

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 24 February 2021, 7.00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Parish Council Members Present:

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

76/20. Apologies for Absence:

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

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey, S Dunn and M McKeon.

77/20. Declarations of Interest:

Declaration of interests was received from Councillor Kerrison in relation to Croxdale Residents Association / defibrillator request and Councillor Burton in relation to cemetery works – tree recommendations.

78/20. Policing:

The Clerk had shared Policing crime stats: 5 incidents being recorded for the period December 2020 within the Parish.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

79/20. Public Participation

No members of the public attended the meeting virtually.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

80/20. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 27 January 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman (under separate cover).

81/20. Matters Arising:

i. Defibrillator – Croxdale:

The exchange has now been arranged for a locked cabinet, with the additional cost being £43.60, including delivery. The new installation date was confirmed for 13 March 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. Planning Application – Hett Lambing:

Clerk confirmed the above planning application was approved via a delegated decision on 11 February 2021. The committee report detailing the applicant's response to the Parish Council's concerns was shared for information.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. Planning:

Clerk confirmed details was circulated on the Parish Council's FB page re contact details for County Durham Together (for assistance during COVID-19) and details of the applicant's pledge to work with the community regarding the new children's residential home. No feedback has been received to date.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iv. Hett Litter Pick:

February's litter pick took place w/c 22 February 2021. Councillor Griffiths reported damage to a rubbish bin in the layby on the A167 just North of Hett Style on the South bound carriageway.

Resolved: Clerk to report to DCC.

v. Litter at Thinford:

Clerk advised no responses have been received to date from retailers.

Resolved: For Members' Information

vi. 20 MPH - Speed Limit Trial:

Clerk contacted Highways on the 20mph speed limit request for Hett and Sunderland Bridge in addition to previous highways requests, and currently awaiting a response.

Resolved: For Members' Information

vii. Hett Caravan:

Clerk confirmed a response has been received from Mr Wilkinson. Clerk to circulate a draft response and agreement for comments.

Resolved: Clerk to draft a response accordingly.

viii. Steel Barrier Fencing, Hett Lane:

DCC requested for further information on 15 December 2020 regarding the location and type of fault, this was provided and currently awaiting a response. Clerk has chased progressed on 12 February 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information

ix. Street Signs, Hett:

A response was received from a Neighbourhood Warden advising that up-to-date dog fouling stickers have been placed around the area, with the patrols to continue. The request for signage is still outstanding.

Resolved: Clerk to progress the request for signage.

x. Parish Logo/Crest:

Members agreed the preference of the dark blue logo for the new Parish logo. Councillors Griffiths and Kerrison had previously queried the background on the name of 'Croxdale and Hett PC' following the merge of Hett PC and Sunderland Bridge PC. Clerk had contacted Electoral Services to determine if they had any records but no response has been forthcoming.

Resolved: Members agreed to the adoption of a new logo for the Parish Council.

xi. Avian Flu:

Clerk has sought advice from CDALC on whether the Parish Council should be issuing regular guidance to allotment holders following change in legislation re bird flu. No feedback has been received to date. It is proposed this situation is kept under regular review, and only write to allotment holders if deemed a matter of urgency.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xii. Allotment Tenant – Breach of Regulations:

Clerk confirmed the tenant's 1 months' notice period ends today (24 February 2021). Arrangements were made by the Parish Council with two allotment holders to re-home a number of chickens at the request/permission of the previous tenant. It was noted the next resident on the waiting list already has an allotment, therefore it was suggested a new allotment rule would be implemented on 1 allotment per household, in view of the number of residents on the waiting list. This would be agreed when reviewing the allotment regulations at the next meeting.

Councillor Burton reported an old 'Hammonds' sign was found in an allotment at the Poultry Centre and questioned if Members knew of its purpose/background? Councillor Burton is to circulate a photograph for Members' consideration.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Councillor Burton to circulate a copy of the sign accordingly.

xiii. Outstanding Allotment Rent Collection:

Clerk confirmed six allotment rents are still outstanding. A third and final reminder will be issued to the tenants concerned.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xiv. Poultry Centre Drainage:

Clerk reported the above to DCC and it was confirmed on 17 February 2021 following their investigation, that the Council is unable to take any further action as it does not fall under their management or ownership. It was agreed for the Clerk to raise this issue with Highways to determine if the drainage issue could become a danger to the highway and its users.

Resolved: Clerk to action accordingly.

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

In view of the Government's roadmap announcement regarding hospitality/restaurants are to open from 17 May 2021, it was agreed to waive the car park rent fee up until this period to take into account the closure of businesses and the impact this has had on the economy.

Resolved: Clerk to contact the owner of the Croxdale Inn regarding the rental fee for the period 2021/22.

82/20 Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. Election Nomination Forms:

Clerk reminded Members of details previously circulated regarding nomination forms for the forthcoming Parish and Town Council elections on 6 May 2021. The closing date for nominations is on Thursday 8 April 2021 at 4pm.

Resolved: For Members' Information

ii. Council Tax Notice 2021/22:

The Clerk prepared the above notice for agreement which was subsequently approved.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for displaying within the Parish accordingly.

iii. Zoom Licence:

In view of the current situation regarding COVID-19 and remote meetings, it was agreed to purchase a monthly licence for monthly meetings to take place via Zoom.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange monthly subscription accordingly.

iv. Nicky Nack Beck, Croxdale:

Councillor Ord reported on 5 February 2021 an incident took place at Nicky Nack bridge involving a car which ended up in the beck and requested if the Parish Council could approach DCC to query if anything can be done at this location to make things safer. It was noted the area had recently been cleaned, however the debris was left on the sides instead of been removed from the area completely. County Councillor Blakey confirmed it is now common practice to leave the remains on the embankment due to contamination.

Resolved: Clerk to report accordingly to DCC.

v. Neighbourhood Budget Grant:

County Councillor Blakey kindly agreed to donate her remaining Members Neighbourhood Budget monies to the Parish Council for the remaining financial year in the sum of £3,006.92, to go towards the cemetery maintenance budget, specifically in relation to the cemetery entrance at Croxdale and tree works.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange completion of AAP Funding application accordingly.

83/20. Financial Matters:

(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 31 January 2021:

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 January 2021. The current net bank balances totalled £15,408.60.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

84/20: Review of Governance Documents:

The Clerk notified Members that the annual review of the Parish Council's policy and procedures were to be reviewed at the next meeting and will circulate under separate cover suggested changes to policies, where applicable. It was noted, this would also include the allotment holders rules and regulations.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

85/20: Cemetery:

(i) Cemetery Works (Croxdale) – Tree Recommendations:

Three quotations had been sought in respect of the above works at Croxdale cemetery. Members reviewed each quotation and following discussion, it was agreed to extend the works schedule to include an additional three holly trees to be felled to the ground at the request of Councillor Griffiths.

Resolved: Clerk to go back to contractors and request for revised quotations accordingly.

(ii) Grass Cutting Contract 2021/22:

The Clerk presented the proposed grass cutting tender pack to Members for approval in relation to grass cutting arrangements for 2021/22 at Croxdale and Hett Cemeteries.

Resolved: Tender pack was approved; Clerk to arrange to issue tender pack accordingly for agreement of contractor at March's meeting, in readiness for grass cutting arrangements to take place from April 2021.

86/20: Hett Flooding – Village Green:

The Clerk had prepared a report for Member's information on progress to date in relation to the village green flooding at Hett and in particular to Hett Village Hall. It was reported a further inspection is to take place next week on the village green by a DCC engineer, thereafter a full report and plan will be provided. Enquiries have also been made to the Coal Authority on the possibility of subsidence from HVHA.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

87/20: Planning Issues:

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

- a) DM/20/03152/FPA - conversion of Working Men's Club to create 3 no. terraced dwellings

The following was also reported for information purposes, but noted this application is not within the Parish' boundary:

- b) DM/20/03750/FPA - erection of single storey extension with balcony above to front of main house, insertion of 2 No. dormer windows and erection of single storey extension to detached outbuilding

Resolved: For Member's Information – no specific comments / objections were made with regard to the above planning applications.

88/20. County Councillor Reports:

County Councillor Dunn gave an update in relation to: budget setting took place today to which the County Council agreed to a 2.99% council tax increase, comprising of 1.99% for council services and 1% specifically to adult social care. Works have recently commenced on the new bus station in Durham City. County Councillors are lobbying for the planning application regarding the Police

custody suite to be determined after the PCVC elections in May in view of the costings been incorrect and not including the costings to renovate existing custody suites.

County Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to: new vaccination centre has recently opened at the Arnison Centre. COVID data for County Durham via Durham Insight has reduced.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

89/20. AOB:

Parking Access:

County Councillor McKeon reported she had recently been approached by a resident from Salvin Street following complaints regarding parking on a grassed area.

Resolved: Councillors Ord and Summerson are to investigate further and liaise with County Councillor McKeon.

90/20. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 7.00 pm.