

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 10 January 2018, 7.00 pm
Hett Village Hall

Parish Council Members Present:

Councillor L Griffiths (Chair), 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 Councillor M McKeon.

124/17. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from County Councillors J Blakey and S Dunn.

125/17. Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Peter Kerrison:

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Peter Kerrison read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Parish Councillor before the Clerk. The Chair welcomed Peter to the Parish Council.

Resolved: That Peter Kerrison is now a Member of the Parish Council.

126/17. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

127/17. Policing:

No issues / incidents were reported following the PACT meeting on 21 December 2017. The next PACT meeting will take place on 18 January 2018 at 7.00 pm. Councillor Griffiths requested for the meeting dates to be circulated to Hett Village Hall Association for displaying in the Village Hall and likewise to Croxdale Community Association if they are not already published.

Resolved: For Members' information. Clerk to circulate PACT meeting dates accordingly.

128/17. Public Participation

Sue Raper was in attendance.

129/17. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 13 December 2017 were amended to include Councillor L Griffiths as having a declaration of interest which were then signed by the Chairman.

130/17. Matters Arising

i. Fencing at Hett Lane:

The Clerk informed Members of the response received from DCC regarding the supply of signage and reflectors at Hett Lane. The location is not considered a risk otherwise highway signage to indicate such would have been installed many years ago. DCC install signs on the highway, not affixed to a landowner's boundary fence. Therefore, should the landowner or the Parish Council wish to consider signage to the posts, it is up to the Parish Council to

discuss with Mr Salvin. Members agreed the Parish would contribute towards the cost of the reflectors if Mr Salvin is willing to do the same.

Resolved: Clerk to contact Mr Salvin on whether he is agreeable to meet 50% of the cost of reflectors on the boundary fence, once it has been repaired.

ii. Croxdale Beck:

Clerk had reported this to DCC and is currently awaiting a response. However, County Councillor McKeon also reported the issue and was advised this will be looked at. The footbridge by Croxdale Beck also requires reporting and action.

Resolved: For Members' information. County Councillor McKeon to report Croxdale footbridge.

iii. Croxdale Children's Play Area:

Clerk reported to DCC who have visited the play area and found the logs rotting. This has been added to their maintenance schedule for action with a time line of three months (low risk).

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Litter – A167:

Clerk advised Members via County Councillor Blakey, that the rubbish has now been cleared on the A167. Members agreed a thank you letter should also be sent to Mr Graveling, as a lot of the rubbish, throughout the year, is cleared by Michael.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to write to Mr Graveling accordingly.

v. Boundary Review:

Clerk notified Members that the deadline for comments on the 2018 Boundary Review was mid night on 11 December 2017, therefore the Parish was unable to respond to the consultation. The deadline had already passed when County Councillor McKeon provided the update at December's meeting.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

vi. Litter Pick – Hett Lane / Leaman's Lane:

Clerk had contacted DCC to request litter picks are programmed in periodically rather than numerous requests made throughout the year. A response was received on 08 January 2018, notifying the Parish that the above areas will be litter picked throughout the year on the second week of every month i.e. w/c 15 January, 12 February and so on.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

vii. Trees at Hett Village Green:

The Clerk had received a response from DCC, confirming their approval to carry out the tree works at Hett, subject to no feedback being received prior to 28 January 2018. With regards to the tree at Croxdale cemetery, the Clerk is still awaiting a response from DCC on whether the Parish can go ahead with the works along with a quotation and advice on whether it requires removing imminently.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to follow up Croxdale cemetery's tree with DCC.

viii. Councillor Contacts:

Clerk circulated a draft poster of Councillor contacts for review.

Resolved: All Councillors to feedback to the Clerk on what contact details is to be included along with a photograph (optional).

ix. Attendance from Highways Representative:

David Battensby, Highways Department, Durham County Council, agreed to attend the Parish Council meeting on 14 February 2018, to discuss traffic issues in Hett, Croxdale and Sunderland Bridge. Clerk is to compile a list of items for discussion and to circulate to residents for their attendance also, if desired.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to co-ordinate items for discussion and notify residents of Highways attendance.

131/17. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. 2017/18 Audit:

Clerk notified Members there is a briefing session on 28 March 2018 for Clerks (free of charge) regarding 2017/18 audit requirements, in view of the recent changes to Mazars from BDO.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. Proposed Council Tax Increase – Police Crime and Victims' Commissioner:

Clerk informed Members regarding the PCVC proposal to increase Council Tax by 7.09% to fund Durham Constabulary for 2018/19. Consultation on the proposal will be ran until 31 January 2018. No initial comments were made in the first instance.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. Street Lighting Energy Reduction Programme - A167:

The Clerk notified Members of DCCs proposal to remove a number of street lighting columns at 2 locations being:

25 at Low Butchers Race to Croxdale

14 at Low Butchers Race to Thinford Roundabout

A risk assessment has been carried out by DCC and as a result, believes it is safe to remove the street lighting from the above locations. Suggested measures / mitigations are to be put in place, such as providing additional signage and refreshing existing road markings.

However, Members felt removing the columns near the three bus stops on the A167, could be a health and safety risk for residents', either crossing the main road, or standing at the bus stop in total darkness. It would be preferred if the street lightings could be left in place at the bus stop locations.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon agreed to feedback concerns and comments on the Parish Council's behalf, before the closing date of 02 February 2018.

iv. Commemorative Benches for WW Centenary:

County Councillor Blakey proposes to fund 3 memorial benches at Hett, Sunderland Bridge and Croxdale in commemorative of the World War Centenary. It is proposed the benches at Hett and Sunderland Bridge will be replacement benches as they are in need of repair in any event and the location of Croxdale bench is yet to be determined, however, it is proposed to

use one of the existing benches adjacent to the roundabout on the A167. There would be no initial cost to the Parish Council, however the Parish would be responsible for general maintenance / up keep of the benches. It was noted, the Parish is currently responsible for 2 of the benches already.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

v. GDPR:

The Clerk gave Members an update on arrangements for the forthcoming requirements in relation to the GDPR, following advice from NALC. It was felt the role of the Data Protection Officer could not be carried out by Town / Parish Clerks, therefore a number of options were suggested, with the preferred option being, working with a legal firm in setting up a national on demand DPO Service. Initial costs were envisaged as £350.00 PA. Further details are to follow in the coming months.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

132/17. Financial Matters:

i. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2017 – 10 January 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 10 January 2018. The current net bank balances totalled £5,944.16.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400346 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk's Wages - £258.00
Cheque Number – 400347 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.40
Cheque Number – 400348 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £37.99
Cheque Number – 400349 – Miss C Maddison – Clerk's Annual Allowance - £250.00

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. Fees & Charges Review – Cemetery:

The Clerk had provided a current schedule of fees and charges for Croxdale and Hett cemeteries along with charges for Cassop cum Quarrington and Belmont Parish Councils for comparison. Following discussion, it was agreed to keep the charges as they are for the remainder of 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Resolved: The Cemetery fees and charges be noted, subject to an annual review.

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

As per the lease agreement that was agreed by all parties on 14 December 2016, whereby it was specified the annual rent for 2018/19 would be increased from £500.00 to £750.00.

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 2018/19 charges accordingly.

iv. Precept Setting 2018/19:

The clerk prepared a number of proposals of Parish Precept recommendations for 2018/19 budget for Members' consideration. It was noted, regarding the Parish Council's Tax Base, has increased from 289.9 to 298.8 (increase of 8.9) for 2018/19 due to there being more 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 2018/19 of £697.00 compared to £1,015.00 in 2017/18.

Following much consideration and discussion, it was agreed to decrease the Parish Council precept from £13,500 (2017/18) to £11,500 (14.81% decrease), resulting in a Band D charge of £38.48 (compared to £46.57 in 2017/18). The proposed decrease is to ensure there are sufficient funds in 2018/19 on reflection of careful forward planning for budget pressures and use of reserves that the Parish Council has identified and to also reflect the £4,000 increase that was made in 2017/18 to account for the cemetery fencing.

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

133/17. Planning Issues:

No planning matters was discussed.

134/17. County Councillor Reports

County Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to: the re-development site at Aykley Heads and new Council HQ.

On behalf of County Councillor Blakey, the Clerk queried a suitable location of grit salt for Hett. Councillor I Watt confirmed Hett Mill Levelling crossing was previously used as a suitable location.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to feedback to County Councillor Blakey.

135/17. AOB:

There was no any other business.

136/17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 14 February 2018 at 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.