

**Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council**  
**Wednesday 18 December 2019, 7.00 pm**  
**Hett Village Hall**

**Parish Council Members Present:**

Councillor L Griffiths (Chair), Councillor K Summerson, Councillor R Burton, Councillor J Garner, Councillor P Kerrison, Councillor M Ord, Councillor A Watt and Councillor I Watt.

**84/19. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies of absence were received from County Councillors J Blakey, S Dunn and M McKeon.

**85/19. Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of interest were received from Councillor R Burton regarding agenda item 11 and Councillor Kerrison in relation to Croxdale Residents Association / defibrillator request.

**86/19. Policing:**

The next PACT Meeting is to take place on Wednesday 12 February 2020, 6pm, Croxdale Community Centre. The Clerk had shared Policing crime stats with 7 incidents being recorded for the period October 2019 within the Parish.

Councillor Garner reported there had been a recent burglary at Windsor Court, Croxdale, which resulted in theft of a vehicle.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**87/19. Public Participation**

No members of the public were in attendance.

**88/19. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 27 November 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**89/19. Matters Arising:**

**i. Hett War Memorial:**

Clerk confirmed that DCC has now confirmed the 6<sup>th</sup> War Dead for Hett being JJ Gibson. It was therefore agreed for the Clerk to proceed with costings for the new plaque in the first instance.

Regarding Croxdale's new memorial, the Parish has received confirmation from Croxdale Residents Association to work with the Parish Council on this project. Contact has also been made with Croxdale Community Association and is currently awaiting a response. It was agreed the Terms of Reference for a separate Working Group to be formed are to be agreed at a future meeting. The Clerk confirmed contact has also been made to Monk Hesleden Parish Council regarding their recent new war memorial for information purposes.

**Resolved: Clerk to progress accordingly.**

**ii. Hett Litter Pick:**

DCC confirmed December's litter pick is scheduled to take place on 18 December 2019. Councillors A and I Watt are to confirm if this has not been the case. The Clerk fed back comments from the last meeting and relayed to DCC; who apologised that the litter pick may have been missed.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**iii. Refuse Bins / Recycling – Hett:**

Councillor I Watt confirmed this matter is still ongoing with no further action been taken.

**Resolved: Clerk to progress with DCC.**

**iv. Planted Bulbs – Croxdale Tommies:**

County Councillor Blakey to confirm timescales on receiving the bulbs and confirmation who will be responsible for planting.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**v. Cycle Paths – A167 / B6288:**

County Councillor McKeon yet to provide an update.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**vi. Defibrillator – Croxdale:**

Clerk is to arrange for an electrician to check requirements at the proposed location before ordering the necessary equipment. Clerk clarified the associated ongoing costs to the Parish Council as follows – insurance – no additional costs. Replacement pads/batteries – costs minimal. Training – free of charge by St John's Ambulance Service. Electricity costs – these are unknown, however research into other costings regarding defibrillators, was estimated as £20 per year (this element would be met from the owner of the corner shop).

**Resolved: Clerk to arrange accordingly.**

**vii. Croxdale Beck:**

County Councillor McKeon yet to provide an update. Councillor Griffiths reported a DCC vehicle was on site recently.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**viii. Damaged Signage – Hett:**

County Councillor McKeon yet to provide an update.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**ix. Additional Cemetery Maintenance Works:**

The additional works had been carried out on 17 December 2019 at Croxdale and Hett Cemeteries. Clerk to arrange inspection accordingly.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**x. Hett Fly-Tipping:**

Councillor I Watt reported the second fly-tip has still not being removed which occurred a meter off the road side. There was other recent reports of fly tipping on Gypsy Lane (tyres) however these items have since been removed.

**Resolved: Clerk to chase progress with DCC.**

**xi. Grass Cutting – West Street, Hett:**

Clerk reported this to DCC on 08 November 2019 and is currently awaiting a response.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xii. Lock and Keys – Sports Field, Croxdale:**

Councillor Summerson has now arranged for the new lock and keys at the sports field. Keys have been distributed accordingly to those who require access.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xiii. Citroen Garage – Advertising on A167:**

This has been now resolved, no further action required.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xiv. Street Lighting – Croxdale:**

Clerk reported to DCC and confirmed on 1 December 2019 that this will be programmed for action.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xv. Salt Bins – Croxdale:**

Clerk has requested for the salt bins to be replenished in Croxdale following a request from Councillor Summerson and is currently awaiting a response from DCC.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xvi. Road Re-surfacing – Hett:**

Clerk reported the above to DCC to which it was confirmed on 2 December 2019 that a road sweeper will inspect the area; and has now been resolved.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xvii. Youth Club:**

Clerk had approached Croxdale Community Association with regard to hosting Croxdale's youth club and confirmed their position has not changed following our previous request on this matter. The Church Hall at Sunderland Bridge is interested in hosting the youth club; therefore, a risk assessment is to be undertaken in the first instance which has been arranged for 20 December 2019. Following this, and subject to the risk assessment being satisfactory, Clerk is to write to all parents/guardians notifying the change of venue from January – March 2020. Members are to agree at January's meeting when determining the Precept for 2020/21 if the youth club is to continue for a further year.

On a separate matter regarding the youth club, the Clerk informed Members of an incident in the bar area following the last session on 12 December 2019 involving two children. The WMC has approached the Parish Council for reimbursement following the loss of funds. Clerk had contacted Spennymoor Youth & Community Association regarding the incident in the first instance who has offered a monetary contribution on this occasion. It was agreed for the Clerk to contact the parents concerned on their views and for them to consider if they would also offer a contribution towards the loss of beer funds to the WMC. The letter

is to also include a reminder of the youth club's rules and regulations regarding conduct and behaviour for youth club members.

**Resolved: Clerk to write to all parents/guardians regarding the change of venue from January 2020 onwards (subject to the outcome of the risk assessment) and write to the two parents concerned regarding the incident separately.**

**90/19. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:**

**(i) Royal Garden Party Invitation - 2020:**

Clerk gave details of next year's royal garden party invitation to which 4 places (including partners) are available.

**Resolved: For Members' Information and to contact the Clerk if of interest.**

**91/19. Parish Councillor Vacancy:**

Clerk had reported the Sunderland Bridge Ward vacancy to DCC on 27 November 2019, however due to Purdah, the Parish Council has not yet received the official notice to be displayed.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to chase progress due to Purdah now being over.**

**92/19. Financial Matters:**

**(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2019 – 30 November 2019:**

A financial update prepared by the Clerk was circulated to Members which included a detailed schedule of receipts and payments for the financial year to date and bank reconciliation to 30 November 2019. The current net bank balances totalled £20,722.66.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**93/19: Parish Clerk Job Role:**

The Chairman presented a business case for Members approval to extend the Parish Clerk's hours from the current 8 hours to 11 hours per week. The report detailed justification due to the Parish Council being becoming more involved in community projects/activities. The additional increase in the wage bill for the Parish Council would be approximately £125 per month (not including Tax/NI). Regarding the CILCA qualification, this is to be reviewed next year when costings have been confirmed for 2020.

**Resolved: Members approved the increase of hours in line with the Council's work load, effective from January 2020.**

**94/19: Cemetery:**

**(a) Cemetery Maintenance Contract Renewal:**

Following feedback from the cemetery maintenance contractor on the proposed amendments to the cemetery maintenance scheme of works, a site visit at Croxdale Cemetery took place on Sunday 8 December 2019 with the contractor, Parish Clerk, Councillors Griffiths and Summerson (Councillor Ord later joined the visit), to determine if additional maintenance is required on certain areas in order to get the cemetery in a state where it can be maintained to the standard required or an adjustment to the contractual

monthly fee. Following inspection of the grounds, a number of items were identified as areas of additional works which came to a total cost of £1,380.00 (Inc. VAT). Members agreed for these works to be carried out in full rather than in stages over the next number of months.

The final scheme of works for cemetery maintenance was subsequently agreed; the contract period is now up to December 2020.

A number of other matters were raised as part of the site meeting, which were in relation to:

- **Grass Cutting Contract – 2020/21** – renewal from DCC to be issued around February/March 2020 for the new contract for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. The Parish Council is to consider if it would be more cost effective for the current contractor to undertake the grass cutting contract as well as the cemetery maintenance at Croxdale and Hett Cemeteries. It was agreed a tender exercise is to be undertaken in relation to this contract.
- **Cemetery Hut / Building (within the grounds of Croxdale Cemetery)** – this building is in need of restoration (repairs to roof/guttering/pointing/painting etc). The upkeep of this building would improve the appearance of the cemetery as a whole, it is the first building you see when entering the cemetery grounds. It is believed the building used to be a mortuary (approx. 65 years ago). Before a budget in 2020/21 is committed to for this project, the Clerk is to confirm that the Parish Council is the registered owner and has full responsibility for its up keep.
- **Health & Safety Tree Report** – Clerk to seek initial advice from DCC on this matter regarding the health and safety of a number of trees within the grounds of Croxdale cemetery.

**Resolved: Clerk to arrange contract signing accordingly, confirm additional cemetery works with the contractor, plan for the tendering exercise to be carried out for 2020/21 grass cutting arrangements, check with the Land Registry for ownership and contact DCC regarding the health and safety requirements for Croxdale cemetery in relation to trees.**

#### **(b) Cemetery Policy:**

Whilst at Croxdale cemetery on 8 December 2019, in relation to the above works, the number of graves with kerb edging/surrounds were inspected. Following discussion, it was agreed kerb edging would be allowed on graves at both cemeteries, however the kerb edging must be a standardised and consistent approach (to be agreed). An application of the proposed kerb edging/surround must be submitted to the Parish Clerk (similar to a headstone request) for Members' approval, with a detailed description/picture of the proposed installation, before the works can be carried out. It was also suggested the Parish Council arranges for an approved contractor list of monumental masons to allow them to carry out works within our cemeteries that is NAMM approved (National Association of Memorial Masons). The Cemetery Policy will therefore be required to be amended further.

**Resolved: Clerk to progress accordingly and also contact the family concerned regarding their kerb edging and confirm it is still under review until the full specification has been agreed on kerb edging.**

**95/19: Planning Issues:**

The Clerk reported the Parish Council received a request via DCC in relation to a piece of land at the former Thinford Inn, which the adjacent business owner wants to purchase to install a sub-station. Following discussion, Members felt there was little information provided to comment in detail. Full details/plans of the proposed sub-station may have been useful. Councillor Ord had concerns over the number of mature trees that is currently in situ at the location.

**Resolved: Clerk to feedback comments to DCC accordingly.**

**96/19. County Councillor Reports:**

There were no County Councillors in attendance at the meeting.

**Resolved: For Member's Information.**

**97/19. AOB:****Bus Stop Repairs - Croxdale:**

Councillor Garner reported the bus stop at Foster Terrace requires attention following vandalism.

**Resolved: Clerk to report to DCC accordingly.**

**Refuse & Recycling - Croxdale:**

Councillor Garner reported that on numerous occasions (with the most recent occasion being on 12 December 2019) that a number of resident's bins were not emptied at Rogerson Terrace due to the refuse vehicle not been able to access the back street due to a parked vehicle.

**Resolved: Clerk to feedback to DCC accordingly.**

**Road Plainings - Hett:**

Councillor Griffiths requested for road plainings to be delivered in Hett to assist with the number of pot holes. As this is not a long-term solution, Councillors A and I Watt requested if the Parish Council could assist with the number of pot holes on unadopted roads on a one-off basis. It was agreed to determine the priority areas in Hett and Croxdale in the lighter nights and agree which pot hole requires the most attention first.

**Resolved: Clerk to request road plainings from DCC and note request above for further discussion at a future meeting.**

**98/19. Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 29 January 2020 at 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.