those attending.
2. The Parish Clerk confirmed that the lead member for the development of the Heritage Strategy has met with

officers and given guidance on necessary community engagement to support the preparation of a strategy document. The lead member has taken the view that the policy document needs to be 'owned' by local people and that the Parish Council has a responsibility to ensure wide public involvement.

CD&E 021/17

**6. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SPORT, EXERCISE AND HEALTHY ACTIVITIES.**

The Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer confirmed that Local Councils have the legal authority to provide sports facilities and opportunities for local people, including the provision of community buildings and grounds for community purposes and that the Parish Council has made provision in its budget for 2017/18 and through earmarked balances for the development and management of community sport and health related activities. Budgetary implications for subsequent years and financial contributions required to enable the construction of required buildings in conjunction with our strategic partners will be considered as part of the budget process for inclusion in our financial plans to 2021.

The Parish Council has asked Cllr A Iley to be the lead member for sport and in this capacity Cllr Iley has supported and guided the biannual review of the Parish Council's sport policy (CD&E 014/17).

In October 2013 the Parish Council adopted a policy for the development of community sport for all ages in partnership with Stakeford and Bomarsund Sports and Social Welfare Centre (The Welfare) and other agencies. The policy was reviewed in 2015 and this review recognised the need for the strategy to be broadened to embrace exercise and healthy activities for all ages. The strategy appreciated the need to develop strategic partners to improve infrastructure, capacity and opportunity.

The policy recognised that local sport is not accessible to all of our community (facilities for girls and opportunities for older people are in short supply, playing surfaces are centred on Stakeford and Bomarsund Sport and Social Welfare Centre and indoor facilities are limited through cost, location and availability) and that the support of strategic partners will be required to develop new facilities in Guide Post and Scotland Gate.

The Lead Member has reviewed the progress made to improve sport provision over the last 2 years. Service developments/improvements over this period include:

1. School sports - the Parish Council now fully funds the provision of extra curricula sport and play at Cleaswell Hill School, Mowbray Primary School, Ringway Primary School and Stakeford Primary School. This provision is delivered by PFC and adds value to tuition provided to schools by Active Northumberland and other providers.
2. After school activities and the mobile sports court are provided for children attending Choppington Primary School.
3. The Welfare has been developed as the hub for junior sport throughout the area, providing opportunities for football and cricket. This year local teams were entered into national competitions with Stakeford Juniors under 12's becoming national champions at the ACES National Finals.
4. Parish Council supported facilities now host 7 local junior teams and 3 senior teams using grass, specialist and 3G surfaces. Extended use is facilitated through the introduction of floodlit training surfaces.
5. The Multi-User-Games-Area has adopted an affordable pricing policy to encourage use by local people and groups. The facility is also made available to local schools and youth organisations.
6. The Parish Council provides structured play during each school holiday as a gateway for the involvement of young people in team and social activity.
7. The authority has purchased a mobile football court to give local children access to structured play in those areas where community facilities are deficient or do not support youth activities.
8. The Parish Council supports the maintenance of local cricket and football pitches as well as the development of lawn green bowls facilities. The area's bowling and cricket surfaces are located at the Welfare. Surfaces are considered as being amongst the best in the county and during the off-season enhanced maintenance is being provided to the cricket square. Bowling membership has grown and our senior cricket team has been promoted twice in recent years.

9. The Parish Council funds winter training for junior cricket.
10. Junior football has been introduced to Guide Post fields to increase opportunity and preserve surface quality at Stakeford.
11. Sport, exercise and healthy activity for older persons is actively promoted through the development of age related classes and walking football.
12. The development of an external tarmac surface and indoor facilities at Stakeford Primary has been completed with facilities being used each evening Monday through to Thursday (exercise classes, boxercise, power hoops, badminton, etc). Space is also available for community meetings and activity. All facilities are directly managed by Choppington Parish Council with income ring-fenced for the future maintenance and improvement).
13. Efficiencies in operational costs have been realised and further efficiency will be achieved through the development of an integrated approach for shared surfaces and equipment. In general all of our local playing surfaces are prepared and maintained by volunteers supplemented by the Parish/Northumberland County Council local services team. Machinery and equipment is owned variously by Choppington Parish Council, Northumberland County Council and individual clubs. The review has recognised that assets, including surfaces need to be shared to ensure value for money. An integrated asset register is being prepared for implementation in 2018/19 and this will inform the amount of earmarked balances that will be required to fund operational and replacement costs.

The Parish Council has previously resolved to provide community and sports facilities throughout the area. Currently the following facilities are being utilised:

1. Stakeford and Bomarsund Sports and Social Welfare Centre – a hub for junior sport together with senior bowls and cricket and space for indoor exercise,
2. Stakeford Primary School – external sports surface with space for badminton and exercise in the hall

3. Guide Post Fields – external surfaces for sport and community use.
4. Scott's Field – informal sport and community use.

To improve and expand accessibility the following developments are being explored:

1. Guide Post Fields – Parish Council proposals for the development of amenity parkland and external grassed and hard playing surfaces have been formulated. Their realisation will require the transfer of land into the responsibility of the Parish Council; this is supported by Northumberland County Council. Proposals have been presented to the Secretary of State for Education for consideration and approval.
2. Choppington and Scotland Gate – The Parish Council is proposing to develop community, sport and play activities through the transfer of a school building and associated land to the responsibility of the Parish. These proposals have been submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for consideration and approval. There is an existing facility in the area, Choppington Welfare, which has land and indoor facilities that could be utilised to enhance community activities particularly for the young, including sport, play and healthy activities. Choppington Welfare is an independent trust and trustees have not responded to invitations to discuss possible shared services/developments with the Parish Council. It is recognised that should the Secretary of State grant permission for the transfer of school buildings and land to the Parish Council it will inevitably reduce the Parish Council's capacity to invest in new facilities at Choppington Welfare.
3. Stakeford and Bomarsund Sports and Social Welfare Centre – the Parish Council has previously committed to develop facilities in partnership with the Welfare and proposes to enter into detailed discussions with the Welfare and the Coal Industry Sports and Social Welfare Organisation to secure a long-term commitment to enable future investment in shared community facilities.
4. Doorstep Green and Sheepwash – it is anticipated that funding for sports facility improvements at Doorstep Green and Sheepwash will be considered as part of the budget process.

## **RESOLVED:**

- 1. Members welcomed the progress being made towards the development of facilities throughout the area to support community sport, play and health related activities.**
- 2. Members agreed to endorse the Parish Council's role as principal enabler for the development of new sports and play facilities in for area.**
- 3. Members agreed to form a working group of members (all elected members) to prepare funding principles to guide the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer in the preparation of the budget for 2018/19 and subsequent years.**
- 4. Members agreed that the working group should consider recommendations to be made to the Parish Council in relation to any financial contributions required to enable the construction/re-modelling of buildings required to deliver the Parish Council's strategy.**

**CD&E 022/17**

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 2018.**

Choppington Parish Council is described as a community led authority that engages with its various communities, empowering local residents to give direction to the council and inform decision making. Financial costs associated with community engagement plans are contained within the Parish Council's core budget.

As a local community council the Parish Council produces information leaflets, surveys residents and engages with individual groups to gain community intelligence and to develop insight on community needs and service standards. The intelligence gained both guides and directs the activities of the authority.

During 2018 the Parish Council will be introducing community scrutiny and preparing a Heritage Strategy and a Neighbourhood Plan and developing an integrated approach for community consultation and engagement. It is considered that this approach will avoid unnecessary expenditure and minimise 'consultation fatigue.'

The following framework for community engagement was suggested for consideration.

1. Residents Panel - It is proposed that the Residents Panel will meet 3 times:
  - i. January - discussing the precept requirements for 2018/19.
  - ii. May - the 'Parish Meeting' addressing issues of general concern to residents
  - iii. November – service and scrutiny review
2. Local Scrutiny Panels will be established through the Residents Panel, which will be tasked to inform Parish Council decision making in respect of service standards and delivery.
3. Parish News – 3 editions, with one concentrating on neighbourhood planning and heritage.
4. Village appraisals will be undertaken in West Sleekburn and Scotland Gate
5. Local community meetings will be held throughout the area as part of the 2018 survey.
6. A heritage group will be established to oversee and direct the preparation of the Heritage Strategy.
7. A steering group will be established through the Residents panel to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Members were asked to consider the proposals for engaging with local residents during the coming year.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. Members endorsed the suggested programme, referring budget consideration to the Parish Council's budget process.**
- 2. The Parish Clerk was requested to prepare a programme of meetings for consideration by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.**

**Agenda – Part 2.** Members considered that in consideration of Standing Order 46a and because of their special and confidential nature, the following items would be considered following the exclusion of press and public.

**CD&E 023/17      8.      CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR GRANTS.**

No requests required consideration by members.

**CD&E 024/17      9.      TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR TRUSTEES.**

Members received a report from the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer detailing training requirements and ongoing support to be provided to elected members and local community trusts. The report considered 4 possible providers, examining cost and experience of training trustees within Northumberland.

**RESOLVED: Members agreed to appoint Community Action Northumberland as the preferred supplier for these services.**

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.55**

**Chairman**

**Date**