

Shincliffe Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Shincliffe Parish Council held at Shincliffe Church Hall and remotely via Zoom on Wednesday 14th July 2021 at 6.00pm

Present: Cllr. Stephen Ashfield, Cllr. Michael Banks (Chair), Cllr. Lizzie Pexton (Vice Chair), Cllr. Christine Warburton in person. Cllr. Brian Fairlamb via Zoom.

Clerk – Vacant

In Attendance: Colin Jubb, Helen Jubb, Stephen Goodhart in person.

Linda Fairlamb, John Charters via Zoom

Item	
1.	Record of attendance A written record of attendance is signed by all members present and retained.
2.	Apologies for absence N/A.
3.	Declarations of interests and Dispensation requests Declarations of interests and dispensation requests noted at 24 th June 2021 meeting stand.
4.	Minutes of the previous meeting of the 24th June The Council resolve to accept the minutes of the meeting as a true record, signed by the Chairman. Cllr. Banks explained that since the last meeting this extraordinary meeting has been scheduled primarily to discuss agenda item 8. Cllr. Banks also explained that at the last meeting Cllr. Fairlamb was given authority to contact a Planning Consultant to prepare the Parish Council's response to planning application DM/20/03538/FPA. The response has been prepared and will be submitted by 17/07/21 by Cllr. Banks. Cllr. Fairlamb ran through the main points of the report, focusing on concerns about the green belt and the environment. The Council resolve to approve submission of this response on behalf of the Parish Council.

	A member of the public queried whether the report would be made public – it will be available to view on the planning portal.
7.	Correspondence received Cllr. Banks ran through correspondence received by the Council: • A personal email received with some suggestions about dealing with the volume of traffic in the village, including speed limits and parking permits (please see later correspondence from Lee Mowbray for more information on this matter) • A letter was received from the Senior Committee Services Officer relating to a complaint received by the Monitoring Officer that Cllr. Banks, Cllr. Fairlamb and Cllr. Pexton have breached Shincliffe Parish Council's Code of Conduct in relation to the co-option process on the 3rd June 2021. Cllrs. have been invited to comment and the complaint will be considered as soon as reasonable and the possible outcomes are: a) That no action should be taken in respect of the complaint; b) To seek local resolution; c) To refer the complaint for investigation; or d) To refer the complaint to the Standards Committee. • An email was received from a resident about Netomnia a firm which supposedly specialises in providing fibre-optic cables but as part of this install numerous poles outside houses. Netomnia have been issued with a warning by DCC about trading in our area and given advance notice. • An email was received about a dislodged manhole cover in High Shincliffe. Cllr. Pexton contacted DCC and this has now been fixed. • A letter was received signed by 30 residents from the Village, welcoming the new Council, highlighting the importance of the Play Park and querying what had happened to plans for the signage designed by children in the Parish and querying when the picnic benches would be returned, as indicated by the Parish Council previously that they would be. The Council discussed signage and that enquiries were outstanding with Councillor Stoker on availability of funds for signage from his neighbourhood budget. It was acknowledged that signage designed earlier in the year was to encourage best practice in the park and that there may be other requirements, including advising of upcoming closures for maintenance. It was also noted that signage telling adults not to use equipment or

	age limits for equipment need to be carefully thought through as adults need to aid children on equipment. The Council resolve to address signage needs more broadly for the Park in the Autumn once hopefully we have seen the park used in normal times. Rospa will be asked as part of their inspection (likely in September) to advise on signage requirements. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr. Banks should approach CDALC to seek legal advice to ensure a safe working environment for our Parish gardener. • Email from CDALC advising that the AGM for Association Member Councils will likely be held in October and asking for any nominations from Councillors for the elected seats by the end of August and any motions to be raised at the meeting. • Email from CDALC about meeting of the Smaller Council Forum on 22nd July at 2pm and asking for two representatives to attend. Councillors have the details and Cllr. Ashfield and Cllr. Fairlamb plan to attend. • Email from Shincliffe Community Association explaining that the Shincliffe Show will this year take place in St Mary's Church and the Church Hall as opposed to Shincliffe School and asking whether the Council would still be willing to cover the cost of the room hire. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr. Banks has delegated authority to approach the PCC to suggest that this is run as a community event and no charge is issued for room hire. • An email was received from CDALC about participation in the Queens Platinum Jubilee through the lighting of beacons on the 2nd June 2022. The Council resolve to approve participation in this and Cllr. Banks will respond. • An email has been received about overgrowth on the High Shincliffe perimeter road. Concerns have also been raised about some paths within the Shincliffe Village. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr Banks will contact DCC to discuss cutting back the overgrowth where this is obstructing paths. The email also raised weed growth and whether weedkiller could be used to suppress this. Cllr. Warburton and Cllr. Ashfield spoke about the importance of weeds and the harm weed killer can do to the environment. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr. Banks will contact DCC to instruct them not to spray with weedkiller in the Parish, and Cllr. Warburton and Cllr. Ashfield will consider options
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	including working together to remove weeds and engaging Shincliffe School in wild flower planting as part of their Climate work. • Wendy Lavelle, Community Development Project Officer, Durham Area Action Partnership has emailed with questions on costs, estimates, and match funding about the sensory garden. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr. Banks will respond with a holding letter as the answers are uncertain at the moment. • Lee Mowbray had provided results from the Shincliffe Village speed volume and occupancy surveys. The full report will be published on the website. The results do not indicate a speeding concern and parking is not at a level at which parking permits would be considered. Cllr. Fairlamb advised that he had spoken to Lee Mowbray and that Lee would be happy to return to talk to the Council about opportunities available to us. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr. Fairlamb should contact Lee Mowbray to invite him to September's meeting. • Three letters have been received from residents about a camper van parked at the back of the Garden Centre. Cllr. Banks updated that DCC has made enquiries and the van used the land with the authority of the Garden Centre and no permission is required. The Garden Centre have been informed of the concerns raised by local residents about this. • A letter was received enquiring about progress made by the Planning Consultant on the Parish Council's response to planning application DM/20/03538/FPA. Please refer to earlier update. It also queried whether our County Councillor has been engaged on this matter by the Parish Council. Cllr. Banks updated that he has and added that Cllr. Stoker has written submitted a letter about the application and is making enquiries with the Planning Committee about the process. The Council resolve to approve that Cllr. Banks should share the Parish Council response with Councillor Stoker. • A lengthy email from resident about the park which the Chair has acknowledged and has been shared by Councillors but was not read out as it is too self-identifying. The email detailed the impact the park has on that resident and expresses a desire that the picnic benches should not be returned as the resident has been to some parks which do not have picnic benches and feels that the return on the benches would encourage teenagers to use the park for drinking and taking drugs. A member of the public challenged these views explaining that the park is now significantly quieter, that the vast majority of parks have picnic benches and that not all teenagers are drinking and taking drugs. Cllr. Banks explained that at the last meeting the Parish Council committed to better management of the park.
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	A member of the public expressed a belief that the picnic benches had caused rat infestations, littering and antisocial behaviour and that since the removal matters had improved. The park should be a community space and the resident believes there is no space left for anything but the play equipment. A member of the public challenged this saying that the benches were removed and lockdown measures eased and so improvements should not be contributed to removal of the picnic benches. Likewise there have always been rats in and around the park. Cllr. Warburton raised concerns about the type of bark used not being play bark and risks about Viles Disease. A member of the public advised that Viles Disease is waterborne and so should not be an issue in the Park. Cllr. Fairlamb challenged the dispensation granted to him in relation to Park matters and expressed his belief that Cllr. Pexton has a declaration of interest to make. Cllr. Banks and Cllr. Pexton stated that Cllr. Fairlamb was out of order. Cllr. Pexton explained that the accusations made against her by Cllr. Fairlamb about having been involved in the planning of and fundraising for the Park are false. She uses the park with her two children and is a supporter of the Park. Additionally his claims that she is an ally of Councillor Stoker and that this influences her are baseless. The previous Clerk check with CDALC whether any declaration is required by Cllr. Pexton and it is not. A motion was raised that the Parish Council purchase a few standard benches, as a temporary measure, to support those using the park over the summer period, and to respond to the volume of requests to bring the picnic benches back. This allows time for the Council continue to understand and explore how best to manage the Park. The Council resolve to approve this motion and Cllr. Banks will liaise with the Parish gardener about installing temporary benches. Email received from the new Police and Crime Commissioner about an update to Parish and Town Councillors on 22nd July. Councillors have the details and Cllr. Warburton plans to attend.
8.	Agreeing terms and conditions of employment and advertising a vacancy for Clerk to the Council and interim support Cllr. Banks explained that the previous Clerk resigned at the last meeting and that since that point Cllr. Banks has been responding to correspondence and arranging payments, and Cllr. Pexton has been monitoring the Parish mailbox and undertaking other admin tasks. CDALC (County Durham Association of Local Authorities) have no locum clerks on their books, however, a member of the public, who is currently a councillor for Durham City Council and had completed initial

	clerk training, has approached Cllr. Banks about providing paid support in the interim. The Council resolve to accept this offer of interim support and Cllr. Banks will liaise with the member of the public to confirm details. The Council resolve to delegate tasks relating to financial accounts / HMRC / VAT returns in the interim to Cllr. Ashfield, accepting that there may be a requirement to engage professional support. The Council resolve to delegate the preparation of materials, including the job description, in preparation for recruitment of a permanent clerk, to Cllr. Ashfield who will bring drafts to the September meeting.
9.	Parish Survey Cllr. Pexton updated that the survey questions have been finalised and that the survey is ready to be printed. Paper surveys will be distributed around all houses in the Parish and a QR code to survey monkey provided for those who wish to complete the survey online. A month's survey monkey subscription for approx. £99 will allow the survey to run and results to be downloaded within the month. Responses will be collated and themes analysed ready to present at September's meeting. Printing costs will be approx. £40. The Council resolve to accept the expenses relating to the survey.
10.	Membership of Finance and Horticulture Committees Cllr. Fairlamb stated that currently he does not wish to participate in committees, given his declaration of interest relating to the park and limited dispensation The Council resolve to accept the following membership of Committees and to report to the September meeting who will hold what positions on these Committees: Finance – Cllr. Ashfield. Cllr. Banks (ex officio), Cllr. Pexton (ex officio) Horticulture – Cllr. Warburton and Cllr. Pexton. It was noted that non-Councillors can sit on the Horticultural Committee.
11.	Garden Awards Winning houses will be displayed on the Parish noticeboards and will each receive a £20 garden voucher.

12.	Liaising with our neighbours: Poplar Tree Garden Centre; The Rose Tree; The Seven Stars; The Avenue; Shincliffe W.I.; St. Mary's Church; Betty Bees Cllr. Banks expressed the need as a new Council to liaise and build relationships with business and organisations across the Parish. The Council resolve to accept the following as points of contact: Cllr. Warburton - The Rose Tree, The Seven Starts and the W.I. Cllr. Pexton – The Avenue and Betty Bees Cllr. Banks - St Mary's Church and Poplar Tree Garden Centre It was noted that all may need to be engaged as part of initial work on the neighbourhood plan.
24.	Date of next meeting – 23rd September 2021

Meeting closed at 7.42 pm

Signed as a true record_____

Cllr. Michael Banks