

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 09 November 2016, 7.00 pm

Parish Council Members Present:

Councillor J Anderson (Chair), Councillor R Burton, Councillor J Garner, Councillor L Griffiths, Councillor K Summerson and Councillor I Watt.

Also Present:

County Councillor M Williams.

127/16. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors A Watt, and W Watt and also County Councillors M Plews and J Blakey.

128/16. Declarations of Interest:

Councillor R Burton declared an interest in item 13 (Council Owned Land Adjacent to the Croxdale Inn).

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Mr P D'Silva, Croxdale Inn, to discuss the item below.

129/16. Council Owned Land Adjacent to the Croxdale Inn

Mr P D'Silva attended the meeting in relation to the land adjacent to the Croxdale Inn and following his letter to the Parish Council dated 27 October 2016. Discussion took place with regard to the terms and conditions of the contract by both parties. It was agreed for the Parish Council to repair the fencing works and thereafter the maintenance and up keep of the fence would be the lessee's responsibility. With regard to the period whereby no rent was collected over a number of years, following the departure of the previous owner, Enterprise Inns, which was due to the former Parish Clerk not requesting monies or formally arranging a new contract with the new owner, it was therefore agreed the outstanding rent monies could not be owed by Mr D'Silva. Discussion also took place with regard to allowing allotment holders access rights to park on the land when pertaining to their respective allotment which Mr D'Silva agreed to.

Following a lengthy discussion, Members agreed to grant Mr P D'Silva, exclusive 'Permitted Use' of the land lying to East of Front Street, Croxdale, for the continued use as a car park for customers and employees of the Croxdale Inn.

A further proposal for the land in question was discussed, submitted by Dan Burton of Special Tree Branch Services. As an agreement was made in principle with the Croxdale Inn, this request was declined but would be re-visited if the contract does not go ahead, for whatever reason, with the Croxdale Inn over the coming weeks.

Resolved: Clerk to draft lease contract for agreement before the next Parish Council Meeting.

Standing Orders were resumed and Mr D'Silva left the meeting.

130/16. Nomination of Vice-Chairman:

Nominations of Vice Chairman were sought from Members present. One Member, Councillor L Griffiths expressed an interest and was nominated and seconded accordingly. Members felt it would be beneficial for the Parish Council to elect a Vice Chair to support the Chairman on Council matters, even though it is not necessary to appoint a Vice Chairman under section 15 (6) and 34 (6) of the 1972 LGA Act.

Resolved: Councillor Les Griffiths elected as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council with immediate effect.

131/16. Policing:

There was no Police attendance at the Meeting. The Clerk reported that during the period 9 October – 9 November 2016, 1 theft incident and 2 incidents of anti-social behaviour took place. The theft was from a rear garden in Windsor Court, Croxdale, and advised to secure any sheds and out buildings.

Councillor Burton raised an incident that took place the previous week involving youths breaking glass in the car park to the Croxdale Inn causing damage to properties and requested if this was reported to the Police and if any action was taken.

Councillor Griffiths stated he had received a number of complaints from Sunderland Bridge residents with regard to speeding on the A167. This is also an issue on Ieman's lane, Hett. Councillor Williams confirmed he has previously requested road signs / speed humps to help alleviate speeding but to no avail. A speed traffic survey had also been carried out throughout the village.

Resolved: Clerk to raise the incident that took place in the car park at the Croxdale Inn with the Neighbourhood Policing Team accordingly.

132/16. Public Participation

Michael Graveling was in attendance.

133/16. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 12 October 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

134/16. Matters Arising

i. Grass Cutting at Rogerson Terrace, Croxdale:

Councillor Garner confirmed she had visited properties located at Rogerson Terrace and stated that there were no overgrown gardens / bushes which looked like they had been cut recently.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. BT Phone Kiosk Removal:

Councillor Griffiths requested if the Clerk could contact Brian Ogdon of HVHA with a progress update on the proposals in adopting a phone kiosk. HVHA were seeking to re-locate the village's defibrillator into the kiosk. Councillor Williams raised initial concerns over this

as his Councillor neighbourhood budget monies were given to HVHA to purchase the equipment but understood they may have some implications if they chose to re-locate the device.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Brian Ogdon of HVHA accordingly.

135/16. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence

i. Bus Stop Repairs:

Clerk confirmed works were completed on 21 October 2016.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. Fencing at Hett Lane:

Clerk queried with DCC if this was resolved with the land owner, Mr Salvin, but is still awaiting an update.

Resolved: Clerk to update Members at the next meeting.

iii. Grass Cutting – Cricket Field – Rear of Front Street East, Croxdale:

Following Councillor Summerson's request, DCC confirmed the football field has been cut and have made the crew aware of the issues for the beginning of next season's grass cutting.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Pond at Hett Village:

Clerk sought H&S advice from DCC who stated a fixed fee of £150 is payable to carry out a Water Safety Risk Assessment which would highlight all H&S issues and provide us with a written assessment and any recommendations for improvement. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, further costs may be involved in signage/equipment etc. Following discussion, it was agreed to contact Christine Dent of Hett Village Pond Association to see if they would contribute towards the associated costs.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Christine Dent accordingly.

v. Letter to Ron Hogg re Policing:

Clerk confirmed a letter has been sent to Ron Hogg following Councillor Summerson's request but no response was received to date.

Resolved: Clerk to update Members at the next meeting.

vi. Jim Shaw:

Clerk confirmed a letter has been sent to Jim Shaw following his resignation. She also queried the former clerk's laptop which Mr Shaw still had but he confirmed the laptop was obsolete and was therefore disregarded some time ago.

Resolved: For Members' Information / noted in respect of former clerk's laptop.

vii. Mrs Etherington:

Clerk confirmed a letter has been sent to Mrs Etherington to clarify public participation at Parish Council Meetings.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

viii. CDALC Executive Committee:

Following CDALCs AGM held on 22 October 2016, the Parish Council was required to seek a representative from the Parish to represent Spennymoor TC and the Parish at area committees across County Durham. Spennymoor TC has nominated one Member, Councillor Ian Geldard (Leader). Councillor Griffiths expressed an interest and requested further details before making a decision.

Resolved: Clerk to send details to Cllr Griffiths in the first instance before contacting Spennymoor TC.

136/16. Financial Matters

i. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2016 – 09 November 2016

A financial update prepared by the Clerk was circulated to Members which included a detailed schedule of receipts and payments for the financial year to date and bank reconciliation to 09 November 2016. The current net bank balances totalled £7,461.59.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400266 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk’s Wages October - £258.00
Cheque Number – 400267 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.60
Cheque Number – 400268 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £31.49
Cheque Number – 400269 – Royal British Legion - £20.00
Cheque Number – 400270 – JW Smith - £540.00

Resolved: For Members’ Information.

137/16. Cemetery Update

i. Grave Plans:

Croxdale: Clerk confirmed cemetery plan is now with the Conservator in Leeds which will take approximately 1 month for works to be carried out. It is envisaged the plan will be ready December or January at the latest.

Resolved: For Members’ Information.

ii. Cemetery Fencing:

Clerk had met with Officer from Durham County Council on 2 November 2016 who confirmed poor workmanship of the cemetery fencing which was not carried out to standards. There are currently 2 issues – boundary issue (following email from Mark Hutchinson of 26 October 2016 which was circulated to Members) and workmanship. It was agreed a meeting is to be arranged with the farmer to agree the correct fence boundary with DCC in attendance. The Parish is yet to receive a quotation in order to put the works right. Once this is received, discussions are to be had to seek compensation or reimbursement from RA Fencing via the Small Claims Court.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange a meeting with the farmer and representative from DCC regarding Croxdale cemetery.

138/16. Vacancy of Parish Councillor

The Clerk reported that the Returning Officer at DCC did not receive the requisite number of signatories to call an election for the recently advertised vacancy. The Parish Council may now therefore co-opt under the Parish Council's own co-option procedures. It was therefore agreed to display an advert for the vacancy throughout the village.

Resolved: The Clerk to produce an advert for displaying throughout the village for expressions of interest to be sought from residents and directed to the Clerk in the first instance. The Clerk will provide details of nominations at the next meeting for co-option.

139/16. Garage and Allotment Fees & Charges Review

Members agreed for this item to be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council to allow sufficient time reviewing the garage and allotment fees and charges for 2017.

Resolved: Clerk to defer to the next meeting of the Parish Council in December.

140/16. Planning Issues:

No planning matters were discussed. County Councillor M Williams confirmed there are ongoing discussions with regard to the application in respect of Hett Livery.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

141/16. Social Media Policy

The Clerk presented a draft policy / code of practice for Members consideration on guidance to the Parish Clerk and Parish Councillors in the use of online communications, collectively referred to as social media. It was noted, notices etc. will continue to be published on the Parish Council's notice boards for the purpose of communicating information about the Parish Council to residents who do not have access to computers / tablets, smart phones etc. It was agreed the Clerk and Councillor Burton to act as administrators regarding content. Content has started to be added to the Facebook page which is not open to the public as yet, until Members approved the social media policy.

Resolved: Members adopted the Social Media Policy for the Council with immediate effect.

142/16. County Councillor Reports

County Councillor Williams gave an update in relation to proposals in relation to the new bus station, confirmed DCC received a gold medal in Northumbria in Bloom and the Duke of Kent opened the newly refurbished Wharton Park.

The Chair thanked Councillor Williams for his service to the Parish Council as former Parish Councillor and County Councillor over the last number of years and wished him well on his retirement. The Chair requested a formal letter to be sent to Councillor Williams.

Resolved: For Members' Information and Clerk to issue letter to Cllr Williams.

143/16. Former Parish Clerk

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the above item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

144/16.AOB:

i. Request for Litter Pick

Councillor Watt requested the Clerk to contact Durham County Council requesting a litter pick to take place between – Hett Lane / Leeman’s Lane / A167 road from Coach & Horses pub to roundabout.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Durham County Council.

ii. Disabled Sign:

Councillor Garner queried a resident had approached her requesting a disabled sign to be erected on the resident’s property and whether the Parish Council could carry out this request. It was agreed that as this was a private property, the owner would be responsible for this.

Resolved: Councillor Garner to inform the resident accordingly.

145/16. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 14 December 2016 at 7.00 pm.