

Cornhill Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 11th February 2013, at the Village Hall at 6.00pm

Present: Cllrs. William Carrington (Chairman), Mike Smith, David Buckle, Marie Gillespie, Rosemary Cott, Mick Plunkett, County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, Clerk: Angela Hallam-Baker.

In attendance: Police Officer Dan Perry, Parishioners: Margaret Mole, Michael Francis, Andrew Walker, Stephen Finlay, Angus and Fiona Campbell.

The Chairman announced the resignation from the Parish Council of Derek Sheldrick, due to his unwillingness to submit answers contained in the Register of Interests regarding personal and private matters.

This resignation was received with regret and Mr. Sheldrick was thanked for his contributions to the work of the Parish Council during his membership.

1. Apologies for absence: none.

2. Parishioners' questions:

One question and one comment had been received regarding the suggested name change on the road signs, from Cornhill to Cornhill-on-Tweed. Since this was an agenda item, discussion was deferred until later in the meeting.

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2012 were agreed and signed following the correction of an error under Item 5. This should read: "Station Gardens bungalows".

4. Matters arising from the minutes:

- **School road sign** – it was agreed that this should be removed, and Cllr. Watkin would pass this request on to NCC.
 - **Speeding traffic** - it was agreed that Cllrs. Watkin's and Murray's offer of financial contributions towards the purchase and installation of flashing 30mph signs should be followed up. Cllr. Watkin suggested it was not cost effective to share these signs with other villages, since the removal and re-installing was expensive.
 - **Road works in the Parish** – the clerk had again sent in requests to NCC for works to be done on the drain by the Old Mill, flooding on the A697 south of Coldstream Bridge, repainting of 30mph sign on A697 approach to the village, repainting of SLOW signs on C20 Cornhill to East Learmouth road, and flooding near to the dismantled railway bridge. These requests had been acknowledged on 22nd November 2012 with a note that they had been passed to the appropriate Inspector.
- Potholes** - motorists were having their wheels and tyres damaged by the large number of potholes in the roads. It was noted that NCC was doing its best to repair these as soon as possible, given the huge number of them throughout the county.
- **Damage to grass verges** – Cllr. Plunkett showed photographs of deep tyre tracks on grass verges within the village, which were apparently caused by Northumbrian

Water's vehicles. It was pointed out that it was the County Council's responsibility to maintain the verges.

- **Churchyard** – it was noted that the County Council had cleared undergrowth from the churchyard, which had improved its appearance.
- **Horse-riders on the railway line** – the footnote on page 4 of the November minutes was read out for the benefit of the residents who were present to put forward their comments. This stated that the landowner had given permission for riders from The Stables **only** to take their horses along the railway line. Cllr. Watkin stated that, as this was a designated footpath, it must be maintained as suitable for that purpose. The footpath is cut twice a year, paid for by NCC, and the proprietor of The Stables, Andrew Walker, said that he removes brambles, fallen branches, etc., and would roll the surface if necessary.

It was noted that the former riding school had used the path for years, and it was agreed by the meeting that horse-riding benefited the economy of the Parish, as well as being a healthy pastime.

Angus and Fiona Campbell stated that people had apparently been intimidated by their dogs when they were walking along the footpath, although the dogs were placid and under control. In conclusion, the Chairman and Cllr. Plunkett repeated their intention to walk the footpath with Raymond Black to examine any damage for themselves.

- **Grit bin in St. Helen's Gardens** – a grit bin had been purchased by the Parish Council at a cheaper cost than would have been charged by NCC. Before going ahead with the purchase, the clerk had enquired whether the County Council would fill this free of charge. They agreed to do this, but when requested to do so, they had said they would fill the bin three times a year at a cost of £100.00. However, as a goodwill gesture they agreed to fill it once for no cost. A future supply would have to be found.
- **Cornhill Community Website** – the clerk was asked to contact Alan Cater and ask him for a quote to update the content of the website.
- **County and Parish Elections on 2nd May** – nominations open for prospective candidates on 25th March, and these would need to be lodged with NCC by 5th April. All details will be publicized, and nomination packs will be distributed to parish clerks from the first week in March.
- **Register of Interests** – the Chairman had initially removed this item from the agenda, but since it was brought up by Michael Francis, it was discussed briefly. He said he would be willing to stand for the Parish Council as long as did not have to disclose private details on the Register. The Chairman was still not willing to sign, but if the other councillors were agreeable, he would not resign from the Parish Council at this stage.

At a Parish/Town Councils Information event held on 7th February by NALC, attended by Cllr. Buckle and the clerk (also ex Parish Cllr. Sheldrick), David Francis had agreed that the form was confusing and too long. He said that parish councils were at liberty to write their own forms as long as they contained the obligatory questions in the appendices to the Code of Conduct. He said he would write a new form for the benefit of council members unwilling to sign the NCC edition.

Cllr. Watkin insisted that the need for answers to the personal questions was inscribed in the Localism Bill, and only referred to land and interests in the Parish which were owned by councillors.

The matter was left pending feedback from David Francis.

- **Donaldson's Lodge Reading Room** – it had not been ascertained who owned this building. The Chairman would ask Sir Michael Blake, and the clerk would contact the estate agents, Edwin Thompson, who had been appointed to sell it some time ago.

5. Financial Report:

The clerk distributed a statement of account transactions since the last meeting, showing a bank balance of £4,117.05.

The precept for 2013/14 had been agreed as £2,700 at the November meeting. Subsequently a letter had been received from NCC informing parish council members that “having registered their property interests, there is an actual change in an individual member’s financial position (however slight) when setting a Precept or Tax, and without a dispensation, members risk not having a defence to a complaint if they participate and do not withdraw.” Accordingly, all the Cornhill PC members signed a Request for a Dispensation.

The Clerk explained that the Government had transferred to the County Council its liability for the payment of benefit-recipients’ council tax payment. This charge would be passed on to council tax payers. However, for this year only, the County Council would pay a non-recurrent grant to parish/town councils to offset the anticipated impact. The grant payable to Cornhill PC is £170. It has therefore been necessary to deduct this amount from the precept, bringing it down to £2,530. Due to the NCC grant, the amount payable to the PC will still be £2,700.

6. Cornhill Road Signs:

A question in writing had been received from Lynda Boland regarding the possible change of the road signs from Cornhill to Cornhill-on-Tweed. She said that she would be against the Parish spending some £2,000 on this, and that if the Parish Council were to consider it, how would consultation with all parishioners take place?

Parishioner Keith Bailey had also submitted a comment that the village was originally called Cornhill, and that the “on-Tweed” was merely used as the postal address and did not necessarily have any geographical significance.

Whereas some of the councillors felt Cornhill-on-Tweed possibly sounded “more attractive” to visitors, Cllr. Buckle reminded the Parish Council that it had already been agreed at a previous PC meeting that the signs should remain as just Cornhill. The matter was therefore closed. Keith Bailey had also suggested that Cornhill-on-Tweed on OS maps should be changed to Cornhill. He had researched this and ascertained agreement with the County Council that there would be no problem in doing this. However, the PC, having no particular opinion on this, agreed that it should be left as it is.

7. Future of Cornhill School:

Cllr. Watkin stated that there had been enquiries about using the school building, but these were not disclosed. He felt that little would be done during the next year or so. He said that NCC has designated this property for housing, but the Chairman considered that the PC and residents should work together to formulate other ideas. The matter should be discussed again at a later meeting.

8. Plans to enhance the appearance of Cornhill and Donaldson’s Lodge:

It was felt that some of the PC’s funds should be spent on making the two villages look more attractive, particularly as many visitors would be expected during this 500th Anniversary year of The Battle of Flodden. In view of this, it was proposed that a Public Meeting be held in the Village Hall on Saturday, 16th March, to obtain the residents’ views and suggestions, and that Lord Joicey should be invited. Posters and flyers advertising the meeting would be produced.

The clerk requested that a new noticeboard be purchased for Donaldson' Lodge. The current one was too high up, was letting in water, and in need of painting. Also, it could possibly be re-sited. It was agreed that L.C. Joinery Services be approached for a quotation.

9. Planning Applications:

- **Fishing shiel and car park by Coldstream Bridge** – permission granted.
- **Farm buildings north-west of The Stables – extension of time limit** – the clerk had communicated to the Planning Dept. that the objections/comments submitted for the original application still stood. She had also submitted the PC's comments on this second application.
- **Cramond Hill Farm** – demolition and replacement of existing farmhouse – no objections from the PC.

10. Police Report:

Police Officer Dan Perry was called away before this agenda item.

11. County Councillor's Report:

Cllr. Watkin told the meeting that the light on the roundabout was only temporary and would be replaced by a better one. The Give Way sign at the top of the Wark road by the War Memorial had not yet been straightened, due to the fact that it has a light on the top and would require two different NCC departments to fix it. Cllr. Watkin said it did not need a light, and he would remind NCC to straighten the pole.

12. Any other business:

- **Bus Service 710** – the Saturday service Kelso to Newcastle, which was under threat of being discontinued, had attracted a large number of protests. Consequently, a Public Meeting had been called for Wednesday, 6th March 2013, at 6.30pm to 8.00pm at Glendale Middle School.
Free transport will be provided from/to bus stops along the 710 route including Wooler Bus Station, but booking in advance is necessary – ring 01670 624092.
The clerk had put up posters in Cornhill and Donaldson's Lodge, and a notice on the Community website.
- **Northumberland Local Development Plan** – in response to the feedback from Parish Councils, NCC had produced a consultation document entitled Core Strategy: Preferred Options. This would be circulated amongst the parish councillors, and comments were to be received by the County Council by Wednesday, 20th March. Officers were due to give a presentation at Ancroft Village Hall on 13th March, and results of the consultation would be available on the NCC during the summer. The Glendale Gateway Trust had made submissions to the Plan and is holding a meeting on Wednesday, 20th February, at 4.00pm at Wooler Fire Station. This is intended to unite the views of residents and therefore create solidarity.
- **Awards for All grants** - Cllr. Buckle stated that in the past these grants could be applied for for up to £10,000 in every two year period, but that now these can be applied for annually. Applicants can also request grants for repeat and regular activities.

It was suggested that Cornhill might apply for a grant to re-write the Community Website, and the Chairman agreed to have a draft specification produced, following which Cllr. Buckle would complete the necessary forms and submit them to Awards for All.

- **Internet Café** – it had been noticed that the two computers and desks were no longer situated in the café – one of the computers and printers is in the shop outside the café door with no desk or chair – the other computer apparently not available for use. The clerk was asked to have a word with Lynda about this.

13. Parishioners' Question Time on Agenda items: none.

14. Change of date for next meeting:

Due to the Chairman's and clerk's other commitments, the date and venue of the next meeting have been changed to:

Monday, 11th March 2013, at The Old Vicarage, Cornhill.

The change of venue is due to the Village Hall being unavailable on that date. In view of shortage of space, any residents wishing to attend with questions should contact the clerk prior to the meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting which was closed at 7.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....