

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 11 April 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 and Councillor I Watt.

Also Present:

County Councillor J Blakey and M McKeon.

165/17. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from Councillors A Watt and W Watt and County Councillor S Dunn.

166/17. Declarations of Interest:

Councillor R Burton declared an interest in agenda item 07 (Parish Clerk's Update / Correspondence associated with Special Branch Tree Services).

167/17. Policing:

The Clerk gave an update on the policing issue and subsequently contacted Croxdale Group (Citroen/Subaru/Mitsubishi) regarding the issue of the garages using and obstructing the bus lane / offloading vehicles, however no response has been received as of yet. Clerk spoke to the resident concerned on 09 April 2018 to keep them up to date on progress and queried if the problems were still the same, to which the response was yes.

County Councillor Blakey informed Members of an incident regarding theft at Wearside, Croxdale, which is to be raised at the next PACT meeting. The next PACT meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 12 April 2018, 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.

Resolved: If no response was forthcoming from Croxdale Group, Clerk to escalate complaint to PCSO Officer accordingly.

168/17. Public Participation

Michael Graveling was in attendance.

169/17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 March 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

170/17. Matters Arising

i. Fencing at Hett Lane:

Clerk had followed this up with Salvin on 05 April 2018 and a response was received from DCC confirming a risk assessment was carried out and found no reason to erect any signage in the interest of public safety. The issue of the fencing repairs was still outstanding.

Resolved: For Members' information. Clerk to query progress regarding the assessment of the actual fencing with Salvin.

ii. Croxdale Beck:

Councillor Ord raised the works at Croxdale Beck and Nicky Nack Road Bridge were still incomplete.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon to action.

iii. Litter Pick at Leeman's Lane:

The litter pick at Leeman's Lane was still outstanding. There was initial confusion over the location of Leeman's Lane, (which had been litter picked in the past), however DCC confirmed it would be carried out on 12 April 2018.

The monthly litter pick at Hett Lane had not yet been carried out – County Councillor Blakey agreed to follow this up with DCC.

Resolved: County Councillor Blakey to action.

iv. Litter - KFC/McDonald's/Starbucks:

Clerk circulated a response received from the Duty Manager of McDonalds following letter issued to the above fast-food chains.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to acknowledge response.

v. Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:

Clerk informed Members the rent monies were still outstanding. A request was received from the owner of the Croxdale Inn for the fee to remain at £500.00, as opposed to £750.00. The Clerk made reference to the rental agreement (point 4), which clearly states the fee would increase for 2018/19 onwards, which was duly signed by all parties in December 2016. Clerk to relay this information to the owner accordingly.

Resolved: Clerk to contact the owner of the Croxdale Inn accordingly.

vi. Sunderland Bridge – Wooden Tubs:

County Councillor Blakey informed Members of the residents of Sunderland Bridge intention to remove a number of wooden tubs which are to be replaced with grass in due course.

Resolved: For Members' Information

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

Clerk confirmed there is no update from David Battensby, DCC, as of yet following attendance at February's Parish Meeting. The following issues were discussed:

Clerk had contacted DCC regarding the deeds of the streets in question (Foster Terrace / Cross Street / Front Street East) to check whether these are publicly maintainable highways. A response with location maps was received but was unclear as to who was responsible – the landowner / frontager to maintain.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to contact Land Registry to try and ascertain ownership.

Johnson Terrace, Croxdale: Clerk informed Members a response was received from DCC on 15 March 2018, whereby Refuse & Recycling are dealing with this request and awaiting confirmation that the bins can be collected from the point that residents are requesting and will be sending letters out to residents to advise when this will commence.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

Tarmac: discussion took place on the use of tarmac and road plainings for Croxdale. There were initial concerns from Members, that if not used correctly, the works carried out could not be time efficient. Tarmac (if quantity can be sought from Quarry) or road plainings from DCC, is to be sourced for Hett Roads at West Street / South Street junctions. County Councillor McKeon to raise concerns with County Councillor Dunn.

Resolved: County Councillors McKeon to action.

Thinford: Councillor Ord raised the issue of a double sign at Costa Coffee at Thinford roundabout (where 2 lanes are merged into 1 when turning right), may cause confusion and lead to an accident. County Councillors McKeon and Blakey agreed to look into this.

Resolved: County Councillors McKeon and Blakey to action.

viii. Dog Waste - Croxdale:

Clerk reported to DCC accordingly. Councillor Ord suggested a notice to be placed on the lamp post adjacent to the garage, to remind members of the public to pick up after their dog.

Resolved: Clerk to action accordingly.

ix. Croxdale Cemetery:

Clerk spoke to Cemetery Attendant regarding the pile of excess slate / stone following Margaret Etherington's burial and will look to remove in due course.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

x. Sunderland Bridge Village Green:

Clerk has followed this up with the resident concerned regarding grass cutting arrangements and currently awaiting a response.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xi. Hett Village Greens:

Clerk informed Members that a site visit with Clerk/Councillor Griffiths/Stuart Priestly (DCC)/ Anne Hutton has been arranged for Friday 13 April 2018 to discuss proposals for the two village greens at Hett. This site visit was initially delayed due to Mrs Hutton's holiday commitments.

The Clerk queried with DCC what exactly the Parish is responsible for in terms of grass cutting to which confirmation was received that our contract covers both Croxdale and Hett cemetery only.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xii. Allotment – Poultry Centre:

Councillor Ord raised there were a number of over-hanging trees contained with an allotment plot at the Poultry Centre. It was noted, the allotment holder in question was written to in the past regarding the up keep of the garden.

Resolved: Clerk to write a further letter to the allotment holder accordingly.

xiii. Defibrillator Funding:

Clerk informed Members the Defibrillator and Cabinet have been purchased for Croxdale Community Centre. Installation costs are approximately £100.00 which will be arranged when both items have been delivered.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xiv. Farmer – Hett:

Councillor Griffiths confirmed a sign had been erected on the farmers land to try and keep members of the public to the public path as opposed to walking on the crops.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

171/17. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. GDPR:

Training session for Parish Clerks is to be held on 26 April 2018 regarding GDPR. Clerk to feedback in due course.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. Request for Land – Special Branch Tree Services:

Clerk informed Members of a request received from the above-named company who is looking for land to rent within Croxdale to store firewood and keep a horse for his daughter. As there were no suitable areas of land available at the present time, it was suggested for their details to be added to the waiting list for a small holding.

Councillor Kerrison suggested to write to specific allotment holders who own small holdings to see if they still wish to rent a garden.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Special Branch Tree Service and write to allotment holders accordingly.

172/17. Financial Matters:

iii. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018:

A financial update prepared by the Clerk was circulated to Members which included a detailed schedule of receipts and payments for the year end and bank reconciliation to 31 March 2018. The current net bank balances totalled £3,535.85.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400363 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk's Wages - £258.20

Cheque Number – 400364 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.60

Cheque Number – 400365 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £37.99

Cheque Number – 400366 – JW Smith – Cemetery Maintenance (February) - £160.00

Cheque Number – 400367 – JW Smith – Cemetery Maintenance (March) - £160.00

Cheque Number – 400368 - D Dove – Website Amendments - £288.00

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Request for Financial Donation – Durham County Council:

Clerk reported the Parish has received a donation request from Durham County Council with regard to 2018 Beautiful Durham Competition Sponsorship. It was noted, the Parish has given previous donations over the years, however, on this occasion, a donation was not approved.

Resolved: Clerk to respond to DCC accordingly.

v. Appointment of Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2018:

It was agreed that Mr G Bestford be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year 2017/18 with the following terms of reference:

- To ensure that the Council's annual accounts are prepared in accordance with proper practices as defined in the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide 2014' and as revised by the 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners Guide 2016';
- To ensure that the Council has a sound system of internal controls which are effectively applied in the exercise of its functions and to so certify the Annual Internal Audit report section of the Council's Annual Return;
- To ensure that the Council has carried out a risk assessment and put adequate procedures in place to manage risks including adequate insurance covers;
- To ensure the Council has adequate measures in place to prevent and detect fraud;
- To ensure that the Council is acting lawfully and has provided electors with the opportunity to exercise their rights in accordance with the Accounting and Audit Regulations;
- To ensure that the Council has acted upon all matters raised in internal and external audit reports.

Resolved: Mr G Bestford be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year 2017/18.

vi. 2017/18 Annual Return and Audit Requirements:

The Clerk notified Members regarding a training session that took place for Clerks on 28 March 2018, with Mazars, External Auditor. As the Parishes annual turnover is less than £25,000, the Parish Council does not require a full external audit under the new guidelines. However, the Parish can request a full audit if required, subject to a fee. The Parish is still required to carry out an internal audit, completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and to publicise correct accounting information at the end of the process for Parishioners to view on our website. The deadline for completion of the AGAR is 6 July 2018.

Resolved: For Members' Information. The Parish Council agreed for a full external audit not to be carried out for 2017/18.

173/17. Revised Allotment Holder Regulations – 01 April 2019

The Clerk circulated the revised allotment regulations following feedback from allotment holders which will be implemented 1 April 2019. In terms of next steps, a copy will be sent to allotment holders in December / January when rent monies are due, requesting all allotment holders to sign the revised tenancy agreement, effective from April 2019.

Resolved: For Members' information.

174/17. Planning Issues:

No planning matters was discussed.

175/17. County Councillor Reports

County Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to: ongoing neighbourhood budget application for Croxdale Community Association with regard to their window replacement scheme. Articles going back to June 1913 were found in relation to Suffragettes in Croxdale – articles to be shared with members of the public via website / social media. Salt bin project – locations of additional salt bins to be identified at Croxdale, the location for Hett was confirmed previously at Hett Mill level crossing.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

176/17. AOB:

(i) Dog Fouling – Sunderland Bridge:

Councillor Griffiths reported a resident from Sunderland Bridge has concerns over dog fouling at the junction of the public right of way (adjacent to 6 Sunderland Bridge) and Hett Lane. The provision of a dog waste bin going up to the Rectory may help with this issue.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon to report to DCC accordingly.

(ii) Facilities for Older Children:

Councillor Garner commented that there are no facilities within the Parish for older children (age range: 8-10 year olds). A skate park was made reference to if a suitable location was identified within the Parish with funding been made available via the AAP on providing better provision for youth, however, Councillor Summerson was interested to see if there were any correlation of increased ASB issues since the skate park at Spennymoor was opened.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Spennymoor TC accordingly.

(iii) M Ord Allotment – Shared Tenancy:

Councillor Ord requested if his daughter, Helen Ord, could be added as a shared tenancy for three allotment plots at Front Street East, Croxdale.

Resolved: Clerk to note for allotment records.

177/17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 09 May 2018 at 7.00 pm, Hett Village Hall.