

# COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in Cotherstone Village Hall  
on **Wednesday 10 April 2019 at 7.00pm**

In attendance: Cllr John Birkett (Chair), Cllr Jenny Watson, Cllr Richard Green, Cllr Richard Hunter, Cllr Alan Thorn, Cllr Tim Sabey  
Public: No members of the public  
Clerk: Judith Mashiter

## 1. **Approval of apologies for absence**

All councillors were present.

## 2. **Declarations of interest**

None

## 3. **Requests for dispensations**

No requests had been received.

## 4. **Minutes**

Draft minutes had been circulated. *It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 13 March 2019 are an accurate record.*

## 5. **Public participation**

No public present.

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

An action log updated 3 April 2019 had been circulated. Following discussion:

- Website charges and 'admin' status changes – Clerk has met with Mark Armstrong. Action closed.
- Bus shelter – repainting work complete. Action closed.
- Tree inspections – Cllr Hunter to meet with WS Hodgsons w/c 15 April to discuss trees near The Close allotments; advice received from Peter Ditchburn that the juniper bush could be cut at the base and won't regrow.
- Teesdale Way footpath – Cllr Watson to provide photograph of the broken-down fence to help Durham County Council identify the location and the damage.
- Cemetery path – Clerk to contact Robert Gill and ask him to liaise with Cllr Hunter when convenient to inspect the path and provide an itemised quotation for a) remedying the yew tree root problems and b) remedying the deterioration of the path where the 'new' and 'old' sections of the cemetery meet.

## 7. **Planning matters**

Clerk advised that three applications are still to be determined by Durham County Council (Haggworm Hall, Four Winds and Water Knott) and that Durham County Council raised no objection to the leylandii work at Moorfields.

## 8. **Neighbourhood Plan**

No progress to update.

## 9. **Correspondence**

A list of correspondence received had been circulated and was noted. Following discussion:

- (item 11) – Cllr Sabey expressed an interest in attending the North Pennines AONB Partnership Annual Forum. Clerk will forward him details and booking link.
- (item 15) – Agreed not to make a donation to support the work of Citizens Advice County Durham.

#### 10. Dog Poo Fairy publicity campaign

*It was resolved that twelve A4 posters produced in-house should be placed on village noticeboards, on the back lanes, at the gates to the railway path and on Demesnes Lane.* Clerk to advise resident who suggested the Dog Poo Fairy posters.

#### 11. Cemetery matters

- a. *It was resolved to note the approval of an application to purchase plot EE3 in the Garden of Remembrance and the interment therein of the ashes of the late Mrs Joyce Jean Rabbitts on Sunday 14 April.* Arrangements for marking the plot, and that of EE2 which will soon be used, were discussed.
- b. Clerk to ask grasscutting contractor to commence the season's cutting, although leaving the Cemetery until after 14 April due to two interments.

#### 12. Allotment matters

- a. Clerk advised that Maddy Tyler has asked to join the waiting list for a Klondike allotment.
- b. Clerk advised that despite two emails to Frazer Davies offering him the 'uncultivable' Klondike plot for hen/duck keeping, no response has been received.
- c. There were no other allotment matters raised.

#### 13. Noticeboard at east end of the village

Councillors acknowledged the need for an additional noticeboard but agreed that locating it within the Cemetery land (ie on Parish Council-owned land) could cause a safety issue as people would need to cross the road to look at it. Agreed that a more suitable location would be close to the telephone box. *It was resolved that Clerk investigate with Durham County Council whether it would allow the installation of a timber-framed noticeboard on the grass verge it owns near the telephone box.*

#### 14. Annual Parish Meeting / Cotherstone Community Forum

Cllrs Sabey and Green had prepared a proposed format and publicity arrangements for an event to be called Cotherstone Community Forum, incorporating the statutorily required Annual Parish Meeting, and explained to councillors their objectives in suggesting this initiative. Key objectives would be to communicate to residents what the Parish Council *can* do and what it *can't* do and what it does do. *Although there was some nervousness about such a meeting being 'railroaded' by one or more disruptors or negativity, it was resolved to proceed with launching a Cotherstone Community Forum, with the express objectives of residents meeting their parish councillors, finding out what the council does for the village and of perhaps discovering information about other groups which operate in the village and of which they are unaware.* Invited organisations to be offered table space to display what they do, encourage people to join etc.

A list of 31 organisations and contact people for those organisations was compiled. Clerk will draft letter of invitation, publicity posters and handbills and a press release for the Teesdale Mercury and Northern Echo.

Agreed that Forum will start at 7pm and the Annual Meeting of the Council, in a different room, at 8pm; Cllr Watson will organise tea/coffee and biscuits; Cllr Birkett will present his Chair's annual report; Cllr Sabey will organise the delivery of handbills through letterboxes in the week prior to the event; all councillors to arrive at 6pm to help set up; all attending organisations to be given a comments sheet to feed back to the Parish Council any issues they want to share.

#### 15. Finance

A paper had been circulated.

- a. *It was resolved to receive a report of receipts and payments from 1 – 31 March and a bank reconciliation at 31 March.*
- b. *It was resolved to receive the draft annual accounts for 2018/19 and make no revisions or comments.*
- c. *It was resolved to receive and approve the internal auditor's report (tabled at the meeting) for the annual accounts 2018/19, and to send a letter of appreciation to Chris Butler for doing the audit work and providing this so promptly.*
- d. *It was resolved to self-certify as exempt from a Limited Assurance Review (external audit) for the 2018/19 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.*
- e. *It was resolved to note that a reclaim of £54.98 in respect of VAT paid on purchases during the financial year 2018/19 had been submitted to HMRC.*

- f. *It was resolved to authorise payments due as listed, with the addition of £130 to Adam Wheeler in respect of an invoice tabled for his repainting of the bus shelter.*
- g. *It was resolved to agree the Clerk's pay rise in line with National Joint Council pay scales for 2019/20, with effect from 1 April 2019 (from £9.521ph to £10.163ph, taking an annual increment into account, as per the 2019/20 approved budget.*

**16. Annual review of risk register**

The risk register adopted 14 February 2018 had been circulated.

*It was resolved to add a 'trees' item to the register, with medium risk until all the trees have been mapped and the management/control measure being that mapping and preparing an inspection schedule is being undertaken. It was noted that the general reserves of approx. £7,400 could be used, if necessary, tree work was identified as part of the process.*

**17. Annual review of asset register**

The asset register dated 31 March 2019 had been circulated.

*It was resolved to add the following items to the register: bus shelter (£1), noticeboard at Methodist Chapel (£1), noticeboard in cemetery (£1) and football posts on The Hagg (£1).*

**18. Members' Allowances Scheme**

A paper had been circulated.

- a. *It was resolved that the Parish Council will not pay basic allowances to parish councillors.*
- b. *It was resolved to set other (non-basic) allowances on the basis recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel.*

**19. Reports from councillors**

- The deadline for submissions to 'Our Cotherstone' was announced as 3 May.

Meeting closed: 8.45pm

APPROVED