

DRAFT**Cornhill Parish Council****Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 10th November 2016,
at the Village Hall at 6.00pm**

Present: Cllrs. David Buckle (in the Chair), Marie Gillespie, Tina Ayre, Barbara Richmond, County Councillor Dougie Watkin, parishioner David Richmond, clerk Angela Hallam-Baker.
Guest speaker: Frank Mansfield (Chair, Glendale Gateway Trust)

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Chairman Cllr. Mick Plunkett, Cllr. Karen Stewart, Rev. Rob Kelsey, PC Dan Perry, and parishioner Lynne O'Reilly.

2. Police Report:

PC Dan Perry was unable to come to the meeting, but subsequently sent the following report:

"In relation to the recent parish council meeting, I can belatedly report the following. Between 08/09/16 and 10/11/16 there were two recorded crimes within the Cornhill area. These would not be relevant for me to go into detail and would not impact on the wider Cornhill community. There has been incidents of tarmac sellers attending our local, rural farms, I would again encourage people to report suspicious persons, and not engage / purchase from door to door sellers. There are no other incidents of note or relevant to the parish council."

3. Glendale Gateway Trust:

Frank Mansfield began his talk by stating that the Trust has been lucky in its contact with benefactors and with its strategic vision, and for this he gave credit to previous chairmen, including David Buckle.

The Trust was set up in 1995, and obtained the Cheviot Centre in Wooler, which was the old workhouse, in 1999. Grants were more readily available then, and gave the Trust some long term assets, including property on the High Street. Interest-free loans were also given by local benefactors.

The Cheviot Centre now houses the library, the tourist information centre, and a reception centre, bringing these services together under one roof. It is open six days a week during the winter, and seven days a week in the summer, with three staff working as a team. This has helped the Trust with extra revenue and has given it an opportunity to do something worthwhile for the community including financial benefit.

Government grants have been made available based on the Trust's track record, and these have enabled the provision of eighteen affordable homes. When the Wheatsheaf Hotel closed, the Trust was able to obtain the first floor on a 250 year repairing lease, and convert it into five high standard flats. Four more flats were constructed at Roddam Dene House off the High Street.

Ten years ago 34 youth hostels were sold off, including the one in Wooler. The Trust bought this and updated it, and it is now running at a surplus.

All prospective projects are looked at in terms of benefit to the community, value, surplus, loss, etc., and a sound business plan produced for every one the Trust undertakes. Parishes vary in precepts and activity.

The Cheviot Centre also houses several small businesses which have made it profitable. The Police now have a base there since the Wooler Police Station closed, and there is a new room for remote learning classes.

The Trust started with village appraisals and input from prominent figures in the town. It took four or five years to get going, driven by a lot of business people. It is now self-sustaining with enough assets to produce a surplus each year.

The Cheviot Centre was gifted by Berwick Borough Council and supported by the Market Towns Initiative. Good relationships have been achieved with organisations such as the County Planning Office, NNPA, and CAN.

Frank said that parish councils tend to expect the County Council to initiate projects rather than source them locally. The Trust will attempt to alleviate the impact of the projected NCC cuts.

He explained that the Trust has eleven trustees with varied and different skills. It does not as yet have anyone with legal skills or HR (Human Resources) experience, nor are the benefactors involved.

In answer to a question, Frank stated that as yet there is no monitoring programme.

Before he left the meeting, Frank was thanked by the Chairman and Councillors for his interesting and informative talk.

4. Parishioners' question time – no questions.

5. The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2016 were agreed and signed.

6. Matters arising from the minutes:

a) Pedestrians in road sign – Cllr. Watkin said that this is ready, but just waiting to be installed.

b) Concrete bus shelter – this has been painted by David Richmond, Tina Ayre and Mick Plunkett. It was agreed that a seat should be added to the interior, and it was suggested that a plaque, dedicating the seat to the memory of the late Nancy Clark, be attached. Permission to do this would be sought from Nancy's son and he would be asked to unveil the plaque.

e) State of footpaths – the Chairman had reported that he thought all our footpaths can now be walked. Some have not been reinstated after sowing, but if this does not happen, Phil Bradley will contact the landowners.

Twizel Bridge – the weeds had still not been removed, and the clerk would contact Duddo PC to ask them to attend to this.

h) New speed sign – this is up and running – Cllr. Watkin was thanked for arranging the part funding, and the Chairman had expressed his thanks to the clerk for hurrying the process along.

Projected cuts in services – as grass cutting is likely to be the first casualty, the Chairman had suggested that community gardens or allotments might be popular in suitable areas.

Lynne O'Reilly had expressed a wish to maintain the small area of waste land in front of her new house in Station Gardens, and the PC supports this. If the other section of this land were to be used for allotments, the neighbours would need to be consulted.

Collingwood A boards – after the Chairman's long meeting with the new owner, he agreed that the board near the bus shelter was a hazard and agreed to move it to the other side of the road.

Litter pick – the Chairman asked for his thanks to be passed to all those who took part.

Open and unguarded inspection chambers and manholes on the A698 in Donaldson's Lodge and to the SW of the village have had temporary safety barriers around them for 18 months.

Two more were discovered without barriers. The Chairman contacted Highways about this, and Cllr. Watkin assured the meeting that they now all had barriers round them.

Area Committee meeting on 12th September – the clerk reported that the main topic of discussion was potholes and the poor quality of the roads.

7. Financial Report:

The clerk distributed a statement of account to date showing a credit balance of £2,077.70. It was agreed that the setting of next year's precept should be discussed at the January meeting.

8. Planning:

School site – Cllr. Richmond expressed concern at the lack of transparency relating to the criteria for bids for the site of the old school, and questioned whether the acceptance of a bid would mean that the bidder could assume that planning permission would be granted. A reply from John Marshall, NCC Senior Surveyor, stated that any offers will be considered; there isn't a fixed assessment criteria, rather all offers will be analysed on the basis of a number of factors including price and proposed use. Cllr. Watkin qualified this by stating that the planning procedure is a total and separate legal requirement. A conditional sale could be concluded with a developer subject to planning permission being granted. NCC cannot accept an offer below the market value, but do not have to accept the highest offer. As was stated at the September PC meeting, prospective purchasers have tried twice to buy the site, and were told that NCC already had an offer, and were therefore fobbed off. The reason for this was apparently because the site was re-marketed due to a complaint to the MP by a parishioner.

As this is a contentious site and there is no indication of the valuation criteria and the bidding process, the Parish Council would need to be able to deal with questions from the parishioners about the non-transparency of the marketing. It was agreed therefore, that, since this is the responsibility of NCC, all questions and comments should be directed to Cllr. Watkin, and parishioners should understand that parishes have no power over planning applications.

Application 16/03847/FUL – Retrospective erection of storage shed at Orchard House, Donaldsons Lodge – the PC had no objection to this application. Although this is just a small shed, Cllr. Watkin said that when these houses were built, any subsequent additional building would require planning permission.

9. Quarry Cottage:

The pre-application 16/00101/PREAPP for building work had not been followed by a full application, in spite of the fact that this work has already been started. Following a site visit by the Planning Officer, it had been established that the owner is reinstating the dwelling as it was on the same footprint, and that planning permission is therefore not required. The owner is seeking to carry out an extension in the future which will require planning permission.

10. Proposed development on site behind Rickerbys:

The marketing of 27 holiday chalets had been advertised in The Journal and on the internet. The developer had stated that planning permission had been applied for, and the estate agent involved stated that this permission had been granted. In spite of this, the PC had heard nothing about the proposed development, nor had NCC Planning. Following NCC's enquiries to the developer, an application (ref: 16/04099/FUL) had been submitted for 11 chalets. This, however, is invalid, and not as yet available to view on the NCC website.

11. State of footpaths:

This was dealt with under Item 6 (e), but it was subsequently reported that the pavements in the village are covered in moss and leaves. If these were to freeze, it would create a hazard for pedestrians. The clerk would report this to NCC specifying the badly affected areas.

12. Play Area inspections and repairs:

Graham Campbell had quoted £400 for materials to carry out the repairs, and this had been accepted. He is apparently waiting for some of the materials to arrive.

He has also agreed to carry out monthly inspections provided he receives a letter from the insurers assuring him that he is covered for any accident which may occur.

13. Play Area grant applied for:

John Stockwell of Station Gardens is taking advantage of a customer offer from the "One Family" Insurance group to fund a community project in Cornhill. He has chosen the Play Area and has applied for a £5,000 award. The PC has provided the required information, and to which communities in the country awards will be given depends on the number of votes received. Consequently, this has been well publicised, including flyers delivered to all households in Cornhill and Donaldsons Lodge requesting people to vote. Voting can only be done online and requires registration to the OneFamily Foundation with name and address and an email address. Voting ends on 30th November, and details can be found on Cornhill Community Website, Facebook, and village notice boards, in addition to the circulated flyers.

Registering address: <https://foundation.onefamily.com/login-logout/>

Search for project Station Gardens Play Area in the nominated projects page:

<https://www.onefamily.com/your-foundation/community-awards/>

14. Churchyard improvements:

Pippa Cole, a landscape gardener from Kelso, spent considerable time walking around the churchyard and formulating ideas, and came up with some interesting suggestions to open

up the aspect of the church, such as a spot for contemplation, wild flowers, and making it bird-friendly. She will send a report to Rob Kelsey and a planning document from which the work could be carried out.

15. County Councillor's Report:

Cllr. Watkin reported that the amount of money which could be spent on services next year is uncertain. There will be no Government grants in three years' time, cutting Council funding by 50%. To make parish councils more powerful, they would need to engage the community and be willing to see the precept increase.

Some bus services will never be viable – low income areas will not be able to afford them. Cllr. Richmond stated that the PC would need to plan ahead.

Cllr. Buckle said that public bonds of £1,000 with no interest payable were offered by the GGT, and these were repayable in five years. More than £100,000 was raised, and some bond holders gifted the £1,000 after the five years.

16. Correspondence:

- **Improvements to the A1** – public consultation to be held on Wednesday, 23rd November, from 11.00am -7pm, at The Maltings, Berwick.
- **Police & Crime Plan** – public meeting to be held on Thursday, 1st December, at 6.00pm for 6.30pm, at The King's Arms, Berwick.
- **Planning Development Management Training Session** – Tuesday, 29th November, 6.00pm to 9.00pm, at Bellview Centre, Belford. Names of attendees to be sent to: ann.rawlinson@northumberland.gov.uk or phone 01670 6222642.
- **Local Services Liaison meeting** on Monday, 12th December, from 3.00-5.00pm, at the Cheviot Centre, Wooler. Officers in attendance will be Bob Hodgson, Area Manager North, and Graham Bucknall, Highways Area Manager North.
- **Great North Air Ambulance** – request for donation. Agreed to send £25.00.

17. Any other business:

- **Parish Action Plan** - Cllr. Richmond suggested a parish action plan should be undertaken to generate ideas for short term projects. She subsequently submitted the attached document containing the ideas of CPC Chair Mick Plunkett, Rev. Rob Kelsey, and herself, and suggested a meeting might be called to be attended by representatives of local groups.
- **New road sign** – Mrs. Vera Porter had repeatedly reported to NCC the filthy state of the large green direction sign on the A698 approach to Cornhill, as a result of which it has been replaced with a smart new white sign. The clerk would write to Mrs. Porter to thank her for her continued efforts to get the sign replaced.

18. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 12th January 2017, at 6.00pm at the Village Hall.

This concluded the business of the meeting which was closed at 8.15pm.

Signed.....

Date.....