

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held in Cotherstone Village Hall
on Wednesday 10 January 2018 at 7.00pm

In attendance:	Cllr John Birkett (Chair), Cllr Richard Hunter, Cllr Alan Thorn, Cllr Jenny Watson
Absent:	Cllr David Rabbitts, Cllr Julie Gill
Public:	One local resident
Clerk:	Judith Mashiter
1. Approval of apologies for absence	<i>As Cllr Rabbitts had submitted apologies due to medical reasons and Cllr Gill for a business commitment, it was resolved that their absences be approved.</i>
2. Declarations of interest	There were no declarations of interest.
3. Requests for dispensations	No requests had been received.
4. Minutes of the meeting held 8 November 2017	Draft minutes had been circulated. <i>It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held 8 November 2017 are an accurate record.</i> Clerk highlighted cases reported to Durham County Council's Highways Departments which remain open and received queries about further issues which she will pursue.
5. Public participation	The local resident present at the meeting did not wish to speak.
6. Appointment of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer	<i>It was resolved to accept the recommendation of the working group that Judith Mashiter be appointed Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer with effect from 1 December 2017.</i> Clerk thanked the Council for making this appointment and expressed gratitude to councillors for the support they have offered. Councillors were asked to note that employer PAYE and payroll system have been established.
7. Planning matters	<i>It was resolved that no comment be submitted on planning application DM/17/04009/FPA, conversion of residential field centre (Use Class C2) to one residential dwelling (Use Class C3), at Water Knott, Baldersdale DL12 9UP.</i> It was noted that application DM/17/02724/FPA, change of use and alteration of farm buildings to form two dwellings, and replacement farmhouse, at Briscoe Farm DL12 9UL is still pending consideration by Durham County Council.
8. Cemetery matters	<i>It was resolved to accept the quotation from Teesdale Memorials, of £150 including VAT, to reposition the memorial to Joseph Wilson and to advise that this work should be deferred until April, when Cllr Hunter will liaise with the company about the exact position.</i>
9. Allotment matters	a. Cllrs Birkett and Hunter had visited the Klondike allotments and noted that wall repairs are necessary. The condition of some allotments remains under review. b. It was resolved to offer vacant allotment plot 2 at The Close to Geoff and Sue McManus, with immediate effect. Clerk to send necessary paperwork. Cllr Hunter to check whether the next person on the waiting list, Martin Meggs, still would like an allotment. c. Clerk reported that 'rent due' notice has been placed in three locations and invited payment direct to the Parish Council bank account.
10. Correspondence	A list of correspondence received had been circulated. Councillors agreed that this method of dealing with correspondence was helpful. Arising from discussion:

- *It was resolved that Cllr Birkett will seek expressions of interest through the next 'Our Cotherstone' from potential volunteers to be trained and operate a Community Speedwatch scheme.*
- *It was resolved that Clerk should express interest in attending a one-day Cemetery Management and Compliance course*
- *It was resolved that no objection be made to a Notice of application for an amendment to the Rights of Common register*
- *It was resolved that Clerk challenge Durham County Council on recent installation of two street name signs:*
 - *At Nicholson Terrace the siting is potentially hazardous;*
 - *At Hawcroft Lane, the sign is not visible at all from one direction, the sign is installed on Parish Council land and there is spelling error.*
- *It was resolved that Clerk write to County Councillors Henderson and Bell challenging the policy that Parish Councils are not consulted on street naming and numbering, even when it relates to a Conservation Area.*

On issues brought verbally by councillors:

- *It was resolved that Clerk liaise with Mike Murden of Durham County Council about progress on removing a fallen tree on the Teesdale Way near The Hagg, about holes in the new footbridge on the Teesdale Way over Wilden Beck, and about remedial work in Bogg Field.*
- *It was resolved that Clerk write letter of thanks to the Fox & Hounds proprietors for their supply of electricity for the Christmas Tree.*

11. Grass cutting contracts

A paper had been circulated.

It was resolved that Clerk prepares grass cutting tender documents, based on 2016 contracts as amended by Cllr Hunter, and initiates the tender process for two new one-year contracts for a) Village Green and Klondike allotments and b) the Cemetery, with evaluation of responses on 14 February 2018.

In addition to making public the invitation to tender for grass cutting, it was resolved to issue the invitation direct to Andy Whitehead, CA Stamp, Jonathan Scott, David Rabbitts (Cemetery only) and Richard Toward.

It was noted that Parish Council-owned lawnmower and strimmer remain in storage.

12. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hunter reported that policy writing is in progress; an update will appear in 'Our Cotherstone' and a Neighbourhood Plan newsletter will be published in February. The Village Design Statement update will be finished by the end of January.

13. Finance

A paper had been circulated.

- It was resolved to receive a report of receipts and payments 8-21 November and authorise one payment to the Clerk, of £200 for December and January salary.*
- It was resolved to receive a report on the 2017/18 year-to-date expenditure against budget and forecast outturn*
- It was resolved to designate 'ring-fenced' reserves totalling £14,000 as follows: General operating reserves £4,000; Election costs £2,000; Cemetery £3,000; allotments £2,000 and Neighbourhood Plan £3,000.*

It was noted that a further £3,039 is already ring-fenced for Neighbourhood Plan and £457 for Defibrillator costs.

It was resolved to accept a draft budget for 2018/19.

It was resolved to request a precept of £6,810 for 2018/19, representing the same resource as 2017/18 and, through tax base adjustments, a 1.6% decrease in parish council tax demand for a Band D property.

- It was resolved that an application be made for Transparency Fund grant of £586.64 to fund the purchase of a laptop computer, software, all-in-one printer/scanner and monthly staff costs associated with keeping the Council compliant with the Transparency Code.*
- It was resolved to close the HSBC bank account and open a Community Bank Account with Barclays Bank, with online access for Clerk but payments made by cheques signed by two of three authorised councillors, these being Cllrs Birkett, Hunter and Watson.*

Clerk to arrange paperwork and set-up meeting with Barclays.

14. To receive reports from representatives to external meetings

There were no reports to receive.

Meeting closed: 20.35