

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 30 June 2021, 7.00 pm
Croxdale Community Centre

Parish Council Members Present:

Councillor L Griffiths (Chair), Councillor P Kerrison, Councillor K Summerson, Councillor M Ord, Councillor A Watt and Councillor I Watt.

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakley, G Hutchinson and M McKeon.

19/21. To Appoint a Chairman of the Council for the Following Municipal Year

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair of the Parish Council. One nomination was proposed and seconded: Councillor Griffiths. Members unanimously voted Councillor Griffiths be elected as Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

Resolved: Councillor Griffiths is elected as Chair of Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year.

20/21. To Complete the Signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chairman

Councillor Griffiths duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as the Chair of the Council.

21/21. To Appoint a Vice-Chairman

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice Chair of the Parish Council. One nomination was proposed and seconded: Councillor Summerson. Members unanimously voted Councillor Summerson be elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

Resolved: Councillor K Summerson is elected as Vice Chair of Parish Council for the ensuing municipal year.

22/21. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors, Adams, Burton and Garner.

23/21. Declarations of Interest:

Declaration of interests was received from Councillor Griffiths in relation to Hett Village Green.

24/21. Policing:

The Clerk had shared Policing crime stats: 7 incidents being recorded for the period April 2021 within the Parish.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

25/21. Public Participation

One member of the public attended the meeting. The resident confirmed the replacement shed is still ongoing following the allotment fire which is to be replaced from another allotment in due course. The Parish Clerk confirmed a letter was issued to the respective tenant regarding the allotment fire/replacement shed accordingly.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

26/21. Minutes:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 26 May 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

27/21. Matters Arising:

i. Hett Litter Pick:

June's litter pick took place on 11 June 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

ii. 20 MPH - Speed Limit Trial:

A response was received from DCC on 15 June 2021 which confirmed DCC has no highways funding available for the introduction of 20mph schemes and therefore as per the Council's Policy, all 20mph speed limits or zones must be financed from other sources i.e., Housing Developers, the Area Action Partnership (AAPs), Town / Parish Councils, etc. Due to the nature of the roads, main link road through the villages, it would be difficult and costly to introduce traffic calming measures that would satisfy design standards suitable for the types of traffic that need to use these roads e.g., delivery wagons, farm vehicles, HGV's etc and also not impede the side road junctions and private accesses. Therefore, due to this and the Department of Transport guidance, DCC would not be looking to implement a 20mph limit/zone in these areas. However, Members were keen to still progress this.

Resolved: The Parish Clerk is to find out an approximate indication of costs in the first instance if the Parish Council was to source this direct.

iii. Poultry Centre Drainage:

Clerk chased progress on 26 May and 27 June 2021 on whether this could result in a highways/road safety issue and still awaiting a response.

Resolved: For Members' Information

iv. Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:

The Parish Clerk confirmed this year's rent was paid on 27 May 2021. Clerk informed Members the 5-year lease agreement is to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Resolved: For Members' Information

v. Allotments:

The following matters was discussed / agreed:

The tree works at the Poultry Centre was carried out on 1 June 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information

The vacant allotment at Front Street East has now been taken over by a new tenant – all plots now taken.

Resolved: For Members' Information

Councillor Kerrison had arranged for an initial analysis and report (at a charge of £18.00) in relation to the asbestos. The area is now taped off and the required stickers in place. A quote has been received to remove the materials; however, a second quote is currently being sourced for comparison purposes.

Resolved: For Members' Information

vi. Re-location of Rubbish Bin, Croxdale:

The Parish Council was notified on 28 May 2021 that the bin outside of the shop will be taken away and a new one will be installed by the bus stop. Councillor Ord reported the owner of the Corner Shop was unhappy that the bin had been removed which has also left a hole in the pavement which could be a health and safety issue.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon agreed to report the pavement with DCC.

vii. Streetlight – Croxdale:

Repair works has been undertaken and is therefore resolved.

Resolved: For Members' Information

viii. Chair Lane, Highways Signage:

A request for the signage to be removed was issued to DCC on 10 May 2021 and currently awaiting a response. This was followed up on 6 June 2021 and County Councillor McKeon has also followed this up on behalf of the Parish Council.

Resolved: For Members' Information

ix. Seat replacement:

Clerk confirmed this remains outstanding from DCC regarding the condition of the seat at the bus stop near to the corner shop.

Resolved: For Members' Information

x. Cemetery Maintenance Moles:

The cemetery maintenance contractor confirmed the fee for the above works is £200.00 at both cemeteries and would keep existing and new infestations under control. Before Members agreed to proceed, Councillor I Watt suggested to speak to an alternative contact for comparison purposes.

Resolved: Councillor I Watt to forward contact details to the Parish Clerk.

xi. Bus stop, Croxdale:

Clerk reported further damage has been made to the glass at the bus stop near to the corner shop which was reported to DCC on 10 June 2021. Members confirmed this has now been replaced.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xii. Hett Cemetery Pointing:

Clerk confirmed the above works is to be carried out in the next 4-6 weeks; an exact date is yet to be confirmed.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xiii. Planning – Integra 61:

A response was received on 27 May 2021 from Planning confirming the Amazon site itself has its own landscaping scheme which was approved as part of the detailed approvals in relation to its reserved matters under application DM/18/01618/RM. However, in addition, the overall planning permission DM/18/01597/VOC contained landscape parameter plans proposing a 15m wide landscape buffer to much of the perimeter of the site including to the south-western edge of the development which would be closest to Hett. DCC has contacted the development team for an update on progress on this and will report back in due course.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xiv. Believe Housing – Land at Rogerson Close:

Clerk confirmed no further correspondence has been received on this issue from Believe Housing. However, a tenant from one of the allotment holders in this area has been in touch on the prospect of buying the plot. Clerk advised the tenant that the land is leased from DCC to the PC, therefore any enquiries on purchasing the allotment/land would need to be progressed with DCC, unless the PC receives any further correspondence from Believe Housing on this matter.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xv. Request for Replacement Seat/Repairs – Hett Cemetery and Sunderland Bridge:

A quote has yet to be provided from RTW Fabrications in relation to the seats at Hett Cemetery and Sunderland Bridge. Councillor Summerson suggested for the Parish Council to also look at recycled plastic benches which be more sustainable long term.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xvi. Tree Works - Sunderland Bridge:

In relation to the proposed tree works at Sunderland Bridge (Cherry Tree pruning and removal of x2 conifers), a formal application for tree works is required due to the location been in a conservation area. This application has been made to DCC and a response received on 18 June 2021; DCC has 6 weeks to consider the proposed works and if no response is received by 29 July 2021, then the Parish Council is able to carry out the works.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xvii. Hett Broadband:

Leaflets were delivered on 19 June 2021 and newsletter circulated to residents on 12 June 2021. No direct enquiries have been received to the Parish Council, however, Rymote has received a few submissions but not as many as they anticipated.

Resolved: For Members' Information

xviii. Sunderland Bridge – Pothole:

Clerk chased progress with DCC and a response was received on 5 June 2021; repairs works are to be carried out in the next 14 days. However, this still remains outstanding.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to chase progress further.

xix. Croxdale Play Park:

Councillor Summerson reported damage to the fencing at Croxdale play park on 20 June 2021, which has been reported to DCC. Councillor Kerrison reported broken glass was present within the play area.

Resolved: For Members' Information. County Councillor McKeon agreed to report the broken glass within the play area and to also chase up progress on the replacement fence.

xx. Advertising Boards – Croxdale Cemetery:

Councillor Griffiths reported an advertising board for the sale of caravans was parked in the lay-by at Croxdale Cemetery.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to report to DCC in the first instance.

xxi. Grass Cutting – Croxdale and Hett:

Councillor Griffiths reported a complaint he had received in relation to the grass cutting on the village greens at Hett. Councillor Summerson also referenced the grass cutting at the football field in Croxdale was also an issue.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to feedback to DCC in the first instance.

xxii. Street Signs, Hett:

Councillor A Watt reported the request for signage is still outstanding; County Councillor McKeon has progressed this on behalf of the Parish Council with DCC.

Resolved: County Councillor McKeon to action.

xxiii. Steel Barrier Fencing, Hett Lane:

Councillor A Watt reported the steel fencing on Hett Lane is still outstanding. The Clerk has previously reported this to DCC and advised the necessary works are scheduled.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to action accordingly.

28/21 Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

i. AAP Funding – Croxdale Cemetery:

Clerk confirmed the AAP funding has now been received for Croxdale cemetery works in the sum of £3,006.92. Only one quotation was sought for the purpose of the funding application. The remainder of the funding will go towards the tree works at Croxdale cemetery.

Resolved: Clerk to progress works accordingly.

ii. Cemetery Feedback:

Clerk informed Members that feedback has been received from a resident regarding the maintenance at Croxdale cemetery. The Parish Clerk had visited the cemetery on 26 June 2021, and confirmed the grass cutting in the cemetery and around was satisfactory, therefore it looks that works had now been complete. Clerk is to provide feedback both to DCC and the PC cemetery maintenance contractor.

A second issue was raised in relation to rubbish within the cemetery grounds, however there was no sign of littering or fly-tipping of items. However, the wheelie bin at the bottom of the cemetery was at full capacity which has been fed back to the cemetery maintenance contractor.

Resolved: For Members' Information

iii. Youth Provision:

Clerk reminded Members the Parish Council has £1,338.10 of remaining AAP funding available for youth provision and sought approval from Members to arrange for summer activities to take place during the school holidays.

Resolved: Members agreed for youth activities to be arranged and agreed to approach Croxdale Community Centre in the first instance as a suitable venue.

iv. Network Rail - Vegetation Management – Croxdale Viaduct:

The PC had received notification that works will be carried out on vegetation alongside the railway around the Croxdale Viaduct until September 2021.

Resolved: For Members' Information

29/21. Financial Matters:

(i) Internal Audit Report – 2020/21:

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's Internal Auditor, Mr G Fletcher, has examined the Council's 2020/21 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.

(ii) Parish Council's 2020/21 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 2020/21 was approved and was 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 1 July 2021 until 11 August 2021 inclusive.

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

(iii) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 31 May 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 May 2021. The current net bank balances totalled £33,491.36.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

30/21: Hett Village Green:

The Coal Authority has now confirmed the Parish Council's acceptance of the £5,000 towards the drainage works would not affect how the Coal Authority would consider future claims. With this in mind, Councillor Griffiths has discussed with HVHA and residents of West Street, and the consensus of views is that, if the Coal Authority can deal with the flooding issue to the north of the Village Hall

on the village green that affects West End and West Street as well as to the rear of the Hall with drainage solution, then this would be an acceptable way forward for now.

A further site visit took place on Wednesday 30 June 2021, with the Coal Authority, Parish Clerk, Councillor Griffiths, Brian Ogden (HVHA) and Alliance to discuss revised plans to incorporate the areas as identified above. The revised plans were in agreement by all parties; therefore, Alliance is to provide revised costings for the proposed works.

In view of the increase of costs which is yet to be confirmed, Members requested if any further contribution could be received from DCC and the Coal Authority.

Resolved: Members agreed to accept the ‘without prejudice’ offer from the Coal Authority and to progress with the proposed drainage solution works on the village green. The Parish Clerk is to contact the Coal Authority and DCC regarding their offer of financial assistance and to commence the arrangement of the land easements.

31/21: Planning Issues:

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

- a) DM/21/02112/FPA – Change of use – Croxdale Hall to a civil wedding venue

Members queried further information in relation to access, egress and parking to the site. The only suitable access is via the old Sunderland Bridge, however, since the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic, the number of vehicles parking either side of the bridge has increased dramatically. If this application is approved, and there is a large wedding, there is a possibility of traffic problems at Sunderland Bridge. Members felt this was not an objection as such, if further information is provided for re-assurance, then this may be satisfactory.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to relay feedback from Members in relation to the above planning application.

32/21. County Councillor Reports:

County Councillor McKeon gave an update in relation to: a site visit has recently taken place at Windsor Court in relation to the pavements. Go North East are changing their timetables, however Croxdale and Hett would not be affected. Consultation is currently ongoing in relation to the Boundary Review, deadline for feedback is 2 August 2021. The proposed review would mean Croxdale and Hett would be in the boundary of Sedgefield as opposed to Durham City.

Councillor Blakey provided an update in relation to: Windsor Court planting and footpath access which is currently ongoing. Councillor Hutchinson provided an update in relation to: grass cutting – this has been an issue across all areas, not just Croxdale and Hett. DCC staff are unable to use certain equipment due to a health and safety issue. The pothole at Sunderland Bridge is to be reported further.

Resolved: Parish Clerk is to provide further information to Members in relation to the Boundary Review and respond to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.

33/21. AOB:

Parking of Vans, Croxdale:

Councillor Kerrison reported the parking of vans on the grass verge at Front Street.

Resolved: Parish Clerk to report to DCC in the first instance.

34/21. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 28 July 2021 at 7.00 pm at Croxdale Community Centre.