

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Planning Applications Policy

Introduction

Cotherstone Parish Council has a right to be consulted on all planning and development applications and decisions relating to the Parish Council area. It is normally given 21 days to respond to the local planning authority (Durham County Council). The Parish Council is committed to ensuring the parish has a voice in this matter, and the local planning authority has a duty to consider the views of the Parish Council when reaching a decision.

Aims of the Parish Council in relation to planning matters

1. To actively seek to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the village of Cotherstone.
2. To seek to ensure that any development, whether new or an alteration to an existing property, will be sympathetic to its surroundings.
3. To increase, wherever practicable, facilities for parishioners, to conserve wildlife, flora and the countryside.
4. To focus on sustainability.

Procedures

1. The Parish Clerk will circulate details of new planning applications and consultations to all members, via email and as sent by the planning authority, in advance of the full council meeting held each month.
2. Parish Council members have the responsibility of individually accessing the online plans and information before each meeting.
3. 'Planning Matters' is a standing item on the Parish Council's meetings' agenda.
4. All applications will be discussed openly and transparently during the Council's meeting.
5. Parishioners and the press are entitled and welcome to attend meetings and pass on their comments during public participation.
6. The council will discuss applications fairly and objectively:
 - a) Each planning application will be judged on its own merits.
 - b) All responses will be based on material planning considerations ie. the criteria by which the local planning authority will judge an application, notably whether it fulfils relevant planning policies.
7. All councillors will abide by the Code of Conduct and must declare any personal/ prejudicial interest that may preclude participation in discussion or voting.
8. The full council may undertake site visits, as appropriate and with permission, to assist in formulating the Parish Council's response, such visits to be arranged by the Clerk.
9. If an application requires a response before the next scheduled meeting of the council, then the following will apply:
 - a) If the application is of a minor nature eg. garage, extension etc. then the Parish Clerk will email all councillors seeking views in line with the above. Each councillor will be asked to state whether they 'support' or 'object to' an application or are 'neutral' about it (these being the categories under which any response must be entered on the Planning Portal). A simple majority of those responses received will be taken as the collective Parish Council decision. Any specific comments, other than 'support, object or neutral' will be collated and recirculated for approval by all councillors prior to submission to the local planning authority.
 - b) If the application is of a major nature, then the Clerk may seek from Durham County Council an extension on the time for responding.
 - c) If the planning authority is unable to give an extension to the time for responding and/or members wish to discuss the application in detail, then an extraordinary meeting of the full council will be called.