

Cornhill Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday, 14th May 2015, at the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Mick Plunkett (Chairman), Marie Gillespie, Tina Ayre,
County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, Angela Hallam-Baker (Clerk).

In attendance: Mrs. Karen Stewart.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr. David Buckle, PC Dan Perry (Northumbria Police),
Rev. Robert Kelsey.

2. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. Stewart to the meeting, and expressed his thanks to his fellow councillors and to the clerk for their hard work and support during the year.

He said the Parish Council was sorry to lose Keith Bailey and Claudio Rickard, but welcomed Tina Ayre as a new member.

He commented on some of the recurrent issues:

- **Complaints about the quality of the grass cutting** - the PC had considered taking on this work, but this was not viable since there would be no rebate from NCC.
- **Village footpath in Donaldsons Lodge** – poor condition, weeds and overhanging hedges made it unusable in places on the edges of the village. Regular site meetings and correspondence had resulted in promises but no action.
- **Public Rights of Way** – complaints, usually dealt with efficiently by the Footpaths Officer, Phil Bradley, contributed to a review of the definitive map by NCC and detailed feedback.
- **Overtaking and speeding in Cornhill and Donaldsons Lodge** – Police are very aware of the problem. An interactive speed sign was promised for February, and the PC is continuing to chase this.. Double white lines, promised long ago for DL have not materialised. Also awaited are a “Pedestrians in Road” sign for the Wark road, and village signs for Cornhill and DL.
- **Regular meetings between parish councils and NCC officers** do not seem to reap the promised rewards. Cause of great frustration.
- **Litter** – the PC has undertaken regular litter picks.
- **Blue bins** – these are a problem in high winds.
- **Play Area** – this is now under the control of the PC, and regular inspections and maintenance are undertaken.
- **DL Phone Box** – the PC has adopted this and it is currently being used as a book exchange and for display of local leaflets.
- **Cornhill Community Website** – Alan Cater is efficiently looking after this, and we try to keep it updated with new content (Tillmouth Village Hall page), photos and local newsletters.
- **Police reports** – these are presented at every meeting and are greatly appreciated and very reassuring. The PC continues to seek help with speeding.

- **Planning Applications** – permission has been granted to build a residence on the infill plot to the south west of The Elms on the Berwick road. A proposed development on land adjacent to Oaklea Lodge is still pending.
- **Former School site** – in June the PC met with NCC's Senior Surveyor, John Marshall, in connection with this site. The intention is to build 10-12 affordable homes and to gift the playing field to the Parish (Community Asset transaction).
- **Planning Review by NCC** – it has been recommended that the automatic trigger which results in applications being taken to committee be removed. Parish and town councils feel this would diminish their already limited powers.
Three amendments were put forward:
 - i. To review in six months' time proposed new 2.00pm start time for committee meetings.
 - ii. Flexible locations for committee meetings.
 - iii. When valid PC objections are made, it will be put before the Chair of the Committee prior to a decision being made.
- **Potholes and flooding** on the A697 reported.
- **Parochial Church Council** – the PC is working with Rev. Rob Kelsey and placing tourist information and notices in the Church.
- **Planting** – the PC is supporting Cornhill in Bloom by replacing broken tubs, and also planting on the roundabout.
- **Borderland Cycle Event** – Tweed Horizons cycle routes leaflets were handed out, and it was noted that the Tour of Britain is due to pass through Cornhill in September 2015.
- **Post 16 Transport** – the PC opposed the imposition of charges which discriminate against students in rural areas.
- **NCC Review of subsidised bus services** – the PC sent a letter in support of maintaining subsidised services.
- **Tourism notice board** – the PC applied for and received an updated board which still requires work to be done it.
- **Bell View's Project** – the PC supports this, has attended a consultation event and distributed flyers throughout the parish and surrounding area. The first of many soup and sandwich events was very well attended.
- **Barmoor Wind Farm Community Fund** – the PC applied for a grant towards play equipment, but this was turned down.
- **A need for new parish councillors** was noted.

3. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th May 2014 were agreed and signed.

4. Matters arising from the minutes: none.

5. Presentation of the unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015:

The clerk circulated copies of the Income and Expenditure Account and Final Summary. It was agreed that these were self-explanatory, and no questions were asked. It was proposed by the Chairman and agreed by the other councillors that the accounts be accepted. The Annual Return was agreed and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

An internal audit would be required, and it was agreed that Susan McCall, who had very kindly undertaken this task voluntarily for the past few years, should be asked if she would do it again.

The clerk stated that the accounts will be available for inspection by parishioners from 1st to 26th June, and the external audit would take place on 29th June 2015..
It was agreed that the Risk Assessment document drawn up in September 2014 should also be applied to the current year.

6. County Councillor’s Report:

Cllr. Watkin reported that the County Council has to tighten its belt, another £30 million having to be found. There are a number of staff changes and redundancies.

Planning - findings from the recent Planning Review ascertained that 5-10% applications have to be recalled due to parish and town council objections, but these objectors do not attend the meetings to speak.

There are three planning committees, politically and geographically balanced, and the Chairs and vice-Chairs should be on the central committee. Specialised planning officers are in place to deal with specific applications. Meetings are held in Morpeth as the more central venue for the county, but if there is a controversial application, the meeting will be held as near as possible to the site.

Around 94% of applications should be dealt with under delegated powers, but parish and town councils will be consulted. Any delegated decisions to officers which contain a valid town/parish council objection are seen by the Chair of the Committee to maintain that level of elected accountability.

Applications should be determined after two weeks.

Planning issues can be found on the website, but should also be on the back of an application.

Training is available, but changes to the planning issues are being made all the time.

Education - there are fewer than 200 children in most first schools, making them costly to run as separate concerns.

Home helps - these required in the mid and north of the country are having to travel from Newcastle as employees cannot be sourced in the local areas.

7. Election of Chairman and vice-Chairman:

It was proposed by Cllr. Gillespie and seconded by Cllr. Ayre that Cllr, Plunkett be elected Chairman, and that David Buckle (in his absence) be elected vice-Chairman.

8. Programme of meetings for the year to 31st March 2016 was agreed as follows:

- Thursday, 9th July 2015
- Thursday, 10th September 2015
- Thursday, 12th November 2015
- Thursday, 14th January 2016
- Thursday, 10th March 2016

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.15pm.

Signed.....

Date.....