**MINUTES OF CORNFORTH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:**

**MARCH 2021**

Minutes of the Remote Meeting of Cornforth Parish Council held at 7.00pm Monday 22nd March 2021.

Present: Councillor Mr. A. Hodgson and

Councillors: Mrs. P. Crathorne, Mrs. H.P. Drew, Dr. S. C Drew, Mr. P. Metcalfe, Mrs. M. Poole, Mr. R. Poole and Mr. R Vaughan.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for all other Councillors who had chosen not to take part in a remote meeting or who could not take part for technical reasons.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made in relation to item 14 (iii) on the agenda by The Chairman and Councillors Mrs. P. Crathorne and Mrs. H. P. Drew. Councillor Mrs. P. Crathorne also made a declaration of personal interest in respect of item 15.

3. MINUTES

Members confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th Febriuary 2021, circulated with the agenda.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

The meeting considered the action proposed by Councillor Metcalfe with regard to fixing a second gate across the access to the allotments. He provided a quote for the work of £960 plus VAT. Members agreed to carry out the work.

5. POLICE LIAISON

The Vice Chairman reported that no PACT meetings had been held. It was again agreed that when they resume, the PSO be invited to attend every other Parish Council meeting. A discussion was held on the proposal of holding PACT meetings using TEAMS. Neither the Vice Chairman nor the Members were prepared to accept this arrangement and called for in person meetings

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

7. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

The Clerk reported that DET on behalf of Tarmac had issued an approval of grant for the Memorial Park. He had advised Kompan and requested a formal contract so that the work could start quickly. Members will be kept advised of progress.

8. AAP ISSUES

The Chairman reported that a brief meeting had been held to update Members on the commitments from the Neighbourhood Fund.

9. COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES

Our County Council representative reported that this had been a challenging year for the County Council. Thanks were due to all involved in keeping the infection rate to 68/1000. The Government’s Fair Funding Review would see a loss of £18M to the public health budget in the county as the SE would benefit under the new age related criteria being adopted.

Councillor Crathorne was continuing to work with the police and Network Rail on the issue of quad-bikes. The police were preparing a report on what could be done. Some of the problems were a result of residents’ bikes, but no evidence was being offered. The damage to the woodland and walkways would need to be addressed once the problem is resolved. Members thanked Councillor Mayhew and our PSO for their continued interest in solving this problem.

The Neighbourhood wardens had been removing fly tipping when reported. The problem of pot holes would continue to be addressed.

The last County Council meeting will be held on 23rd March, with no further meetings until after 6th May 2021.

Councillor Mrs. Crathorne agreed to make enquiries about the frequency of the No 56 bus, as it appeared to have been reduced to an hourly service.

10. PLANNING MATTERS AND APPLICATIONS FROM DURHAM COUNTY’S WEEKLYLISTS.

At the time of the despatch of this agenda, which included applications lodged up to and including 15th March 2021, the following application had been received by Durham County Council, which was of interest to the Parish Council:

1. DM/21/00575FPA – Mr. A. Stanley – 11 Verdun Terrace – Single storey rear extension and outbuilding

Members resolved not to make any representations.

It was noted that no recent decisions by the County Council had been made on applications of interest to the Parish Council.

11. WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY AND MONITORING

Following the Government’s Digital Services staff’s request for an update on the above issue, the Clerk had asked our website designer to draft a reply to be sent to the GDS. Unfortunately, he had been unable to make contact and Cornforth Partnership had similar difficulty with regard to work he is doing for them. As a result, our website has not been updated and this state of affairs needs to be resolved quickly. Members agreed to ask the staff of Cornforth Partnership to resolve the problem, even if this meant that we have to create another website.

12. GROUND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT.

The Clerk reported that the current ground maintenance contract expires on 31st March 2021. It will not be possible, given the restrictions surrounding the forthcoming elections, to seek new tenders. It was agreed the current tender be extended, either for a year, so that the new Parish Council has adequate time to review its needs and revise the terms, if necessary. Members were reminded about the likely closure of the cemetery, at which time its maintenance would fall to the County Council. In these circumstances, the new Parish Council would need to take the maintenance of the churchyard out of the main contract and have a separate arrangement with a short expiry date.

13. CHRISTMAS MOTIFS AND ARTIFICIAL TREE.

The Clerk re[ported that the Parish Council has arrangements with Blachere Illumination and Lumalite to provide illuminated Christmas decorations and that both contracts are coming to an end. Members agreed that as the Blachere motifs were old and failing we should seek new equipment from them after May 2021. The tree from Lumalite was satisfactory and the contract should be renewed.

14. ISSUES FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

1. BANK RECONCILIATION STATEMENT – POSITION AT 28th FEBRUARY 2021.

The bank reconciliation statement for the above period was approved and would be signed as required by the Chairman and Councillor Mrs. M. Poole.

1. RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2021.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Receipts** |  | **£** | **Cheque****No.** |
| NIL |  |  |  |
| **Payments** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Cornforth Partnership | Web site repayment | 380.00 | 102099 |
| R. A. Sunman | Allowances and expenses | 171.38 | 102100 |
| R. A. Sunman | Salary | 666.10 | S/O |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | **Total expenditure** | **1217.48** |  |

The schedule was approved.

1. The Clerk reported that Cornforth Partnership had been successful in obtaining grants towards the refurbishment and redecoration of Cornforth House and No.66 High Street; the latter is owned by the Parish Council. The Parish Council has already approved a request to meet the Third Party Contribution for Tarmac’s contribution to the works at around £3,000. Cornforth Partnership had written to the Council for support of £6,000 to meet the shortfall in grant to refurbish and decorate No. 66 High Street. Members’ views were sought.

Councillor Dr. S. C. Drew took the Chair and the Councillors who had declared an interest took no part in the decision that followed. The Members agreed that as No. 66 High Street was a Parish Council building, the request be agreed.

15. APPOINTMENT OF A TEMPORARY PARISH CLERK.

In accordance with Section 11 of the Standing Orders of this Parish Council, dealing with staffing and matters of a sensitive and/or confidential nature, Members were reminded that this item and the associated papers were not to be disclosed to the public or considered whilst they were present. The personal details of a potential candidate for the above post had been enclosed with the agenda. No members of the public were present. Mrs. Crathorne’s declaration of interest was noted and she took no part in the decision making.

Members held a discussion with and asked questions of the candidate, Mr. Derek Snowball. After he had left the meeting, Members resolved to appoint him as Temporary Clerk for six months, working alongside Mr. Sunman, from 12th April 2021.

Members agreed that an approach could be made to our audit advisor Mr. Fletcher to prepare Mr. Snowball’s payroll details: the Council to bear the costs.

16. THANKING THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN.

Members noted that this could be the last meeting of the Parish Council before the elections in May. Councillor Mr. Hodgson, our Chairman, has decided not to stand for election. Members took the opportunity to thank him for his many years of service as a Member and as Chairman.

**NOTE: At the close of the meeting Members were asked if they had any items**

**for inclusion on a future agenda. None were requested.**

To all Members of the Parish Council.

Yours Sincerely, Ray Sunman, Parish Clerk: 24th March 2021.

**Signed: …………………………………… Dated: ………………………..**