

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in Cotherstone Village Hall on Wednesday 12 June 2019 at 7.00pm

In attendance:	Cllr John Birkett (Chair), Cllr Jenny Watson, Cllr Richard Green, Cllr Tim Sabey, Cllr Vince Bendin (from item 5)
Absent:	Cllr Richard Hunter
Public:	One local elector (to item 5, then Cllr Vince Bendin)
Clerk:	Judith Mashiter
1. Approval of apologies for absence	<i>As Cllr Hunter was on holiday, it was resolved that his absence be approved.</i>
2. Declarations of interest	None
3. Requests for dispensations	No requests had been received.
4. Minutes	Draft minutes had been circulated. <i>a. It was resolved that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 8 May 2019 are an accurate record.</i> <i>b. It was resolved that the minutes of Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held 8 May 2019 are an accurate record.</i>
5. Co-option to Parish Council vacancy	Councillors had received a written profile prepared by Vince Bendin, who had introduced himself and explained his interest in being co-opted. <i>It was resolved that Vince Bendin be co-opted to the council, and he duly signed the acceptance of office declaration; and also that the Parish Council pay the cost of Cllr Bendin attending new councillor training in Yarm on 19 June.</i> Clerk reported that following no response to the call for an election, the Parish Council is now able to co-opt to the vacancy created by Alan Thorn's resignation.
6. Public participation	No public present.
7. Governance	A paper had been circulated. <i>a. It was resolved that Chris Butler of Butler & Gee Accountancy be appointed as internal auditor for 2019/20 at a fee of £85+VAT.</i> <i>b. It was resolved to agree a schedule for the review of policies/registers throughout 2019/20.</i> <i>c. It was resolved that no revisions are necessary to the Council's Code of Conduct.</i> Agreed that examples of interests and how they might be handled would be helpful to complement the Code and Clerk will prepare this. <i>d. It was resolved that no revisions are necessary to the Council's Information and Data Protection Policy.</i>
8. Update on progress of actions and resolutions	An action log updated 3 June 2019 had been circulated. Following discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teesdale Way footpath — Clerk to chase Durham County Council about broken railing• The Hagg grasscutting has been carried out by J&J Gill as requested• Clerk is awaiting response from Durham County Council on request that Parish Council installs new noticeboard next to telephone box at the east end of the village• A previous action concerning the ash tree at Briscoe Road end has been re-opened by a resident who has written to Durham County Council challenging its stance on the condition of tree. <i>It was resolved that Parish Council write to Durham County Council, copying County Councillors, endorsing the view that the tree is a risk to traffic and pedestrians due to its rotten inside, an increasing split and fungal growth on the trunk and roots.</i>• Clerk reported that an apparent impasse over funding for the inner leaf repair to Briscoe Bridge is being investigated and a Durham County Council Highways Officer is due to contact Clerk with progress report.

9. Planning matters

- a. *It was resolved that a 'neutral, no comment to make' response be made to application DM/19/01349/VOC (The Limes).*

Cllr Sabey declared an interest in application DM/19/01565/FPA (Land east of Holmfield) in that his property is adjacent to Holmfield and that a family member has been casually employed by the applicant's family. *Following discussion on the water supply, septic tank, access to, seasonality of use and nature of the proposed camping pods, it was resolved that an objection be made to application DM/19/01565/FPA on the grounds that it would be encroachment into the Conservation Area with a detrimental impact in an Area of High Landscape Value and would set a precedent for the whole of the Conservation Area .*

- b. *It was resolved to note a summary of planning applications relevant to the Parish Council since June 2018.*

10. Neighbourhood Plan

A Contents page for the Neighbourhood Plan was tabled, and councillors noted that chapters 1 to 5 and 9 were now complete; chapters 6-8 are being finalised. Cllr Hunter had reported that the Design Guide (which replaces the Village Design Statement) has been healthchecked by Durham County Council and a final check will be made to ensure no ambiguity with draft Plan. A full report on the Neighbourhood Plan income and expenditure, with forecast of remaining costs and funding to its completion, will be discussed at the July Parish Council meeting.

11. Correspondence

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

- (item 10) – *It was resolved that Clerk request that Durham County Council provide additional dog waste bins at all points where the railway walk crosses roads and that Resident A is advised of this and of the effort the Parish Council has made by placing posters around the village, and the view that this is having a positive impact.*
- (item 20) – Cllr Birkett does not wish to receive emails direct from Co. Durham Association of Local Councils.
- (late item) – The owner of the shop/post office would like the parish to discuss purchasing the shop as a community asset. Agreed that this item will be substantive item on the July agenda and that Clerk will prepare some background/case study material on community enterprise models and examples.

12. Cemetery matters

- a. A quotation from J & JG Gill for repairs to the cemetery footpath was noted. *It was resolved that if accepting this quotation is in line with Financial Regulations, then this be done, otherwise Clerk to obtain two competitive quotations.*
- b. *It was resolved that Clerk write to the grasscutting contractor expressing concern about the care being taken with cemetery grasscutting this year as councillors noted that bits have been missed.*
- c. *It was resolved to approve the details of a proposed memorial to Thomas Cecil Hicks in the Garden of Remembrance.*

13. Allotment matters

- a. *It was resolved that Parish Council asks Durham County Council for permission to fell to wall height the sycamore tree (7-8 stems) on the boundary of the Klondike allotment, as they cause significant loss of light to the allotments.*
- b. *Having met with the tenant of plot 5 of The Close allotments, it was resolved that permission be given for erection of a polytunnel within the maximum size specified in the allotment agreement and acknowledging that tenant of neighbouring plots has no objections.*
- c. Having visited both allotment sites prior to the meeting, councillors noted that all allotments have never looked so good. It was noted that the fence near the beck on the edge of Plot 8 at The Close has moved again, due to land erosion by the beck. A possible solution through placement of large boulders was discussed, but no resolution made.
- d. *It was resolved that Clerk remind grasscutting contractor of the need to cut the Klondike site grass at the agreed hourly rate of pay.*

14. Cotherstone Community Forum / Annual Parish Meeting

A paper had been circulated.

- a. *It was resolved that the following responses to issues raised at the Annual Parish Meeting be actioned and also posted in the Parish Council noticeboard:*

- *Request for water supply at Klondike allotments — 2018 was an exceptionally dry year, that many tenants have made water-collecting measures and that the cost of a water supply would be prohibitive in relation to the income by the Parish Council.*
 - *Resurfacing the B6277 through Cotherstone — the Parish Council will request that Durham County Council address this.*
 - *Poor visibility due to trees at Balder Bridge — Parish Council to write to landowner suggesting that if he is willing to fell/prune these, then the Parish Council would be appreciative, despite the County Council's view that the issue is entirely one of drivers taking care.*
 - *Reinstatement of flower bed at Cotherstone sign at east end of village — Parish Council will arrange strimming of the area around the sign, and write to Roy Siswick asking if he would be willing to plant it up as he has done previously.*
 - *Request to explore a canoe-launch structure at The Hagg — Parish Council consider that any 'damage' is natural erosion but will monitor the situation.*
 - *Parking/congestion/danger outside school at peak time — Parish Council to ask Durham County Council to refresh the yellow zig-zag lines outside the school and to consider extending them slightly in the Lartington direction, acknowledging that it is traffic approaching that 'blind corner' that poses the most risk.*
 - *(further issue) Wheelie bins — Parish Council to write to owners of Tees Mill and Mill Hill querying the need for residents to leave their bins at the end of the lane permanently and/or asking them to reduce the number of bins.*
- b. Councillors generally felt that the Community Forum/Annual Parish Meeting event had been well received, but if it was to be repeated in future years, then greater effort should be made to publicise in advance and to ensure that all organisations are contacted.

15. Finance

A paper had been circulated.

- a. *It was resolved to receive a report of receipts and payments from 1 – 31 May and a bank reconciliation at 31 May.*
- b. *It was resolved to authorise payments due as listed, with the addition of £800.00 to A R Toward in respect of four cuts of the Cemetery and four cuts of the Greens (invoices received today).*

16. Reports from councillors

- Cllr Green queried how the Parish Council manages bench seat maintenance and was advised that this is on an ad-hoc basis as required.
- Cllr Sabey had represented the Parish Council at the North Pennines AONB Partnership meeting and was assured that the Cotherstone Moor Field Reeves are familiar with/linked in with the work of the Partnership.
- Cllr Sabey reported that previous technical problems with the website now seem to be resolved.
- Cllr Watson requested that replacement pads be ordered for the defibrillator, as the Parish Council holds funds for this purpose.
- Cllr Watson reported that the condition of the lifebelt at The Hagg, its casing and signage were in need of attention.
- Cllr Watson reported that the wall at Low Shipley, just before the Tees footbridge, is bellying towards the Teesdale Way.
- Cllr Watson reported that a large tree trunk is lodged against the Tees Bridge.
- Cllr Watson reported that there is currently a rabbit inundation at The Hagg bottom.
- Cllr Watson reported that one tread of the stile between the railway line path and the village was missing.

Meeting closed: 8.57pm