

**Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council**  
**Wednesday 26 January 2022, 7.00 pm**  
**Hett Village Hall**

**Parish Council Members Present:**

Councillor L Griffiths (Chair), Councillor P Adams, Councillor S Burton, Councillor J Garner, Councillor P Kerrison, Councillor M Ord and Councillor A Watt and I Watt.

**Also Present:**

County Councillors J Blakey and G Hutchinson.

**92/21. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies of absence were received from County Councillor M McKeon.

**93/21. Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Stephen Burton**

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Stephen Burton read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Parish Councillor.

**Resolved: That Stephen Burton is now a Member of the Parish Council.**

**94/21. Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**95/21. Policing:**

The Clerk shared Policing crime stats: 4 incidents being recorded for the period November 2021 within the Parish.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**96/21. Public Participation**

No members of the public attended the meeting.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**97/21. Minutes:**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 24 November 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**98/21. Financial Matters:**

**(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 31 December 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 December 2021. The current net bank balances totalled £34,686.06.

**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 neighbouring Parish Councils for comparison. Following discussion, it was agreed not to increase the charges for 2022/23.

**Resolved: The current Cemetery fees and charges will be effective from 1 April 2022, subject to an annual review.**

**(iii) Fees & Charges Review – Allotment and Garages:**

The fees and charges for Croxdale and Hett allotment and garages were reviewed for implementation from 2023 in order to give a year's notice to allotment holders. Following discussion, it was agreed to bring the following allotments more in line with other plots as follows for 2023/24.

1. Front Street East - £20.00 (currently £14.00)
2. Front Street East x1 - £20.00 (currently £18.00)
3. Rear Rogerson Terrace - £20.00 (currently £14.00)
4. Rear Rogerson Close - £25.00 (currently £22.00)

It was proposed the charges for points 1 - 3 would be further increased to £25.00 next year for implementation in 2024/25.

The charges for garages remained the same.

**Resolved: Clerk to write to all allotment / garage holders in due course.**

**(iv) Fees & Charges Review – Croxdale Inn Car Park Rent:**

The car park rental income was reviewed and it was proposed for the fee to remain the same at £765.00 PA.

**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 2022/23 charges accordingly.**

**(v) Precept Setting 2022/23:**

The Clerk prepared a number of proposals of Parish Precept recommendations for 2022/23 budget for Members' consideration. It was noted, regarding the Parish Council's Tax Base, has increased from 291.2 to 291.5 for 2022/23 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 2022/23 of £1,398.00 compared to £1,222.00 in 2021/22.

Following much consideration and discussion, it was agreed not to increase its Precept and to maintain at £17,500.00 for the financial year 2022/23. The maintain is to ensure there are sufficient funds in 2022/23 on reflection of careful forward planning for budget pressures, identified projects and use of reserves that the Parish Council has identified.

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

#### **99/21. Parish Council Co-option:**

The Clerk reported no applications were received with regard to the vacancy of Parish Councillor for Sunderland Bridge Ward. It was noted x1 expression of interest was received via email but no formal application was received, despite reminders being issued.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to re-advertise vacancy accordingly.**

#### **100/21. Parish Works for Approval - Croxdale Cemetery**

Three quotations had been sought in respect of the above works at Croxdale cemetery. It was noted a fourth contractor was contacted; however, no quotation had been received. Members reviewed each quotation and following discussion, it was agreed to pursue with contractor 2 due to cost and the level of detail provided within the quotation compared to others.

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

#### **101/21. Matters Arising:**

**i. Hett Litter Pick:**

January's litter pick took place on 12 January 2022.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**ii. Hett Village Green:**

Land easements are still ongoing following queries from the landowner's solicitors regarding the drainage plans. This is being looked at by the Drainage Team at DCC.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**iii. Hett Moor Solar Project:**

The aerial photos were received by Lightsource BP which were circulated and added to our website for information. On 11 January 2022, Lightsource confirmed their company policy is for online community events only due to Covid-19. Regarding the community benefit offer, confirmation was received from CDALC that regardless of the amount, the legal advice remains as is. Discussion took place on accepting the offer at this stage; Members preferred to make a decision once the outcome of the Planning Application is known.

**Resolved: Clerk to inform Lightsource BP accordingly and to also check if there are any associated deadlines in accepting the offer.**

**iv. Allotments:**

The site visit to inspect the allotment is still to be arranged. To date, there are x8 rent collections outstanding (deadline 31 January 2022). The Clerk informed Members no enquiries/applications for the role of Allotment Manager had been received from allotment holders.

**Resolved: Clerk to issue reminders to allotment holders as required.**

**v. Defibrillator - Croxdale Community Centre:**

The PC has arranged for an electrician to inspect the defibrillator and cabinet on 28 January 2022. It was noted the defibrillator at the corner shop was recently used following a fatality in Croxdale. This may result in a petition from local residents to pursue with a reduced

speed restriction to 30MPH. County Councillor Blakey confirmed she was meeting with DCC on this issue on 27 January 2022.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**vi. Parish Walkabout – 3 December 2021**

County Councillor McKeon and Parish Councillors attended a walkaround the Parish and looked at the following issues:

- Road to Hett – Metal Bridge
- Footpath – Tudhoe School
- Brambles overgrown at Croxdale near to the footpath at the roundabout
- The bus stop near to the corner shop has weeds overgrowing
- Overgrown Bush, Croxdale
- Sunderland Bridge Tree
- 20mph speed limit pilot/Highways issues

With regard to the tree at Sunderland Bridge, County Councillor Blakey confirmed via feedback from DCC, this is on private property and any works would be subject to a tree preservation order. It was agreed to contact Croxdale Estate as landowners highlighting the tree as a safety concern and potential damage to neighbouring properties.

**Resolved: County Councillor McKeon to provide an update at the next meeting. Clerk to contact Croxdale Estate accordingly.**

**vii. Bench Restoration Works:**

The above works did not take place before Christmas due to the contractor being off sick as a result of an injury. Works have been re-scheduled to the end of February.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**viii. Hett Caravan:**

For Members information, a complaint was received in early December via Councillor Griffiths that a resident's caravan had returned on the village green. Letters were exchanged with the outcome being, the caravan has now been moved to the front of his property, and no longer on the village green.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**ix. Damaged Remembrance Sunday Cross – Croxdale:**

Clerk informed Members there was a delay with the order/delivery for the replacement cross, however, this has now been received by DCC and will be delivered to Councillor Garner shortly.

**Resolved: For Members' Information**

**x. Flower Tubs at Sunderland Bridge:**

Confirmation was received that a resident of Hett supplies and plants the flowers in the village planters, however, due to personal reasons, the resident won't have the time to spend growing the plants and therefore unable to look after the planters this year. The resident also maintains the willow at the pond 2-3 times a year and painting the stones white when needed. Therefore, the PC will need to look at flower provisions for Hett and Sunderland Bridge this year. It was agreed to look at all flower provisions for the Parish, including Croxdale Cemetery and Croxdale.

Regarding the willow at Hett pond, it was agreed to approach the cemetery maintenance contractor in the first instance to determine the cost to the removal (or pruning) of the willow.

**Resolved: Clerk to contact DCC and an alternative contact for the provision of supply and planting of flowers throughout the Parish. Clerk to contact the cemetery maintenance contractor regarding Hett pond.**

#### **102/21 Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:**

##### **i. Northern Saints Interpretation Boards:**

Correspondence was received from DCC in relation to the walking routes of the Northern Saints Trails detailing the route of one of the trails passes through our parish (Sunderland Bridge). Visit County Durham have been successful in a funding bid to provide a series of interpretation boards along the routes. The boards will provide information on the route itself, as well as highlighting local points of interest. Planning permission will be required for the boards and it is anticipated the application will be submitted in the next month. Members had no initial views/feedback of the proposed location.

**Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to inform DCC of the Parish Council's support in principle.**

#### **103/21: Planning Issues:**

No new planning applications was discussed.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

#### **104/21. County Councillor Reports:**

County Councillor Blakey gave an update in relation to: a site visit took place at Hett Lane re a drainage issue and update on the incident took place at Croxdale, following complaints from residents re contractors working at Woodview. Both matters are now resolved.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

#### **105/21. AOB:**

##### **Diversion – A167:**

Councillor Garner commented on the additional traffic on the A167 due to drainage works and in addition more recently following closure of the A1.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

##### **Hett Noticeboard:**

Councillor Griffiths questioned who owns the noticeboard at Hett on the village green following enquiries from Hett Village Hall Association (HVHA) as it appears to be leaking and in need of repair. Members believed the noticeboard is owned and should be maintained by HVHA as key holders.

**Resolved: For Members' Information.**

**106/21. Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 at 7.00 pm at Croxdale Community Centre.