

Update from the Parish Council

Since our last update there has been two virtual meetings (March and April) and the key focus areas from both meetings were as follows.

Open spaces

Following a safety audit of the park, the Parish Council has put forward the funds (circa £2,000) to make necessary repairs to existing equipment in the children's play area – these works have now been completed.

The Park Committee made a presentation to the Parish Council regarding the possible replacement of the current wooden adventure playground equipment (with a more durable metal alternative). The Parish Council is supportive of the project and would like to thank the Park Committee the work undertaken regarding this to date – research into possible equipment, resident consultation on preferred options, seeking quotations etc. The project to replace the equipment requires significant funds (perhaps around £20,000), and before committing any Parish Council funds to this it was agreed that the Park Committee should investigate whether grants may be available from other sources to put towards the works.

The Incredible Edible project has proposed to install planters around the village, initially funded by a grant from 'North Yorkshire's Stronger Communities' organisation and maintained by volunteers. The intention is that edible produce will be grown for use by anyone in the village. The first two planters have recently been installed in the church hall grounds, with another planned next to the allotments at the corner of Westfield Lane and School Lane behind the bench (subject to NYCC approval). The Parish Council would like to thank the volunteers who are working hard on this project.

Public Rights of Way

Paths have also been a hot topic due to the increase of usage over the past year, with maintenance, signage and legal routes been flagged as issues. We are grateful for the formation of the South Milford Paths Group who intend to work on addressing these issues, liaising with NYCC as required. Look out for separate updates from this group in the coming months. In terms of footpath signage, the Parish Council has put aside £400 for the purchase of signposts and markers.

Network Rail has proposed to close the footpath from Low Mill Farm to Norden's Barn Farm due to 'safety issues' at the crossing along this route. People within the Parish should have received a letter detailing this and asking for support/objections to be sent to Network Rail. The Council have responded to this with an objection on three grounds, namely; lack of alternative route, losing connections to other villages and challenging the claimed safety concerns given the lack of substantiation of the issues. We await the outcome of this consultation.

Section 106 monies

Following many objections, the decision has been taken to not proceed with the proposed dog exercise area on Westfield Lane. Therefore, there is still a question mark over how the ringfenced funds should be utilised. There are very specific criteria for how the section 106 monies may be spent and the main option currently being considered is a sensory garden on unused land at the north east of the Park (to the side of the fenced games area). We are currently exploring the feasibility, suitability and affordability of this and will provide further updates in due course.

Another option for using the funds could be the replacement of the wooden adventure play equipment referred to above.

Vacant Land

It has been brought to the attention of the Parish Council that there is a section of land off Common Land (opposite Burley Close) which is currently vacant and has been fenced off for some time as 'private land'. This fencing has not been erected by the landowner and appears to be an attempt to claim 'adverse possession' of the land by an individual. The Parish Council has engaged a solicitor to explore all possible avenues to trace the legal owner of the land. If the legal owner cannot be traced, the Parish Council will consider its options, as clearly it is keen to utilise this land in the most effective way for the village.

Planning

There have not been many significant planning applications/decisions since the last update other than the granting of the demolition of the building at 16 Low Street and erection of 4 new houses. Works began on this land in April.

Sherburn Library

The council have given its annual financial support to Sherburn Library as it used by many in the village and considered to be a vital service within the community. £630 was paid in April for this purpose.

Future of Parish Council Meetings

Since March last year, Parish Council meetings have been allowed to take place online due to a special permission being granted to permit this (due to the pandemic). This temporary permission has now expired, meaning formal Parish Council meetings are currently not permitted to take place virtually. Given in person meetings in Grove House are not possible whilst social distancing is still required, we currently have no formal Parish Council meetings planned. However, hopefully things will change soon and once we have a plan in place for the format of future meetings, it will be communicated via the usual routes.