

MINUTES OF CORNFORTH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: **OCTOBER 2018**

Minutes of the Meeting of Cornforth Parish Council held at 7.00pm, in the Community Centre, Cornforth, on Monday 8th October 2018.

Present: Councillor Mr. A. Hodgson and

Councillors: Mr. C. Baker, Mrs. P. Crathorne, Mrs. H. P. Drew, Dr. S. C. Drew, Mrs. J. Grafton, Mr. C. Hodgson, Mrs. S. Traynor, Mr. R Vaughan and Mrs. M. Walker.

Apologies: Councillors: J. Grafton, Mr. P Metcalfe, Mrs. M. Poole, Mr. R Poole and Mr. M. Simpson.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The above apologies were accepted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs. H.P. Drew and Dr. S. C. Drew declared an interest in item 12 (as Members of The Woodland Trust. The item was for information only.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September, which had been circulated with the agenda, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising that did not appear on the agenda.

5. POLICE LIAISON

The Vice Chairman reported that the burglars associated with the break-ins at Salisbury Crescent had been caught. Issues of speeding around Salisbury Crescent remain. There had been an incident of shop-lifting at Anelka News. There was to be no meeting in October.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents were in attendance at the meeting and asked to speak on the following issues:

- i) Halloween Party - Mrs. Walton, of Music Activities and Movement, attended the meeting to ask for help in organising a disco Halloween Party. The best safe place for such an event was in the Community Centre. The event would be ticketed and refreshments provided within this charge. NE Entertainments would provide the sound equipment and it would be monitored and insured. The charge would be £350 for a 2hr. party.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (CONT'D)

- ii) Fireworks Display – Mrs. Walton asked for help in organising a fireworks display.
Again the use of the Community Centre was proposed. The Community Centre Management Committee would be considering the request on 9th October 2018. SAG had been advised and volunteer marshals would be trained by DCC.

The items were discussed later in the agenda.

7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

- (i) The Chairman reported that he had received a reply from Arriva with regard to the No. 56 bus service. The changes to the route in Cornforth will go ahead. Complaints to be directed to Mr. Stuart Woods at Durham County Council.
- (ii) A letter had been received from Cornforth Partnership seeking a contribution towards core costs. The Partnership had been successful in obtaining funds towards projects of £280,000 over three years, but the support requested was for the running of Cornforth House, from which the projects are delivered. Members requested a copy of the accounts and that the Chief Executive attend November's meeting.

8. AAP ISSUES

The Chairman reported that of the 20 projects Cornforth had been allocated £10K for work by the Partnership. The next meeting of the AAP would be held next week.

9. COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES.

Our County Council representative, Mrs. P. Crathorne, reported that the savings demanded of the County Council in the next budgeting round would be very challenging, but the LCTSS would remain. The issues with 16 Salisbury Crescent was ongoing. A meeting had been arranged with senior DCC staff to resolve the Glebe Villas issue: probate law does allow action to be taken and recovered from an estate.

10. COMMUNITY/PARISH PLAN.

The documents provided by Durham Community Action at the last meeting were attached for Members. Councillor Mrs. Marie Walker advised that Mrs. Wilson had been ill, but that progress would be made with an event and the distribution of questionnaires.

11. PLANNING MATTERS AND APPLICATIONS FROM DURHAM COUNTY'S WEEKLY LISTS.

The Clerk reported that the schedules of planning applications received by Durham County Council, up to and including 1st October 2018, included the following proposals for development within Cornforth Parish:

11. PLANNING MATTERS AND APPLICATIONS FROM DURHAM COUNTY'S WEEKLY LISTS (CONT'D)

- i) DM/18/02733/FPA – Mr. B. Midgely – 9 Maple Grove, Cornforth – single storey side extension.
- ii) DM/18/02685/FPA – Mr. I. Jackson – Melton House, 11 Railway Terrace, Cornforth – Removal of 1 sycamore and replanting. Crown reduction and thinning to a second sycamore by 20% and removal of a limb to the north. Both trees in the garden area.

The County Council had made no decisions on planning applications within the Parish since the last meeting. Members resolved not to make any comments with regard to the applications.

12. WOODLAND TRUST PROPOSALS.

The Chairman reported that the Woodland Trust proposes to acquire an area of 11 hectares to the west of Cornforth and to plant trees upon it. The proposals were the subject of an event held on Sunday 7th October 2018, which the Chairman attended. A request had been logged to extend the proposed pathways through to the railway crossing to Ferryhill. Work will start in 2019.

The interest of Councillors Mrs. Drew and Dr. Drew were noted, but this item was for information only and they were not asked to leave meeting.

13. REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH LIVIN'.

The Clerk reported that he had written to Livin' asking a senior officer to attend this meeting to discuss the condition of houses in the village and the possibility of three bedroomed houses being built on land held by the Housing Association. A reply had been received offering a meeting with the Clerk and the Chairman to discuss these issues. Members asked that the meeting be held before the November meeting.

14. RoSPA INSPECTION OF THE MEMORIAL PARK.

The Clerk reported that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had carried out an inspection of the surfacing, fencing, barriers and equipment within the Memorial Park on 22nd September 2018. It had issued a 50 page detailed report with photographs and recommendations. Monitoring and some repairs are recommended, but overall it regards the park as very good in terms of its equipment for all age groups from toddlers to senior aged teens. It was agreed that Members of the Recreation and Amenities Committee be sent a copy of the report and that they meet with officers of Durham County Council and our ground maintenance contractor to discuss action to implement the Society's recommendations, as well as seeking their input on any need for action on the current landscaping and possible improvements to equipment. At the same time, it was agreed that input be sought from Cornforth Partnership, the School and other local groups on proposals to improve the park and that the views of residents be sought, prior to the Parish Council seeking design expertise.

15. TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS.

The Clerk reported that a free course for Councillors on how to avoid getting involved in bullying and harassment complaints was to be held on 16th October 2018 in Shotton Hall, Peterlee from 10am to 4pm. As the closing date for places was 7th October 2018, the Clerk has reserved three places for Members of this Council. Councillors Mrs. H. P. Drew, Mrs. J. Grafton and Mrs. M. Walker were agreed as the attendees.

16. GDPR AND RELATED POLICIES.

The Clerk reported that he had been working on policies to be adopted by this Council in response to the General Data Protection Regulations. Draft documents were circulated at the meeting so that Members could consider them prior to adoption at the November meeting.

17. HARVEY V LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL.

The Clerk reported that the Monitoring Officer for Durham County Council had prepared a briefing note following the High Court ruling on the above case which affects the use of Grievance Procedures and Codes of Conduct for Members. A copy of the paper had been circulated with agenda for Members' information.

18. ALTERATION OF NO.56 BUS SERVICE IN CORNFORTH.

The Clerk reported that following the September meeting, he had made enquiries of Durham County Council about proposed changes by Arriva to the No. 56 bus service. The County staff confirmed that the company intended to reroute the service and that this would have the effect of disadvantaging elderly residents in Chester Crescent. The County Council has pointed this out to Arriva, but has limited influence in that this route has no County Council subsidy. The reasoning behind the change is to reduce the journey time, thereby improving punctuality and meeting the Traffic Commissioners standards. The Clerk has written to Arriva objecting to the proposals and asking the company to reconsider the matter: such a small change in journey time is hardly likely to achieve a significant improvement, but disadvantages many residents. A copy of the letter had been sent to the County Council, but no response has been received from either party. This item was also covered under correspondence received separately by the Chairman.

19. REQUESTS FOR DEFIBRILATORS IN THE VILLAGE.

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had received requests for external defibrillators in Cornforth. Those available in the village are within buildings. Members' views were sought on the provision of two external defibrillators, one in the High Street and the other by the shops at The Oval. Members resolved to seek the advice of the St. John's Ambulance Service.

20. REQUEST TO FORM A FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A Member had asked that this item be placed on the agenda. The Clerk advised that such a proposal had not been considered since the election of this Council. Councillor Mrs. Walker asked that the item be considered at the end of the meeting once the public had left. This was not accepted and discussion went ahead. Mrs. Walker stated that she felt that the Parish Council should have a separate Finance Committee. At present the whole Council acts to approve financial issues. Mrs. Walker argued that such a Committee would help avoid poor budget forecasting and late banking by the Clerk as well as his "substitute accounting" of Council asset values. She also claimed that irregularities had occurred in the publication of the Annual Return, in this and previous years, over which Mr. Ross Woodley would be speaking to the Clerk. This led to some confusion as not all Members knew that Mr. Woodley was a member of staff attached to Mazars, our external auditor. Mrs. Walker attempted to circulate papers relating to the conduct of the Chairman, which caused further confusion. Her claims led to heated exchanges with Councillor Mrs. P. Crathorne, causing the Chairman to intervene. Councillor C. Hodgson called for the debate to concentrate on the issue in hand. The Chairman asked Councillor Mrs. Walker if she was proposing the formation of a Finance Committee. She did so and the Chairman asked for a seconder to the proposal. As none came forward the motion fell.

21. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

- i) SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018.

Receipts		£	Cheque No.
NIL			
Payments			
C. D. A. L. C.	Membership fee	409.95	929
Altogether Greener	Ground maintenance (period 5)	2,648.60	930
R. A. Sunman	Allowances and expenses (Aug)	100.90	931
R. A. Sunman	Salary (Sept)	666.10	S/O
	Total Expenditure	3,825.55	
	Net Expenditure	3,825.55	

The above schedule was agreed.

ii) BANK RECONCILIATION STATEMENT – POSITION AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2018.

The bank reconciliation statement for the above period was circulated at the meeting. The Vice Chairman, who in the absence of Councillor R. Poole had examined the bank statement for the same period, advised that the figures were correct. The schedule was approved and in accordance with the request of the internal auditor signed by the Chairman.

iii) REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

a) GREAT NORTH AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE.

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from the above service for a donation. It was agreed that a sum of £250 be donated.

b) MUSIC ACTIVITIES AND MOVEMENT.

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from an embryonic Community Interest Company offering to organise events in Cornforth for financial and other assistance. The organisation wished to hold a Halloween Party in the village and a firework display. Following on from discussions held under item 6, Members' views were sought on providing financial assistance. It was agreed that should a venue be available the Parish Council would meet the costs of hire for the Halloween party. It was felt that issue of a firework display had been received too late for the detailed consideration it demanded and would best be put to the Parish Council again next year, before the January precept meeting.

iv) ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2017/18.

The Clerk reported that the year-end audit had been completed and the external auditors, Mazars, had asked that the Council ensures that all income is banked within one month of receipt and that it alters its method of reporting with regard to bank reconciliation and the carrying forward of monies in the Annual Return. Mazars also asked that we address two minor issues of improvement for 2018/19. The Internal Control Objective F should be ticked as "Not Covered" as we have no petty cash transactions and in future the approval of the budget should be explicitly minuted. The notice of completion of the audit has been displayed as required on the notice board and the web site, alongside the proscribe parts of the Annual Return.

NOTE: At the close of the meeting Members were asked if they had any items for inclusion on a future agenda. None were requested.

To all Members of the Parish Council.

Yours Sincerely, Ray Sunman, Parish Clerk: 22nd October 2018.

Signed:

Dated: