

# MURTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: June Watson  
Telephone: 017683 52851/07834 884022  
E-mail: [jw.watson@btinternet.com](mailto:jw.watson@btinternet.com)

Correspondence:  
The Nurse's House, 50 Scattergate Green  
APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND CA16 6SP

---

## NOTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF MURTON PARISH COUNCIL 6 March 2017

**Present:** Barbara Govan (Chair), Debbie Hewitt, Pat Laverty (Vice Chair), Alan Taylor. The Chair welcomed Major Kevin Gallagher and approximately 25 members of the public to the Annual Parish Meeting.

### **17/17 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Atkinson, King and Longstaff.

### **18/17 Major Kevin Gallagher, Training Safety Officer, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Service Delivery Training North, Warcop Camp**

Major Gallagher explained that the title of TSO had replaced the term Commandant but the role was essentially the same. This included acting as liaison between the Camp and the local community and he appreciated that the Camp had a big impact on the lives of the local public. Warcop is one of the main army sites in the UK for troop and police training and is a civilian test centre for weapons. Last year they trained 152,000 troops, although not all were in residence.

Safety training is paramount and the Warcop Ranges are considered to be safer than they have ever been for both soldiers and public. Handovers between soldiers and the contractors (Landmarc) have replaced the need for a constant presence of Range Wardens.

A new, small range, is replacing an existing one at Haybergill. This is to enable soldiers to practise firing at moving targets. Soldiers have to have this training on annual basis.

Following one of many inspections there had been a health and safety (H&S) recommendation that signs indicating the use of lasers be placed on the Range. Lasers have been used for over twenty years on sights and vehicles, but it had been deemed necessary to inform the general public. The sign about lasers recently erected near Murton fell gate has been removed following objections from local residents. It was agreed it had not been placed appropriately.

New barriers have been erected on Hags Lane to prevent anyone driving onto the Range by mistake. New signage is being arranged to show the exact location of the Ranges.

Discussions are taking place with CCC regarding the relocation of two public footpaths which cross the High Explosive Impact Area at the foot of Roman Fell in order to ensure public safety.

There are no plans for the function of Warcop to change. It is a core site and important to the future plans of the MOD.

Security at the Camp is being tightened. Later this month only those with an official pass will be allowed access to the Camp.

If anyone wishes to report an incident which they consider to be unacceptable please phone Major Gallagher (contact details below). Please provide as many details as possible, eg location, time, vehicle registration as there are several hundred people on site at some times.

Major Gallagher personally considered the Public Inquiry Undertakings to be very generous with regard to the amount of night firing allowed. The total amount of night firing has reduced. There is no longer any night firing on Fridays, and the only firing that does take place on Fridays is when there is an operation need, ie a unit needs to be prepared for deployment. There are two maintenance days per month when no firing takes place.

Warcop is unusual in that they receive very few complaints about excessive noise on the Range.

### **19/17 Questions & Discussion**

A discussion about **noise levels, new weapons and the Inquiry Undertakings** took place. Major Gallagher said that the Ruling about not using new types of weapons on the Range is difficult to manage as development and technology advance. 'Missile type weapons' are not allowed, but some new weapons, eg NLAW, an anti-tank weapon, are very loud and may sound like missiles. Some weapons are in fact fake, eg filled with concrete, but enable training in carrying them around.

Major Gallagher observed that the sound of firing may seem to have increased because the more experienced, battle-hardened troops use very aggressive automatic firing. 150 rounds per minute instead of 20. The actual amount of firing had not increased.

Noise monitoring does not take place at Warcop Range and the kit to measure decibels at the Camp is minimal. There is a sophisticated system installed on the Otterburn Range but there are no plans or budget for a similar system at Warcop. Noise monitoring is a complicated task in this environment and decibel levels will always be affected by wind direction, weather etc.

***Action: Major Gallagher undertook to raise the monitoring of firing level decibels at the next Stakeholders Meeting. He would also confirm that the total amount of 30mm firing met the Ruling.***

On **dry training areas**, where both the MOD can train (using blanks) and the public can walk, the rule is that soldiers cannot throw weapons or fire within 100m of a footpath. The accuracy of firing flares is difficult in any situation. In answer to a request for details of what is dry training and where it will take place, Major Gallagher said it is not easy to specify. There are already flags and barriers all over the Range but no specific warnings are given.

Major Gallagher stated that there are no plans to change the **status of Common Land** on Murton Pike.

A request that **liaison be more formal or frequent** was made, eg utilising the village newsletter to disseminate changes such as the erection of the laser notices. It was agreed this should be pursued.

Is there always a **Safety Officer on the Range** when firing? Yes. An Exercise Conducting Officer and at least 5-6 others present should be at a similar level of qualification. The EFOs wear fluorescent jackets.

The process of putting up flags and locking barriers to indicate **live firing** starts at 4.00 am. They are removed at the end of the day. In summer this can be as late as 2.00 am. The monthly training conference includes all participants in the planning of activity and safety.

**Murton fell gate car park** often fills with army vehicles despite a small sign stating that these vehicles must go through both gates and park on the fell. Major Gallagher agreed this sign was too small and could be obscured. He undertook to have it replaced with a larger sign.

Contact Details: Major Kevin Gallagher

Tel: 017683 43224 (direct line)

(MOD): 094542 3224

Mobile: 07860 647955

E-mail: kevin.gallagher106@mod.uk

The Chair thanked Major Gallagher for taking the time to provide an interesting update and answering residents' questions.

**20/17 Date of next meetings:**

Annual Meeting of Murton Parish Council – Monday 15 May at 7.00pm, followed by Ordinary Meeting of Murton Parish Council at 7.30 pm

**The meeting closed at 8.30 pm**

**A LARGE PRINT VERSION OF THESE MINUTES IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM THE PARISH CLERK**