

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held via video conference on Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 7.00pm

In attendance:	Cllr John Birkett* (Chair), Cllr Vince Bendin, Cllr Richard Hunter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Jenny Watson, Cllr Richard Green and Cllr Tim Sabey
Absences:	None
Press:	None
Clerk:	Judith Mashiter

**Note that Cllr Birkett's attendance was marred with intermittent connection problems; Cllr Hunter chaired the meeting when Cllr Birkett was not present*

1. Approval of apologies for absence

All councillors were present.

2. Declaration of interests

Cllrs Birkett declared an interest in agenda item 8, as executor of the play area landlord.

3. Requests for dispensations

No requests had been received.

4. Minutes

Draft minutes (paper 080720-1) had been circulated.

It was resolved that the minutes of the Meeting held 10 June 2020 are an accurate record.

5. Public participation

No public were present.

6. Update on progress of actions and resolutions

Paper 080720-2, an action log updated 1 July 2020, had been circulated. Following discussion:

- New noticeboard at east of village — Clerk has received some quotations for a new board, but further quotations are expected. Agreed that Robin Quick be invited to quote also. Agreed that although the existing board at the Methodist Chapel needs a little attention, this will last until the future of the chapel is known, and that this might in fact be relocated to the west green.
- Tree work — 45degree ash and rotten ash at top of Hagg steps have already been done; allotments and cemetery work still to be done. The contractor will also be asked to look at trimming self-seeded sycamores at cemetery which are in danger of overhanging 1 Featherstone Rise.
- Flower planting at village entrance sign (east end) — noted that Roy/Audrey Siswick have done the planting, although later reported that mice had eaten many plants. Agreed that Clerk ask grass cutter to rough cut a larger (10 yard) stretch of grass in front of the sign.
- Bench seats — Cllr Hunter reported that wood stain is not available at the present time, but Cllr Green and he will together look at how repairs might be done using the spare parts.
- Safety equipment — Clerk to chase this once more.

7. Finance

Paper 080720-3 had been circulated.

- It was resolved to receive a bank reconciliation at 29 June 2020.*
- It was resolved to authorise payments due as listed, with the addition of £240 to C A Stamp for June cemetery grass cutting; and in anticipation of invoices expected during the August recess, for work previously authorised at known cost: A R Toward (2 x £250 for June and July greens cutting), C A Stamp (£240 July cemetery grass cutting) and Lee Jopling (£510 for tree works).*
- It was resolved to note the quarterly monitoring report of expenditure against budget for 2020/21 Quarter 1.*

8. Parish Council grants

Paper 080720-4 had been circulated. Cllr Birkett declared an interest, as executor to the landlord of Play@Cotherstone, and took no part in the vote on this issue. Clerk reported that in addition to one application received by the deadline, one further application has now been received. Agreed that as there had been some confusion over the visibility of text in the covering email to organisations, the two applications should both be considered. The second application details: from Friends of Cotherstone School, requesting £1,000 towards a project costing £905.49 + some plants, to fund a sofa set, cooking trolley, cooker, utensils and plants, all to enhance the outdoor learning experience and support mental wellbeing; group have applied to Co-op Community Grant but will not hear the outcome for several months, and have approx. £4,200 in the bank (though no reserves information or annual accounts were available). Clerk clarified that the budget allocation of £700 for Contributions and Support in

2020/21 includes any anticipated contribution to Cotherstone Village Hall and the 'usual' Play@Cotherstone. Councillors were somewhat mystified about why Play@Cotherstone don't use their reserves to pay for the basket swing, claim the grant money for it, and then move forward to a project for buying bench seats and goalposts. Clerk advised that the current budget allocation of £700 represents 10% of the precept income. *It was resolved to make a donation, from general reserves, of £200 each to Play@Cotherstone and Friends of Cotherstone School and to write to all the other organisations inviting them to approach the Parish Council if they experience extreme financial difficulty in the future, especially as a result of Covid-19 impact on their fundraising.*

9. Correspondence

Paper 080720-5 had been circulated and there were no requests for further information.

- Item 30 — enquirer has been directed to North Yorkshire Record Office.
- (late item) — Cotherstone Fun Weekend request permission from the Parish Council to replace the two barrel planters on East Green, and place a plaque commemorating 'Fun Weekend 2020'. Agreed to approve this, and Cllr Watson suggested that, if suitable, two from the back of the Village Hall could be relocated to the green.
- (late item) — details of scheduled phased road closure and diversions for resurfacing of B6277, from 24 October. Agreed that Cllr Richard Bell be asked to ensure that every household be leafleted, not just those on the B6277, and that every effort be made to minimise parking reduction and disruption.

10. Planning matters

No planning matters to consider, however Clerk reported that an application has been made for Tree Conservation Area work at The Owls.

11. Review of parish council estate

Councillors had individually conducted 'walkabouts'.

Cemetery — Cllr Hunter reported that a wall repair at the cemetery is scheduled, Nixon memorials will continue to be monitored, Alderson headstone will be dealt with by the family and Wilkie headstone has a slight lean and will be monitored.

Allotments — Cllr Sabey reported that Klondike allotments, in general, are in a better condition than in recent years and suggested that at the scheduled September review of tenants and the waiting list, consideration be given to the potential to divide further, under-cultivated, allotments to meet demand. Cllr Watson and Cllr Birkett reported that The Close allotments are looking really good and that the earth slip at the bottom has not deteriorated further.

The Hagg — Cllr Watson suggested that the Hagg bottom should be cut once this year. Clerk to ask Gills to cut in September. Bankside to the river needs cutting again with hedgetrimmer — Clerk will ask Gills to cut in September. Pathways to seats at the Hagg need strimming. Clerk to ask Richard Toward to do this on his hourly rate. Clerk to report to Durham County Council that some of the step risers have rotten and need replacing. Agreed that Clerk chase request for new bins on East Green and a larger capacity bin at the Hagg (supporting Dr Robertson's request).

No issues were raised about the Hearse House.

12. Covid-19 risk assessments

Paper 080720-6 had been circulated.

Clerk advised councillors that it is a responsible thing for the Parish Council to do to demonstrate formally that risk matters have been considered. *It was resolved that the prepared risk assessments are posted on the Parish Council website, without revision, and updated laminated posters put on both allotment sites comprising the simple government advice and referring to the availability of the risk assessment on the website.*

13. 'Cotherstone' entrance sign

Cllr Hunter confirmed that the sign is identified as a heritage asset in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and that it is crumbling aluminium alloy causing the deterioration and many cats' eyes are missing. He suggested that urgent attention is not needed, but that a cast iron like-for-like sign be considered, without cats' eyes, perhaps with a grant to support this. Cllr Hunter will investigate further. Cllr Hunter expressed the belief that Durham County Council would not be able to automatically replace the sign with a modern blue/gold one if they received a request for this.

14. Cemetery matters

Cllr Hunter reported that the Capper headstone was being removed today for an additional inscription. The wall repair is scheduled. Cllr Sabey queried whether an estimate has been made recently on the anticipated capacity/years until an expansion would be needed. Cllr Hunter will provide an estimate in due course.

15. Allotment matters

Cllr Bendin passed on a query about the likelihood of a water supply being provided at Klondike allotments. The tenant should be referred to the response given to a similar request at the Community Forum in May 2019.

16. National Model Member Code of Conduct

Councillors had received the proposed new national Model of Conduct and agreed to not submit any comment during the consultation on it.

17. Cotherstone Community Celebration

No progress to report or actions to take.

18. Community-run shop/post office

Agreed that this item remain on future agenda until news confirmed about any sale of the existing shop premises. Cllr Bendin advised of communication from Plunkett Foundation stating that future support would be willingly offered if and when the project becomes active again. Cllr Bendin to speak with Methodist Chapel representative to ask about progress on the premises and intentions for it.

19. Reports from councillors

- Cllr Bendin reported that he has enrolled for the online Good Councillor training and will give feedback in future.
- Cllr Green asked for and received approval to relocate the 'no parking beyond this point' sign on West Green.
- Cllr Hunter reported a large pothole on Briscoe Lane, close to Glendale. Clerk will report online.
- Cllr Hunter reported that the final chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan has been completed and only GIS mapping is outstanding and preventing the second public consultation. In the interim, the draft Plan will be submitted to Durham County Council for a final healthcheck.
- Cllr Hunter reported a request from a resident of Birkett Close for the removal of a parking bay. Clerk advised that the resident should direct this request to Durham County Council Highways Department.

Meeting closed: 8.35pm

APPROVED