

DRAFT**Cornhill Parish Council****Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 8th September 2016,
at the Village Hall at 6.00pm**

Present: Cllrs. Mick Plunkett (Chairman), David Buckle, Marie Gillespie, Tina Ayre, Barbara Richmond, County Cllr. Dougie Watkin, Revd. Rob Kelsey, And 3 parishioners (David Richmond, James & Helen Bulman) and Clerk Angela Hallam-Baker.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Karen Stewart and PC Dan Perry.

2. Police Report:

PC Perry, being unable to attend the meeting, sent a written report informing that there have been no recorded crimes within Cornhill since the last meeting in July.

He again advised people to drive carefully on the country roads, as there have been a number of collisions. He also advised residents to remain vigilant with door to door sellers. He may be contacted by email on: Daniel.Perry.281@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

3. Parishioners' question time: no questions.

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2016 were agreed and signed.

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

a) Pedestrians in road sign for B6350 Wark road – according to Cllr. Watkin, this is on its way through the system. The other road signs ordered are also on their way.

b) Concrete bus shelter – David Richmond, Tina Ayre and Mick Plunkett agreed to paint this on 10th October. It would be painted in a similar colour, and the black boards would be over-painted in the same colour to dissuade people from sticking posters on them.

c) Recycling bins – the Collingwood Arms could not accommodate these in its car park.

d) Planning application 16/02183/FUL – two bedroom bungalow at The Sidings, Station Gardens, has been granted permission.

Nothing further has been heard regarding the two pre-applications.

Cornhill School – a letter dated 25th July 2016 had been received from the Leader of NCC stating that the School was among other NCC redundant properties to be marketed as from week beginning 25th July 2016. Conflicting reports had been received as to whether or not the property had been on the market well before this date. It was said that NCC confirmed that it had never been off the market, but had not been actively marketed. Several prospective buyers had allegedly shown serious interest, but their interest had apparently not been followed up.

e) State of footpaths – Mick reported that these have all been attended to. However, the broken kissing gate on the railway line has not been repaired. Mick agreed to contact Phil Bradley again to ask if he has been to look at it.

Twizel Bridge – the steps at the western side of the bridge, which were in a dangerous condition, have been repaired in time for the Walking Festival. The other side of the bridge in Duddo Parish is overgrown with weeds.

f) Riverside footpath – no response from Neil Thompson, but since Lady Astor had given permission for people to walk there, the Parish Council considered that her decision is still valid.

g) Happy Street competition – Cornhill raised the grand total of £3,428.37 for Radio Borders' chosen charity, Cash for Kids, but was pipped at the post by Lilliardsedge, St Boswells. It was reported that Cornhill raised 25% of the total amount raised throughout the area.

h) New speed sign – this has been paid for with a grant of £3,308.00 from NCC and a £1,000.00 contribution from the Parish Council, and is expected to be erected by the bend on the A697 north side of the village soon after 13th October.

6. Financial Report:

The annual return for the year ended 31st March 2016 had been checked and signed by the external auditors who stated that there were no matters requiring a separate report. The annual return, which had already been presented to the Parish Council and posted on the Cornhill Community website, was approved and accepted by the Councillors.

The clerk distributed a statement of the financial transactions since the last meeting, showing a credit balance of £1,914.06.

7. Projected cuts in services:

An email from NALC warned parish and town councils of projected cuts in services in order to save £20m in the two financial years from 2018 to 2020.

These services are likely to include green/environmental services such as grass cutting, amenity land maintenance, public toilet provision, supported bus services and community group support. It was therefore suggested that individual communities give consideration on how they would wish to respond to these reductions, which would not be implemented until 2018.

It was agreed that the item should remain on future agendas, and that Cllr. Watkin should be asked to focus on this and report feedback at each meeting.

Cllr. Buckle stated that CAN and GGT have taken some steps to preserve local services, including, in Wooler social housing, the library and tourist information centre, and had instigated the provision of a number of properties on the High Street.

He said that the Glendale Gateway Trust is community-focused, and that its board meetings are open to the public. The website gives more information: www.wooler.org.uk/glendale-gateway-trust, but Cllr. Buckle suggested that he could ask the Chairman, Frank Mansfield, if he would come to the next PC meeting and talk about the work of the Trust.

The main concerns for Cornhill Parish are grass cutting and the local route 67 bus service between Galashiels and Berwick, but other services, such as the mobile library may also be cut. Cllr. Watkin assured the PC that the bus service should be safe, as this is partially sponsored by the Scottish Borders Council.

It was pointed out that the grass cutting is already not done often enough, and if the service were to be reduced, the PC might have to consider employing someone to do the job. Suggestions that wild flowers could be planted had been put forward by some parish councils, but the grass and dead flowers would still need to be cut.

Apart from the future projected reduction in grass cutting, and in response to a letter from NCC Neighbourhood Services, the clerk has asked for a quote for additional grass cutting in October and March which would take effect in 2017.

Hedges – it is noted that the hedges between the two new houses and the churchyard on the main street are in need of pruning, and the Chairman agreed to report this to NCC. Other hedges alongside the roadside footpaths are also overgrown. These are the responsibility of the landowners, but Cllr. Watkin pointed out that they are not allowed to cut them between 1st February and 1st August to protect nesting birds. He made the point that, in his opinion, it would not affect the birds during the summer as much as the current autumn cutting does, which destroys the berries.

8. Insurance:

The current annual premium includes cover for the two speed signs, but as the second sign is not yet in place, the extra cost of £33.80 will not be charged until September 2017.

9. War Memorial:

Advice has been received that the Cornhill War Memorial has been added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest under Grade 2.

A request has been received by Mr. Eric Grounds, to add to the War Memorial the name of Alexander Renton, late of New Harper Ridge, Donaldsons Lodge, who died in action on 19th October 1917, aged 32. The Parish Council agreed to this, and Mr. Grounds very kindly offered to pay for the inscription work. He asked whether the PC wished the monument to be cleaned and the inscriptions re-painted. This work would be charged to the PC at a cost, quoted by Robertson Memorials, of £730.00. Following discussion, it was agreed that this is not necessary at the present time.

10. Play Area inspections and repairs:

It had been agreed that an annual inspection by RoSPA should be implemented, and that the first one should take place as soon as possible to ascertain what repairs might be necessary.

In spite of NCC's stating that weekly inspections should be made by a fully qualified person, the PC's insurers provided information that these could be undertaken by a competent person on a monthly basis, provided a log was kept. The PC's public liability policy would cover this person and any accident which might occur.

Graham Campbell, who lives close to the Play Area, had been approached verbally, and the clerk would write to him advising him of the requirements.

11. Barmoor Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund:

The clerk had forwarded the application to the funders to consider providing a grant to purchase new play equipment for the Station Gardens Play Area. This particularly included equipment for younger children. Three quotations were required, together with copies of recent PC end of year accounts and bank statement.

Residents had requested that a new net for the goal post be purchased, and the chairman agreed to contact Steve Wright for his advice.

12. Churchyard improvements:

A gardener from Abbotsford had been approached with regard to providing a design for the churchyard. Should she be unable to do this, it was suggested that a garden centre be contacted and asked to provide a report which could be submitted to a grant funder. The PC had agreed to make a contribution towards the cost, and it was noted that Cllr. Stewart had agreed to act as PC liaison with the church. It was agreed that one representative from the church and one from the PC should meet with the chosen contact.

13. County Councillor's Report:

In addition to Cllr. Watkin's remarks under Item 7, he mentioned that the Government may cease giving subsidies to local councils. As part of the financial savings, children over 16 years are having to pay for school transport. Cllr. Watkin said that NCC is involved in talks with the other six County Councils with a view to forming a single regional council for the North East. If this goes ahead, parish and town councils may have to take responsibility for the local services they want to retain.

14. Correspondence:

- **Footpath obstructions** – following complaints that sandwich boards and other items of furniture are causing obstructions on footpaths are a danger to pedestrians, particularly visually impaired people, NCC has asked for comments to be sent to the Infrastructure Manager about any obstruction not authorised through the Highways Act.
It was mentioned that the two sandwich boards outside the Collingwood Arms are impairing visibility of motorists exiting both the hotel drive and the parking spaces by the Village Shop. They are also taking up at least one parking space in an area busy with private and commercial vehicles, and also impeding access to the re-cycling bins. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the owner of the hotel and ask that they might be re-sited in less dangerous spots.
- **Road works on A697** - Cllr. Richmond reported that her neighbour had received notification that road works are to take place shortly in the middle of the village. Since the PC had not been informed of this, the Chairman asked that he be sent a copy of the letter.
- **Public Spaces Protection Order for the Control of Dogs** – a new protection order to come into force on or before 1st December 2016, stated that, in addition to the existing Dog Control Orders, areas of beach at Newbiggin by the Sea and Blyth would be closed to dogs every year between 1st May and 30th September inclusive. Any comments to NCC requested by 30th September 2016.
- **Area Committee (North) meeting** – notification had been received that this is to be held on Monday, 12th September 2016, at Lady Waterford Hall, Ford. The clerk agreed to attend.

15. Parishioners' questions on agenda items: none.

16. Any other business:

Cornhill Village Hall AGM - Cllr. Richmond had attended the AGM on 7th September 2016, and reported that there had been a significant change in officers, and that meetings would be held monthly.

The newly appointed officers are:

- **Chairman** – Steve Wright
- **Secretary** – Heather Young
- **Booking Secretary** – Kathryn Wright
- **Secretary's Assistant** – Sarah Glass
- **Treasurer:** Paul Ashton

Litter picking – the PC had carried out a litter pick between Cornhill and Coldstream Bridge on 15th August. A further one was scheduled for Monday, 17th October, meeting at the Village Shop at 9.30am. Volunteers welcome.

17. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 10th November 2016, at 6.00pm.

This concluded the business of the meeting which closed at 8.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....