

DRAFT**Cornhill Parish Council****Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 11th January 2018,
at 6.00pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs. Mick Plunkett, Marie Gillespie, Barbara Richmond, Tina Ayre, David Richmond, Rev'd Rob Kelsey, parishioner Elizabeth Devon, Clerk Angela Hallam-Baker.

1. Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr. Roderick Lawrie, Rev'd John Carr, PC Dan Perry, Martin Devon.

2. Police Report:

PC Perry had sent a message saying that only one issue had been reported – a broken-down van had been set alight between Cornhill and Barelees. No one had been identified in connection with this.

3. Parishioners' Questions: none.

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2017, which had not been reviewed at the November meeting due to lack of time, were agreed and signed.

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2017 were agreed and signed.

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

- **Repairs to the churchyard wall** – it was reported that the wall had been re-pointed, and the County Council employee who undertook the job was thanked for working under near freezing weather conditions and adapting his cement mix to suit the temperature.
- **Repairs to the wall in Station Gardens** – it was still not known to whom the wall belongs. The railings are the property of the residents of the privately-owned houses. The clerk to ask NCC about the wall.

6. Financial Report:

- **New external auditors appointed** – the clerk reported that external auditors are appointed or re-appointed every year. During 2016 information was circulated that small authorities would be opted-in to a new central procurement regime managed by SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd.) unless they expressly decided to opt-out and appoint their own external auditors. Since Cornhill PC has a turnover of less than £25,000 and therefore not required to pay for the audit, it was decided to "opt-in" rather than run to the expense of appointing its own auditors.

It appeared that matters would continue as before, ie. completion and publishing of an annual return, and presumably, although not clear in the current document, the appointment of an internal auditor.

The new external auditors are: P.F.K. Littlejohn LLP, 1 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD.

- **Statement of account to date** – the clerk circulated a statement of the bank account to date showing a credit balance of £1,564.58.
- **Precept for 2018/2019** – it was noted that the annual precept was last increased in 2010/2011, and has remained at £2,700 since then. In view of funds spent during the intervening years on capital items, including donations towards the interactive speed signs, two new benches, new notice board at Donaldson's Lodge, flower tubs and plants, as well as general maintenance, it was agreed to increase the precept by 5%, bringing it to £2,835.
Two of the old benches need replacing, and it was agreed that County Cllr. Lawrie be asked if he would fund these from his Members' Fund. This to be discussed at the March meeting.
- **Decision on internet banking** – in view of the fact that many of the PC's suppliers had recently elected to have payments made electronically where possible, the clerk had obtained an application form from the Bank of Scotland to request that the PC be registered to pay its bills on line. Angela pointed out that this would not only save her having to obtain two signatures on the cheques, but it would also save the payees having to cash cheques at banks, many of which are now closed.
After much discussion, it was agreed that the PC should go ahead with applying for registration, and that Angela, who is not a signatory, be appointed Delegate User. The signatures of the four signatories were added to the application form.
It was agreed that the clerk would email all the bank account signatories/parish councillors asking for permission to pay every bill as it becomes due. It would be necessary to receive the consent of a minimum of two of the signatories. Once paid on line, the clerk would obtain a print out of each transaction which would be made available to the parish councillors as proof of payment. This method of payment will be monitored to ensure that it is working correctly.

7. Planning Applications:

- **17/03894/FUL – Cornhill School site** – 79 comments had so far been submitted to the Planning Office, and it appears that comments are still being sent in. To date there is no indication on the NCC website as to when this application is likely to be discussed.
- **16/04099/FUL – Holiday Lodges behind Rickerbys** – this application has been withdrawn by the applicant.
- **17/04267/VARYCO – The Granary, Castle Heaton** – no objections received by the Parish Council.

Complaints were lodged by some of the PC members about how difficult it is to get on to the NCC Planning website. These would be conveyed to Cllr. Lawrie.

8. Land for sale behind Tweed Meadows:

Although offers for the purchase of this land had been submitted, nothing further had been heard from the agents.

9. Festive lighting and planned replacement of street lamps with LED bulbs:

After a huge amount of work by a local team of Lynda and David Waite and Paul Smith, led by Cllr. Barbara Richmond, seven of the Christmas lights were up and running by 3rd December. The eighth light had not been connected by NCC although this had been paid

for and promised. Apologies were received from NCC for this oversight, and the PC told it would be fixed.

The new LED lamps are due to be installed by March, and once these are in place, plans would be made for Phase 2 of the festive lighting. Lynda and the Village Shop had already raised £105 towards this, for which the PC is most grateful. The amount currently ring-fenced for Phase 2 of the lighting stands at £713.60.

The Village Shop's outdoor festive lights added to the seasonal display, as did Rickerbys' tractor lit with coloured lights, and the Collingwood Arms' tree lights.

It was hoped that the number of lights for Christmas 2018 would be increased, and that they could all be switched on at the same time. Sunday, 2nd December, agreed.

10. Bell View:

The Christmas Lunch, organised by Jane Field, St. Helen's Church, and the Village Plan Committee, was held in the Village Hall on 9th December, and much enjoyed by the 35+ guests who attended. A profit of £320 was raised, and this would be ring-fenced for future Cornhill activities. Thanks were extended to all those who provided food and helped with the event.

It was planned to hold a Strawberry Tea in the summer, which would be organised by Bell View, St. Helen's Church and the Parish Council.

11. Village Plan:

It was agreed that the name of this project would be changed to "Cornhill Community Action Plan". The next committee meeting was arranged for Wednesday, 24th January, at 4.30pm at the Collingwood Arms – time and venue to be confirmed. Elizabeth Devon was asked if she would join the committee, and was pleased to accept.

The Rev'd Kelsey is still looking for a landscape gardener to help with the churchyard, and Elizabeth and Martin Devon offered to work with him on this. Funds may be obtained via Cllr. Lawrie's Members Fund.

It was agreed that the committee should produce an Events Calendar which could be widely publicised by way of the Community Website, the Fourum, an additional page in the Village Newsletter and posters. Lynda would be asked to include a facebook page.

12. Traffic calming and speed monitoring result:

A new speed strip had been placed across the A698 at the north end of the village. This would record speeds and possibly numbers of HGV vehicles.

In addition to Coldstream monitoring the number of HGV vehicles passing through Coldstream High Street (almost 1,000 between 6.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday), Mick had spent several hours recording the numbers passing through Cornhill:

4th January - 34 per hour by Rickerbys

9th January - 23 per hour at the roundabout

10th January - 18 per hour at Wark Road

It appeared that lorries diverted from the A1 at night, due to road works, were passing through Cornhill, and that their sat navs were directing them through Cornhill because this is the shortest route.

13. Play Area:

Since the climbing frame had been condemned as being not worth the expensive repairs required, it was agreed that it should be removed, and would leave more room for children to play football. The swings are still serviceable, and since there appear to be only a few children using the play area, it was thought not feasible to spend a large amount of money on new equipment. Angela suggested the councillors should have a look at the Branxton play park where all the equipment is made of timber, and likely to be cheaper to install. Much of this is simple and attractive to small children.

14. Cornhill-in-Bloom:

Paul and Carol Ashton are fund-raising with quizzes, etc. to pay for plants. A number of the tubs need replacing, and the PC would help with the purchase of these. It was suggested that the tubs would be less likely to rot if they are placed on flagstones. It appeared that the planting of the tubs is not a problem, but volunteers to keep them watered are required. If residents with a tub outside their houses would see to the watering, this would solve the problem. A suggestion was made that a prize could be awarded each year for the best kept tub.

15. Community Walks:

The first of these walks had been well attended, and Mick would arrange another one in the next few weeks.

16. Byways Open to All Traffic BOATs Nos. 18, 19, 21:

Mick reported that the objections to these paths being designated as BOATs had been withdrawn, and that a decision was due to be made next month.

17. Village Shop Award nomination:

The clerk had put forward a nomination for the Village Shop to receive the Eastern Borders Development Association (EBDA) Award 2017 citing their huge fund-raising activities and voluntary services provided for elderly villagers, etc. etc. A decision is expected shortly.

18. County Councillor's Report:

None due to Cllr. Lawrie's attendance at another meeting. The North Area Meeting has been set for Thursday, 25th January, at Alnwick. Details and agenda expected later.

19. Correspondence:

- Request for donation to **Great North Air Ambulance** - £25.00 agreed.
- Request for donation to **Community Action Northumberland** - £35.00 agreed.
- **Holiday homes in Cornhill Parish** – the National Association of Local Councils is conducting a survey seeking the depth of support for a proposal to enable better funding for services for permanent residents in areas with a high proportion (more than 10%) of second/holiday homes. 14 were counted in Cornhill Parish - could be more – which amounted to nearly 10%.
- **Breaching of commercial photographer's copyright** – a letter from NALC reported that one of its member councils had inadvertently breached a copyright when using an image on the Council's website, as a result of which the Council has had to pay a significant amount in compensation. Local councils are asked to

check for permission to use any photographs on their websites which have been taken by commercial photographers.

20. Any other business:

- **Litter pick - Monday, 5th March**, was agreed. Request for volunteers would be put in the next Newsletter. Mick would put a notice on the board and contact Gerald Tait in Coldstream.
- **Pedestrian refuge damaged** – it appeared that a vehicle had collided with this, and the clerk would ask NCC to have it repaired.
- **Litter bin required for lay-by between Goslaw Cut and Cornhill** – it was reported that litter is being dumped in this lay-by, and therefore a bin is required. The clerk had been told that NCC could no longer supply a green wheelie bin because they could not now obtain the stanchions to which it could be fixed. Consequently, the PC would be required to purchase a black bin, at a high cost. The PC considered that a bin should be paid for by NCC, since the clearing of litter is a County Council service. It was pointed out that local volunteers carried out litter picking every two months along the grass verges on the two main roads through the village.

21. Parishioners' questions on agenda items – none.

22. Date of next meeting: Thursday, 8th March 2018, at 6.00pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

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