

Cornhill Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held on 16th September 2013, at the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. William Carrington (Chairman), Mick Plunkett, Marie Gillespie, Anthony Jewels, Claudio Rickard, County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, Police Officer Mark Lynn, Parishioners Stephen and Karen Sproat, Clerk Angela Hallam-Baker.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. David Buckle.

2. Appointment of Deputy Chairman:

Mick Plunkett was appointed Deputy Chairman, proposed by Anthony Jewels, seconded by Marie Gillespie, and agreed unanimously.

3. Parishioners' questions:

Mr. Sproat posed the following question, which had been circulated to the councillors prior to the meeting:

I would like to know the stance the Parish Council intends to take regarding planning application 13/01767/Ful (new farm office at New Heaton Farm).

The reason for the question is the fact that the application is flawed and full of inaccuracies.

My main concern is the fact that the plans of the old building look nothing like how the original building looked. In my mind the plans have been changed to ensure the New Building can be built to what the applicant wants, rather than reflect what was originally there. What worries me most is that the east side of the building had a solid wall and the new plans are for a huge picture window looking on to my land. Also, I do not understand why a second farm office is required.

Mr. Sproat spoke to the meeting saying that the plan shows the house drawn on the original build, which has now been knocked down. It is in the same area, but on a larger footprint, and showing no height measure..

The existing farm office has apparently been there for some 22 years, although the statement with the application says that the farm does not have an office. It is alleged that a farm office on Mr. Laing's land in Derbyshire was turned into a dwelling house, and Mr. Sproat feels that a condition of the planning permission should be that this office cannot be turned into a house. He has sent these comments to the Planning Officer.

The planning application had been circulated to the Parish Councillors, one of whom, who lives near to the site, had commented that the building appeared to be a very elaborate office, and that planning permission for a house between Stickle Heaton and New Heaton had previously been turned down. He also stated that Mr. Laing had recently advertised for a farm manager at New Heaton. These comments had been forwarded to the Planning Officer.

Mr. Sproat also brought up the subject of the septic tank which is used by all the New Heaton residents including the farm. Mr. Laing has said he is putting in a new septic tank for his new agricultural building and new office, but that he will also break into the existing one.

There has also been a problem with the water supply since January 2012. Mr. Laing has apparently increased his herd of milking cows from 200 to 400, although the previous farmer had stated that he was not able to increase his herd to this number because of the size of the borehole.

It was reported that the water supply to the dwelling houses has regularly been off from 7.00am to 10.00am over a period of a month. It has also been off for two whole days, and on another occasion for 23.5 hours. The new agricultural building housing the cows, was apparently intended as a refuge for sick cows, but there does not appear to be any sign of this.

Following discussion, the Chairman suggested that a letter should be sent to Mr. Laing asking him to clarify the matters in question.

The clerk had received a message from Derek and Veronica Sheldrick thanking the Parish Council (in fact, Mick Plunkett) for re-painting the milestone opposite Milestone Cottage.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2013 were agreed and signed.

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

i) School playing field – Mick Plunkett had discussed this matter with PC Dan Perry and Mr. Robbins of NCC, who are both prepared to continue to allow youngsters to use the field, provided they keep to certain rules. These would include keeping away from the school building, vacating the field by a certain time, and that no bad language be used. The windows at the back of the school were boarded, but it was agreed that front ones should not. The Parish Councillors agreed to this and that official notice boards should be placed in strategic positions.

ii) Future of Cornhill School – Cllr. Watkin stated that there had been no further progress with the future of the school, and that the Parish Council would be notified of any plans. If the land were to be used for social housing, consultation with the PC would take place. Cllr. Watkin said that a few affordable houses were available @ £260 per month, but that there was no money available from the Government to build more. Affordable houses being planned for Belford will be paid for by the tax-payer, and will be of no benefit to the wider community.

iii) Tourist Information Board – the clerk said she had not had the time to work on the updating of this, but would do so during the winter.

iv) Internet Café phone line – the Village Shop had decided not to continue with this and instead add the facility to its existing line. The clerk had cancelled the direct debit payment.

v) Flower tubs - two tubs and plants requested by Station Gardens had been purchased. The residents were pleased with this and are looking after them.

vi) Ragwort – the only concentration of ragwort in the village was on a small piece of privately-owned land, and this appeared to have been treated with weed killer.

vii) Footpath beside No. 1 St. Helen's Gardens – Cllr. Watkin had arranged for a white line to be painted beside the footpath, and the clerk had had the flower tub moved to form an obstruction to prevent parking.

6. Police Report:

PC Mark Lynn reported that the average speed in Donaldson's Lodge had been logged at 39mph which counted it as a speed critical area. Hand held cameras would therefore be operated at irregular intervals.

There were complaints about the speeding logging trucks on the B6350. These were driven by self-employed drivers, and registration numbers, date and time of day would need to be noted before they could be cautioned.

He was asked about the outcome of the fatal accident near Wark, but said that as yet there had not been any information as to the cause of the accident.

PC Lynn reported that he had had six callouts for domestic disputes and a stolen car had been recovered in Cornhill..

7. County Cllr's Report:

Dial-a-Ride - Cllr. Watkin stated that a meeting with the Transport Officer and Dial-a-Ride was scheduled for 9.30am on Tuesday, 17th September, in Berwick. This service required subsidies from parish councils. The matter had already been discussed by the Parish Council at earlier meetings when it had been agreed that the current two-hourly bus service between Galashiels and Berwick via Cornhill was quite adequate.

Footpaths – Cllr. Watkin noted that the clerk had already requested a footpath between the roundabout and the drive to The Stables, and the request for a path along the side of the B6350 from the War Memorial and across the bridge by the Old Mill had been communicated to NCC several years ago. **This was considered to be the more important path**, and as it would narrow the road, it was agreed that a priority one-way system should be adopted. This could be in the form of traffic lights, or simply and more cheaply, signs giving priority to traffic leaving Cornhill. Cllr. Watkin said he had the sum of £10,000 available for his parish councils, and would be happy to put half of this towards work to improve the safety of pedestrians, and in view of this, the clerk would write to Highways to ask for the work to be done as a matter of urgency.

8. Financial Report:

The external audit for the year ended 31st March 2013 had been completed and no matters were found which required further explanation. The Annual Return, which had already been agreed, was available for inspection, and was approved and accepted by the Parish Council. A public notice would be displayed for 14 days to allow members of the public to view the Return.

The clerk distributed a note of the financial transactions since the last meeting, showing a bank balance of £2,415.95.

9. Cornhill Community Website:

The Chairman said his employees had not had the time to re-build the website, and he suggested that Alan Cater should be given the job of storyboarding, from which a grant could be applied for, and the website updated. He would speak to Alan to arrange this.

10. Tweed Horizons cycle rides booklet:

David Buckle had received requests from Selkirk and Border towns for further supplies of this booklet. He still had a supply, but had asked that the PC might consider reprinting. It was agreed that this matter should be left until the next meeting when David would be present.

11. Any other business:

- **Joint County Council & Parish/Town Council Meeting on Monday, 14th October, at 6pm at the Northumberland Hall, Alnwick** – this would be mainly concerned with car parking. In Berwick parking at the Station was particularly difficult, and there were suggestions by the Town Council that the area on the other side of the tracks should be made available.

It was stated that the annual parking tickets, eligible for use throughout the County, were now transferable.

- **Flower tubs** – the purchase price of the tubs for Station Gardens and Donaldson’s Lodge, plus all the plants for the two villages, had been quite considerable, and it was agreed that the clerk should draft a letter to all the residents asking them if they would be agreeable to providing and caring for plants in tubs outside their homes. Cornhill-in-Bloom had provided the plants in previous years, and the clerk would consult with them first.
- **Rubbish on railway line footpath** – a bonfire had been lit on the railway line as part of a birthday party resulting in a pile of partially burnt paper, and this had attracted complaints from walkers. Photographs of the litter would be forwarded to the land-owners in order that they could deal with the matter.
- **Locked gate on public footpath** – complaints had been received that a gate had been locked and wired on the Muggers Loan path (County Highway U2) Melkington to New Heaton. This would be referred to in the letter to Mr. Laing, mentioned above.
- **Joinery work** – the planks on the bench beside the post box were in need of replacing. The clerk would ask Dennis Pereira for a quote, and also remind him again about the new noticeboard required for Donaldson’s Lodge.

12. Parishioners’ Question Time on agenda items:

Mr. Sproat, in his capacity of IT Test Manager, offered to test the Cornhill website when it is set up. This was agreed and Mr. Sproat thanked.

13. Date of next meeting: Monday, 18th November 2013, at 6.00pm at the Village Hall.

This concluded the business of the meeting which was closed at 7.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....