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**Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held Monday 11 November 2024 at 7pm in West Cornforth Community Centre, Station Road, Cornforth, DL17 9LA.**

**Present: Councillors Mr P Metcalfe (Chair), Mr N Coombs, Mr M Cunningham, Mrs S Metcalfe, Mr J Ratcliff, Ms J Snowball & Mr R Vaughan.**

**In attendance: Mr R Ormerod (Parish Clerk) and one member of the public.**

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| 1 | <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors J Beetham-Yelland, S Drew and P Drew.</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: To receive and accept the apologies.</i></b></p>  |
| 2 | <p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p><b><i>It was noted that Cllr R Vaughan declared a personal interest in item 13 as parent of a child likely to attend the party. Cllrs P Metcalfe and S Metcalfe both declared personal interests in item 14 as allotment holders.</i></b></p> |
| 3 | <p><b>Members' dispensation</b></p> <p>The Clerk informed the meeting that there were no dispensations for this meeting. It was noted that there were no dispensations.</p>  |
| 4 | <p><b>Public participation</b></p> <p>A member of the public expressed thanks to the parish council for removing two redundant bus shelters, but also asked that the parish council request removal of the bus stop signage and road markings.</p>   |
| 5 | <p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p><b>Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 October 2024</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr M Cunningham and seconded by Cllr R Vaughan, and it was</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the council held on 14 October 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at this meeting.</i></b></p>  |
| 6 | <p><b>County Councillor's report</b></p> <p>None received.</p>   |
| 7 | <p><b>Chairman's announcements</b></p> <p>The Chairman informed the meeting that he had attended three Remembrance services in the parish, all of which had been well attended. Thanks was expressed to Mr Andy Denholm, the outgoing Remembrance Parade Marshal, for his work on Remembrance Day events in the parish over many years.</p>  |

Signed

Date

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|    | <p><b>Resolved: That the Chairman and Clerk write a letter of thanks to Mr Andy Denholm.</b></p> <p>It was noted that Saturday 16 November will see the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cornforth's war memorial. Members were encouraged to attend the service to commemorate this.</p> <p>It was noted that Tursdale's war memorial required rust treatment.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Clerk check records to find out if the parish council has taken responsibility for this in the past.</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recent budget had included changes to employers' National Insurance contributions. The Chairman said that the council would need to be mindful of this when setting its budget for 2025-26.</p>   |
| 8  | <p><b>Police And Communities Together (PACT)</b></p> <p>Councillor Mr N Coombs reported on a recent meeting that had been better attended than usual. Topics covered included an attempt to access a key-safe, bins set on fire, an attempt to break into a farmhouse, a vehicle left untaxed on the highway, a bully dog in the surgery car park and various incidents involving fireworks.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council receive the report.</b></p>   |
| 9  | <p><b>Area Action Partnership</b></p> <p>Cllr J Snowball informed the meeting that the AAP was funding two schemes: Living Well (a health and fitness scheme) and Supporting Families (a scheme to build financial resilience in the community). It was noted that there had been an uptake in Pension Credit claimants. It was noted that there was likely to be an announcement soon regarding the police and off-road bikes.</p>   |
| 10 | <p><b>Clerk's update</b></p> <p>The Clerk had circulated a written report.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr S Metcalfe and seconded by Cllr N Coombs, and it was</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council receive the report.</b></p>   |
| 11 | <p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>No discussion.</p>  |
| 12 | <p><b>Financial matters</b></p> <p>Members had received the Income and Expenditure Analysis for September and October 2024, the bank reconciliations at 30 September and 31 October 2024, the expenditure against budget analysis from 1 April 2024 to 31 October 2024 and the list of pending payments. It was noted that the council had £136,581.98 in its current account and £184,487.10 in the reserve account.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Snowball and seconded by Councillor R Vaughan and it was;</p> <p><b>Resolved: To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Analysis for September and October 2024.</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor R Vaughan and seconded by Councillor M Cunningham and it was;</p> <p><b>Resolved: To receive and approve the bank reconciliations at 30 September and 31 October 2024 and for them to be signed by the Chairman.</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Snowball and seconded by Councillor S Metcalfe and it was;</p> |

Signed

Date

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|    | <p><b>Resolved: To receive and approve the expenditure against budget analysis for the period 1 April to 31 October 2024.</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor M Cunningham and seconded by Councillor R Vaughan and it was;</p> <p><b>Resolved: To receive and approve the pending payments, subject to a full check on the accuracy of the invoice for the pantomime in December 2022.</b></p>   |
| 13 | <p><b>Grant application, West Cornforth &amp; District Community Association</b></p> <p>The council had received an application for financial assistance towards a children's Christmas party and disco in December 2024. A discussion took place.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor M Cunningham and seconded by Councillor J Snowball, and it was;</p> <p><b>Resolved: To donate £700 towards the Christmas party and disco.</b></p>  |
| 14 | <p><b>Parish council allotments</b></p> <p>A report had been circulated to members following a recent site visit by the Allotments Sub-committee. A discussion took place. All members believed it was important for the council to invest in the allotment site.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Snowball and seconded by Councillor R Vaughan, and it was;</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council obtain prices for 50 tonnes of dolomite, and request assistance from Thristlington Quarry.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council obtain prices for a drainage channel by the bridge.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council obtain prices for two polyurethane footbridges to replace the wooden ones.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council divide the plot in the centre of the site into three plots and offer them to applicants on the waiting list.</b></p>   |
| 15 | <p><b>Parish survey</b></p> <p>Cllr J Snowball briefed members on the results of the residents' survey which had had a 6.22% response rate.</p> <p>Discussions took place on dog fouling, Housing associations buying up vacant properties, bus services and creating more annual events in the parish.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Cllr Snowball for her work on the survey.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Snowball and seconded by Councillor R Vaughan, and it was;</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council put a summary of the survey results on its website.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council put the topic of public transport on its agenda for December 2024 and try to get a Durham County Council representative to attend.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council put the topic of dog fouling on its agenda for December 2024.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: That the council try to get DCC wardens and/or its Clean &amp; Green Team to carry out a "blitz" of the village to make it tidier.</b></p> |
| 16 | <p><b>Tree works and survey</b></p> <p>The Clerk informed the meeting that only two quotes had been received so far.</p>   |

Signed

Date

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|    | <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Snowball and seconded by Councillor S Metcalfe, and it was;</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That the matter be deferred to the next meeting of the council.</i></b></p>   |
| 17 | <p><b>Parish newsletter</b></p> <p>Cllr J Beetham-Yelland had circulated a draft version of the newsletter. Members agreed that it looked very good.</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That Cllrs Beetham-Yelland, Snowball and the Clerk finalise content and go to print with a view to delivering the newsletter in the week commencing 25 November 2024..</i></b></p>  |
| 18 | <p><b>Christmas lighting</b></p> <p>The Clerk informed the meeting that the Christmas lights will be put up on 28 and/or 29 November 2024.</p>  |
| 19 | <p><b>Water leak, Elm Road</b></p> <p>Cllr M Cunningham informed the meeting about an ongoing issue with water leaking from the ground in Elm Road. Northumbrian Water had been contacted but said it was not an issue with their pipework but with groundwater rising to the surface. Cllr Cunningham said he would continue to make complaints to Durham County Council.</p>  |
| 20 | <p><b>Motions on notice</b></p> <p>There were none.</p>   |
| 21 | <p><b>Exclusion of press and public</b></p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.</i></b></p>   |
| 22 | <p><b>Clerk's contract and remuneration</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Clerk had completed his six-month probation period and had met all targets set.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Ratcliff and seconded by Councillor N Coombs, and it was;</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That the Clerk be offered a permanent contract with the parish council.</i></b></p> <p>It was noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Ratcliff and seconded by Councillor N Coombs, and it was;</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That staff be paid in line with the NJC rates.</i></b></p> <p>It was noted that the NJC is recommending that the pay award be backdated to 1 April 2024.</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor J Snowball and seconded by Councillor S Metcalfe, and it was;</p> <p><b><i>Resolved: That the pay award be backdated to 1 April 2024, for both the current Clerk and the previous Clerk (who was still in post during April and part of May 2024).</i></b></p> |

Signed

Date