

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 14 June 2017, 7.00 pm

Parish Council Members Present:

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

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey, S Dunn and M McKeon.

36/17. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from Councillors J Anderson and W Watt.

37/17. Declarations of Interest:

Councillors Garner, Ord and Summerson declared an interest in item 09 (Review of Allotment Holder Tenancy Regulations: Gardens and Small Holdings). However, their dispensation previously granted authorised Members to speak and vote in connection with the Council's allotments and garages.

Councillor Burton declared an interest in item 10 (Cemetery update) in relation to fencing contractors.

38/17. Policing:

There was no Police attendance at the meeting; however, a report was circulated for the period 14 May 2017 – 14 June 2017 with 23 reported offences for the area. Councillor Griffiths requested for future reports to include the outcome of the crime / offence to add context and detail on the matter.

A response from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Ron Hogg, was received on 30 May 2017; having made further enquiries with both Durham Constabulary and the Crown Prosecution Service, the situation remains the same in the absence of new evidence. This was a decision made by the CPS which Mr Hogg cannot overturn in this case.

The Clerk reported an incident that took place on 10 May 2017 at a bus stop at Rogerson Terrace with a cyclist and pedestrian which was subsequently reported to the Police. The nature of the incident a statement was not needed. However, the relevant paperwork for this type of incident was completed; no other incidents of a similar nature have been reported in the area.

Resolved: For Members' information. Clerk to raise with the Police with regard to the monthly reports that are received.

39/17. Public Participation

Michael Graveling and Linda Burton were in attendance.

The Chairman agreed to suspend Standing Orders and bring forward agenda item 09 to the public participation part of the agenda to allow for Linda Burton to participate in discussions in relation to the review of Allotment Holder Tenancy Regulations: Gardens and Small Holdings.

40/17. Review of Allotment Holder Tenancy Regulations: Gardens and Small Holdings

Linda Burton informed Members of complaints of tenants burning dog waste on allotments and barking at night causing a nuisance. If problems persist, this will be reported to Environmental Health. Official complaints are to be made in writing to the Parish Council in the first instance in order for the issue to be investigated and dealt with accordingly.

The regulations for gardens and small holdings were reviewed, following claims an allotment holder kennelled dogs on site overnight and puppy farming / breeding of dogs. There was no specific regulation that refrained allotment holders to house dogs overnight. The only reference was made to 'livestock'. The Clerk circulated a schedule for information of tenancy agreements referencing dogs in relation to what other parish / Town Councils enforce. The majority do not allow dogs to be kept on allotment/small holding sites, however, they can be on sites, under control, whilst the tenant is there but taken home again. No further complaints have been received regarding breeding of dogs, which could be seen as a breach in tenancy agreement: 'not to be used for the running of a small business'. This is to be reviewed if an official complaint was received.

Discussion took place on a number of issues such as - if a tenant moves out of the area, should they still be allowed to rent an allotment? Before the lease of an allotment, the individual should inform the Parish Council of their intentions of use for the allotment or small holding. If a tenant had a historical agreement in place, this would be honoured, however, any new tenants would need to put in writing their specific request(s) outside of the regulations for the Parish Council's permission.

It was agreed there would be one tenancy regulation going forward in respect of gardens and small holdings, instead of having individual ones respectively.

Resolved: Members to review and comment on the current tenancy regulations for discussion and agreement at the next meeting.

Standing Orders and the normal running order of the agenda resumed. Linda Burton left the meeting.

41/17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 May 2017 were revised as follows, subject to agreement as a true record and signed by the Chairman at the next meeting.

Members Present – Councillor J Anderson and reference 26/17. Financial Matters.

42/17. Matters Arising

i. Fencing at Hett Lane:

Confirmation received from the County Council that as Highway Authority, they would not write to a landowner unless the fence was considered to be dangerous. In addition, an assessment has been made to ascertain whether or not a vehicle restraint system would be appropriate in this location and the outcome was negative. It was noted the Highway Inspector will continue to monitor the situation when undertaking highway safety inspections. However, the issue remains of a vehicle going through the fencing and drop at the other side.

Resolved: Clerk to follow up with DCC.

- ii. **Dyke at Butchers Race:**
Reported to DCC on 4 May 2017 and was still open as of 13 June 2017. A member of the Clean & Green Team to contact the Clerk to clarify exact location.

Resolved: For Members' information.

- iii. **Road Plainings:**
Clerk confirmed delivery of the road plainings at Hett were delivered on 13 May 2017.

Resolved: For Members' information.

- iv. **Croxdale Inn Fencing:**
Confirmation received from Special Tree Branch Services that works are to be carried out over 26 and 27 June 2017.

Resolved: For Members' information.

- v. **Road Closure – Thinford Works:**
The patching and surfacing works to Hett Lane were completed approximately 2 weeks ago. With regard to complaints on the benefits of the scheme, DCC has reiterated the fact that it was never the intention of the widening to have any impact on Hett, instead it was meant to reduce the congestion westbound on the A688 towards Thinford. Observations have shown that the queue on the A688 has reduced significantly as a result of the widening. No response has yet been received with regard to the assessment criteria used and costs for the works completed. Clerk to pursue this matter, if no response is forthcoming, a freedom of information request is to be drafted.

With regard to the provision of 'children playing' warning signs and rumble strips in Hett and Sunderland Bridge, DCC confirmed the Department for Transport's regulations determine what signage Councils can prescribe upon its road network. DCC advised that they wouldn't provide rumble strips in the settlements. The reason for this is that there are adjacent residential properties whose inhabitants would suffer from the generated noise.

Discussion took place on making one way only through Hett and residents to be consulted. A traffic / speed survey was suggested to take place. County Councillor Dunn wished for more traffic measures to be in place for the number of cars 'rat racing' through Hett.

Resolved: Clerk to pursue the assessment criteria used with the County Council and request for a traffic survey to be undertaken at Hett.

- vi. **County Association Executive Committee and AAP Representation:**
Clerk advised Spennymoor TC on 15 May 2017 that Councillor Ord is the Parish Council's nominated representative for the above Committee and AAP Forum. Spennymoor TC nominations are yet to be received; once known a meeting to appoint the joint representative covering both areas is to be arranged.

Resolved: For Members' information.

- vii. **Request for Future Donations:**
Clerk advised Croxdale Community Association and Citizens Advice Bureau that the Parish will consider donation request(s) later in the financial year.

Resolved: For Members' information.

viii. Circulation of Correspondence to Parishioners:

A flyer was produced for circulation within the Parish for residents to sign up to receive Parish Council news / information. To date one resident has expressed an interest.

Resolved: For Members' information.

ix. Hett Green:

A letter was issued to the farmer concerned accessing farmland via the village green at Hett. A response was received; stating access over the village green is used to avoid accidents with parked cars and also as a result of pitfalls in the village. Councillor A Watt advised he has also spoken to the farmer since receiving the initial letter. It was agreed a further response would be issued asking the farmer to use the road whenever possible rather than the village green.

Resolved: Clerk to write to the farmer as agreed above.

x. Data Sharing:

Clerk had contacted ICT Services at the County Council with regard to setting up a shared area and options for Councillors and members of the public to access Parish Council correspondence. The Parish website should be developed more for the public in terms of sharing financial reports, crime stats etc. An option for Councillors was considered using Office 365, however, due to the annual licencing costs and all Councillors requiring access to broadband, this was not deemed practical at the present time.

Resolved: For Members' information.

xi. Hett Village Green:

A site meeting on 15 May 2017 took place with the Clerk, Councillor Griffiths, resident of Hett and Stuart Priestley of DCC regarding two greens that potentially are to be turned into wildflower meadows to the north of the village hall and the west side of the village. The seed costs for the area has been estimated at a cost of £1,800. Councillor Griffiths has contacted a local farmer to seek assistance with the ground preparation works to help keep costs to a minimum, however, this has been unsuccessful. Without contributions from DCC and help from local formers on the ground works, this project is unlikely to proceed. However, the Clerk is to pursue this matter with the County Council to determine what their contributions would be to the project.

Resolved: Clerk to contact DCC.

xii. 2016/17 Audit:

2016/17 annual return was completed and sent to auditors in advance of the 7 June deadline. A Public notice for the accounts inspection is now in place from 7 June – 14 July inclusive.

Resolved: For Members' information.

xiii. Damage to Recreation Ground:

A response from the Police has not yet been received. Councillor Ord confirmed the fencing railings have now been repaired by the County Council.

Resolved: For Members' information.

xiv. Appointment of Chairman

Councillor Garner wished to note on record, her apologies to the former Chairman, Councillor Anderson, with regard to the comment made concerning his health. The comment was not meant to be offensive, it was more as a genuine concern.

Resolved: For Members' information.

43/17. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence

i. Councillor & Chairmanship Training CDALC:

Clerk gave Members details of forthcoming training sessions in relation to Councillor and Chairmanship, as well as Members Code of Conduct.

Resolved: Members to inform the Clerk of training that is of interest.

ii. Transparency Funding 2017/18:

Clerk informed Members funding application has been submitted for 2017/18 in the sum of £720.00. CDALC to confirm if application successful in due course.

Resolved: For Members' Information

44/17. Financial Matters:

i. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2016 – 14 June 2017

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 14 June 2017. The current net bank balances totalled £17,320.10.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400309 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk's Wages May - £258.00

Cheque Number – 400310 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.40

Cheque Number – 400311 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £31.49

Cheque Number – 400312– JW Smith – March & April Cemetery Maintenance - £320.00

Cheque Number – 400313 – D Dove – 2017/18 Website Hosting - £60.00

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Bank Signatories

The Clerk confirmed all Members (apart from current bank signatories who completed this process last year) are required to complete personal details under section 3b as part of the bank's requirement under their policy so that they hold a list of all Councillors that have control over the Council.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for banking forms to be completed.

45/17. Cemetery Update – Fencing:

Clerk reported that Croxdale Farms has now been contacted with regard to carrying out the fencing works, however, this option was not forthcoming, therefore additional quotations are to be obtained from fencing contractors who recently tendered for works at the Croxdale Inn for

discussion at the next meeting. It was also suggested once the fencing issue has been resolved, the boundary line between the Parish Council and the farmer is agreed and is in writing to avoid disputes arising in the future.

Resolved: Clerk to contact fencing contractors who tendered for works at the Croxdale Inn to submit a quotation, if works are of interest.

46/17. Planning Issues:

The Clerk reported the Parish Council has received the following planning application(s) for comment / objection:

New timber windows to front and rear of 5, 6, 7, 13, 18, 37, Front Street, Croxdale – Durham City Homes.

Resolved: For Member's Information – no specific comments / objections were made with regard to the above planning application.

47/17. Parish Council Byelaw: Cricket Field

Clerk reported confirmation has now been received from CDALCs legal's team that the Parish does have the necessary powers to revoke the Byelaw if decided to do so. However, it was agreed to leave the Byelaw in place as it is, and for the situation to be monitored going forward with respect of complaints / issues of increased dog fouling. Councillor Summerson suggested erecting a polite notice, as a reminder to pick up waste after your dog.

Resolved: Members to note and feedback at meetings as and when necessary. Councillor Summerson to erect signage.

48/17. County Councillor Reports

Newly elected County Councillors Stuart Dunn and Maura McKeon introduced themselves following the recent local elections. Discussion took place over Members Neighbourhood funding for the ensuing financial year, which effectively will be divided over 12 divisions. Each village's aspirations will be individually looked at and assessed. County Councillor Blakey informed Members of the newly elected Chairman, County Councillor Bill Kellett.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

49/17. AOB:

i. Travellers – Sunderland Bridge:

Councillor Ord reported he had received a complaint from a resident of East Farm regarding travellers parking vehicles adjacent to the river. It was agreed the situation should be monitored and reported to the County Council.

Resolved: Councillor Ord to monitor situation and report back findings as necessary.

ii. Rear of Front Street East, Croxdale:

Councillor Burton reported the lack of maintenance to the rear of Front Street East which has been an issue for a number of years. As this is an un-adopted road, this is the responsibility for neither the Parish or County Council. The issue was duly noted and suggested for the residents to set up a scheme for road repairs and maintenance, however, the Parish would assist with the co-ordination of the scheme, if progressed by residents.

Resolved: Councillor Burton to feedback to residents.

50/17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 12 July 2017 at 7.00 pm.