

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 14 February 2018, 7.00 pm
Croxdale Community Centre

Parish Council Members Present:

Councillor L Griffiths (Chair), Councillor J Garner, Councillor P Kerrison, Councillor M Ord, Councillor K Summerson, Councillor I Watt.

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey and S Dunn.

137/17. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from Councillors R Burton, A Watt, W Watt and County Councillor M McKeon.

138/17. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

139/17. Policing:

PCSO Stephanie Young was in attendance as February's PACT meeting was being held at the same date/time as the Parish Council meeting. The PCSO reported there was 1 vehicle crime where a tyre was slashed, 1 ASB incident with 14 further incidents were reported in the period 18.01.18 – 14.02.18 with no current trends. All incidents took place within Croxdale. No members of the public attended the PACT meeting.

The next PACT meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 15 March 2018, 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.

Resolved: For Members' information.

140/17. Public Participation

Michael Graveling and David Battensby, Traffic Asset Senior Engineer, Durham County Council, were in attendance.

The following questions / issues were raised with David Battensby and the outcome as detailed below:

1) The speed of traffic on Leeman's Lane and potential for designating it as a single track road with passing places and traffic calming at Hett.

The issue of water spillage to the sides of the road was discussed. David Battensby (DB) to follow request to correct department to determine if this can be actioned. Possibility of creating passing places onto farmers land, however costs may be an issue. The use of gateway signs was discussed as another form of traffic calming although this may not be effective for this location. DB to feedback on definitive options / costs for the Parish to consider. Solo powered signs – only used in locations that has a problem of vehicle speed; Hett does not meet the criteria following recent traffic surveys. County Councillor Blakey requested if a new survey could be carried out since Thinford has re-opened. DB to request a survey and compare the data previously in 2014 and 2017.

2) The volume and speed of traffic in Sunderland Bridge.

This issue is linked to the above. Average speed of vehicles is 20-21 mph. No vehicles were in enforcement category following the last survey in 2013. DB to request for a new survey to take place at Sunderland Bridge. The request of a reduced speed to 20 mph for Hett and Sunderland Bridge won't be cost effective as procedure involves receiving a legal order, consultation, and adverts in local and national press.

3) The speed of traffic approaching Croxdale from the North and South and the access to crossing points. The inability to cross the road in Croxdale due to the volume of traffic.

Issue of school children crossing the road. DB suggested 'keep clear' signs to be added to the road when re-surfacing takes place and a possible sign of 'caution!' near the pedestrian crossing. Croxdale does not meet the criteria under legislation to reduce the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph. Lengthy discussion took place as to why Tudhoe is different.

4) Rat running on Front Street / Salvin Street Croxdale. Request for 20 MPH speed limit – Croxdale. 'No Entry' signs to be installed at the rear of Front Street and Chair Lane, making it a one-way system? The location for signs could be Front Street, (opposite Croxdale Inn) and between 20/21 Front Street.

Residents prefer for speed humps not to be in place, however this is thought to be the only option to reduce the speed of vehicles. Speed humps and 20 mph signs indicating the speed are to be consulted with residents and to agree a preferred option. New gullies are required at Salvin Street.

5) Potholes at Johnson Terrace, Croxdale – an agreement was in place with Refuse that bin wagons would not drive down the rear of Johnson Terrace with residents leaving their bins at the entrance. This seems to have been forgotten about and large number of pot holes have appeared.

Clerk has reported this direct with DCC (Refuse & Recycling) and is currently awaiting a response.

6) Damaged verges at the junction of Grove Court and South Green where vehicles use the verge as a passing place and the proximity of the vehicles to property in Grove Court.

It was agreed to put a kerb in place to stop vehicles parking on the grass verges – DB to request this.

7) The quantity of rubbish from McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks and the other takeaways at Thinford which is thrown out of car windows and left in lay-bys on Hett Lane and Leeman's Lane.

Monthly litter picks are to take place at Hett Lane and Leeman's Lane, however Leeman's Lane has not been covered this month. Clerk to feedback to Officer at DCC. The use of dash cams was discussed, although this option was not applicable in this instance. County Councillor Blakey suggested to write to the owners of KFC / McDonalds / Starbucks regarding the amount of rubbish that is left by drivers, following attendance at their facilities.

Resolved: David Battensby to action points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 and report findings back to the Parish Council in due course. Clerk to action points 5 and 7.

141/17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 January 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

142/17. Matters Arising

i. Fencing at Hett Lane:

The Clerk had contacted Salvin with proposal, however no response has been received as of yet.

Resolved: For Members' information.

ii. Croxdale Beck:

Clerk had reported this to DCC and a response was received from the Drainage Team on 12 January 2018, informing that the contractor will be visiting the site w/c 15 January to clear the grids and remove any debris. However, the footbridge by Croxdale Beck is still outstanding and requires attention.

Resolved: For Members' information. County Councillor Dunn agreed to report back to County Councillor McKeon for appropriate action.

iii. Litter – A167:

Clerk confirmed a thank you letter was issued to Mr Graveling in relation to the litter picks he has carried out throughout the year.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Trees at Hett Village Green / Croxdale Cemetery:

Tree works at Croxdale Cemetery and Hett Village Green were carried out on Monday 05 February 2018.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

v. Councillor Contacts:

Clerk circulated a revised draft poster of Councillor contacts for review which was subsequently agreed.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for contacts to be displayed / circulated within the Parish.

vi. Street Lighting Energy Reduction Programme - A167:

County Councillor McKeon fed back the Parish Council's views on the consultation. DCC confirmed on 08 February 2018 that the street lighting columns will be retained to illuminate the crossing at the location of Hett site bus stops.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

vii. Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:

Clerk has contacted the owner of the Croxdale Inn to give advance notification with regard to 2018/19 rent fee is payable by 31 March 2018.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

viii. PACT Meetings:

Clerk circulated Croxdale and Hett PACT meeting dates to HVHA and CCA as requested.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ix. Council Tax Notice:

Clerk had prepared a draft council tax notice informing residents of the Parish Precept decrease for 2018/19.

Resolved: Members to feedback any amendments / comments before circulation.

x. GDPR:

Clerk reported there was no further update on GDPR, however CDALC Officer, Steve Ragg, has been on annual leave.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xi. Feedback from Revised Allotment Regulations:

Clerk informed Members that tenants have until 28 February 2018 to respond to the revised regulations. Comments so far has been received from 1 allotment holder. All comments received will be collated and discussed at the next meeting.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

143/17. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. Street Names – Hett:

Following requests from Hett residents, via Councillor Griffiths, street names have been requested from DCC for – East Street, West Street, South View and North View following a period of lost mail and deliveries. Discussion took place with Hett Councillors on possible locations, however, a site visit with DCC would need to be arranged.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to arrange site visit with Councillor Griffiths, Clerk and representative from DCC.

ii. Croxdale Cemetery – Late Margaret Etherington:

Clerk informed Members regarding the wrong allocation of a grave that was assigned in 2009 which impacted on a burial that was due to take place. The Clerk had met with the family along with the funeral director to assign the correct graves as requested by the family, which resulted in 3 further plots to be purchased. As a result of the x1 grave that was allocated in error in 2009, Members agreed to discount x1 burial plot for the family in view of the initial error.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to write to Alison Taylor accordingly.

iii. Croxdale Cemetery:

Clerk informed Members of a request received from William Allison & Sons: Monumental Sculptors to place kerb edging around an existing grave following a request from a family member. Following discussion, and comparison with what other local Town / Parishes allow, it was agreed the Parish would adopt a similar approach and not to allow kerb edging around graves.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to draft new Cemetery Policy for agreement at the next meeting.

iv. Sunderland Bridge Village Green:

Clerk informed Members of a request received from a resident at Sunderland Bridge, requesting the Council to pay for a garden waste subscription and also for a communal lawnmower for grass cutting at Sunderland Bridge Village Green. Members agreed (as discussed previously), that it would not be appropriate for the Parish to pay for a garden waste bin for residents grass cuttings as it would be unfair to other residents within the Parish who pay for the garden waste scheme direct.

With regard to the Parish Council paying for a lawnmower, Members recall the grass cutting was initially carried out by DCC but was taken over by Croxdale Residents Association, which now no longer exists. The Parish Council is unable to fund for a communal lawnmower in view of the Association no longer being in place; therefore if residents prefer for the green grass cutting arrangements to go back to the responsibility of DCC, the area in question would need to be factored into the Parish Council's grass cutting programme for 2018/19.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to respond to the resident accordingly.

v. Hett Pond Restoration:

The Clerk informed Members of a request received from DCC following a funding application received from HVHA. The scheme involves planters being installed on the area around Hett pond, which will be planted and maintained by the residents of Hett. As the area in question is on Parish Council land, DCC requires the necessary approval / confirmation that the works can go ahead. All Members agreed to this request.

Resolved: Clerk to confirm Parish Council's approval to DCC and Brian Ogden accordingly.

vi. Allotment Request – Mr Firby:

A request for a poly tunnel (6m x 3m) and a storage shed (2.5m x 3m) to be installed at Front Street East allotments was considered and approved by Members.

Resolved: Clerk to inform Mr Firby of the approval.

144/17. Financial Matters:

i. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2017 – 14 February 2018:

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 February 2018. The current net bank balances totalled £2,450.60.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400350 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk's Wages - £257.80
Cheque Number – 400351 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.60
Cheque Number – 400352 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £37.99
Cheque Number – 400353 – St Bartholomew's Church Donation - £30.00
Cheque Number – 400354 – JW Smith – November Cemetery Maintenance - £160.00
Cheque Number – 400355 – JW Smith – December Cemetery Maintenance - £160.00
Cheque Number – 400356 – Special Branch – Tree Works: Croxdale & Hett - £ 576.00
Cheque Number – 400357 – DCC – 2017/18 Grass Cutting Contract - £2,207.17
Cheque Number – 400358 – Mr Layfield – Hett Hedge Cutting - £20.00
Cheque Number – 400359 – Mr Graveling – Rent Collection Fee - £50.00

Resolved: For Members' Information.

145/17. Review of Governance Documents:

The following governance documents were discussed; the Clerk highlighted the only change was to the Council's Standing Orders to reflect the venue change of Hett Village Hall and Croxdale Community Centre. These were:

- (i) Standing Orders
- (ii) Financial Regulations
- (iii) Members Code of Conduct
- (iv) Risk Assessment
- (v) Disciplinary Policy
- (vi) Grievance Policy
- (vii) Data Protection
- (viii) Complaints Procedure
- (ix) Social Media Policy

Resolved: Subject to feedback at the next meeting, Members approved the above governance documents, which are effective from 01 April 2018.

146/17. Planning Issues:

No planning matters was discussed.

147/17. County Councillor Reports

County Councillor Blakey gave an update in relation to: review of salt bin provisions for Croxdale and Hett, complaints from residents on Windsor Court, Croxdale, regarding car parking and is working with County Durham Housing Group. Working with the AAP to provide memorial benches within the Parish which will be considered at March's AAP Meeting.

County Councillor Dunn gave an update in relation to: Council approved a new primary school for Bowburn and Council agreed to set a council tax increase of 5.99%.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

148/17. AOB:

Parish Council Owned Benches:

Councillor Griffiths queried if the Parish has a composite schedule of all memorial / garden benches that are owned by the Parish, in which the Parish would be responsible for general maintenance and health and safety aspects. Councillor Summerson recalled former Councillor Shaw looked into this previously and agreed to contact him for the information.

Resolved: Councillor Summerson to contact Mr Shaw accordingly.

149/17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 14 March 2018 at 7.00 pm, Hett Village Hall.