

**Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council**

**Wednesday 29 July 2020, 7.30 pm**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Parish Council Members Present:**

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

**01/20. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor A Watt and I Watt.

**Also Present:**

County Councillors J Blakey, S Dunn and M McKeon.

**02/20. Declaration Acceptance of Office – Pauline Adams:**

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Pauline Adams read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office under separate cover for Parish Councillor.

**Resolved: That Pauline Adams is now a Member of the Parish Council.**

**03/20. Declarations of Interest:**

Declarations of interest were received from Councillor Kerrison in relation to Croxdale Residents Association / defibrillator request and Councillor Burton in relation to the quotation regarding the cemetery gates painting at Croxdale and Hett cemeteries.

**04/20. Policing:**

PACT meetings have been suspended until further notice due to COVID-19. The first online Q&A PACT session took place via Facebook on 6 May 2020 with members of the Durham City, Framwellgate and Sherburn Neighbourhood Policing Teams. The Clerk had shared Policing crime stats: 10 incidents being recorded for the period May 2020 within the Parish.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**05/20. Public Participation**

No members of the public attended the meeting virtually.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**06/20. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 26 February 2020 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman (under separate cover).

**07/20. Matters Arising:**

**i. Delegated Powers:**

Due to COVID-19, the Parish Council empowered the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to do anything expedient and necessary to ensure the continuous business of the

Parish Council, and to deal with mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period that the delegation is applicable.

**Resolved: Members approved the Delegation of Powers to the Clerk/RFO.**

**ii. Dispensation Requests:**

Clerk reported a leave of absence have been approved for Councillors A and I Watt due to not being able to meet remotely as a result of COVID-19. A report was prepared in May 2020 and approved by the Clerk under Delegated Powers.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**iii. Hett War Memorial:**

The new plaque at Hett was installed on 20 March 2020. With regard to the new war memorial at Croxdale, it was agreed due to COVID-19 this project is currently on hold. County Councillor Dunn stated that County Councillor Member funding was secured up until December 2020 only.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**iv. Hett Fly-Tipping:**

A request was sent to DCC regarding the use of cameras following the number of recent fly-tipping at Hett. No response to date due to COVID-19.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**v. Defibrillator – Croxdale:**

This was previously on hold due to COVID-19; however, this can now be progressed following lockdown restrictions being eased.

**Resolved: Clerk to progress accordingly.**

**vi. Hett Cemetery Pointing:**

The above works are currently on hold. It was preferred to look for alternative quotations for comparison purposes.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**vii. Cemetery Hut Building / Ownership:**

No progress to report on this matter.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**viii. Cemetery Gates Painting:**

Due to not been able to contact the appointed contractor, the cemetery gates painting was out to tender from 6 July to 17 July 2020 inclusive. Two quotations were received: 1) = £1,380 (Inc. VAT) without VAT = £1,150 and 2) = £800.

The majority of votes appointed contractor 2) on the grounds of cost as well as their expertise in this area of work.

**Resolved: Clerk to inform appointed contractor accordingly.**

**ix. Cemetery H&S Tree Inspections:**

A tree report can no longer be provided free of charge by the tree specialist, however the quotation to carry out the report is free. To provide a report would cost £140.00 + VAT which was agreed to proceed.

**Resolved: Clerk to progress with tree specialist accordingly.**

**x. Youth Club:**

Letters were issued to all parents associated with the youth club in March 2020. County Councillors Dunn and McKeon have funded for weekly sports activities in the school holidays commencing from 22 July 2020.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xi. Road Plainings, Hett:**

Clerk requested for additional road plainings for Hett in February 2020 and is currently awaiting a response from DCC which may have been on hold due to COVID-19.

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

**xii. HVHA Planning Application:**

The Parish Council received notification that the planning fee was incorrect, therefore a refund of £231.00 was received in March 2020. Regarding the VAT element and whether the Parish Council can 'host' monies in relation to the construction to then reclaim VAT back, following specialist advice, the Parish Council would not be able to reclaim VAT that has been incurred by HVHA on replacing the village hall. Correspondence is currently ongoing with DCC and HVHA regarding dispute over the land in question.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xiii. Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent – 2020/21:**

Clerk confirmed payment had now been received at the reduced rate of £573.75 due to COVID-19. A request was received from the owner on whether the Parish Council wishes to sell the land in question, however following discussion, Members unanimously agreed the land is not for sale and shall remain an asset of the Parish Council.

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

**xiv. Cemetery Grass Cutting:**

It was previously agreed due to COVID-19 to undertake the review of grass cutting in 2021 and to continue with DCC under the current terms.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xv. T Curle Moran Grave – Croxdale Cemetery:**

A response from the family of the abovementioned was received on 24 July 2020 requesting permission from the Parish Council to install a kerb surround. The request was approved in principal; however, the Parish Council requires the necessary application from the memorial mason with details of size/materials/wording etc.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xvi. Cemetery Guide:**

Clerk confirmed the guide is now on the Parish Council's website and has been issued to those masons who have carried out works in our cemeteries in the past. To date, we have 3 approved contractors on our memorial masons' scheme, being, Cleveland Monumental, Scott memorials and North East Granite.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xvii. Licensing Application - Barnmoor Service Station:**

No hearing was necessary due to the Parish Council agreeing to the proposed terms and conditions.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xviii. Council Tax Notice 2020/21:**

Clerk confirmed this was circulated as agreed, with no feedback received to date.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xix. Benches on A167/Bus Stops:**

Clerk confirmed this was requested/queried with DCC in March 2020 and has since chased progress on 20 July 2020, and is currently awaiting a response (which may have been on hold due to COVID-19). County Councillor McKeon agreed to progress this on behalf of the Parish Council.

**Resolved: County Councillor McKeon to progress.**

**xx. Review of Governance Documents:**

Clerk confirmed there were no proposed changes to the Parish Council's policies and procedures, with the exception of the Allotment Regulations. Following feedback from allotment holders, it was agreed to amend the regulations to prevent the allotment manager from entering allotments/sheds etc for inspections without the respective allotment holder being present or aware. The revised regulations are to be issued to allotment holders within the next week.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xxi. Croxdale Play Park:**

Councillor Summerson reported repair works at the end of June which were fed back to DCC. Further feedback was received last week from a resident stating that the repair works to the fencing were still incomplete and questioned why hadn't these been carried out before the opening? A response from DCC was received which confirmed there has been some remedial works been undertaken leaving the site safe to use. Further works will be carried out in future; however, the timeline for the repairs is currently unknown.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xxii. Grass Cutting Complaints:**

Councillors Garner and Summerson reported poor grass cutting around Croxdale and the cricket field which was fed back to DCC. A large plant holder was also damaged at Rogerson Terrace by the grass cutters; however, a replacement would be provided as well as the container planted with flowers by DCC.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xxiii. Croxdale Playing Field – Request for Use:**

Councillor Summerson was previously approached from the Secretary of Spennymoor Moors Tavern FC for use of the playing field at Croxdale, for approximately 4-6 weeks for football training on a Sunday morning (to commence from 5 July 2020) while their pitch is being reseeded and marked out. This was agreed for the use based on the following terms/understanding: 1) the FA and Football league are providing the football club with COVID-19 guidance, 2) parking – the Croxdale Inn has agreed for the use of the car park being used by members, 3) the football club has their own public liability insurance for use of the field.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xxiv. Fencing at Wood View, Croxdale:**

Councillor Ord has received queries from residents for permission to erect fencing around the front of their properties at Wood View, Croxdale, however, this is a DCC matter to which the residents have been advised to contact the Planning Department direct.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**xxv. Hett – Parked Caravans:**

Councillor Griffiths has received complaints regarding a caravan being parked on the village green at Hett. This was reported to DCC and a response was received of 23 July 2020; which confirmed from the vehicles noted there was none which were parked actually on the green and therefore no planning breach in respect of a material change of land use.

**Resolved: Evidence of the parked caravan is to be provided to DCC to progress this complaint further.**

**xxvi. Croxdale - Parking Complaints:**

Complaints from residents have been received regarding a commercial vehicle parking on the footpath / grassed verges on Front Street, Croxdale. A response was received from DCC on 28 May 2020, stating whilst DCC has no enforcement powers to deal with vehicles parked on grassed verges, on this occasion the vehicle is parked on land owned by the County Council. This is now a matter for the Highways Asset section for their attention, who will keep a record of complaints and monitor the condition of the area for potential inclusion in a future improvement scheme. This could include works such as verge hardening or the installation of low-level fencing. However, this work is prioritised based on community impact and is subject to funding availability.

**Resolved: County Councillor Dunn agreed to progress this further on behalf of the Parish Council.**

**xxvii. Request for Road Signage - Croxdale:**

The Clerk reported an enquiry has been received from a resident regarding a request for a 'slow down' sign to be placed just off the roundabout heading towards Tudhoe. This has been forwarded to Highways and currently awaiting a response.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

## **08/20. Financial Matters:**

### **(i) 2019/20 Annual Return and Audit Requirements – Certificate of Exemption:**

As per last year, due to the Parish Council's annual turnover is less than £25,000, the Parish Council does not require a full external audit. 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 31 August 2020.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. The Parish Council agreed for the exemption of a full external audit for 2019/20.**

### **(ii) Internal Audit Report – 2019/20:**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's Internal Auditor, Mr G Fletcher, has examined the Council's 2019/20 accounts and records and certified the annual internal audit section of the Council's Annual Return accordingly. A copy of the auditor's report was circulated to Members for information which confirmed the Parish Council's internal controls are satisfactory for the size of the Council and no recommendations were made.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

### **(iii) Parish Council's 2019/20 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 2019/20 was approved and will be duly signed by the Chairman and Parish Clerk under separate cover.

It was noted the period for the exercise of public rights will commence on Friday 31 July 2020 until Friday 11 September 2020 inclusive.

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

### **(iv) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 30 June 2020:**

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 June 2020. The current net bank balances totalled £28,379.21.

It was noted whilst there had been no Parish Council meetings for the period March – June 2020, the Clerk had still prepared the monthly financial report for Members' information / reference.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

## **09/20: Planning Issues:**

The Clerk reported the Parish Council has received the following planning application(s) for comment / objection:

- New Equipment Holdings Limited - demolition of existing warehouse and construction of new warehouse space, sub-divided into 5 No. individual units for B1, B2 and B8 use.

**Resolved: No specific comments / objections were made with regard to the above planning application.**

**10/20. County Councillor Reports:**

County Councillor Dunn gave an update in relation to: the County Council's ongoing support to County Durham residents for COVID-19 since March. Works have now commenced on Elvet Bridge for a period of 14 months for essential repair works. Planning applications for the new bus station and History Centre are to be progressed in due course. The new HQ and Milburngate works are progressing well.

County Councillor McKeon added the AAPs have provided valuable support to County Durham residents also during the Pandemic.

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

**11/20. AOB:**

**Remote Parish Council Meetings:**

The Clerk reminded Members that the current guidance from CDALC is to still meet remotely wherever possible. This would be reviewed regularly as guidance changes. If remote Parish Council Meetings are to continue for the feasible future, the Clerk is to review the Zoom package for future meetings.

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

**Parish Council Meeting – August 2020:**

In view of the number of Parish Council Meetings being cancelled due to COVID-19, Members are to determine if a Special Meeting of the Parish Council is to be arranged during August (this period is usually in recess), if there are any urgent matters requiring a Council decision.

**Resolved: Clerk to discuss with Members in due course.**

**12/20. Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 30 September 2020 at 7.00 pm.