

DRAFT

Cornhill Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 12th November 2015, at 6.00pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs. Mick Plunkett (Chairman), Marie Gillespie, Tina Ayre, Karen Stewart, County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, PC Dan Perry (Northumbria Police), Rev. Rob Kelsey, Angela Hallam-Baker (Clerk).

In attendance: Parishioners: David and Barbara Richmond.

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

2. Police Report:

PC Perry reported two recorded crimes in the Cornhill area:

- Damage to a vehicle 21st-23rd September (undetected)
- Burglary at Branxton Moor Farm – 23rd October

There was also a break-in at Whitton Hill Farm, Milfield.

Farmers are urged to ensure that their buildings are securely locked, and residents with heating oil tanks to ensure these are secure.

The non-emergency telephone number to call is 101 to contact Northumbria Police, and emergency calls to 999.

It was mentioned that a 999 call for a local chimney fire took the fire service 25 minutes to arrive from Berwick. As a general rule, it was claimed, that the nearest appliance would answer a call.

3. Parishioners' Questions: none.

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2015 were agreed and signed.

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

- **Minutes of PC meetings** – copies are now spread out on the noticeboards and also placed in the Village Shop and the Church. They are also posted on the website.
- **Interactive speed sign** – Cllr. Ayre had observed that vehicles travelling at just over 30mph slowed down at the sign; those travelling at 36+ mph tended to speed up. She had also noticed that vehicles travelling in the opposite direction were driving much faster. It would therefore be desirable to have another sign at the Coldstream end of the village, but finances do not allow this at present. Cllr. Watkin said that the speed of every vehicle going past the sign is stored and can be downloaded. Cllr. Plunkett agreed to look into this. There were two offers to take part in the training in the use of a hand-held speed gun, and the clerk would ask the Police about this. Persons offering to undertake this would be advised not to do so in their local area.

- **Cornhill-in-Bloom** – Cllr. Plunkett had helped Theresa Culbertson and Liz Allen plant the tubs. Thanks were recorded to these ladies for all the work they do in raising the funds and organising the plants.
- **New seat** – this has been installed in the play area in Station Gardens.
- **Pedestrians in Road warning sign** – Cllr. Watkin said the PC would have to pay for this. It was therefore agreed that Cllr. Plunkett would take a photograph of one of the signs which are erected around the county, from which copies could be made for either end of the stretch of road down Mill Brae.
- **Double white lines through Donaldsons Lodge** – Cllr. Watkin said that these had been agreed, and Cllr. Plunkett would send a reminder to NCC.
- **Local Heroes Award** – it was agreed that Ann Wood, who had served on the Tillmouth Village Hall committee for 30 years, should be included in the nomination for this award. Cllr. Plunkett had taken over chairmanship of the committee.
- **Brambles** – these had been pruned. No hogweed visible and may have been removed by the farmer. Cllr. Plunkett would monitor the East Learmouth roadsides.
- **Riverside path** – Cllr. Ayre said she had walked along the path with no adverse comments, but was asked to keep clear of the area where the fishermen are.
- **Litter pick** – the roadsides from Cornhill to Donaldsons Lodge had been cleared. David Richmond was thanked for helping the parish councillors with this. It was agreed that a photograph should be taken to record this voluntary work. Another litter pick from Donaldsons Lodge to Twizell Bridge would be arranged later in the meeting.

6. Financial Report:

The external audit of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015 had been completed. There was only one item mentioned, that the £40.00 spent on the replacement cradle swing should have been added to the Asset Register. This would be done for the current year, as would the new seat in the play area.

The accounts, which had already been presented to and agreed by the PC, were again accepted. There was no charge for the audit.

The clerk presented the financial statement showing the transactions during the last two months, leaving a credit balance at the bank of £2,463.86.

Precept for year 2016/2017 – this is not now due for submission to NCC until the end of January, so would be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Churchyard Improvements:

The Rev. Kelsey reported that a meeting had been held in July to discuss how to proceed with this matter, as a result of which a leaflet had been posted through all doors in the parish, kindly delivered by Cllr. David Buckle.

The leaflet included the following suggestions:

- The history of Cornhill Church be researched – someone has this in hand.
- The patron saint of the Church, St. Helen, whose feast day falls on 21st May, should be celebrated.
- Improvements to be made to the closed churchyard, and more of a focal point made of this historic church which lies in the centre of the village.
- The Parish Council and other groups might be asked to contribute towards the above.

The Parish Council agreed that these are good ideas and would be happy to help in any way they can.

There were suggestions that a landscape architect might be employed, or possibly a suitably qualified student with a project in mind, who would look at the churchyard and envisage how it might be made into an attractive leisure area.

The Rev. Kelsey thought he might be able to raise funds from the diocese and that this might be match-funded by other groups.

In order to get these suggestions moving, it would be necessary to form a small committee, comprising the Rev. Kelsey, a member of the Parish Council and say two more interested persons. A lady experienced in these matters and a local artist have offered help. Cllr. Stewart said she would be willing to help, and Mr. Kelsey will contact Cllr. Buckle. He would also send the leaflet to Alan Cater to put on the website.

8. Play Area inspections:

It had been agreed that three-monthly inspections by Alan Cater would be sufficient, and that regular checks would be made Cllr. Plunkett. Any immediate damage or problems would be reported to the clerk, whose contact details are displayed at the play area.

It was also agreed that Ricky Fletcher would be asked to provide quotes for the running repairs pin-pointed by Alan.

According to Alan, the annual inspection is costly, and although he is qualified to carry out the monthly inspections, it would apparently require further expensive training to do the annual ones. Cllr. Plunkett would make enquiries as to who is employed to do this for other play areas.

9. Grass cutting:

This has been lacking – particularly in St. Helen's Gardens and the verge across from the Village Shop. After Cllr. Plunkett's intervention, these areas have been cut. According to Cllr. Watkin, a new manager has been appointed to review grass cutting in the County and re-work the schedules.

The new footpath within the 30mph signs at Donaldsons Lodge has now been cleared, but the promised dropped kerbs at Sunnyside have not been done. Cllr. Watkin said the money to do this is available, and Cllr. Plunkett will chase it up with Mitch Young.

10. Northumberland Plan:

This had been looked through by Cllr. Buckle, and Cllr. Plunkett had attended a drop-in meeting in Wooler. There did not appear to be any significant changes to previous years, and it was noted that this is a long-term plan – 15 years or more. The PC had provided its comments in 2012 and 2013, and these had been similar for 2014.

Cllr. Watkin said it would be necessary to build 10,000 extra houses to cope with the rising population, including a greater number of people living on their own.

11. County Councillor's Report:

Cllr. Watkin said that Berwick is short of water and is dependent on boreholes. There is no open reservoir in the north of the county and £1 million has been spent on pipework to supply underground reservoirs.

County Hall, which was apparently built to last only 25 years, is in need of extensive repairs which would cost slightly more than putting up a new building in Ashington. The current

building in Morpeth houses 1,300 staff, whereas the proposed new building would cater for 900.

It has not yet been decided whether the offices will move to Ashington, but this seems likely.

12. Correspondence:

- **Review of Public Conveniences** – a paper had been received suggesting closures round the County – some of them just in the winter.
- **Parking Enforcement Vehicle** – this is designed to prevent irresponsible parking in the keep clear areas outside schools, and is expected to be operational from January. Cllr. Watkin informed the meeting that a 20mph speed limit is to be introduced on the roads adjacent to schools.
- **Parish and Town Council meetings with NCC officers** – local meetings to be held at the Cheviot Centre, Wooler, on 16th November, and Ancroft Memorial Hall on 26th November, both commencing at 7.00pm. One or two councillors from each parish are invited to attend. Anyone wishing to attend should contact the Locality Development Team at: locality.development@northumberland.gov.uk
- **Energy Road Show** – Cheviot Centre, Wooler, on Tuesday, 8th December, between 3.30-6.00pm. Free energy monitors will be available, and information on how to get a free central heating system where there is not one installed, and where the household income is less than £28k a year. Posters to be put on the notice boards, newsletter and website.

13. Any other business:

- **Litter pick** – from Donaldsons Lodge to Twizel Bridge on Monday, 7th December, meeting at DL outside the chapel at 9.30am. Half of the volunteers will start at DL and the other half at Twizell Bridge, and walk facing the traffic. High viz jackets, gloves, and litter-picking tools will be provided. It was agreed that Duddo PC should be asked if they would join in and clear the litter from the roadsides on their side of the bridge.
- **County Highway U2** - Cllr. Plunkett again mentioned the gates erected by the landowner blocking the U2 County Highway from Melkington to New Heaton. According to Cllr. Watkin, these gates are illegal, although Neil Howie (NCC) claims they are acceptable if they are unlocked. The same road has recently been blocked to all users by a new fence. Neil Howie has asked the farm manager to remove the fence, but this has not yet happened. If nothing is done, Cllr. Watkin will be asked to follow it up.
- **Re-surfacing of road through Cornhill** – Barbara Richmond enquired as to when the A697 through Cornhill is to be re-surfaced. Cllr. Watkin said that the condition of main roads is monitored monthly, and that there is extra money available for the A697.

14. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 14th January 2016, at 6.00pm in the Village Hall.

Signed..... Date.....