

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at Remote Meeting on Thursday, 18 March 2021 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

S Bridgett
G Hill
W Pattison
C Seymour

T Thorne
R Lawrie
G Renner-Thompson
J Watson

OFFICERS

L M Bennett
G Bucknall
L Dixon
B Hodgson

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Highways Delivery Area Manager
Democratic Services Apprentice
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Sgt. L. Robson
Sgt. P. Sykes

Sgt. S. Vickers

Northumbria Police (Morpeth)
Northumbria Police (Alnwick)
Northumbria Police (Berwick)
Northumbria Police (Berwick)

181 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Clark and G A Roughead.

182 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday 21 January 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

183 POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Sgt Robson, Sykes, Budge and Vickers to the meeting and invited them to give an update on policing matters in the North of Northumberland.

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The following issues were raised:-

- **Sgt. L Bowman (Amble)** - Over the last 12 months there had been a drop in some types of crime such as burglary but an increase in others such as anti social behaviour and drugs related issues. The neighbourhood and response teams were actively tackling the issues.
- Issues had been identified in the Church Street and Queen Street areas of Amble and meetings were being arranged with other bodies such as the Highways Agency.
- An operation would take place soon targeting drugs, social disorder and violence.
- Planning was in place for the removal of lockdown and the lifting of restrictions. Licensed premises and restaurants would be reopening.
- **P Sykes (Alnwick/Rothbury)**
- Similar situation to Amble. Issues in the Alnwick area included the use of second homes and having holidays during the lockdown.
- Reduction in the contact with schools whilst they had been closed, although this was being stepped up again.
- Mindful of what happening in coastal areas following the increase in tourism in 2020. Joint operations were planned for the whole coastal area.
- Proactive with the housing department with a lot of housing enforcement in the Alnwick area. Closure notice in place for Narrowgate Court, Alnwick. Actively working to reduce anti social behaviour.
- **Sgt. Vickers (Berwick)** - Similar to other areas crime was generally down in the Berwick area with an increase in anti social behaviour, both were linked to the COVID pandemic.
- Challenging year, County Lines was identified in Berwick and had been dismantled and offenders involved would be receiving Court dates.
- Rural crime team introduced who would look in detail at crimes being committed in rural areas.
- There had been a high number of issues relating to holiday and second homes when lockdown was eased during summer 2020. Efforts had been put in place to find solutions rather than being reactive.
- Work was ongoing to deal with the re-opening of pubs, holiday parks and other licensed premises to try and pre-empt future problems.

The following comments were made in response to Members' questions:-

- The local sergeant for a particular area could be contacted via telephone, personal e-mail, office e-mail or e-form on the Northumbria Police website. In an emergency 999 or 101 should be used. Any incident should be reported via 999 or 101 rather than contacting a particular police officer direct.
- Progress on the installation of the automatic number plate recognition system paid for by Councillor J.G. Watson would be investigated. A number of such systems had been installed in undisclosed locations.
- Forward planning was being undertaken around issues for residents such as parking and anti social behaviour over the summer months. A 'coastal summit' was being held to deal with visitor issues and ensure staff such as parking enforcement officers were in the right place at the right time.
- The police could only act on information supplied by the public if the

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- information was of sufficient quality.
- Community speedwatch scheme operated by public volunteers had been on hold during the COVID restrictions, but two officers had been out today in the Alnwick area. Recruitment was handled centrally.
- Operation Nightwing covered Morpeth, Alnwick and Berwick areas and actively targeted anti social behaviour hotspots.
- COVID Enforcement letters were being delivered to parents of children involved in anti social behaviour to make them aware and to warn of the possibility of a fine.
- Three Police Community Support Officers were working out of Berwick and dealing with anti social behaviour.
- Officers were in Longhoughton, Lesbury and Denwick today doing speedwatch work. Powburn had been a regular location for speedwatch and the speed camera van. If a problem was discovered in any particular area, the Highways Authority was asked to provide speed strips.
- Operation Acorn was run in more inland areas of Northumberland in conjunction with the National Park and National Trust to look at areas which had been heavily hit by visitors over the winter months.
- The police were aware of the issue of off road motor bikes and quad bikes and this was being looked at over the force area

The Chair thanked the police officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

184 **LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

G Bucknall, Highways Area Delivery, updated Members on highways issues in the North of the County.

- A huge programme of work, double the normal amount, had been delivered despite the pandemic and the recent poor weather.
- Of 205 major schemes in the County, 176 had been delivered with the remainder expected to be completed in April/May.
- 59 schemes were in the northern area with 49 completed and the remainder would be completed in the next few weeks.
- North Road Berwick was deferred indefinitely to allow for the Flood Team to identify a solution to the problems there.
- Recently completed LTP schemes included Hazon, Wilkinson Park, Alwinton, Grange Road Shilbottle, Warkworth Avenue and Dial Place Warkworth, Chathill, Ford and Etal and Branxton
- In the next few weeks, two schemes at Norham, the Peth at Wooler, Percy Terrace and Lovaine Terrace at Berwick, North End Longframlington, Coldrife, Low Road to Weldon, North Middleton and Duddo
- There were also two footpath schemes in Alnwick and Church Street Amble.
- Traffic Safety Schemes such as 20 mph zones, dropped kerbs and car park improvements continued to be delivered.
- Bridge schemes were ongoing along with the cleaning and jetting of gullies.
- There was a number of potholes following the poor weather and additional resources had been made available to deal with this.
- The COVID signage in town centres had been renewed.

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The following responses were made in relation to Members' queries:-

- Reports of a number of potholes, particularly in Percy Terrace and Percy Street, Alnwick would be chased up. Work to pavements in Alnwick were likely to begin in April.
- Reporting of faded road markings could be made either electronically or directly to the Highways Manager. This type of work tended to be carried out during the summer months.
- Officers were aware of the poor state of the road verges at Swarland.
- The issue of water on the road between Longframlington and Swarland and potential to flood a property could be dealt with as part of a scheme in the next LTP programme.
- A Signs Team was to be set up to deal with the large number of damaged road signs in the County. The team would be asked to look at the damaged road sign at the Northumberland Arms, West Thirston.
- The bus shelter at Shilbottle was being dealt with by the Structures Team and a retaining wall was being designed.
- The latest situation regarding the chicanes in Longframlington would be investigated.
- The road surface at High Cliff Estate, Berwick was in a poor state and on the list of priorities for repair.
- The grass area near the school on Osborne Road, Berwick could be assessed as potential additional parking area.
- The condition of the road outside Belford Primary School would be assessed.
- The position regarding the damage done to the village green in Elsdon would be investigated along with timber lorries not using designated routes.
- Structural patching and tree cutting was to be done on the Low Road.
- The situation regarding road markings at Golden Square, Berwick would be checked with the Highways Inspector.
- Damage to highways signs should be picked up by Highways Inspector in the course of their work. Damage to a sign on the Acklington to Amble Road was noted.

Bob Hodgson, Local Services, updated Members as follows:-

- Winter work had continued despite challenging weather conditions and summer works would be commencing soon. Some rural locations had been difficult to access during the winter but the teams were up to date with work. There had been very few complaints.
- Access to vaccination centres had been maintained.
- Grass cutting had just begun but would depend on ground conditions.
- Weed control would be undertaken inhouse again this year. A trial of glyphosate alternatives was planned and other options were being assessed for their effectiveness.
- Enhanced street cleaning, litter bin emptying and cleaning of public conveniences would be required. Plans were in place in view of the anticipated increased footfall.
- It was business as usual for the waste collection services and the garden waste collections had started again. There had been an increase in the numbers requesting this service. The price had remained the same as last year.

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- The glass collection continued and its effectiveness was being monitored. After five collections in the Alnwick area, nearly 35.5 tonnes had been collected.

The following responses were made in relation to Members' queries:-

- Volunteers for litter picking were essential and very welcome. Collection of the resulting rubbish bags could be arranged by contacting the Local Services Officer.
- The situation regarding trees in Longframlington Cemetery would be assessed and any appropriate action taken.
- The England and Northumberland County Council flags had been replaced at the Border.
- The dirty state of some town signage would be looked by the Signs Team referred to by the Highways Officer.
- Litter bins were a Town and Parish Council asset and were emptied by Northumberland County Council on their behalf. Although there was a reasonable amount of flexibility regarding the location and number of bins, it was preferred if they were located within a reasonable carrying distance.
- The Local Services Manager was happy to have a walk around the High Cliff and East Cliff areas of Berwick to look at issues in that area. Issues could also be taken up with Bernicia.
- It would be possible to assist North Sunderland Parish Council with the cleaning of rubbish bins. It would depend on the frequency but could possibly be done four times per year starting before the tourist season.

RESOLVED that the information was noted.

185 **MEMBERS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

Members noted the details of the Members' Local Improvement Schemes which were provided for information. It was requested that these reports be updated.

186 **BERWICK REGENERATION COMMISSION**

Members were informed that the Borderlands Exclusive Growth Deal had just been signed. This was very good news for Berwick. The next step was to draw up a design brief and this would be completed in April/May 2021. There was much appreciation for the work of Officers and Members who had worked very hard on this deal.

187 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was attached to the signed minutes. Members were asked to contact the Chair if there were any issues which they wanted at future meetings and these would be taken to the Local Area Council Chairs' Briefing.

188 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next remote meeting will be held on Thursday, 20 April, 2021, at 2.00 p.m.

Ch.'s Initials.....

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....