

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 31 March 2021, 7.00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Parish Council Members Present:

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

91/20. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors R Burton, J Garner, A Watt, I Watt and County Councillor Blakey.

Also Present:

County Councillors S Dunn and M McKeon.

92/20. Declarations of Interest:

Declaration of interests was received from Councillor Kerrison in relation to Croxdale Residents Association / defibrillator request.

93/20. Policing:

The Clerk had shared Policing crime stats: 2 incidents being recorded for the period January 2021 within the Parish.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

94/20. Public Participation

No members of the public attended the meeting virtually.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

95/20. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 24 February 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman (under separate cover).

96/20. Matters Arising:

i. Defibrillator – Croxdale:

The defibrillator and cabinet were installed at the corner shop on 13 March 2021 and is registered with NE Ambulance service. It was agreed for flowers to be arranged for the owners of the corner shop for their continued patience on this matter. Councillor Kerrison confirmed the remaining monies from Croxdale Residents Association would be ring-fenced to Parish Council funds for replacement pads, batteries and flowers.

Resolved: Clerk to arrange for flowers accordingly.

ii. Hett Litter Pick:

March's litter pick took place on Friday 26 March 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

iii. 20 MPH - Speed Limit Trial:

No response has been received from DCC as yet; Clerk chased progressed on 29 March 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information

iv. Hett Caravan:

Clerk had issued draft agreement to the resident concerned and currently awaiting feedback. Councillor Griffiths had recently spoken to the resident who confirmed the caravan will be moved by mid-April.

Resolved: For Members' Information

v. Steel Barrier Fencing, Hett Lane:

A response was received from DCC on 3 March 2021 advising that the team have scheduled necessary works for this case.

Resolved: For Members' Information

vi. Street Signs, Hett:

The request for signage is still outstanding; Clerk has progressed further with DCC.

Resolved: Clerk to progress the request for signage.

vii. Poultry Centre Drainage:

Reported to DCC on 2 March 2021 on whether this could result in a highways/road safety issue and is currently awaiting a response.

Resolved: For Members' Information

viii. Allotments:

The following matters was discussed / agreed:

The Clerk confirmed one payment is still outstanding for an allotment at Front Street East and has now issued a notice to quit to the tenant concerned.

Resolved: For Members' Information

A request was received via Councillor Summerson to carryout works by a tenant at the Poultry Centre (by way of installing a pipe to protect the fence), however, Councillor Summerson since confirmed this request is no longer required.

Resolved: For Members' Information

Tree obstruction to the boundary line at the Poultry Centre is causing concerning by a tenant as they are unable to install a fence. Discussion took place on whether the Parish Council would agree to meet the cost for it to be felled or whether it was the responsibility of the new tenant. On this occasion, it was agreed for the Parish Council to meet the cost of the tree works as this has remained a long-standing issue to the tenant concerned.

Resolved: Clerk to action accordingly.

Vacant allotment – it was reported that the fencing panels and gate had been removed/stolen at the vacant allotment and a letter was issued to allotment holders at the

Poultry Centre, however, no response was received from tenants. The Allotment Manager and tenants have cleared away the rubbish/burned some of the fire wood and tried to replace what they can to the fencing and gate. Whilst this allotment is vacant, it was agreed to source a quotation to halve this allotment.

Resolved: Clerk to action accordingly.

A tenant at the Poultry Centre had informed Councillor Summerson that they wish to give up half of their allotment due to its size. This request was approved.

Resolved: Clerk to action accordingly.

An allotment at Front Street East had recently become available following a tenant's death. The Clerk raised a request from Councillor Burton in her absence if she could swap allotments to Front Street East from the Poultry Centre.

Resolved: Members agreed to this request; Clerk to note for PC records.

ix. Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:

Clerk had contacted the owner concerned on 28 February 2021 regarding 2021/22 rent and is currently awaiting a response on their intentions regarding the land (deadline of 30 April 2021).

Resolved: For Members' Information

x. Croxdale Beck Clearing:

A response was received on 4 March 2021 advising this has been passed to NWL as land owner, however the Clerk has since raised this further to DCC and awaiting a response. In addition, Councillor Griffiths reported the safety of the bridge's structure which the Clerk reported to DCC also. A response was received on 19 March 2021; an investigation has been carried out and it is not considered to be dangerous, DCC will continue to monitor through routine safety inspections.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xi. Croxdale Cemetery – Neighbourhood Budget Grant:

The Parish Council's application is with the AAP Funding Team for final appraisal and sign off.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xii. Parking Access – Salvin Street:

This matter is still ongoing via County Councillor McKeon.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xiii. Request for rubbish bin:

On the layby on the A167 just North of Hett Style on the South bound carriageway was reported/requested on 4 March 2021 and the case is now closed.

Resolved: For Members' Information

97/20 Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. Remote Meetings Update:

The Clerk updated Members regarding the current position on the use of remote meetings after 6 May 2021. The LGA is lobbying to Government to extend the legislation beyond May which is expected to be determined before the end of April.

Resolved: For Members' Information

ii. Request for Rubbish Bin – Front Street East, Croxdale:

The Clerk informed Members of a request she had received from a resident regarding the amount of litter been thrown over into their garden and suggested for a litter bin to be placed near to the bus stop. The Clerk requested for a new bin via DCC, however it was confirmed that an additional litter bin at this location was not necessary. The Clerk is to request the litter bin located at the corner shop is re-located to the bus stop.

Resolved: Clerk to request re-location of rubbish bin to DCC.

98/20. Financial Matters:

(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 28 February 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 28 February 2021. The current net bank balances totalled £15,230.48.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

99/20: Review of Governance Documents:

The following governance documents were reviewed by the Clerk:

- a) Standing Orders
- b) Financial Regulations
- c) Members Code of Conduct
- d) Risk Assessment
- e) Disciplinary Policy
- f) Grievance Policy
- g) Data Protection
- h) Complaints Procedure
- i) Social Media Policy
- j) Cemetery Guide
- k) Dignity at Work Policy
- l) Assets Register
- m) Allotment Regulations
- n) Co-option Procedures

Suggested amendments / additions were proposed to the financial regulations and the allotment regulations being:

- Financial Regulations:
 - To include reference to the Parish Council's business continuity delegated decisions in the event of a national emergency.
- Allotment Regulations:
 - No tenant (at the same address) will have the right to more than one allotment/small holding (apart from any historical arrangements that are currently in place). However, if

there is no one on the waiting list, then a further / additional allotment would be approved.

- When a tenant vacates an allotment, it should be in a fair/good condition and free of any materials, rubbish or other structures (unless it has been agreed for these items to remain), in order for the allotment to be re-allocated as soon as possible.
- If a tenant finds that they cannot cope with a whole allotment plot, they should inform the Parish Clerk and consideration will be given to let half of the allotment plot to a prospective tenant on the waiting list.
- The Parish Council accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury to tenants or their belongings occurring on their allotment sites.

Resolved: The suggested amendments to the financial regulations and allotment regulations were approved accordingly.

100/20: Cemetery:

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

Three revised quotations had been sought in respect of the above works at Croxdale cemetery. Members reviewed each quotation and following discussion, it was agreed to pursue with contractor 1 due to cost.

Resolved: Clerk to contact each contractor accordingly informing them of the outcome.

(ii) Grass Cutting Contract 2021/22:

Five quotations had been sought in respect of the above works at Croxdale and Hett cemeteries. Members reviewed each quotation and following discussion, it was agreed to pursue with contractor 3.

Durham County Council has been the Parish Council's grass cutting contractor for a substantial period of time at our cemeteries in Croxdale and Hett. In view of this, the Parish Council wanted to ensure the Parish was receiving value for money and therefore wished to 'test the market' for this particular contract. The outcome of this exercise was evident that the Parish Council is receiving value for money and although Durham County Council was not the cheapest price, (nor it was the most expensive), Members agreed to continue this arrangement with the current contractor.

Resolved: Clerk to contact each contractor accordingly informing them of the outcome.

101/20: Hett Flooding – Village Green:

Councillor Griffiths updated Members on the current position regarding the flooding on the village green. Plans have now been received from DCC. If this option was to be agreed, the Parish Council would need to meet the costs of this work by way of machinery hire, materials and associated legal fees with the farmer concerned. Indicative costs are yet to be determined. Councillor Adams questioned if there are any funding/grants available for flooding issues. The Clerk confirmed Parish Councils are usually not eligible for funding, however this would be looked into further. Councillor Summerson agreed to contact DEFRA for advice on general flooding issues. Councillor Ord queried if DCC as the Highways Authority are also responsible for controlling any drainage from the highway? The Clerk is to query this with DCCs engineer in the first instance.

Resolved: For Member's Information. Clerk to action points above accordingly.

102/20: Meeting Schedule 2021/22:

The schedule of meetings for 2021/22 was circulated for information and meetings agreed to be held on the fourth Wednesday of every month (except August when no meetings are held).

It was noted December's meeting is to be brought forward (due to the Christmas holidays) and for the meeting to take place on Monday 20 December 2021.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

103/20: Planning Issues:

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

- a) DM/21/00368/FPA - single storey extension to side

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

104/20. County Councillor Reports:

County Councillor Dunn did not give an update due to being in the Pre-Election period (Purdah).

County Councillor McKeon did not give an update due to being in the Pre-Election period (Purdah), with the exception from the vaccination programme is continuing at speed.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

105/20. AOB:

Chair Lane – Highways Signage:

Councillor Kerrison raised concerns of contradictory information he had received via DCC in relation to the ongoing issues on Chair Lane, Croxdale. County Councillor Dunn agreed to progress this further on behalf of the Parish Council.

Resolved: County Councillor Dunn to action.

Street Lighting, Croxdale:

Councillor Ord queried the progress on the repair works at the street lighting column behind the corner shop, Croxdale.

Resolved: Clerk to follow up progress with DCC.

Spennymoor AAP Board Representative:

Councillor Ord informed members of his intentions to resign as Spennymoor's Area Action Partnership (AAP) Board's representative. Councillor Ord is to inform the AAP accordingly.

Resolved: For Member's Information.

106/20. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 28 April 2021 at 7.00 pm.