

## Cornhill Parish Council

### Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014, at the Village Hall at 5.00pm

**Present:** Cllrs. William Carrington (Chairman), David Buckle, Marie Gillespie, Mick Plunkett, Anthony Jewels, Claudio Rickard.  
Dan Perry (Northumbria Police),  
Veronica Sheldrick (Parishioner).  
Angela Hallam-Baker (Clerk)  
County Cllr. Dougie Watkin arrived at 6.00pm

**1. Apologies for absence:** none.

**2. Police Report:**

PC Dan Perry reported two crimes: the theft of a 42" television from the Village Hall between the dates of 18<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> November; and damage to fencing on private land which occurred 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> December.

Speed cameras had been installed at Donaldson's Lodge on 10<sup>th</sup> January when, in a period of three hours, 36 vehicles were stopped for exceeding the speed limit, two drivers for not wearing seat belts and one driver using a mobile phone. In the adjoining parish of Carham, six drivers were stopped for exceeding the speed limit in a period of two hours.

The matter of vehicles parking on the pavement across the road from the Collingwood was raised. This is blocking the way for pedestrians walking round to the Wark road. PC Perry offered to look into this.

**3. Parishioner's questions:** none.

**4. The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013** were agreed and signed, following an amendment to the note in Item 4 regarding the locked gate.

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

**a) Speeding traffic through Donaldson's Lodge** – Cllr. Plunkett had met Stefan Bell of NCC Highways Dept. to discuss what measures could be put in place to counter this. Mr. Bell agreed to look into this and report back.

**b) Speeding traffic on B6350 Wark Road at Cornhill** – again, this was discussed by Cllr. Plunkett and Mr. Bell, and a report would be issued.

**c) Planning Application for new farm office at New Heaton** had been approved by NCC.

**d) The locked gates** referred to are on a section of County Highway U2, and not on a footpath. In view of this, there cannot be a stile or pedestrian gate, but any other gate must be unlocked.

**e) Parish Councillor's Declaration of Interest forms** – an email had been received on 3rd December from the Elections Assistant at County Hall confirming that the forms for Cllrs. Carrington, Buckle, and Gillespie (to replace the missing forms) had been received safely, and would be posted on the NCC website.

**f) Proposed road closure of 600 metres of A697 north of Barelees** – the repairs did not take place on the dates stated, and this work has apparently been put back until "the summer" to be undertaken during the night from 6.00pm. Since the road is in a bad condition, it was

agreed that the clerk should write to Highways and request that the work should be done earlier than this.

**g) Planning Application No. 13/03385/OUT** – it was noted that the line of sight for traffic on the A698 from Coldstream is not sufficiently clear due to the bend, and this should be pointed out to the planners.

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

The clerk distributed a statement of the bank account showing transactions since the last meeting and a current balance of £2,803.32. It had been agreed by the councillors that the precept for 2014/2015 should remain at £2,700 per annum.

It was agreed that some of this money should be spent on improvements in the villages, and the councillors were asked to think about this.

### **7. Wind turbine planning applications:**

The Chairman mentioned the application for a 67.9m turbine at Primsidemill, Yetholm. In the previous application, there were approximately 250 letters of objection and approximately 8 letters of support. The turbine would obstruct the view of the Cheviot Hills and would impede on the Pennine Way, and for this reason the PC should oppose it.

The Chairman stated that the current Cornhill area applications would be only for personal gain by the applicants and of no benefit to the community. He personally would not object to wind turbines provided they were sensitively sited and were able to provide a tangible benefit to the affected community.

**Fracking** – it was mentioned that sites proposed for fracking were approaching Northumberland, and that the Government was allegedly offering *bribes* to communities to allow this method of extracting energy.

### **8. Cornhill Play Area:**

The PC had been informed that the charge for a Service Level Agreement involving weekly inspections and carrying out minor maintenance and repairs as necessary would be £1,690 per annum based on one man hour a week including travel to and from Berwick. Any major repairs or replacement would be costed and agreed with the parish on a case by case basis. The PC considered this charge to be excessive for the three play items, and had previously been told that weekly inspections were not necessary for this small rural parish.

It was therefore agreed that the current lease should be surrendered and a freehold transfer from NCC to Cornhill PC be undertaken. It was further agreed that T.C. Smith, Solicitors, should be appointed to deal with the transfer.

Cllr. Rickard stated that the play area is in an untidy state and needs to be updated. Since it is on a slope, with the goal posts at the lower end, it is unsuitable for playing football, as balls run down on to the main road. Also the nets are torn and need replacing. It was suggested that the posts be removed to the Cornhill School field and new nets purchased.

It was also stated that the car parking area at the lower end of the grassed area was covered in sand, and Cllr. Rickard agreed to ask the person responsible to clear this away.

The councillors were asked to think about how the area could be updated and made more attractive.

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

This had been re-built by Alan Cater and is now up and running and looking very smart. However, there are still spaces to fill, and the site needs to be kept up to date with local news and events. Accordingly, the councillors and clerk were asked to add an item each month. Mrs. Sheldrick asked that each item submitted by the councillors should include a photograph of the writer, in order that the public would be able to recognise their councillors.

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

Cllr. Watkin reported that all the street lights were to be changed to LEDs which would save electricity and cut out 25% of the current light pollution. He also briefly referred to the proposed sale of County Hall.

### **11. Any other business:**

**a) Litter picking** – an email had been received from Gerald Tait of Coldstream Community Trust informing that Coldstream is gradually being tidied of litter, and that they are concerned that the approach from Cornhill to Coldstream has litter lying on the path sides, as has the Berwick road.

Gerald suggested that if Cornhill community could offer a handful of volunteer litter-pickers, Coldstream would be willing to supply the gear and pick up the bags. The councillors were agreeable to this, and several of them offered to help. A notice requesting further volunteers could be put in the Village Shop.

Accordingly, the clerk would reply to Gerald asking what dates might be convenient for the hire of the gear.

**b) Fly-tipping** – Cllr. Plunkett reported fly-tipping in two areas of Donaldson's Lodge. Some of this had been dumped by Open Reach, who, when requested, had moved some of it. Cllr. Plunkett would ask them to remove the rest.

**c) Dog fouling** – Cllr. Buckle reported that this is still causing problems on the grass verges, and the clerk would ask the Dog Warden to put up the new NCC notices warning of considerable fines.

**d) Road safety in Station Gardens** – a resident had asked that 20mph speed limit notices be erected to slow the traffic. A request had also been made for the bus shelter windows to be cleaned. The clerk would convey these requests to NCC Highways, although Cllr. Plunkett mentioned that the Donaldson's Lodge residents cleaned their two themselves.

**e) Planting** – it was pointed out that last year's bedding plants on the roundabout and in the tubs were dead and needing removal. It was agreed that the beds on the roundabout could be planted with small shrubs which would require little maintenance. The question of replacing the plants in the tubs would be raised at the next meeting, and it was hoped that the residents would accept responsibility for watering the tubs outside their houses. If not, it was suggested that Coldstream in Bloom might do this for a fee. It was pointed out that Donaldson's Lodge residents had watered their adjacent tubs last year, and had removed the dead summer plants and replaced them with winter flowering plants. The PC was very appreciative of this public-spirited work.

**f) Overgrown footpaths on road sides** – the footpaths on the Cornhill/Coldstream and Berwick roads were substantially narrowed by the overgrowth of grass. NCC had in the past done some work to counter this, but it was suggested that the PC should ask the gardener responsible for cutting the local footpaths for an estimate of the cost if he was agreeable to undertaking this work.

**Housing:**

Four Housing representatives, who were due to attend the meeting at 6.00pm, cancelled their visit at the last minute. Their email stated that “the initial findings of the report (on the drop-in event) does not support the scale of development being pursued by the Developer on the school site, which is not our asset, therefore NCC needs to consider what is acceptable to them in terms of their proposed disposal before we move forward in any way”.

The Parish Council, and the residents who had come to the meeting specifically to hear the report, were disappointed at the long period which had elapsed between now and the drop-in event on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013, and it was agreed to invite Four Housing to attend the next PC meeting on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> March.

There followed a discussion on the proposed development of 24 houses, bearing in mind that Eric Grounds’ application for seven, including affordable housing, is still in the pipeline, and had been approved by the Parish Council.

The following points were made regarding the school site proposal:

- It was reported that the bottom end of the school field is currently a foot deep in water, and that tarmac surfaces would increase the risk of flooding.
- There is probably a need for affordable housing, but we do not know how many or where.
- Is it intended to demolish the school building?
- It was considered that the community had been badly treated.
- Cllr. Buckle stated that NCC is not able to respond to Four Housing because they have not yet got the information, and agreed that Four Housing should be given a second chance.
- The Chairman stated that Four Housing should circulate their findings a month before the PC meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March.
- Eric Grounds’ planning application may have an influence on Four Housing’s plans.
- General feeling is that the community’s infrastructure should not be altered by introducing a large number of people from other areas.
- Homefinder should be invited to the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March to say whom they would house on the site.
- 24 houses would diminish the village (say some 72 more people) – the local need is more important.
- Pointed out that the proposed 42 houses on the site behind Rickerbys was opposed by the village.

The Chairman was asked the Parish Council’s view on the proposed development. He said this had not been discussed as a separate topic, but it would respect the views of the people it represents. Furthermore, it is not possible to reach a decision on this matter without having put forward a concrete proposal. He stated that if Four Housing does not come back with a proposal, the Parish Council should think about what it can do with the site.

This concluded the business of the meeting, and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and input, and hoped they would come to the next meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March. The usual PC meeting would begin at 5.00pm, followed by the discussion on the future of the school site at 6.00pm, when it was hoped Four Housing would be present.