

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 29 January 2020, 7.00 pm
Croxdale Community Centre

Parish Council Members Present:

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

99/19. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from Councillor A Watt.

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey, S Dunn and M McKeon.

100/19. Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of interest were received from Councillor Kerrison in relation to Croxdale Residents Association / defibrillator request and Councillor Griffiths in relation to the request from Hett Village Hall Association.

Councillors Garner, Ord and Summerson declared an interest in item 09 (Fees & Charges review in relation to Allotments & Garages). However, their dispensation previously granted authorised Members to speak and vote in connection with the Council's allotments and garages.

101/19. 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: 7 incidents being recorded for the period November 2019 and 8 for December 2019 within the Parish.

A new PCSO Officer has been confirmed for the Parish with immediate effect – Ashley Boardman. A response was received on 29 January 2020 in relation to the use of smart water and confirmed the Police do not offer this facility and suggested for the Parish Council to look at 'Allotment Watch' which could act as a deterrent to hopefully reduce breaks-ins.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

102/19. Public Participation

Two members of the public were in attendance. One resident raised the ongoing issues of public transport for children travelling to New College Durham within the Parish via the X20/X21. Arriva has recently announced they are putting extra services on, as well as Go North East services.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon agreed to progress on behalf of the resident.

103/19. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 18 December 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

104/19. Matters Arising:

i. **Hett War Memorial:**

A quote from Cleveland Monumental on the replacement plaque at Hett is yet to be received.

Regarding Croxdale's new memorial, the Terms of Reference for a new working group to be formed has been drafted for agreement at the next meeting. No response has been received to date from Croxdale Community Association to work with the Parish Council on this project. Clerk informed Members of possible funding streams available from Believe Housing in the sum of £500 and £1,000 and is to progress accordingly.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. **Hett Litter Pick:**

DCC confirmed January's litter pick was scheduled to take place on 29 January 2020; Councillor I Watt confirmed this was carried out.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. **Hett Fly-Tipping:**

The fly-tip was removed in December 2019, which was reported previously, however further fly-tipping had occurred on Hett Lane with the items being removed on 29 January 2020.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

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

A response was received from DCC on 20 December 2019 regarding this issue and confirmed there would be no further action. However, the contaminated bin had still not being removed and one household were still storing their bins on the public footpath. All other residents remove them after they are emptied and store them at the rear of the property.

Resolved: County Councillor Blakey agreed to progress this further on the Parish Council's behalf.

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

County Councillor Blakey to confirm timescales and delivery for planting of the bulbs in due course.

Resolved: County Councillor Blakey to confirm timescales.

vi. **Defibrillator – Croxdale:**

Clerk confirmed an electrician visited the corner shop on 15 January 2020 and quoted £85 for the installation. However, Councillor Kerrison reported the shop owners were unhappy following the visit and complained the company came across rude. Councillor Kerrison suggested a letter of apology be sent to the shop owners and for alternative quotations be sourced. On behalf of Croxdale Residents Association, Councillor Kerrison provided a cheque in the sum of £1,757.80 to purchase the necessary equipment.

Resolved: Clerk to draft letter of apology and arrange for further quotations for the installation.

vii. **Additional Cemetery Maintenance Works:**

The additional works at Croxdale cemetery is to be carried out by the Cemetery Maintenance contractor w/c 20 January 2020. Clerk to arrange inspection accordingly.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

viii. Cemetery Pointing:

Pointing works to Croxdale cemetery are also being carried out w/c 20 January 2020. Clerk has now contacted the appointed contractor to arrange for the cemetery gates painting before year-end, if possible. A quotation has now been received for Hett cemetery pointing works and was subsequently agreed to source alternative quotes for comparison purposes, with the view for the works to be carried out in the new financial year.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to source further pointing quotations.

ix. Additional Cemetery Bin:

Clerk had contacted DCC in the first instance to obtain an additional waste bin for Croxdale cemetery, however, they will not provide a waste bin without a contract in place for commercial waste. A bin is therefore to be sourced online, however the delivery address of Croxdale cemetery has caused issues due to not being a fixed postal address, therefore, it was agreed to approach the Cemetery Maintenance contractor to ascertain if the bin could be delivered to their business address.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for additional cemetery waste bin accordingly.

x. Cemetery Hut Building / Ownership:

The Clerk shared with Members an initial inspection report received by the contractor who carried out the pointing works at Croxdale cemetery, for information purposes as a guideline of the potential restoration works and indication of costs required regarding the cemetery building at Croxdale cemetery. However, it was agreed to look at this further once the position is known regarding ownership/responsibility.

The Church Warden of St Bartholomew's Church has offered their research services to the Parish Council to ascertain responsibility of the cemetery building. It was also suggested to search within the archives at Durham Records Office. Following this initial research, the Parish Council could claim ownership of land known as adverse possession.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xi. Cemetery H&S Tree Inspections:

Clerk had contacted DCC on 9 December 2019, for initial advice on health and safety tree inspections and is currently awaiting a response. However, the Parish Council has since received contact from a company offering their arboriculture services, who also specialise in site inspections and can provide reports on the health and condition of our trees within the cemetery grounds. However, it was agreed to progress the advice from DCC in the first instance.

Resolved: Clerk to progress with DCC accordingly.

xii. Grass Cutting – West Street, Hett:

A response was received from DCC on 22 January 2020, stating the area is to be cut back from the footpath in question during grass cutting season. The area is very wet and cutting out of season could cause damage.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xiii. Citroen Garage – Advertising on A167:

The above issue has come to the Parish Council's attention further, and was agreed for the Parish Council to contact the car garage direct as on occasions the advertised car(s) were obstructing the entrance to the cemetery gates.

Resolved: Clerk to action accordingly.

xiv. 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.

xv. Youth Club:

Clerk confirmed the risk assessment for the Church Hall took place on 20 December 2019, however, the Parish Council was informed early in the New Year, that the Church has now secured a long-term tenant and is therefore unable to accommodate the youth club. The Parish Council is therefore now looking at options for new venues which includes Hett Village Hall (subject to availability and agreement by the Committee). A suggestion was also received to arrange transport for the children to and from Croxdale to St David's Hall, Tudhoe, which currently has sessions on Monday evenings. However, this option was not in favour as the purpose of forming the youth club was to establish youth provision within the Parish. In the meantime, it was agreed letters be issued to the parents/guardians informing the sessions are no longer going ahead until further notice. With regard to the AAP funding received, DCC is to confirm if the Parish Council can utilise the funds for other related youth provision activities, such as arranged days out in the school holidays. Reference to a mobile youth bus was also considered with further information to follow.

Regarding the youth club incident that took place on 12 December 2019 involving two youths, letters were issued to the parents before Christmas as requested. No response has been received to date from one of the parents, however £10 has been received from one of the children, as a contribution towards the loss of funds to the WMC. A £20 contribution has also been confirmed from Spennymoor Youth and Community Association.

Resolved: Clerk to write to the parents/guardians regarding the youth club and to also write to the WMC regarding the contributions received to date following the incident.

xvi. Grass Cutting Contract 2020/21:

Clerk confirmed the Parish Council's grass cutting tender/contract for 2020/21 will be drafted for agreement at the next meeting, in readiness for the contractor to be in place from April 2020.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xvii. Bus Stop Repairs, Croxdale:

Clerk confirmed this was reported to DCC on 18 December 2019; the case still being open on DCCs CRM system.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xviii. Refuse & Recycling, Croxdale:

Clerk reported an update to Members on 10 January 2020 - the Refuse Team confirmed they will try and call back to locations that are missed and will also remind the crew to have the necessary cards to hand to place on vehicles. Councillor Garner to report back any further issues.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

xix. Road Plainings, Hett:

The road plainings that was requested in December 2019, have been sourced and delivered, however, Councillor Griffiths requested if a further supply could be arranged.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for further road plainings accordingly.

105/19. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

(i) Meeting Schedule 2020/21:

Clerk is currently arranging the meeting schedule for 2020/21 and wanted to seek Members views on re-arranging December's meeting from 30 to 23 December 2020. It was agreed to re-arrange to 23 December in the first instance and confirm nearer the time if the meeting is to go ahead.

It was noted, now that the Church Hall has secured a long-term tenant, the Parish Council is unable to hold monthly Parish meetings at Sunderland Bridge, therefore the venues will continue to rotate between Hett and Croxdale. St Bartholomew's Church did offer the use of the Church, free of charge, however it was agreed that the Church is not a suitable venue for Parish meetings.

Resolved: Clerk to finalise 2020/21 meeting schedule for agreement at the next meeting.

(ii) Licensing Application - Barmoor Service Station:

The Clerk informed Members of a Licensing Application received in relation to:

Applicant Details	Premises Details	Summary of Application	Deadline
Penny Petroleum Partnership 1	Barmoor Service Station A167 Croxdale Durham DH6 5HS	New premises licence application Late night refreshment (outdoors) Monday to Sunday 11.00pm to 5.00am. Sale of alcohol (off the premises) Monday to Sunday 24 hours daily.	20 February 2020

Resolved: Clerk is to feedback the Parish Council's objection on this application, on the grounds of public nuisance in respect of the potential additional litter and public safety in respect of purchasing alcohol whilst travelling in a vehicle and already having the facility of purchasing alcohol at the nearby Thinford Services.

106/19. Parish Councillor Vacancy:

DCC confirmed on 24 January 2020 that they did not receive the necessary signatories to call an election, therefore the Parish Council can now advertise to co-opt.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for a vacancy notice to be circulated within the Parish and also contact the previous x2 candidates for co-option at February's meeting.

107/19. Financial Matters:

(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2019 – 31 December 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 31 December 2019. The current net bank balances totalled £18,674.24.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

i. Fees & Charges Review – Cemetery:

The Clerk had provided a current schedule of fees and charges for Croxdale and Hett cemeteries along with charges for Pittington and Belmont Parish Councils for comparison. Following discussion, it was agreed to increase the following charges for 2020/21:

Grave Purchase (Burial Plot & Exclusive Rights of Burial)	£100.00 (from £75.00)
Ashes Purchase (Ashes Plot & Exclusive Rights of Burial)	£75.00 (from £50.00)
Erection of a Headstone (or replacement Headstone) and Kerb Edging (if agreed) (Single or Double)	£65.00 (from 20.00)

It was noted, the additional income as a result of the increase of cemetery fees and charges would be set aside for ongoing cemetery maintenance costs.

Resolved: The revised Cemetery fees and charges be effective from 1 April 2020, subject to an annual review.

ii. Fees & Charges Review – Allotment and Garages:

The fees and charges for Croxdale and Hett allotment and garages were reviewed for implementation from 2021 in order to give a year's notice to allotment holders. Following discussion, it was agreed to increase the charges by 35% across all allotments and garages with effect from 2021/22.

It was noted, the additional income as a result of the increase of allotment and garage fees and charges would be set aside for improvement works at the various allotment sites.

Resolved: Clerk to note revised charges for 2021/22 accordingly and to write to all allotment holders in due course.

iii. Fees & Charges Review – Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:

The car park rental income was reviewed and was agreed to apply the standard rate of inflation (2%), which would increase the annual fee from £750.00 to £765.00.

Resolved: The Croxdale Inn car park rent be noted, subject to an annual review. Clerk to write to the owner of the Croxdale Inn notifying 2020/21 charges accordingly.

(ii) Precept Setting 2020/21

The Clerk prepared a number of proposals of Parish Precept recommendations for 2020/21 budget for Members' consideration. It was noted, regarding the Parish Council's Tax Base, has reduced from 299.8 to 298.8 for 2020/21 due to there being less taxpayers in the Parish. The Parish Council has also been notified that DCC is to also continue to provide the Local

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant funding in 2020/21 of £843.00 compared to £659.00 in 2019/20.

Following much consideration and discussion, it was agreed to increase the Parish Council precept from £13,500 (2019/20) to £17,500 (30% increase), resulting in a Band D charge of £58.69 (compared to £45.03 in 2019/20). The proposed increase is to ensure there are sufficient funds in 2020/21 on reflection of careful forward planning for budget pressures and use of reserves that the Parish Council has identified.

Resolved: Clerk to complete and return precept proforma to DCC accordingly.

108/19: Cemetery Guide:

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

109/19: Planning Issues:

The Clerk reported the Parish Council has received a request from HVHA in relation to the impending planning application in connection to the re-build of Hett Village Hall.

Resolved: Clerk to contact DCC Planning Department in the first instance.

110/19. County Councillor Reports:

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

111/19. AOB:

New Bus Centre – Consultation:

County Councillor Dunn informed Members of the above consultation that is currently ongoing in relation to the new designs for Durham City Bus Station, with deadline for comments/feedback being 9 February 2020.

Resolved: Clerk to circulate details of the above consultation to Members.

Dog Waste Bin – Cricket Field:

Councillor Summerson reported the dog waste bin within the cricket field requires to be emptied which was also full of general rubbish.

Resolved: Clerk to report to DCC accordingly.

112/19. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 7.00 pm, Hett Village Hall.