**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CORNFORTH PARISH COUNCIL: MARCH 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of Cornforth Parish Council which was held in the Community Centre, Cornforth, at 7.00pm on Monday 9th March 2015.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor Mr. A., Hodgson.

Councillors: Mr. C. Baker, Mr. T. Cutmore, Mrs. H. P. Drew, Dr. S. C. Drew, Mr. C. Hodgson, Mrs. S. Neville, Mrs. M. Poole, Mr. R. Poole, Mr. R. Vaughan and Mr. A. Wilson.

Apologies: Mr. S. Hodgson, Mr. P. Metcalfe and Mrs. S. Traynor.

PRIOR TO CALLING THE MEETING TO ORDER THE CHAIRMAN ADVISED MEMBERS THAT THE PROCEEDINGS COULD BE RECORDED AND THAT THOSE ATTENDING COULD EXPECT TO BE REPORTED UPON.

1. APOLOGIES.

The above apologies for non-attendance were noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of a personal or prejudicial interest made with regard to any item to be transacted.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2015 and circulated with the agenda were agreed as a true copy.

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

There were no matters arising that were not covered on the agenda.

5. POLICE LIAISON

The latest PACT meeting had been well attended with 20 people and representatives from “Livin’”. One of the main topics had been police response times. An “immediate” response was within 10 minutes; a priority was within 1 hour; a “scheduled” response could take up to 3 hours or up to 3 days. The differing times were manpower and cost related. Residents were encouraged to phone in to report incidents as this helps justify extra resources for particular areas. The priority in Cornforth was the Maughan and Elvet Close areas which had been targeted by aggressive salesmen.

Residents felt that a light on the path next to the churchyard was required. This was difficult because of unknown ownership. The “Safe Homes Initiative would help residents. Overall crime in the village was low and generally involved domestic or neighbour related issues.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs. Walker, Mrs Wilson and Mr. Walker attended the meeting, but did not ask to speak on any item on the agenda.

7. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from Mrs. Wilson on behalf of the “Allsorts Group” and read it out. Mrs Wilson had asked why the Parish Council had not included an item on the agenda on the Parish Meeting. The Chairman explained that the Council had already agreed to hold a meeting and that it would be held in May after the General Election. He instructed the Clerk to reply in writing on this aspect of the letter.

The second part of the letter dealt with the issue of dog fouling and again questioned the omission of this item from the agenda when it had been discussed at the February meeting. The Chairman replied that this matter was one for the County Council to address, but had no objection to its inclusion on the April meeting.

8. AAP ISSUES

Councillor Simpson had attended the past meeting at which the Lord Lieutenant for County Durham gave a presentation on the honours system. County Durham was under represented. A web site can advise those interested in putting forward nominations ([www.gov.uk/honours](http://www.gov.uk/honours)) and a telephone helpline is available (020 7276 2772).

A presentation was made by a nature conservation group, “Three Rivers”, which will apply for Heritage Lottery funding for a £2M scheme to form a reserve around the head-waters of the River Skerne.

A change will be made in the way future AAP projects are assessed with three sub groups being formed to examine projects in each of the three priority areas rather the the full Board examining them all. The next meeting will be held on 13th May 2015.

9. COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES

County Council Simpson reported that:

1. The sign above the pizza shop on the High Street had been approved.
2. An application for a new house had been made on land adjoining the Green. The details had been circulated during the meeting by the Clerk and the issue was dealt with under item 12.
3. Fly tipping continues to be a problem at vacant property. Jennifer Jones of the Community Action Team had advised that Durham County Council would be approaching the Land Registry to determine ownership and action. The Parish Council is asked to support this action. Under this item Councillor Wilson raised the issue of tipping behind the former Balaclava public house. It was reported that permission had been granted to clear the land.

10. BANK RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS – POSITION AT 28TH FEBRUARY 2015.

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliation statements and a comparison of this year’s budget to actual expenditure for this periods at the meeting. The contents were noted.

11. SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2015.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Receipts** |  | **£** | **Cheque**  **No.** |
|  |  |  |  |
| NIL |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Payments** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| R.B. Legion Men’s Section | Contribution | 30.00 | 616 |
| R. B. Legion Women’s Section | Contribution | 30.00 | 617 |
| R.A.O.B. Sphere Lodge | Contribution | 30.00 | 618 |
| Salvation Army | Contribution | 30.00 | 619 |
| West Cornforth Comm. Assoc. | Wreath | 36.00 | 620 |
| Stephen Edgoose | Computer repair | 120.00 | 621 |
| R. A. Sunman | Allowances | 90.93 | 622 |
| Altogether Greener | Ground maintenance | 2,316.76 | 623 |
| Cornforth Partnership | Awards for All payment | 800.50 | 624 |
| R. A. Sunman | Salary | 666.10 | S/O |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 4,150.29 |  |
|  |  |  |  |

The schedule was approved.

12. PLANNING MATTERS AND APPLICATIONS FROM FEBRUARY’S WEEKLY LISTS.

Members considered the details of a planning application top build a house and garage in the garden east of Stonedale on the Green. A decision on this issue was delayed until the end of the meeting so that all members could view the application. The Council resolved to object to the development on the grounds that the access onto the lane to the north would hazardous to road safety.

13. NETWORK RAIL: ACCESS TO THE SCRAP YARD.

The Clerk advised Members that he had not had a reply from Network Rail.

14. REPAIR WORK TO THE GREEN.

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council had not provided its specification for the repair work. Because this ongoing delay was causing the situation to deteriorate, the Members agreed the following list of tenderers and instructed the Clerk to seek tenders from them as soon as the specification was available. The list, which had been formulated from firms able to undertake repairs to stonework and paving as well as provide tarmacadam and bitumen solutions, was as follows:

1. Terra Firma Surfacing and Earthworks – Durham .
2. Dunn and Spence – Spennymoor.
3. Foster Groundworks – Spennymoor.
4. Andrew Hardy – Cornforth.
5. Durham County Council’s Highways Departmnent.

15. WINTER WORKS IN THE CHURCHYARD AND ON THE GREEN.

The Clerk reported that, following damage to the container for dead flowers, the ground maintenance contractor has been asked for a specification and quote to replace it with something more substantial but with a lighter metal cover. A box of similar size to the existing and made of timber with an aluminium cover is suggested at an estimated cost of £684 and £450 respectively.

In addition, there is a need to carry out work on two sets of trees. The first is to raise the crowns of trees on the Green to facilitate mowing using ride-on machinery, at a cost of £320. The second is to remove dead branches from the churchyard and take down a dead tree at the cost of £390.

The Parish Council resolved that as the container was damaged by volunteers carrying out tree work on behalf of the Church and as the Parish Council had already carried out a lot of tree work in the churchyard, the Church Council be asked to pay for all of this work other than on the Green. The Parish Council agreed to meet the cost of tree work on the Green.

16. LIVIN’ MEETING HELD 5TH MARCH 2015.

The Clerk and the Chairman were to attend a meeting with “Livin’” to consider the results of its consultation exercise to improve land at Laburnum Road. The meeting was cancelled at short notice and a report will be made at a future date.

17. REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

1. The Clerk reported that a request had been received from the Secretary of the Village Show Committee for assistance towards the costs of the show, which is to be held on Sunday 30th August and Monday 31st August 2015. The Council agreed to support the request in principle and ask for further detail.
2. The Clerk reported that Durham Miners’ Association had asked for support for the Durham Miners’ Gala. Last year the Parish Council offered payment for a message of support at a cost of £45. It was agreed to make the same contribution.

18. FUTURE WORK TO THE ALLOTMENTS.

Members were advised that following discussions with Northumbrian Water and assistance from Councillor Metcalfe the water leaks appear to have been dealt with and the supply has been reconnected. The Clerk is currently updating the waiting list in accordance with the Council’s instructions and the Prince’s Trust has helped clear two vacant plots. It was agreed that the Clerk could organise the removal of any material from the plots at Parish Council expense and that a date be set for the collection of rents. Thereafter, water usage is be monitored monthly until the next bill is received and at that point the need for further work would be considered.

19. THE COUNTY DURHAM PLAN.

The Clerk advised Members that the interim findings of the Governments’ Planning Inspectorate had been severely critical of the above plan. The enquiry found that the plan made unrealistic assumptions about job growth and inward migration, which resulted in housing needs being far too high. The spatial distribution of development was not justified for Durham City and as the Parish Council commented at an early stage, the plan needed to assess the needs for settlements such as Cornforth. Incursions into the Green Belt, including 4,000 houses, was criticised and associated plans to provide two relief roads were considered unjustified, undeliverable, environmentally unacceptable and unsustainable. The County Council faces three courses of action, to continue with the plan, which is unsound, to amend it, for which there is too little time, or to withdraw it. The Members resolved to advise the County Council to take on board the need to regenerate towns and small villages and to reconsider the Parish Council’s previous comments.

20. REPLACEMENT SEATS AND DOG BINS ON THE GREEN.

The advised Members that Durham County had provided a quote of £1,504.65 including installation for four benches in the village and two replacement dog bins on the Green. The County had also been asked to turn the bench on Cuthbert’s Road through ninety degrees and install two of the former High Street litter bins in the Memorial Park. The Clerk will make application from Section 106 monies to fund the replacement seats at Stobbs Cross. In the meantime, it was agreed to order the work to go ahead and meet the cost.

21. REPLACEMENT PRINTER/SCANNER.

The Clerk advised the Council that he had been using his own equipment for scanning and printing since his appointment. The equipment is not fully compatible with the Parish Council’s computer which runs on Windows 8.1 software and it is now in need of replacement. Members agreed to approve the purchase of a new printer/scanner at a cost of up to £100.

22. SCHOOL OPEN DAY.

Members had asked that this item be placed on the agenda at the last meeting. Councillor Cutmore advised Members that an open day was to be held on Friday 12th June in the new Cornforth School.

**NOTE: At the close of the meeting Members were asked if they had any items for inclusion on the next agenda. The following item had already been noted:**

1. Dog fouling.

R. A. Sunman Parish Clerk

7th April 2015

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