

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in Cotherstone Village Hall on Wednesday 11 September 2019 at 7.00pm

In attendance:	Cllr John Birkett (Chair), Cllr Jenny Watson, Cllr Vince Bendin, Cllr Richard Hunter, Cllr Richard Green, Cllr Tim Sabey
Clerk:	Judith Mashiter
Public:	2 local residents (until agenda item 10 only)
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. <i>It was resolved that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Parish Council held 23 July 2019 are an accurate record.</i>
5. Public participation	Members of the public present did not wish to speak. <i>Chairman sought and received agreement for agenda item 10 to be dealt with at this point</i>
10. Planning matters	<p>a. <i>It was resolved to note the Parish Council's response to application DM/19/02083/FPA, considered at an Extraordinary Meeting held 23 July.</i> Clerk reported that the Planning Authority is still considering the application and that, should its officer recommendation be to approve the application, then, as this is contrary to the Parish Council's wishes, the decision will be referred to the Planning Committee rather than decided under delegated authority.</p> <p>b. <i>It was resolved to note the Parish Council's response to applications DM/19/02259/FPA, DM/19/01565/FPA and DM/19/02367/VOC, all considered prior to the meeting due to response deadlines.</i></p> <p>c. <i>It was resolved to note Durham County Council's decision on five applications.</i></p> <p>d. <i>It was resolved to note a summary of planning applications since September 2018.</i></p> <p>Clerk updated verbally on three 'trees in a Conservation Area' applications relating to two Leylandii at Heatherlea and four Norway Spruce at Pound House (both to which Durham County Council are raising no objection) and to two ash trees at Glenside, Briscoe Lane (pending consideration).</p>
6. Governance	<p>A paper had been circulated.</p> <p>a. <i>It was resolved that the draft revised Financial Regulations be approved with no further changes.</i> Cllr Sabey queried how councillors can be assured that the Council is fully compliant with the policy, for example over internal auditor appointment. Clerk will circulate the publication 'The Good Councillor's Guide to Finance and Transparency' as this might address any concerns; clerk also reiterated that invoices are always available for inspection at meetings where payments are authorised and that councillors receive full details of all receipts and payments and a bank reconciliation at each scheduled meeting.</p> <p>a. <i>It was resolved that no revisions are necessary to the Council's Training and Development Policy, though it was suggested that a training log be appended to it.</i></p>
7. Update on progress of actions and resolutions	An action log updated 3 September 2019 had been circulated. Following discussion:

- New noticeboard at east of village — Durham County Council have advised that North Star Housing, not the County Council, own the land. Agreed that Clerk write to North Star seeking permission to install a noticeboard once the telephone kiosk has been removed.
- Dog waste bins where Tees Railway Walk crosses roads — Clerk advised that Durham County Council will install an additional bin by 13 September.
- Lifebelt at The Hagg — Agreed that after checking with the owner of Hagg House about his correspondence with Durham County Council, Clerk to contact the County Council's Occupational Health and Safety Manager to assert the Parish Council's belief that the County Council should be the body responsible for the maintenance and updating of the safety equipment.

8. Finance

A paper had been circulated.

- It was resolved to receive a report of receipts and payments from 1 July to 31 August and a bank reconciliation at 31 August.*
- It was resolved to authorise payments due as listed, with the addition of £800.00 to A R Toward, £1,000.00 to Planning Advice Plus/Shawn Hanson and £121.80 to Clerk for reimbursement of expenses (all received since paper was prepared).*
- It was resolved to approve expenditure incurred in printing a questionnaire about the Community Shop / Post Office and in organising a public meeting on 16 September.*
- It was resolved to note precept comparison data for County Durham and England.* Cllr Sabey suggested that those councils with much higher precepts than Cotherstone are likely to be those employing a number of staff.

9. Correspondence

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

- (item 26) — agreed that Clerk respond to resident stating that the Council prefers the historic nature of the existing sign to the new modern one suggested, and that it is included as a heritage asset in the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan and will be restored in due course.
- (item 42) — all councillors had received a copy of a letter from Play@Cotherstone and were happy to note the clarification that a recent *Teesdale Mercury* article with regard to funding was inaccurate, and that the group continue to actively seek funds.
- (late item) — in response to a query about the location of a WW2 POW camp, councillors clarified this, and Clerk will respond to the visitor
- (late item) — Clerk provided details of County Durham Association of Local Councils AGM, at 10am on Saturday 12 October. Two representatives per council are invited. Clerk will attend. No councillors expressed an interest.

11. Cemetery matters

- Clerk reported that a plot in the Garden of Remembrance had been sold and a double interment of ashes will take place on 15 September.
- Other cemetery matters raised:
 - Path repairs have been completed and the yew tree cut well back.
 - David Rabbitts has successfully caught a mole which was causing damage.
 - Cllr Hunter suggested that the two cherry trees at the entrance will need attention soon. Councillors to inspect and, at the November meeting, consider action to be taken.
 - Cllr Hunter suggested that an edge needs to be cut along the full length of both sides of the path.
 - Cllr Hunter to acquire grass seed for the grave recently re-levelled.
 - Approval was given for the fitting of a memorial to Philip Clive Christopher Lee, as per artwork and specification provided by Teesdale Memorials.

12. Allotment matters

- Councillors noted that the Parish Council's application to fell to wall height six sycamore trees at the allotments was acknowledged on 4 September by Durham County Council, who have six weeks to consider making a tree preservation order (TPO) on the trees. If no TPO is made, then after 13 October, the work may be carried out as long as this is within two years. Cllr Bendin reported that Trees for Cotherstone will potentially be objecting to the application.
- Other allotment matter: Although the grass cutting has not been carried out this season, councillors agreed that this would not now be necessary for this year.

13. Trees

A report had been circulated.

Councillors expressed appreciation of the significant work which Cllr Hunter had carried out in preparing the very comprehensive Tree Risk Assessment Report which built on the survey carried out by Dave Martin.

It was resolved to accept the report and to implement recommendations 1, 2 and 3 now, by asking All About Trees and other two arboriculturalists to quote for a detailed Autumn examination of trees 42 and 43 (Noble Fir and Norway Spruce) and trees 29 and 35 (sycamore and ash) and for a 5-yearly cycle of inspections for all trees in the Very High and High risk categories. Recommendations 4 to 9 from the report to be considered at the November meeting.

It was noted that the recommendations from the report should be transferred to the Council's risk register and risk management plan.

14. Community-run shop/post office

Cllr Bendin reported that he had delivered questionnaires by hand to the vast majority of parish properties, with those to a few outlying properties being posted. As of 11 September, just over 50 questionnaires had been returned to the box in the shop. Cllr Bendin offered to deliver some more to Lartington and Romalldkirk properties. Clerk to circulate to neighbouring parish clerks for onward distribution if possible.

Agreed that the desired outcome from the public meeting on 16 September will be a measure of the interest in people volunteering, investing, providing professional services and in forming a steering group. Acknowledged that there will be differing opinions, sensitivities and many questions which it won't be possible to answer. Agreed that Cllr Bendin and Clerk prepare a structure for the meeting and circulate this to all councillors for comment. Agreed that questionnaire analysis will not be shared prior to the closing date, but that volume of returns will be presented.

15. Reports from councillors

- Cllr Hunter reported that an application for £6,000 from Locality to support the Neighbourhood Plan had been approved in principle, though further documentation must be submitted.
- Cllr Watson reported that footpaths behind St Cuthbert's Church and past the play park up to the station were in need of strimming and tidying up. Clerk to request that Durham County Council address this.
- Cllr Watson reported that the Hagg bottom was cut last week.
- Cllr Green reported that the light on lamppost number 7 is not working. Clerk will report.

16. Clerk's report on recent Continuing Professional Development

A report had been circulated.

It was resolved to note the recent activity and councillors noted that the Clerk found value in attendance.

Meeting closed: 9.08pm