

**Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council**  
**Wednesday 14 December 2016, 7.00 pm**

**Parish Council Members Present:**

Councillor J Anderson (Chair), Councillor K Summerson, Councillor A Watt, Councillor I Watt and Councillor W Watt.

**Also Present:**

County Councillor M Plews.

**146/16. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors R Burton, J Garner, L Griffiths and also County Councillor J Blakey.

**147/16. Declarations of Interest:**

Councillors Anderson and Summerson declared an interest in item 12 (Garage and Allotment Fees & Charges Review). However, the Clerk advised 2 applications were received from Councillors Anderson and Summerson for dispensation to speak and vote in connection with the fees and charges review on allotments and garages.

**Resolved: The Parish Council considered the applications for dispensation and agreed to grant such dispensations on the following grounds for the remaining term of office (May 2017):**

- i. **Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area**
- ii. **Without the dispensation, the number of persons may prohibit from participating in any business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business.**

**148/16. Policing:**

There was no Police attendance at the meeting and no report was received on the number of incidents for the period 9 November - 14 December 2016.

**149/16. Public Participation**

Michael Graveling and Peter Billingham were in attendance.

**150/16. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 09 November 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**151/16. Matters Arising**

- i. **Fencing at Hett Lane:**  
Clerk requested for an update from DCC on 6 November, 29 November and 8 December 2016 and is still awaiting a response. However, an update was provided with regard to the

use of vehicle restraint systems commonly referred to as crash barriers and was concluded that the provision of a crash barrier at this location was costly and would be a low priority for the County Council.

**Resolved: Clerk to keep progressing for an update.**

**ii. Policing:**

A response is still outstanding from the Police regarding the incident at Croxdale Inn car park. Also, a response was yet to be received from Ron Hogg regarding policing matters; a follow up email was issued on 06 December.

**Resolved: Clerk to keep progressing for an update.**

**iii. Pond at Hett Village:**

Email of 15 November 2016 from Brian Ogden was circulated to Members regarding what works were carried out on health and safety matters during and after the pond restoration project. However, if no appropriate health and safety signs or equipment were present and an accident was to happen, then it would be the Parish Council's responsibility. Following discussion, it was agreed to seek quotations for signage in the first instance.

**Resolved: Clerk to seek quotes for appropriate signage from DCC.**

**iv. CDALC Member Training:**

Clerk clarified the training in March is for Parish/Town Clerks only. Steve Ragg confirmed that there will be training following the Elections in May for new Parish Councillors or anyone wanting a refresher. Further details will be forwarded after the Elections.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**v. CDALC Executive Committee:**

Clerk forwarded further details to Councillor Griffiths as requested and is happy for Cllr Geldard from Spennymoor TC to be our joint representative.

**Resolved: For Members' Information and Clerk to confirm arrangements with CDALC.**

**vi. HVHA – BT Kiosk:**

Clerk confirmed an update on where we are with the consultation was provided to Brian Ogden and also shared former County Councillor M William's concerns of moving the defibrillator from the village hall into the kiosk, however, HVHA confirmed following their meeting on 15 November 2016, they no longer have an interest in retaining the kiosk in the village.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**vii. Litter Pick:**

Clerk logged with DCC on 14 November 2016. An update was requested on 08 December which was confirmed the case was still open.

**Resolved: Clerk to keep progressing for an update.**

**viii. Thank you Letter:**

Letter issued to Mac Williams as requested thanking him for his service as Parish and County Councillor over the past numerous of years.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**152/16. Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence**

**i. County Durham Plan:**

Clerk provided an update with regard to the County Durham Plan. The process which will result in a plan for development across County Durham has been paused to consider what are expected to be fundamental changes from a new Government White Paper in January 2017.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**ii. Changes to the Local Government Ombudsman Service:**

Clerk confirmed Parish and Town Councils could be subject to the newly created Public Services Ombudsman. At the moment, Parish and Town Councils are not covered by the LGO procedures so the public cannot use this avenue to complain about Parish Councils. This could mean that Parish Council decisions and actions etc. will be open to more scrutiny by parishioners etc. Consultation currently ongoing due to close 24 January 2017.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**iii. Operation 'Spruce Up':**

Clerk provided details to Members on the above scheme which Parish Councils may wish to get involved in by working with AAPs. Certain villages or towns will be chosen due to the current conditions of the environment, prospects for improvements and opportunities to work with partners.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**iv. CDALC – Royal Garden Party Nomination 2017:**

Clerk provided details to Members with regard to next year's Royal Garden Party. Four places are available with two sets of two people to attend. Deadline for expressions of interest is 20 January 2017 whereby nominations will be entered into a draw and a random selection will be made.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**153/16. Financial Matters:**

**i. Financial Report for the Period 1 April 2016 – 14 December 2016**

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 14 December 2016. The current net bank balances totalled 6,934.12.

The following cheque payments were approved:

Cheque Number – 400271 - Miss C Maddison – Clerk’s Wages November- £257.80  
Cheque Number – 400272 – HMRC – Tax & NI Contributions – £64.60  
Cheque Number – 400273 – Miss C Maddison – Broadband Subscription - £31.49  
Cheque Number – 400274 – JW Smith - £160.00  
Cheque Number – 400275 – Miss C Maddison – Parish Expenses - £13.58

Councillor I Watt presented the Clerk with a note for payment with regard to hedge cutting at Hett, as detailed below:

Cheque Number – 400276 – Mr J Layfield – Hedge Cutting - £20.00

**Resolved: For Members’ Information.**

## **154/16. Cemetery Update**

### **i. Grave Plans:**

Clerk confirmed Croxdale cemetery plan is still with the Conservator in Leeds and should be complete in the New Year.

**Resolved: For Members’ Information.**

### **ii. Cemetery Fencing:**

Clerk confirmed that a meeting took place on 22 November 2016 with attendees from – Cllrs Garner, Summerson, Martin Briscoe from DCC, Mark Hutchinson (farmer) and his father, along with the Parish Clerk. The correct boundary line for the fencing was agreed with all parties concerned. A quote was received from DCC on 6 December 2016 to re-erect the fencing on the correct boundary and to a satisfactory standard equated to £4,995.93 (exc. VAT) and was noted the price quoted would need to be complete by March before the grass cutting season commenced.

Clerk confirmed now that the quotation was received, a letter was issued to RA Fencing on 9 December 2016 informing them of the above meeting and associated costs involved to the cemetery fencing with options being: RA Fencing come back and carry out the works free of charge or the contractor pays DCC direct to carry out the job on their behalf. A deadline of 28 days to reply in writing of their intentions was given (6 January 2017). If no response is forthcoming, the Parish Council is to consider taking this issue to the small claims court for compensation.

It was noted that Councillor Summerson had arranged for all of the old fencing to be removed from Croxdale cemetery which had been left unattended by RA Fencing and disposed of accordingly.

**Resolved: For Members’ Information and are currently awaiting response from RA Fencing. Clerk is to contact Mark Hutchinson to keep him up to date on developments.**

### **155/16. Expressions of Interest for Vacancy of Parish Councillor**

The Clerk reported 1 expression of interest was received for Parish Councillor vacancy being:

1 = Michael Ord

The above candidate was nominated and seconded receiving unanimous votes.

**Resolved: Michael Ord be duly elected as Parish Councillor and summoned to attend the next Parish Council meeting to sign the declaration of acceptance of office.**

### **156/16. Council Owned Land Adjacent to the Croxdale Inn**

Clerk circulated the draft lease contract for comments / agreement. This was also shared with the owner of the Croxdale Inn, Praveen D'Silva, who had agreed to all terms in the agreement with the exception of the rental increase of £500.00 to £750.00 from 2017/18. It was noted for the period December 2016 – March 2017, a payment of £144 is payable now which Mr D'Silva agreed to.

Mr D'Silva requested for the Parish Council to consider the rental charge remains at £500 for 2017/18. Following discussion, Members agreed to this request but wished to make clear to Mr D'Silva that the rent fee will increase to £750 PA from 2018/19 and will be reviewed on an annual basis along with the Parish Council's other fees and charges.

Quotations were also to be sought for the fencing repairs at the car park, after which all responsibility for the maintenance and up keep of the fencing would be the Croxdale Inn's.

**Resolved: Clerk to inform Mr D'Silva of the Parish Council's decision and arrange signing of the lease agreement if all parties agree to the terms above. Quotations were also to be sought for the fencing repairs.**

### **157/16. Garage and Allotment Fees & Charges Review**

Clerk provided a comparative schedule of allotment and garages fees and charges in other Parishes for Members information and to note the fees of surrounding Parish Councils.

A proposed summary of 5%, 10%, 15% increase across 3 years was provided as well as showing what a 20%, 40% and 60% increase would be to enable discussion on what the various % increase would be over a 3-year period. It was also proposed to bring in line the collection of rents to financial year (April-March) rather than calendar year (January-December) in order for the monies to be tied in with year-end accounting purposes and to enable budget preparations for the following year. However, as rent monies were already being collected and to allow sufficient notice to be given to allotment holders on the proposed rental increase and change in rental term, it was agreed to continue with the current fee for 2017/2018 and to review the charges for 2018/19 in 2017.

**Resolved: to consider 2018/19 increase during 2017 to allow plenty of notice to be given to allotment holders.**

### **158/16. Planning Issues:**

The Clerk reported the Parish Council has received the following planning applications for comment / objection:

- a) 4 Queen's Garth - demolish existing garage and erection of detached garage with garden room
- b) Thinford Park – 3 no. fascia signs and 1 no. projecting sign
- c) Croxdale Citroen - display of internally illuminated fascia sign to front elevation, 4.2m high freestanding internally illuminated pylon sign and relocation of existing Subaru pylon sign to other side of entrance.

**Resolved: For Member's Information – no specific comments / objections were made with regard to the above three planning applications, however further details are to be forwarded to Councillor Summerson in respect of the planning application at Queen's Garth.**

#### **159/16. County Councillor Reports**

County Councillor Plews gave an update in relation to: finance settlement released earlier today which has resulted in an increase in council tax regarding adult social care, Lumiere scheduled for November 2017, positive works in relation to smoking cessation, Ian Botham is the new Chair of Durham County Cricket Club Board following the Club's financial difficulties, bin collections remain the same over the festive period and garden waste charges have increased to £25.00.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

#### **160/16. Former Parish Clerk**

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the above item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

#### **161/16. AOB:**

##### **i. Hett Fencing:**

Councillor A Watt raised that a resident brought to his attention the fencing at Hett cemetery was in need of a small repair.

**Resolved: Councillor Summerson agreed to look at this in the first instance.**

##### **ii. Grave at Croxdale Cemetery:**

Councillor Anderson raised concerns over his sister's grave at Croxdale cemetery which has sunken and hard to locate due to no headstone.

**Resolved: Clerk to assist in locating the grave via the grave plan and grave register, after which Councillor Anderson to address the grave itself.**

##### **iii. Croxdale Citroen Garage:**

Councillor Anderson raised concerns over large vehicles being parked on the footpath causing obstructing when loading new vehicles at the above garage.

**Resolved: Clerk to raise with DCC in the first instance.**

**162/16. Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 11 January 2017 at 7.00 pm.