

Cornhill Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual General Parish Meeting held on Monday, 20th May 2013 at The Old Vicarage, Cornhill.

Present: Cllrs. William Carrington, David Buckle, Marie Gillespie, Michael Francis, County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, Clerk Angela Hallam-Baker.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mick Plunkett and Keith Bailey, Northumbria Police Officers Mark Lynn and Dan Perry.

2. Chairman's Opening Remarks and Report for year ended 31st March 2013:

The Chairman emphasised that the Parish Council's priority should be to provide benefit for everybody in the Parish.

The grass-cutting carried out by NCC had been bad, but Terry Garnick, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, had done his best to put in extra cuts and tidy up the grassed areas in Cornhill.

The Community Website was in need of modernizing and had to be kept up to date. Cllr. Buckle had offered to put in a grant application for the necessary work to be carried out once a specification had been drawn up.

The spread of wind turbines in Northumberland, and specifically those in locations neighbouring Cornhill Parish, was of concern to the Parish Council and many parishioners. These are destined to provide economic benefit to the persons who install them, and none to the community which subsidises them. Parish councils were either for wind turbines or against them, and the Chairman's opinion, which was generally supported by the Parish Council, was that Cornhill Parish should be against them.

The Chairman concluded by thanking his fellow councillors for their help and support during the year, especially Mike Smith who had not wished to seek re-election. The two new councillors, Keith Bailey and Michael Francis, were welcomed, but there is still a vacancy for a further councillor. It was hoped that a young person might be persuaded to join.

The Chairman reminded the councillors that there was always something to be done between Parish Council meetings.

3. Minutes of the AGPM held on 14th May 2012 were agreed and signed.

4. Matters arising from the minutes:

- **Cornhill First School** (Cllr. Francis declared an interest in this discussion since his house backs on to the property)

Having been informed that the school would be moth-balled for three years, there is concern that NCC is now offering it for sale. Cllr. Watkin stated that the reason for this is that there is a surfeit of first school places in the catchment area. There is a possibility of more houses being built on the site, but no families to occupy them due to the absence of a school. It was pointed out that the new houses in Tweed Meadows – mostly retirement homes - have taken 7 years to sell, and are still not all sold.

Cllr. Watkin pointed out that 25 affordable houses have been built in Norham, 20 of which are rented and 5 in shared ownership. It appeared that 50 people had applied for these homes, and he considered that there could be the same amount looking for homes in Cornhill due to displacement from farm cottages. However, due to low income,

shared ownership is not generally affordable, and social housing appears to be the only answer.

5. Presentation of unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013:

The clerk distributed copies of the Income & Expenditure Account and Final Summary for the year. There were no questions, and it was proposed and agreed that these be accepted. An internal audit would be required, and the clerk suggested that Susan McCall might be asked to undertake this again. The accounts will be available for inspection by parishioners from 10th June – a notice will be posted on the noticeboards. They will then be sent to the external auditors in time for the audit date of 8th July 2013.

6. County Councillor’s Report for the year ended 31st March 2013:

The County elections in May this year had resulted in a Labour administration, and the County Council would need to save another £140 million, which will put a strain on services and staff. This may mean that council tax would have to go up.

The precept had gone up to account for the Government’s withdrawal of its grant towards council tax benefits. When asked what was happening about the NCC money invested in Iceland, Cllr. Watkin said that this was being paid back in stages.

7. Parish and County Council Elections on 2nd May 2013:

Parish Councillors elected in the uncontested election are:

William Carrington, David Buckle, Marie Gillespie, Mick Plunkett, Keith Bailey and Michael Francis. It was hoped that the vacancy would be filled by a young member of the Parish.

In the **County elections**, Dougie Watkin was returned to represent Cornhill and neighbouring areas.

The elected Parish Councillors signed the Register of Interests and Acceptance of Office forms.

8. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman:

Cllr. William Carrington was elected Chairman, proposed by Cllr. David Buckle, seconded by Cllr. Marie Gillespie. Since two of the Parish Councillors were absent from the meeting, it was agreed to wait for a full meeting before electing a Deputy Chairman.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed, and retiring Parish Councillor, Mike Smith, having been thanked for his years of office, was wished well in his retirement.

Signed.....

Date.....