

# COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting held in Cotherstone Village Hall on Wednesday 14 February 2018 at 7.00pm

In attendance: Cllr John Birkett (Chair), Cllr Jenny Watson, Cllr David Rabbitts, Cllr Julie Gill  
Absent: Cllr Richard Hunter, Cllr Alan Thorn  
Public: None  
Clerk: Judith Mashiter

### 1. Approval of apologies for absence

*As Cllr Hunter had submitted apologies due to being on holiday and Cllr Thorn due to sickness, it was resolved that their absences be approved.*

### 2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Rabbitts declared an interest in the grass cutting contracts and was advised that the Council was simply receiving a decision from the Councillors who had met to evaluate the tenders.

### 3. Requests for dispensations

No requests had been received.

### 4. Minutes of the meeting held 10 January 2018

Draft minutes had been circulated. *It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held 10 January are an accurate record.*

### 5. Public participation

None

### 6. Update on progress of actions and resolutions

An action log updated 6 February had been circulated. Clerk further updated and there was discussion:

- Hury Bridge blockage – despite Durham County Council having closed the case, blockage remains and Clerk will pursue the matter further
- Landslip near The Hagg – Clerk to investigate what ‘dealt with’ by Durham County Council actually means
- Request for replacement bus stop/timetable outside 2 Balder Cottage — Durham County Council (DCC) will not replace at this location as there is no footpath, therefore a potential accident risk. DCC offers to relocate to outside Methodist Chapel, consulting with directly adjacent and opposite neighbours; if this is put in place and subsequently the bus operator has difficulty picking up/dropping off, then further consultation would be carried out on the use of painted road markings. *It was resolved that a request be made to Durham County Council that the status quo is maintained, with no bus stop being established outside the Methodist Chapel, this being the narrowest part of the village.*
- Noted that a double-sided, correctly spelled Hawcroft Lane sign had been installed. Clerk to question why, if the land there is public highway, Durham County Council doesn’t cut the grass.
- Clerk to pass to Durham County Council information provided about ownership of Bogg Field.
- New issue of broken inner leaf of wall at Briscoe humped-back bridge to be reported by Clerk.

### 7. Planning matters

- a. The draft planning policy which had been circulated received approval in principle, but it was agreed to defer further discussion until March meeting when the ‘aims of the Parish Council in relation to planning matters’ section can be checked for alignment with the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- b. A summary listing of planning applications had been circulated. Clerk updated that DM/17/04009 (Water Knott, Baldersdale) had been approved by Durham County Council on 13 February.

### 8. Allotment matters

- a. Clerk reported that five rents for 2018 were still outstanding and Klondike Plot #10 had been relinquished. *It was resolved that Clerk write to one tenant advising that the plot is being reallocated as several requests for improvement have been ignored and the allotment is not being used for productive purposes. It was resolved that Clerk write to four tenants reminding them that rent is overdue.*

- b. *It was resolved that Cllr Birkett and Cllr Watson will each approach a potential contractor to provide a written quotation for repair of two small gaps in the Klondike wall.*
- c. *It was resolved that Clerk write to Martin Meggs offering him The Close Plot #3, to Teresa Wilcox granting her permission to move from Klondike Plot #6 to Klondike Plot #10, and to Norman Dinning offering him Klondike Plot #6.*

#### 9. Correspondence

A list of correspondence received had been circulated.

Arising from discussion:

- Agreed that a weather widget will not be used on the Parish Council website
- *It was resolved that the date for the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting will be Wednesday 9 May, prior to the scheduled Parish Council meeting.*
- Following publicity in 'Our Cotherstone' one resident had expressed an interest in volunteering for Community Speedwatch. Clerk will retain the details pending further interest and a decision on whether to proceed.

#### 10. Grass cutting contracts

Cllrs Birkett, Watson and Gill had met prior to the full council meeting to open and evaluate tenders received in response to advertising. Four tenders were received for Cemetery grass cutting and three for Greens and Klondike grass cutting.

*It was resolved to award contracts to Richard Toward (AR Toward Plants) for both Cemetery and Greens/Klondike grass cutting for 2018.*

Cllr Rabbitts advised of the need to consider grass cutting near the river at The Hagg, at the same frequency as the Cemetery grass cutting.

#### 11. Neighbourhood Plan

Noted that Cllr Hunter had reported in 'Our Cotherstone' that draft policies are with the Planning Consultant for formal review and comments, and an updated Village Design Statement will be completed shortly. Also, that a Neighbourhood Plan newsletter will be delivered to all residents in early March and will include details of a Village Open Day prior to the launch of a second consultation event.

#### 12. Governance

- a. A briefing paper had been circulated. *It was resolved to note the requirements of the forthcoming introduction of General Data Protection Regulations, to continue to monitor developments as necessary, to adopt the draft framework document prepared by the Clerk and to appoint an external Data Protection Officer as soon as possible (allocating £350 in the 2018/19 budget for this purpose).*
- b. A briefing paper had been circulated. Clerk to find out what happens if the Council has certified itself exempt from external audit and an elector raises an issue about the accounts. *It was resolved to appoint Chris Butler as internal auditor for 2018/19, to adopt the draft Internal Audit Schedule and draft Risk Register with very minor amendments (subject to identified work in progress) and to note the new arrangements for Annual Report and the opportunity for Council to certify itself exempt from external audit.*

#### 13. Finance

A paper had been circulated.

- a. *It was resolved to receive a report of receipts and payments from 22 November to 15 January, to make a donation of £150 to Play@Cotherstone as a contribution towards insurance and equipment inspection, and to authorise due payments.*
- b. *It was resolved to note receipt of Transparency Fund grant of £584.64 and the subsequent purchase of laptop and printer/scanner.*
- c. *It was resolved to note that a new Parish Council bank account has been opened with Barclays and to authorise a payment to it to reduce the HSBC account balance to zero prior to closing that account.*
- d. *It was resolved that draft Financial Regulations will be discussed at the March meeting.*

#### 14. To receive reports from representatives to external meetings

There were no reports to receive.

Meeting closed: 20.20pm