

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 12 July 2017, 7.00 pm

Parish Council Members Present:

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

Also Present:

County Councillor M McKeon.

51/17. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from Councillors J Anderson, A Watt, W Watt and County Councillors Blakey and Dunn.

52/17. 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.

53/17. Policing:

There was no Police attendance at the meeting and no Police report was received for the period June / July, however, the Clerk informed Members the way in which the Police construct their monthly reports and PACT reporting is changing. The monthly reports will no longer be a list of reported offences; they will now be a PACT report. The report will also include any current crime trends in the area and will be circulated in line with the PACT meetings rather than the Parish Council Meetings. PACT meetings will be held monthly with July's meeting being held at the rear of Rogerson Terrace. Due to there never been any "regular" attendees of the Croxdale PACT meetings, this is why the format of meetings are changing in an attempt to engage with more residents.

Additionally, due to unbalanced workloads of officers, Abby Pattison will no longer be the PCSO for Croxdale and Hett parish area, PCSO Holly McCabe will be taking on this role.

Resolved: For Members' information.

54/17. Public Participation

Michael Graveling and Linda Burton were in attendance.

55/17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 May 2017 and 14 June 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

56/17. Matters Arising

i. Fencing at Hett Lane:

Clerk reported Hett Lane further to DCC who advised the location reported is a low risk site and therefore not a location whereby the County Council can justify of installing safety fencing. Members wished for this to be progressed further before a serious accident occurs.

Resolved: Clerk to progress further with County Councillor McKeon.

ii. Croxdale Inn Fencing:

Confirmation received from Special Branch Tree Services that works will now commence on 13 July 2017, which was delayed due to recent bad weather.

Resolved: For Members' information.

iii. Road Closure – Thinford Works:

Clerk reported no response has yet been received from DCC regarding the assessment criteria used and costings in relation to the above works. If no response is forthcoming then submitting a Freedom of Information (FOI) request would be considered. The Parish is also currently awaiting feedback regarding carrying out a traffic survey at Hett.

Resolved: Chairman to draft FOI request accordingly.

iv. County Association Executive Committee and AAP Representation:

Clerk advised the Parish is still awaiting feedback from Spennymoor TC regarding their nominations.

Resolved: For Members' information.

v. Councillor & Chairmanship Training CDALC:

Councillor Burton is to attend the above training on 25 July 2017.

Resolved: For Members' information.

vi. Hett Green:

A further letter was issued to Mr Wilson as discussed at the last meeting.

Resolved: For Members' information.

vii. Parish Council Website:

Clerk confirmed to add further web pages to the website as previously discussed i.e. financial section, news page will cost in the region of £200.

Resolved: Members agreed to the development of the Parish Council website, which will be met from 2017/18 transparency funding.

viii. Hett Village Green:

Clerk confirmed the Parish is awaiting feedback from DCC on what their contributions would be before making a decision. It was noted no response has been forthcoming from the local farmer as of yet.

Resolved: For Members' information.

ix. Cricket Field Signage:

Councillor Summerson confirmed the signage had now being erected on the cricket field.

Resolved: For Members' information.

x. Travellers – Sunderland Bridge:

Councillor Ord confirmed the travellers are now gone and was fed back to the complainant.

Resolved: For Members' information.

xi. Dyke at Butchers Race:

Clerk clarified the location with Clean and Green Team Leader with regard to the build-up of rubbish which will be removed and a bin will also be supplied.

Resolved: For Members' information.

57/17. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. CDALC Proposals 2018/19:

Clerk gave details of CDALCs proposals for 2018/19, which is to be reported to Town and Parish Councils for comment before being considered at the Larger and Smaller Council Forum on 27 July 2017. The proposals were noted with no financial impact for the Parish.

Resolved: Clerk to feedback Parish Council response to CDALC accordingly.

ii. Transparency Funding 2017/18:

Clerk informed Members the funding application submitted for 2017/18 has been successful in the sum of £720.00.

Resolved: For Members' Information

58/17. Financial Matters:

i. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2017 – 12 July 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 12 July 2017. The current net bank balances totalled £17,029.71.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400314 – JW Smith – Cemetery Maintenance - £120.00

Cheque Number – 400315 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk's Wages - £257.80

Cheque Number – 400316 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.60

Cheque Number – 400317 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £37.99

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. Budgetary Control: Forecast of Outturn – 31 March 2018

The Clerk provided details of the forecast of outturn budget position for the Parish Council highlighting key areas of spend to the end of 31 March 2018.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. **Bank Signatories**

The Clerk confirmed the bank forms for banking signatories is now complete. New bank signatories being - Councillors Griffiths, Garner, Summerson I Watt and A Watt. Due to not being able to certify Councillor Anderson's previous address history, he is no longer a bank signatory. However, Councillor Anderson can be added as a bank signatory once the relevant details can be issued to the Coop Bank. At the moment, the Parish is not compliant with their banking policy.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

58/17. Parish Council Allotments and Garages:

i. **Complaint – Allotments**

The Clerk had received via Councillor Summerson a complaint from an allotment holder at the rear of Front Street East regarding neighbouring plots not being cultivated. It was noted however, that on occasions spraying weed killer is not always possible due to the weather allowing weeds to get out of hand. It was therefore agreed to write to the neighbouring allotment and remind them of the tenancy rules that the land must be maintained and cultivated.

Discussion took place on other allotments across the various sites not being maintained or cultivated and was agreed for Councillors Ord, Summerson and Garner to visit and inspect each allotment to determine if they are being maintained regularly, if an allotment holder wishes to end their agreement or if any plots not being used could be divided into 2 plots to help reduce the number of people currently on the waiting list. This would be reported to the next meeting.

Resolved: Clerk to acknowledge receipt of letter and write to neighbouring allotment holder(s). Councillors Ord, Summerson and Garner to inspect allotments accordingly.

ii. **Review of Allotment Holder Tenancy Regulations: Gardens and Small Holdings**

The revised draft combined regulations for gardens and small holdings was circulated for Members comment and feedback with a view to writing to all allotment holders in late September / October.

Resolved: Members to review and comment on the revised tenancy regulations for discussion and agreement at the next meeting. Clerk is to clarify with Steve Ragg on the procedure for consulting with tenancy holders on revised regulations.

iii. **Allotment and Garages Fees and Charges Review 2018/19 and 2019/2020**

Clerk provided a comparative schedule of allotment and garages fees and charges in other Parishes for Members information and to note the fees of surrounding Parish Councils.

A proposed summary of 5%, 10%, 15% increase across 3 years was provided as well as indicating what a 20%, 40% and 60% increase would be to enable discussion on what the various % increase should be over a 3-year period. It was also proposed to bring in line the collection of rents to financial year (April-March) rather than calendar year (January-December) in order for the monies to be tied in with year-end accounting purposes and to enable budget preparations for the following year.

To allow for a minimum of a year's notice to be given to allotment holders to increase the fees, charges for 2019/20 were therefore considered. Following discussion, it was agreed to increase the fees and charges by 5% across the board and a 50% increase for rental of the cricket field to bring in line with the charge of a small holding. The fees and charges for garages were reviewed and agreed there would be no increase and fees to remain as they are for 2019/20. The fees and charges for 2018/19 would remain the same for 2017/18.

Resolved: Clerk to write to all allotment holders notifying them of the proposed charges for 2019/20 with no increase for 2018/19 along with the revised tenancy agreement.

59/17. Cemetery Update – Fencing:

The Clerk along with Councillors Griffiths and Ord met with Deerness fencing on 29 June 2017 at Croxdale cemetery. A quotation was subsequently received following the visit to correct the boundary issue and separate quotes to correct the fencing overall in terms of workmanship.

It was noted no response was received from Charlton Fencing and RM Fencing & Landscaping and Special Branch Tree Services advised the company is tied up with another contractor until March 2018 and therefore does not want to commit to the works. It was therefore agreed to progress with the quotation received from Deerness fencing in principle, subject to clarification on their terms and conditions.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange site visit with all interested parties, being the Parish Council, Deerness Fencing and the local farmer, Mr Hutchinson, to discuss further and agree exact requirements.

60/17. Planning Issues:

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

Change of use of agricultural cow byre / hemmel to class A2 at the Granary, Croxdale.

Initial concerns was regarding access impacting on Sunderland Bridge residents, however this was clarified in the supporting planning papers not to be the case. Members reported problems they encountered accessing the Planning Portal. The Clerk is to report this to DCC accordingly.

Resolved: For Member's Information – no specific comments / objections were made with regard to the above planning application. Clerk to contact Planning Department re Planning Portal.

61/17. County Councillor Reports

County Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to – Cabinet today considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with further cuts planned, Teaching Assistant dispute is still ongoing with Unions not agreeing to the ballot and next steps being considered. On a positive note, a Syrian refugee who was rehoused has gained employment. County Hall and other strategic sites contributed to fundraising works in relation to the Bradley Lowery Foundation. Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to the incident that took place between Sunderland Bridge and Hett Lane.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

62/17. AOB:

i. Village Green, Sunderland Bridge:

Councillor Ord reported he had been approached by the owners of East Farm following an incident with a tree, which had damaged their property and was seeking advice on who is responsible for the land in question. The village green is not Parish Council property, as it is on Salvin land.

Resolved: Councillor Ord to feedback to Mr and Mrs Gledhill.

ii. Area Action Partnership (AAP) Representation:

Due to work commitments and not being able to attend recent AAP Board meetings, Councillor Summerson wished to step down on his representation for Spennymoor AAP. Councillor Ord was interested in fulfilling this role going forward.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Michael Wilkes at DCC accordingly to see if this is possible.

iii. The Licensing of Reverend Barbara Hilton:

Councillor Garner gave advanced notification of the licensing of Reverend Barbara Hilton taking place on Sunday 24 September, 2.00 pm, St Bartholomew's Church, Croxdale, and sought representation from the Parish Council as well as County Councillors.

Resolved: Councillor Griffiths as Chairman agreed to attend the event.

63/17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 7.00 pm.