

STANHOPE PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in Eastgate Village Hall on 3rd April 2024

PRESENT:

Cllr J Shuttleworth, Cllr D Craig, Cllr Mrs D Sutcliff, Cllr R Lawrie, Cllr M Brewin, Cllr Mrs C Burdis,

Cllr Mrs S Smart, Cllr Mrs S Thompson, Cllr E Buchanan

Cllr Miss J Carrick – Chairman

Susan Anderson – Clerk

Also Present – Cllr Mrs A Savory,

Gary Stringer – Northern Lithium

Dave Brignall – Northern Lithium

10910

Apologies for Absence

Cllr P Turton, Cllr L Blackett, Cllr Mrs A Hawkes

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To Receive Any Declarations of Interest from Members

Cllr D Craig

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Minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2024

Minutes were moved as a true and correct record and were signed by the chairman

10913

Gary Stringer and Dave Brignall – Northern Lithium

Cllr Miss Carrick welcomed Gary Stringer and Dave Brignall to the meeting. Northern Lithium have signed an exclusive Mineral Rights Agreement with the Church Commissioners to develop the extraction of lithium and other minerals from saline-brines. The new Agreement covers mineral rights owned by the Church Commissioners across 240 sq kms providing up to forty five years for exploration, appraisal and production. At the moment the main area of interest is at Ludwell and tests are being done on the two boreholes with a 30 day pump test then a 60 day test. In the coming months a third bore hole will be drilled away from the slit vein to see what the geology is like. Data is being collected at two burns and a breeding bird survey at Heights Quarry is taking place. Mr Stringer is keen to formalise a sponsored prosperity fund for Stanhope and the immediate villages around it. There will be £10,000 split in half where Durham County Charity Foundation will deal with £5000 for applications over £1000 and then a Committee in the Parish for applications under £1000.

Posters with a QR code will be displayed which will take you to the website for the expression of interest then a formal application will be filled in. A quarterly newsletter is to be produced depending on the level of interest this is to get the information out so everyone knows what the company is doing. Ideas were put forward on getting the newsletter out such as the AAP Ebulletin, letter drop possibly by the cadets at Wolsingham School, posters to the Village Halls, Agricultural Shows, Wolsingham Parish Council and social media.

The most important thing is that every process will go through the Planning System and Environmental Assessments will have to be done. Northern Lithium are very open on what they are doing and want the public to understand everything that they are doing. Cllr Mrs Savory declared an interest as she is on the planning committee

Some councillors sent questions in to be answered and the replies are as follows:

1. What will be the extra transport requirements and the impact on our roads?

Exploration and drilling operations result in very little additional traffic, as evidenced by the exploration activities at Ludwell. For example, in Phase 1 drilling at Ludwell Farm, vehicle movements were a maximum of 16 vehicle (eight in and eight out) per month. Vehicle movements associated with lithium production are being calculated as the understanding of the scheme develops but Northern Lithium does understand the sensitivity around this matter and will look to mitigate any impacts.

2. Who owns the land from which the minerals will be extracted and how are the owners benefitting financially?

Surface land ownership remains with a number of private individuals who actively farm and manage the land as freeholders. Mineral rights are held by the Church Commissioners for England. Everyone has been offered the same deal.

3. What might be the environmental impact on 60k sq acres?

It is important to note the difference between land and mineral ownership rights and actual planning permission boundaries. Only small surface areas will be needed at any one time and individual boreholes and compounds will be temporary and have minimal footprints. As noted previously, matters such as working hours, lighting and vehicle movements would be subject to environmental assessment and permitted or refused by DCC.

4. What is the environmental impact of such wide scale expansion?

Expanding the activities beyond Ludwell and its immediate surrounds, will take some time to properly plan and as such is not something the company envisage doing in the short term. They are confident that any impact would be minimal and any development would be subject to the planning process which would include environmental studies and formal assessments. The naturally occurring lithium-bearing brines are pumped via boreholes from granite deep underground and processed brines would be safely pumped back via the boreholes. The footprints of individual well sites will be small and would be comparable to those already drilled at Ludwell. All sites will be restored to a standard demanded by DCC after production ceases. Honouring previous commitments to the council, any development will be brought to our attention before they are formally submitted

5. How will it affect farming communities?

Farmers who become part of the project will benefit from payments associated with exploration and drilling activities. There will be no meaningful impact on livestock or land management. Local communities will benefit from grants available through the Northern Pennine Shared Prosperity Fund. Employment will be created and existing businesses will have opportunities to provide goods and services.

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Matters Arising

1. **ASHCROFT PLAYPARK** – The monitoring of the Ashcroft MUGA Refurbishment project reference 21TVF-WEAR001 has now been signed off.

2. **GULLY AT NEW PARK, WESTGATE** – The gully has been reported and has been added on to the current work programme. It has had some tarmac put on it but it hasn't solved the problem as the tarmac will come away again.
3. **PLANNING PERMISSION DM/23/00704/FPA** – The permission has been granted for rescue pigs only. One has been residing there in the barn and will now be accommodated in one of the sties. There is no intention to rescue pigs in large numbers and there is no intention to breed pigs at the site. Cllr Craig still has concerns regarding the permission to keep pigs. DEFRA needs to know where pigs are and any pig needs a licence. This isn't a planning matter its an Environmental Health matter.
4. **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER SITE MEETING** – A meeting took place on 20th March and an update has now been received. Following the meeting with the Chief Executive of DCC and the PCC it was discussed ways that they can work together to ensure there is consistency in road safety across the whole of the County Durham area. We are now in pre-election period with the PCC elections taking place on 2nd May 2024. We have been assured that this is an area that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will be recommending is progressed through the Polce and Crime Plan, regardless of who the Police and Crime Commissioner is as a result of those elections.
5. **STONE BRIDGE, STANHOPE** – An Environment Agency Permit Application has been submitted pending approval and the issue of a bespoke permit. The Environment Agency requested further in depth ecology surveys including bat and otter method statements which have been provided now. DCC are awaiting an update as to whether any further information is required or whether it is now acceptable for the permit to be issued.
6. **DOG DISPENSERS IN WEARDALE** – Last meeting it was agreed to purchase economy dog bags when the next order is needed. After speaking to D Hunt he has made a list of all the locations where there are dispensers out and if necessary will monitor them.

10915

Correspondence Received

1. An email has been received from the ParkThatBike project which is supported by DCC. It aims to make cycling easier and more convenient and to tackle the problem of bike theft. There are various types of bike rack and secure cycle-store free of charge. There is a charge for delivery for the cycle-stores. They will be supplied and installed by ParkThatBike. The cycle - parking is available on a first-come first served basis but must be installed on private premises only.
2. S Makepeace has carried out an inspection of the stability of the Grave Stones in the Old Cemetery, Stanhope. The overall condition of the Grave Stones is good there are no dangerous defects and nothing to cause concern at this time.
3. Cllr Mrs Burdis sent some photographs that were taken of a broken kerb stone at Frosterley after a lady had fallen. The photographs were sent to DCC.
4. Northumbrian Water are holding a Community Outreach Event on Thursday 18th April at Stanhope Community Centre between 3pm and 7pm. Details have been sent to the councillors
5. Durham Community Action would like talk to the Parish Council on housing needs for example are rents too high for young people or is there a shortage of bungalows for older or disabled residents. Also do we feel that too much house building has already occurred.
Resolved: Clerk to invite to the May meeting

10916

County Councillor Update

The caravan that is parked at Westgate will be moved on Friday

10917

Planning Matters

APPROVALS

DM/21/02654/RM

Approval of reserved matters (appearance, land scaping, layout and scale) of planning permission

DM/15/00373/OUT

Shittlehopeburn Farm

Stanhope

DM/23/02521/FPA

Erection of 2no agricultural buildings with photovoltaic panels and associated landscaping

Sunny Bank

St Johns Chapel

DM/24/00232/FPA

Single storey replacement front extension

High Kitty Crag

Sidehead

Westgate

WITHDRAWN

DM/23/03537/FPA

Erection of a single, detached 2 bedroomed dormer bungalow plus detached double garage

Land and buildings south east of Sycamore House and

West of Bondisle Way Stanhope

10918

Finance

1. S Makepeace has inspected all of the playgrounds and the report has been sent to all of the councillors. If the work needed in the report is done then the condition of the playgrounds will remain good. **Resolved:** It was agreed to have the work done
2. The grass cutting in the Old Cemetery will be going up by £20 per cut totalling £1422.36 for the year.
3. Eastgate Village Hall are having problems getting to the bank to pay the cheque in from the Parish Council. **Resolved:** It was agreed to pay Eastgate Village Hall direct.
4. The plots that were taken on near the top of the Crosshill allotment site need S Makepeace to clear a pile of rubbish such as sheeting, old wire and glass. **Resolved:** It was agreed to have the rubbish removed.

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AAP Report

Next meeting will be the AGM

10920**Accounts for Payment**

E-ON NEXT PLAYGROUND PAID	£46.25
GEORGE F WHITE IRESHOPEBURN ALLOTMENTS	£20.00
SMITH OF DERBY FROSTERLEY VILLAGE HALL	£298.80
DCC BUSINESS RATES FOR CEMETERY	£199.60
SMITH OF DERBY WEARHEAD MEMORIAL CLOCK	£298.80
SMITH OF DERBY WESTGATE MEMORIAL CLOCK	£298.80
MAKEPEACE MOTORS WILLARD GROVE ALLOTMENTS	£682.80
S ANDERSON SALARY	£903.28
HM REV	£20.96
S ANDERSON HOME AS OFFICE	£35.00
S ANDERSON EXPENSES – SLCC MEMBERSHIP/POSTAGE	£193.00
TOTAL	£2997.29
SCOTTISH WIDOWS	£40,000.00

ACCOUNTS FOR RECEIPTS

ALLOTMENT RENTS	£1,201.00
HMRC VAT REFUND	£421.36

RESOLVED: Accounts moved**10921****New Matters for Discussion**

1. Cllr Mrs Savory mentioned the speeding order signs, speed limit signs would have to come out of the County Councillors budget and she commented that it just cannot be done.
2. Cllr Craig mentioned the for-sale advert for the church at Westgate and the ground available for parking. There are graves up the side to the church. This would all go through the planning when it gets to that point.
3. Cllr Mrs Sutcliff would like the Market Place in St Johns Chapel sweeping and the toilets.
Resolved: Clerk to report to D Hunt
4. Cllr Brewin the Neighbourhood Warden up to Frosterley as there are some snares down by Kenneths Bridge and a dog got its leg caught. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact the Neighbourhood Warden
5. Cllr Mrs Burdis mentioned the rubbish at Hill End after the Easter holidays. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact D Hunt

6. Cllr Mrs Thompson would like some broken flags repaired at St Johns Chapel Market Place by the telephone box. **Resolved:** Clerk to report to DCC as a trip hazard
7. Cllr Miss Carrick mentioned that the water meter at the Village Hall Eastgate has not been unearthed yet. **Resolved:** Clerk to report to DCC again

10922

Clerks Business

1. Most of the allotment rent money is in now and chase up letters have been sent.

Meeting Closed at 8.00pm

Date of next meeting is Wednesday 1st May 2024 at Eastgate Village Hall commencing at 6.30pm

.....Signed.....Date