

**MEETING OF HAYDON PARISH COUNCIL AT 7.30PM ON THE 22ND OF MAY
AT HAYDON BRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE.**

Present : Cllrs L. Alderson, B. Howard, K. Richardson, A. Sharp, A. Suddes, D. Thornhill (Chair), and D. Webster; C. McGivern (mins.) and members of the public.

1. **Election of Chair and Vice-chair** – David Thornhill was elected Chair and it was agreed to elect a Vice-chair at the June meeting.
2. **New Cllrs Danielle Webster and Louise Alderson were welcomed by the Chair** and the Clerk distributed Acceptance of Office and Declaration of interests forms to be completed.
3. **Public participation** – none.
4. **Crow Hall Farm Woodland Creation Project** –

Sam Roberts, Woodland Creation Mgr, Euroforest Silviculture, Chris Hamill, Director Euroforest Silviculture and Harry Humble of True North (landowner).

Sam Roberts began by outlining the project which he said would be mixed productive woodland, with the aims of increasing biodiversity, harvest of timber, and carbon sequestration. Timber production will take place below Muckle Moss to the eastern side of the land. Anyone can look at the website. As surveys come in and are signed off they will be available on this website.

Harry Humble said that the investors in the fund were a spread of UK defined benefit schemes whose aim is to make a return and capture carbon. The timber that is harvested will be used in building and will then be locked up for the future. The trees that are used grow 5-10 times faster than native species. He was keen to emphasize that this is not carbon offset. This will help increase the timber supply, of which there is not enough in the UK. The fund is looking for low profile areas to work and Crow Hall is relatively out of sight.

He went on to say that he was happy to have allow public access where possible. Sam explained that they have gone through Stage 1 of the process and are now moving onto Stage 2 where they will look at the site in-depth. There will be public engagement events over the summer when there is more to show people.

Chris Hamill said that the process takes a long time, possibly up to 2 years. Only when all the data has come in can they formulate the final design. Then the regulatory process will decide if what has been put forward can go ahead.

Questions were then invited from members of the public.

Damien Rudge, Thorngraston asked about road safety as access will be onto the A69 and also why the fund is based in Guernsey. HH said that the regulatory regime for small startups was the simpler in the Channel Islands.

Cllr Thornhill asked who was the “planning authority” for such schemes as for normal planning applications people get the chance to voice their objections. In this case it is the Forestry Commission and the process is similar. CH said that over the next 12 months the team will come to meetings and will put all of their information on the website. Natural England are the statutory consultee and the National Park will also form part of the consultation.

Mr Rudge returned to his question about access onto the A69 and HH said that NCC Highways Dept will be a consultee, and they would have to have discussions with such authorities to see what could be done.

Cllr Suddes asked if the Forestry Commission sometimes refuse permission, and she was told that yes they can refuse schemes that do not meet their criteria.

It was explained that the whole site covers some 400 hectares, after the surveys have been completed some areas will come out of timber production. HH confirmed that everything above the lonnen is out of timber production. At present Muckle Moss is in good condition and they will be looking to enhance biodiversity in this area.

John Jackson, Langley, asked if grazing will be continued north of the lonnen. HH confirmed that this would be the case. The investors were interested in doing good, and will explore the options before deciding whether to sell this land.

A member of the public asked about the buffer between the lonnen and tree planting. SR said that there would be a 200 metre buffer below the SSSI.

Mr Rudge said that in the past people had got their fingers burned dealing in carbon credits. HH replied that the site near Aberdeen was in the hands of Standard Life Investments Trust and they had been forced to wind down, it had nothing to do with the performance of the site, and he went on to say that the fund that owns Crow Hall is fully funded. He said that this was absolutely not a carbon credit scheme, which he viewed as allowing people to pollute. The fund wanted to capture carbon for the planet and produce good timber. Cllr Suddes asked how the wood would be used for building as steel and concrete are very polluting. CH said that varying grades of timber are used for stud walls and engineered material was very strong and had already been used for 6 storey buildings on the continent.

James Royds, Prior House, asked when spades would go in the ground and was told that this could be November 2026, or later.

Nigel Eve, Thorngraston, said that various infrastructure crossed the site, such as water pipes and public footpaths. How would this be dealt with. SR replied saying that there will be buffer zones around power lines and they would talk to Northumbrian Water about buffer zones around water supplies. Any rights of way would not be limited. Deer fencing would incorporate swing gates to allow access and they would look to formalise desire paths across the land.

A member of the public said that there were currently lovely stone walls at boundaries, what would happen to them? These must remain and there will be a 4 m buffer on either side. Some have cultural significance and will have a bigger buffer. HH said there would be no ongoing need to maintain for stock. The lady said that conifer trees produce acidity and asked how they would stop this from entering water sources. SR said that in reality this was negligible. CH said that UK forestry standards stated that there must be direct run off into watercourses.

A member of the public said that the initial surveys had been carried out late in the year, and CH replied that they had been done in April to June last year. Whether there will be an environmental impact survey done is up to Natural England. If the Forestry Commission are not content they will call for a survey.

Cllr Sharp said that he was pleased that CH and HH had come along to this meeting. He said that he had received a lot of concerned enquiries about the project. He also said that he had walked the area last weekend, and noted how much of the site is next to the A69. He asked if the whole site would be put into the scheme or were the group prepared to work with people where there are concerns. HH said that there had been no detailed discussions with Highways yet, but they were open to disposing of sensitive parts of the land. Not all of it has to be planted with trees, they are willing to sell part to reduce

conflict. Cllr Thornhill noted that another site, Stobo, had ended up in judicial review. HH said that Forestry Scotland had not fully considered the operating plan, the site needed Environmental Impact Assessment and it will go ahead. An ecology survey will now be carried out to measure the increase in biodiversity.

Cllr Morshead asked if the wildlife survey for Crow Hall would be made public. This will go on the website when it is complete, probably toward the end of the summer. The breeding birds survey is on there now and public engagement events will be advertised there.

The website is www.crowhallwoodland.co.uk

The Chair thanked them for coming to the meeting.

5. **Apologies** - were received from Cllrs S. Jackson, C. Kendall, A. Kirsopp, and T. Simmonds.

6. **Declarations of interest** – none received.

7. **Minutes of the previous meeting** – having been circulated were agreed and signed.

8. **Report from Northumberland County Council –**

Cllr Thornhill congratulated Cllr Sharp on his re-election. Cllr Sharp reported that –

- The planning application for Hindshield had been made invalid. The application for West View had been refused. There is nothing new to report about the Langley Brickworks application. The application regarding Marshall's Yard has not been refused. They have until the 30th of May to deal with a few remaining issues.
- A replacement for the damaged sign at Langley has been ordered.
- A plan for yellow lines on John Martin Street needs to be corrected.
- Fly tipping at Foundry Court has now been dealt with.
- Cllr Sharp needs to check that all the drains on North Bank have been sorted out.
- The planning application for Haydon Park House was approved and work has started. One stone pillar has been bulldozed, and the planners will keep an eye on the site.
- Work on Ratcliffe Road/Innerhaugh road schemes will start in July.
- Cllr Sharp will chair the Rights of Way Committee.

9. **Highways –**

- a) Details of road closures on the B6305 had been circulated.
- b) The bus shelter opposite Innerhaugh will be discussed at the June meeting.
- c) Cllr Alderson raised the issue of traffic speeds from the crossroads past the village hall at Langley. She wondered if the speed limit could be reduced to 30mph. Cllr Sharp will look at this.
- d) Cllr Morshead said that work was needed on the West Lands End bank and Cllr Sharp said he would follow this up.
- e) Cllr Webster wondered what was happening about the road behind Belmont Gardens and Cllr Sharp said he would try to get it into the Local Transport Plan.

10. **Lighting** – nothing to report.

11. Planning applications –

25/01532/FUL Construction of hardstanding from a county road ... at Hindshield – had been made invalid.

25/01599/FUL Create a pond to introduce fish, create a natural environment and habitat for wildlife at Lipwood Well Farm had been made invalid.

12. Accounts – as in budget.

I Approval of Annual Governance Statement – The Annual Governance Statement was completed and approved and signed.

II Approval of Statement of Accounts – The statement of accounts provided by the Clerk was approved and signed.

13. **Review of Internal Audit and Risk Assessment** – The Clerk had circulated these documents for 2025, and they were agreed and signed.

14. Correspondence –

- a) The Elections Department at County Council had contacted the Clerk to remind everyone to complete and return their election expenses form.
- b) Emails had been received from Chris Armstrong regarding his request for brown signs for the village. Cllr Thornhill and Howard had met with Mr Armstrong and he now appreciated the limitations of the Parish Council's powers. Another issue raised had been parts of the village looking tired for eg the barbecue stands that had been repeatedly damaged at the riverside. Cllr Thornhill said he had been down there and the grass was mown, the picnic tables looked good, though some of the benches could do with repainting. One of the bins has been damaged. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask whether this bin could be replaced with a wheelie bin in a stand. Cllr Alderson suggested that a recycling bin was also needed at the bottle bank to allow people to recycle cardboard. The Clerk will contact NCC.
- c) Details of a Definitive Map Order were received from NCC.
- d) Michelle Gregg had contacted the PC about contributing to a memorial bench and planting wildflowers in memory of her Mother Diane Lowes, and had been put in touch with Carole Price. It was noted that permissions are still being sought for planters/benches on the old bridge.

15. Parish Projects

- a) **Development Trust** – The DT needed two representatives to replace Esmond Faulks and Jo Thompson. They had suggested Anne Suddes, who was already working with them on some projects, and this was agreed. Cllr Simmonds also said that she was interested, and the Clerk had passed on this information to Peter Fletcher.
- b) **Shelter at Langley** – Cllr Morshead said that one family had two children of school age who travelled to school by private transport. Another family had two children of pre-school age. No children currently use the shelter. This will be discussed at the next meeting. Cllr Sharp said he would give £200 toward the repairs.

- c) Stagecoach buses – it was noted that the buses are still unreliable, and it was agreed to invite someone from the firm to a meeting.

16. Any other business –

- a) Cllr Kirsopp had asked about the area of grass being cut by Mr. Batey at the junctions with the A69, as she was concerned about safety cutting this close to the main road. Cllr Sharp will investigate. Cllr Thornhill said that the PC should consider the effect of its policies on the environment.
- b) Cllr Thornhill explained that the playground funds were currently being managed by a sub-committee made up of Esmond Faulks, Simon Walker, Howard Oliver and Robert Adams, all of whom would now like to retire. Four new people would therefore be needed to take on this role. Cllr Alderson said that she would be interested in doing this.