

## Cornhill Parish Council

### Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014, at the Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs. Mick Plunkett (Chairman), David Buckle, Marie Gillespie, County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, PC Dan Perry (Northumbria Police), Phil Massey (Cornhill Church), Parishioners: Veronica Sheldrick, Susie Dorrian, Clerk Angela Hallam-Baker.

**1. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs. Keith Bailey and Claudio Rickard.

#### **2. Police Report:**

PC Perry informed the meeting that there had been no reported crime or anti-social behaviour in the Cornhill during the last two months, although there had been numerous thefts of quad bikes, particularly in the Rothbury area. An organised group from Stockton had been found responsible.

PC Perry had corresponded with NCC regarding speeding vehicles on the A697 between the roundabout and the 30mph sign past Station Gardens, and was trying to get monitoring strips laid across the road.

The Police were still monitoring speeding in Donaldson's Lodge and were finding numerous vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

Northumbria Police were re-introducing the Community Speed Watch scheme and training individuals to use the hand-held speed cameras – details on their website.

With the summer holidays now in full swing and therefore a large increase in the population, PC Perry urged people to be vigilant and ensure doors, windows and sheds are securely locked when they are away from home and possessions not left on view in cars.

#### **3. Parishioners' Question Time:**

Mrs. Sheldrick brought up the following matters:

- **Poor quality of grass cutting** – this was not being cut with sufficient frequency and not mulched, therefore leaving long grass lying.

The Chairman had taken the opportunity to discuss this with Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, Terry Garnick, who had told him that the two extra cuts mentioned at the last meeting, could be undertaken at any time at a cost of £200 each.

It was noted that grass was growing at a high rate this year, and that private individuals were having to mow their lawns at least one a week. This could not be done in public areas within the village where the frequency is 10-14 days.

The footpath between Cramond Hill road end and Donaldson's Lodge was also discussed. The tarmac path is covered and the hedge encroaching on to the verge.

The Chairman said that one of the DL residents was confined to a wheel chair and had to use the side of the road, and two others had difficulty in walking. He would therefore get back to Mr. Garnick to ask what could be done.

The hedgerow beside the Cornhill to Coldstream path needs pruning – the clerk to remind the farmer about this. Also, the bushes overhanging the church wall and those beside Croft Cottages were in need of trimming – the clerk to ask NCC to do this. It was reported that hedges could not be cut until 1<sup>st</sup> September when birds had finished nesting.

- **Tourist Information Board** – it was agreed that this needed to be replaced with an up-to-date version covering local sites of interest. Mrs. Sheldrick advised against using sponsored advertisements for accommodation, etc., as these soon became out of date, and it was a full-time job chasing up sponsors. It was agreed that the clerk would contact Northumberland Tourism and ask them if they would renew it.
- **Armistice Day Service at the War Memorial** – it had been noticed that there was no representative of the PC present last year, and Mrs. Sheldrick suggested that this might be remedied, and a wreath provided by the PC, particularly this year on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Great War. The British Legion would apparently provide a wreath at a small cost. The clerk would enquire about this.

4. **The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014** were agreed and signed.

#### 5. **Matters arising from the minutes:**

- **Speeding traffic** – Cllr. Watkin said that the painting of double white lines in Donaldson's Lodge and the erection of a "Pedestrians in Road" sign on the Wark road had been agreed by NCC. The clerk was asked to send a reminder and enquire when the work is likely to be done.
- **Litter picking** – the stretch from the roundabout to Donaldson's Lodge had been cleared on 14<sup>th</sup> July by Cllr. Plunkett and Gillespie, the clerk and Mrs. Sheldrick. It was agreed that at a later date the verges from Donaldson's Lodge to Tillmouth Park should be cleared.
- **Fallen tree by railway bridge** – reminders had been sent to NCC asking for this to be removed. The clerk would send a further reminder.
- **Planting** – in order to avoid expensive and time-consuming watering during the hot weather, it was agreed to plant hardy, evergreen shrubs on the roundabout in the autumn.

#### 6. **Financial Report:**

The clerk distributed a note of the financial transactions since the last meeting, showing a current balance of £3,073.94.

#### 7. **Planning:**

**Application 14/00550/FUL** – planning permission granted for hardstanding for parking and new vehicular access via Knowe Head, with provision that the existing vehicular access on to the Wark Road is permanently closed and the kerb and footway re-instated. Also, permission for a first floor extension over the existing ground floor lounge, although this appears now to be a pitched roof replacing the flat roof.

**Application 14/01823/SCREEN** Wind Turbine 82m tip height on land east of Cramond Hill Farm – pending consideration; not receiving comments and nothing can be done at this stage.

#### 8. **Transfer of Play Area and Inspections:**

The transfer is almost complete pending the publication of two announcements in the Berwick Advertiser on 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July.

Alan Cater has passed his RPII Play Park Operational Inspectors examinations and will be available to carry out inspections from the beginning of August. It had already been agreed by the PC that they would ask him to undertake the Cornhill Play Park inspections.

The training course, paid for by Carham Parish Council, had cost £495.00 plus £86.40, and an email from the clerk suggests that perhaps Cornhill PC might be willing to make a contribution towards the costs.

This was agreed in principle, but the clerk was asked first to enquire precisely what the inspections would entail, how frequent they would be and whether Alan would undertake the annual inspection.

#### **9. Cornhill Community Website:**

This was being kept up to date with PC information, Newsletter, etc., and any topical items. The four Cornhill Walks had been added, and Cllr.Plunkett agreed to send a photograph of Tillmouth Village Hall and details of the forthcoming Flower and Dog Show.

#### **10. Parish Views on Rural Housing questionnaire:**

This, which appeared to be a national survey forming part of the evidence base for the Rural Housing Policy Scheme, had been passed on by the Glendale Gateway Trust. The relevant boxes were ticked by agreement with the councillors, and the document would be forwarded to the email address supplied.

#### **11. Post Sixteen Transport:**

In spite of huge opposition to the imposing of transport costs for over 16 age school and college students, NCC had voted by only four votes to levy these charges. The finance, supplied by the Government, could be allocated either for transport or for education, and Cllr. Watkin said the County Council had chosen to put it towards the schools and colleges. The 16 year-olds living in rural areas had now to decide during the summer holidays whether they could afford to return to school or try to get some work.

#### **12. County Councillor's Report:**

Cllr. Watkin said he was very disappointed in the post sixteen transport decision, which would affect a large number of students. Journeys to school and back now had a maximum time limit of 1.5 hours, but journey times had been as much as 4-5 hours in some cases. The rural geography of Northumberland is the problem, and there is talk of providing extended education in the north of the county.

#### **13. Any other business:**

**i) Executive positions on the County Council** – Mrs. Sheldrick enquired whether all the roles had now been filled. Cllr. Watkin confirmed that they had, and that the position of Chief Executive had been scrapped, the senior officer in charge being the Treasurer. Cllr. Watkin left the meeting at this point.

**ii) Archiving Parish records** – parish councils had been invited to archive their records at the Records Office at Woodhorn. Cllr. Buckle had many years' correspondence stored at his home, which he would be glad to re-house. It was therefore agreed that these files should be moved to Woodhorn. The clerk to arrange this. More recent records since 2006 were currently stored at the clerk's home, and it was agreed these should be kept locally for the time being for easy reference.

**iii) Clerk's remuneration** – Cllr. Gillespie suggested that the clerk might be given a pay rise, since she was still being paid the same amount as when she took over the job in 2006. This was left for the Chairman to discuss with the clerk and discussed further at the next meeting.

**iv) Traffic calming** – there was still concern over speeding traffic in the centre of the village, particularly as there are so many large commercial vehicles parked near to the village shop

obscuring pedestrians' view for crossing the road. It was suggested that a solar-powered flashing sign might be purchased to be situated at the south-east end of the village. When this had been discussed in the past, Cllr. Watkin had offered to contribute towards the cost. The clerk would follow this up.

**v) Neighbourhood Plan for Glendale** - the Chairman and Clerk had attended a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July hosted by Wooler Parish Council to discuss the possibility of the Glendale parishes grouping together to develop a long-term (10-20 years) planning policy. It was pointed out that there must be one central parish chosen, and that this would be Wooler, being the largest one. Funding of £7,000 would be available to be shared amongst all the parishes. Doddington PC stated that as Wooler is an urban parish and the other parishes rural, there would be a divergence. However, each parish representative was asked to discuss the matter with their councillors and decide whether they consider it feasible to proceed with a joint Neighbourhood Plan for Glendale. A meeting with representatives of NCC would be arranged to obtain further information.

**vi) Parishes Meeting** – the Chairman had attended a meeting of the local parishes and NCC officers on 16<sup>th</sup> July at Ancroft. The discussions were mainly on communications and the time it takes to get things done. It was agreed that these meetings should take place six-monthly, and that an hour before the start of the meetings should be allowed for parish representatives to talk to the officers about matters relating to their parishes. As mentioned above, the Chairman took this opportunity to discuss grass-cutting in Cornhill, and it was pointed out that volunteers are now taking on some of the jobs that were traditionally done by the County Council.

**vii) Cornhill Church** – Phil Massey had unfortunately had to leave the meeting before this agenda item, but the possibility was discussed of putting tourist information on the table at the back of the church, in addition to leaflets, flyers, etc., of interest to the local population. Cllr. Plunkett agreed to ask Rev. Kelsey if he would be agreeable to the tourist information being located in the church, and if so, the clerk would seek to obtain the literature from the Tourist Information Board.

At the previous PC meeting, Rev. Kelsey had expressed a wish that the churchyard could be used for the benefit of local people and visitors and that a seat could be placed with a view of the countryside. The clerk was asked to contact NCC about making the leaning gravestones safe and how often the grass is cut/strimmed.

**viii) Cornhill School site** – Susie Dorrian enquired about the current situation with the school site. The Chairman explained that following Susie's correspondence with Paul Leo of NCC, he and Cllr. Buckle had had a meeting with John Marshall, Senior Surveyor, NCC, from which he had learnt that the school site was no longer on the market, and that it is the intention of the County Council to demolish the existing building and erect 10-12 affordable houses on its site. There are no definite plans, but the development is scheduled for a period from 2015-2018, but it could be sooner rather than later. The school field would be retained, and half of it could be gifted to the Parish Council via a Community Asset Transfer to be maintained as a play area. If and when a formal application is made, the Parish Council will be given the opportunity to submit its comments.

Susie asked whether the Parish Council intended to do anything prior to the application being submitted.

The Chairman replied that the site belongs to the County Council, and that it was made clear at the public meeting in the Village Hall that it is their intention to develop the site for

affordable housing. The recent housing survey produced a need for a limited number of affordable houses, and this was therefore considered to be the best use of the site.

**ix) Wind turbines** – Mrs. Sheldrick said she was pleased to note that the Parish Council is taking an interest in applications for wind turbines. She had received a letter from the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government with information that Robin Lethangie’s appeal to erect two turbines on Moneylaws Hill has been dismissed, one of the reasons being that this is a Registered Battlefield Site.

**14. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014, at 6.00pm.**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**