

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held via video conference
on Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 7.00pm

In attendance:	Cllr John Birkett (Chair), Cllr Vince Bendin, Cllr Richard Hunter, Cllr Richard Green and Cllr Tim Sabey
Absences:	Cllr Jenny Watson
Public:	One local elector (from part-way through item 6)
Press:	Nicky Carter from the <i>Teesdale Mercury</i>
Clerk:	Judith Mashiter
1. Approval of apologies for absence	<i>As Cllr Jenny Watson was unable to connect to the videocall, it was resolved to approve her absence.</i>
2. Declaration of interests	Cllrs Sabey and Birkett declared an interest in agenda item 9, as Committee member of Play@Cotherstone and as executor of the play area landlord respectively.
3. Requests for dispensations	No requests had been received.
4. Minutes	Draft minutes (paper 100620-1) had been circulated. <i>It was resolved that the minutes of the Annual Meeting held 13 May 2020 are an accurate record.</i>
5. Public participation	No public were present.
6. Update on progress of actions and resolutions	Paper 100620-2, an action log updated 3 June 2020, had been circulated. Following discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New noticeboard at east of village — ‘in principle’ support has been given by North Star Housing for the erection of a noticeboard, with a request for details of dimensions and materials before full approval is given. Agreed that, for an agenda item in July, Clerk source information on oak, recycled plastic and aluminium boards, similar in style to the board at the Chapel, with two doors and to hold eight A4 posters.• Paving slabs — agreed action complete so can remove from log.• Tees Bridge (lodged tree trunk) — agreed action complete so can remove from log.• Bench seats — Clerk to enquire whether the Wicksteeds spare parts are back in production and remind them to contact Cllr Hunter prior to trying to deliver.• Agreed that ‘walkabout’ of council land is done by individual councillors prior to the July meeting and that the annual review therefore can be an item on the July agenda.
7. Finance	Paper 100620-3 had been circulated. <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. <i>It was resolved to receive a bank reconciliation at 29 May 2020.</i>b. Noted that Cllr Birkett has still been unable to make the dual authorisation online bank arrangements (waiting time on calls to Barclays averaging 5+ hours), so agreed that Cllr Hunter, the other account signatory, will also try. Clerk advised that Society of Local Council Clerks’ National Finance & VAT Advisor recommends the Council not to repay the Business Rates Covid-19 Grant yet as it is still unclear as to the entitlement, but not to spend the money either, pending guidance from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, however councillors agreed that the Council repay the grant. <i>It was resolved to authorise payments due as listed, with the addition of £250 to A R Toward for May cutting of the greens.</i>
8. Tree work	Cllr Hunter presented a quotation received from Jopling Tree Services and reported that Dr Robertson is willing to pay for the work at Hagg House (£450) and Mr Bainbridge for the work on the rotten ash tree at the Teesdale Way fence/footpath gate (£150). <i>It was resolved that the Parish Council instruct Joplings Tree Services to carry out the tree work on the leaning ash over the Teesdale Way footpath, on the ash and sycamore trees at Klondyke Allotments and on the cherry trees at the Cemetery gates, all for £510 (Cllr Hunter to liaise with Lee Jopling and the residents to be invoiced separately for their work).</i>
9. Play@Cotherstone	All councillors had received information setting out the current position of Play@Cotherstone, summarising that although grants have been received for grasscutting and for the installation of new equipment, some of the funding for the latter will only be paid on completion of the work, therefore presenting a cashflow issue for the group. Cllr Sabey asked whether the Parish Council could ‘underwrite’ the group. Clerk advised that a grant application, through

the existing Grants Awarding Policy and using the application form, could be considered at the time of need, but not in advance. *It was resolved that publicity be issued (via website and direct email to those organisations previously invited to the Community Forum) inviting grant applications, with a deadline such that applications can be considered by Council at its July meeting when demand can be assessed and a decision taken on reserves to allocate to this.* Information should also be given about other potential sources of funding. Clerk to advise Play@Cotherstone and to circulate the policy and application form to all councillors for information.

10. Correspondence

Paper 100620-4 had been circulated and there were no requests for further information.

- Item 56 — Cllr Bendin expressed interest in councillor training.
- (late item) — a cemetery visitor had complained about grasscuttings being left on headstones. Agreed to contact Chris Stamp reminding him to blow off the cuttings.
- (late item) — County Councillor Richard Bell urges the Parish Council to respond to the County Durham Plan (Modifications) consultation supporting the retention in the Plan of a relief road for Barnard Castle. Agreed that a brief response be submitted in support of keeping the relief road in the Plan.

11. Flower planting at eastern entrance to Cotherstone

Cllr Watson has received an enquiry from Mr & Mrs Siswick wondering whether the Parish Council wished them to plant up the flower bed in front of the Cotherstone entrance sign. *It was resolved that this offer be accepted, with a similar budget to last year for bedding plants.*

12. Planning matters

There were no planning matters to consider.

13. Cemetery matters

- It was resolved to grant permission for an additional inscription to the Capper family headstone, in similar style, size and font to the existing inscription.*
- Other cemetery matters
 - A section of cemetery wall had been damaged in recent winds, falling into a neighbour's garden. A quotation of £180 to repair 6m of wall has been received, although work cannot be done until the end of July at the earliest. Agreed that Clerk instruct Robert Thompson to rebuild the section of wall, at a charge of £180, as soon as possible. Cllr Birkett will look at a temporary repair for the neighbour.
 - Cllr Birkett reported that a gravestone has toppled and is leaning against the wall. Cllr Hunter suggested that it should be laid flat. Cllr Hunter will look into it. Cllr Birkett also suggested that a fenced-off triple grave (Nixon) might need some attention.

14. Allotment matters

No allotment matters were raised.

15. Cotherstone Community Celebration

No progress to report or actions to take.

16. Community-run shop/post office

Clerk reported receipt of a letter from a South Shields resident who is asking for the result of the Parish Council's Community Consultation on a community-run shop and wondering why the village hall could not be used. Agreed Clerk should send the results and advise that the Village Hall Committee had decided that it was not feasible to use the hall for shop purposes. Cllr Bendin had no updates from Plunkett Foundation or elsewhere.

17. Reports from councillors

- Cllr Hunter reported that a request has been made by a resident for additional/higher capacity bins at The Hagg, in the light of increased use since coronavirus lockdown restrictions easing.
- Councillors confirmed that although there had been a large influx of visitors on recent weekends, there had not been congestion or any serious problems, other than the overflowing litter.
- Cllr Hunter reported that only one chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan remains to be completed, and the GIS mapping by Durham County Council. Advice has been sought on how consultation could be carried out, remotely if possible, in a few months' time.
- Cllr Bendin offered to replace/put up additional 'please pick up dog poo' posters.

Meeting closed: 8.07pm