

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 27 June 2018, 7.00 pm
Croxdale Community Centre

Parish Council Members Present:

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

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey, S Dunn and M McKeon.

17/18. Apologies for Absence:

There were no apologies of absence.

18/18. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

19/18. To Appoint a Vice-Chairman

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice Chair of the Parish Council. Councillor Summerson was nominated and seconded, however, due to personal reasons, Councillor Summerson declined as Vice-Chairman. Councillor Garner agreed to take this role on for a further year and was duly nominated and seconded accordingly.

Resolved: Councillor J Garner is elected as Vice-Chair of Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year.

20/18. Policing:

New PCSO Officer is now in place: Shaun Banks but was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The next PACT meeting is scheduled to take place on Friday 10 August 2018, 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre. Meetings will now be every other month with the last meeting taking place on 7 June 2018.

Clerk gave an update with regard to the ongoing complaint from a resident with Croxdale Group. Clerk had spoken to the complainant after the last meeting and confirmed the PCSO Officer had been in contact with the Croxdale Group and asked for the haulage company not to obstruct the bus lane. No further correspondence has been received to date.

There have been 2 burglaries at Hett in May and June. On both occasions there was no sign of forced entry. Investigations are still ongoing; Police are advising residents to keep their doors locked at all times even when in the house.

The Community Speed Watch took place on Tuesday 29 May 2018 at Front Street East, Croxdale. This was initially arranged for Thursday 24 May 2018 but could not take place due to the devices not working. Councillors Ord and Burton both attended. The speed watch took place 20-30 minutes on each side of the road and surprisingly there was not many speeding vehicles. Roads were quite quiet, perhaps as a result of half term. Councillor Burton asked if there had been an update from the new PCSO Officer on any further community speed watch taken place? Clerk to check progress accordingly.

Councillor Kerrison raised concerns over unmarked police cars driving through Croxdale at high speeds, which are believed to be for Police driver training and are usually taking place on Thursdays. Clerk to highlight the Parish Council's concerns with the Police and query whether the driver training can take place in another area/village.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to action accordingly with PCSO Officer.

21/18. Public Participation

Linda Burton was in attendance. Overhanging of trees on an allotment plot at the Poultry Centre was discussed, which obstructs Mrs Burton's green house. It was agreed a third and final letter be issued to the allotment holder with a specific timescale to complete the works.

Mrs Burton also informed the Parish Council of a request for permission to erect a garage. Councillor Griffiths requested for this to be made in writing which can then be considered at a future meeting.

Resolved: Clerk to write to allotment holder further.

22/18. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 May 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

23/18. Matters Arising

i. Fencing at Hett Lane:

Clerk has now followed this up with Salvin on 25 April and 16 May 2018, however no response has been forthcoming.

Resolved: For Members' information.

ii. Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:

Clerk confirmed rent monies for 2018/19 has now been received.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. Costa Coffee Sign at Thinford:

County Councillor McKeon provided an update to Members on 18 May 2018. Once Phase 2 of this development comes forward, and there is increased traffic flow within the site, the design of the road layout should mean that rat-runners are forced to wait at the "Give Way" junctions. No additional traffic calming measures such as speed humps were proposed within the layout, nor were any requested. Dates for Phase 2 of the development is yet to be confirmed.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Sunderland Bridge Flower Tubs:

County Councillor Blakey confirmed the flower tubs at Sunderland Bridge have now been removed.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

v. Street Signs, Hett:

Councillor Griffiths reported the new street signs at Hett have now being installed.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

vi. Dog Fouling Sunderland Bridge:

Councillor Griffiths is currently liaising with County Councillor McKeon and the County Council on the location of a multi-purpose bin at Sunderland Bridge, following an increase of dog fouling. This is currently now on hold to enable the location of the new bin to be discussed with residents.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

vii. Traffic Issues – Sunderland Bridge / Croxdale / Hett:

Clerk has chased progress with David Battensby of Highways. County Councillor Dunn and McKeon informed Members, Michelle Shearer is now the Parish Council's contact for highways issues.

In addition, Councillor Griffiths reported the road markings at the junction of Hett Lane / Leaman's Lane in front of the Village Hall have worn away and are not visible and secondly, a resident at Grove Court has suggested 30MPH and white chevrons for the roads entering the villages. Clerk has raised these requests also with Highways.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to provide update to new Highways Officer on where we are with traffic issues in Hett, Croxdale and Sunderland Bridge.

viii. Road Plainings:

These were delivered to Hett 5 June and 6 June 2018.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ix. Tarmac Quantity for Hett:

Due to no resource being available to transport the tarmac, it was agreed not to pursue the use of free tarmac for Hett / Croxdale unadopted roads. As previously discussed, it was agreed to contact Salvin (Croxdale Estate) regarding the responsibility of the maintenance of roads at Front Street East, Croxdale.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to contact Croxdale Estate accordingly.

x. Re-Surfacing – Hett:

Hett Councillors had commented that the road south of South Green is more 'untidy' than before the recent resurfacing works. County Councillor McKeon agreed to follow this up with DCC.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon to action.

xi. Sunderland Bridge Village Green:

DCC confirmed on 26 June 2018 that they will pick up the grass cutting going forward at Sunderland Bridge. Clerk has informed residents accordingly.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xii. Windsor Court Grass Cutting:

This has been reported to DCC and currently awaiting a response via the 'do it online' facility.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xiii. Hett Village Greens:

Discussions are currently ongoing with the farmer and Mrs Hutton on the types of seed to purchase. The green is to be cut early August, rolled and bailed which will be carried out by the farmer.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xiv. Parish Council Meetings:

Clerk revised the meeting schedule for the remainder of 2018/19, to meet on the 4th Wednesday of every month (apart from December's).

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xv. Defibrillator Funding:

This has now been installed at Croxdale Community Centre.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

24/18. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. GDPR:

Clerk confirmed the Parish Council's website has now being updated following GDPR regulations. A privacy notice has also been included which is displayed on the website and noticeboards. All Councillors are to complete a consent form (as well as the Clerk) to obtain approval for the Parish to hold their personal data. Clerk circulated a revised policy on data protection which requires approving. The Parish is now registered as a 'Data Controller' with the ICO which has a fee of £40.00 PA. Clerk is to confirm set up arrangements for Councillors to have a Parish email account instead of using their personal account for Parish business.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Members approved the revised Data Protection Policy. Clerk to confirm set up arrangements for Councillors email accounts.

ii. Hett – Village Green – Equestrian Events:

Clerk gave details of an enquiry received (for Members information), which was received via the Parish Council's website. Discussions have been ongoing; with the last correspondence sent to the resident on 17 June 2018. No further correspondence has been received to date.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. Request for Donation – Mayor's Appeal 2018/19 – Royal British Legion:

Clerk informed Members of a request for financial assistance from the Mayor of Durham in aid of the Royal British Legion. The Parish does support the RBL and already gives a donation in aid of the annual poppy appeal, therefore a further donation was not agreed.

Resolved: Members agreed not to make a donation on this occasion.

iv. County Durham Plan Consultation:

Clerk circulated details of the consultation that is currently ongoing regarding the County Durham Plan - deadline for comments / feedback is 3 August 2018. The County Durham Plan sets out a vision for housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Responses can be made as a Parish, as individual Councillors or members of the public.

25/18. Financial Matters:

(i) Internal Audit Report – 2017/18:

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's Internal Auditor, Mr G Fletcher, has examined the Council's 2017/18 accounts and records and certified the annual internal audit section of the Council's Annual Return accordingly. A copy of the auditor's report and recommendations was circulated to Members for information which confirmed the Parish Council's internal controls are satisfactory for the size of the Council, with some small improvements required as follows:

- a) That all expenditure forms are initialled by the 2 Councillors signing cheques or confirming BACS payments, to verify payments.
- b) That the Chair initials the bank statement to confirm the bank reconciliation.

Resolved: Clerk to ensure these are actioned for 2018/19 financial year.

(ii) Parish Council's 2017/18 Annual Return:

The Clerk had read to Members sections of the Council's Annual Governance Statement with respect to accounting statements 1-9 and was agreed by Members as prepared by the Clerk.

The Parish Council's Accounting Statements 2017/18 was approved and duly signed by the Chairman and Parish Clerk.

Resolved: The Parish Council's Annual Return be duly signed and agreed.

(iii) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 31 May 2018:

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 31 May 2018. The current net bank balances totalled £16,251.13.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400375 – Phase Electrical - £80.00
Cheque Number – 400376 – Internal Auditor Fee – £100.00

Resolved: For Members' Information.

26/18. Cemetery:

(i) Cemetery Gates – Hett:

It was noted the cemetery gates at Hett are in need of repair and required painting also. Croxdale cemetery gates are also to be inspected.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for quotations of works.

(ii) Grass Cutting / Maintenance:

Discussion took place on DCCs grass cutting contract for 2018/19. Clerk confirmed DCC work towards a 10-day cycle (weather permitting) and therefore will not be issuing a precise numbers or cost per cut, as previously done so. The cost on the contract will be the price charged for the season. It was agreed to continue using DCC for grass cutting services for 2018/19. With regard to cemetery maintenance, it was agreed the scheme of works is to be reviewed to ensure the Parish is receiving value for money etc. Ad-hoc pieces of work, for example, painting of cemetery gates, is to be included as an annual duty, and should be reflected in the monthly charge.

Resolved: Clerk to inform DCC of confirmation for grass cutting services and arrange for scheme of works for cemetery maintenance for agreement at the next meeting.

(iii) Headstone Inspections:

A query was received via Councillor Griffiths at Hett Cemetery regarding ground shift and fallen headstones. Clerk confirmed she had contacted DCC to determine if the Parish has had headstone inspections carried out in the past, to which DCC confirmed they have not carried out any routine inspections, however, Councillor I Watt confirmed this was not the case. It was agreed a quote be obtained for headstone inspection for both cemeteries.

Councillor Ord reported damage to graves in Croxdale cemetery. Whilst we are not certain how the damage has occurred, it was agreed the Clerk would ask the grass cutters to take more care in future when cutting in between graves.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to obtain quotation for headstone testing.

27/18. Planning Issues:

County Councillor Dunn made reference to the planning application 'Integra 61' that was discussed previously, which will have an impact on traffic at Hett and also public transport. Clerk agreed to re-circulate details of the application and circulate details on Social Media to make residents aware. It was noted, Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council were supportive of the application. County Councillor Blakey agreed to bring the plans to the next meeting.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to re-circulate details and County Councillor Blakey to bring further details to the next meeting.

28/18. County Councillor Reports

Updates were received throughout the meeting on the ongoing issues as outlined above.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

29/18. AOB:

Footpath at Hett:

Councillor A Watt reported the footpath at Number 1, The Green, is prominent to flooding/large puddles. This was previously reported to DCC and confirmed the water is coming from private land.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

Fly-Tipping Signage:

Councillor I Watt requested if signs 'you've been watched' could be put in place at the entrance to Gypsy Lane from Hett Lane as a deterrent for fly-tipping incidents.

Resolved: County Councillor Blakey agreed to look into this.

Playground – Croxdale:

Nettles are overgrown on the wooden blocks at Croxdale play area, preventing them from being used.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon agreed to look into this.

Salvin Street Paths:

Councillor Kerrison reported the path from Salvin Street (Salvin Allotments) to Gerard's Gill are overgrown.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon agreed to look into this.

Youth Provision:

County Councillors are working with the AAP for youth activities at Croxdale and a play area for Hett. This is to be discussed further at the next AAP meeting on 12 July 2018. Consultation to take place with residents with different options to choose from.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

Foundation of Light:

County Councillor McKeon gave details of football activity sessions to take place during the summer holidays at Croxdale, if this was of interest? The cricket field was suggested as a possible location. Members agreed to the proposal and agreed a contribution of £200.00 to go towards the costs.

Resolved: For Members' Information. County Councillor McKeon to arrange.

30/18. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 25 July 2018 at 7.00 pm, Hett Village Hall.