



**Minutes of the meeting of Chollerton Parish Council held on Wednesday
27th September 2023 at 7.30pm at Gunnerton Church**

Present: Cllr Edward Heslop (Chair) in the Chair

Cllr Dorothy Pigg (Vice Chair)
Cllr Andy Bennett
Cllr Fiona Charlton
Cllr Bruce Lowdon
Cllr Michael Smith
Ms Jayne Longlands in attendance

County Cllr (CC) Nick Morphet

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from; Cllr Malcolm Johnson and Cllr Maggie Tarbit.

2. Opportunity for Matters Raised by Members of the Public before the meeting to be discussed

Questions which require a substantive answer at the meeting need to have been submitted to the Parish Clerk in writing 5 days before the meeting

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

3. Declaration of Interest from Members

To receive disclosures of personal and/or prejudicial interest from Members on matters to be considered at the meeting

Cllr Dorothy Pigg noted a declaration of interest in Barrasford Playground.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 26th July 2023 were approved as a true and correct record, and duly signed by the Chair.

(a) Matters Arising from the above minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

(i) Barrasford School Sign

Cllr Fiona Charlton said that the school sign next to the Barrasford Arms had not been working; it was **AGREED** that PC's should monitor this situation and report back their findings to the Clerk.

(ii) **Gunnerton Playing Field Wall**

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Michael Smith would speak to Neil, a local drystone waller from Barrasford Park, who may be able to assist with this matter; the PC would meet any associated costs.

(iii) **Greenrigg Turbine Fund**

The Chair noted a Greenrigg Turbine Fund meeting would be taking place soon; only a few applications had been received.

5. **County Councillor Report**

NCC Nick Morphet reported as follows:-

Colwell Parking Issue; Vehicles at the junction had been reduced and the sight line was improved.

However most of the vehicles (10 plus a wagon tractor unit) were now parked over the road. As many of these vehicles were unroadworthy and had remained unmoved all year it was considered an eyesore by the villagers.

After discussion it was **AGREED** that the PC would write to the landowners asking their assistance in clearing the area which, historically, has also been used by walkers and other visitors to the village.

Gunnerton 20mph speed limit; CC Morphet had spoken to Richard McKenzie from NCC Highways about the possibility of reducing the speed limit to 20mph in Gunnerton. Mr McKenzie would conduct a speed survey and the results would be circulated to PC's when available.

Japanese Knotweed; CC Morphet had checked the two patches of Japanese Knotweed on the A68 and sent photos to the Parks and Green Spaces Officer who was meeting with a contractor to discuss further.

The **sign at Middle Farm** had now been installed.

Barrasford Playpark bench; it was noted that this had now been installed and everyone was happy with it.

Blocked Gullies; the badly blocked gully at Gunnerton had now been sorted.



The Chair mentioned water gathering issues in the Colwell area (50yds north of the Colwell junction) and it was **AGREED** that Cllr Morphet would investigate this further.

Cllr Lowdon noted that the general condition of the coal road was an issue (the bridge, drainage and road surface) and it was **AGREED** that CC Morphet would raise this further.

Mobile Library Service; the pilot of this scheme had been met with positive comments and was providing valuable insights.

Karbon Homes: Homefinder Service; information about Karbon Homes' Homefinder service was included on the PC website.

CC Morphet would be taking the **Highways Maintenance Area Manager** on a **tour of the ward on 3rd October**. He would show him the drainage problem just south of Dalla Bank, and the state of the footpath between Barrasford and the rear entrance to the quarry.

The **3G mobile network** was being switched off; Vodafone would complete their switch off by early next year, EE would start their switch off early next year, Three would switch off at the end of next year, and O2 would switch off in 2025. Three don't have a 2G network, so if you're with them and don't have a 4G signal you would need to switch provider.

CC Morphet would be presenting his **sewage presentation** to Hexham Town Council later in the year. Previous PC presentations had led to some good conversations and several people had offered to support the campaign. CC Morphet had met with Tyne Rivers Trust, who had put him in touch with the researcher from Newcastle University studying bacteria from sewage in the Ouse Burn. There may be the possibility of an MSc student studying sewage bacteria in the North Tyne.

New **greenhouse gas emissions data** for Northumberland had been released over the summer. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by land uses such as forestry had been revised downwards, and as a result of that the total emissions for the county had been revised upwards. Whereas the data used to show that we achieved a 22% reduction in CO2 emissions in 2020 (with the help of Covid), it now shows that we only achieved a 15% reduction. And unfortunately, the new data for 2021 shows that the county's CO 2 emissions rose by almost 15% - meaning that we're more-or-less back to where we were before the pandemic with only 6 ¼ years to go before we're supposed to be a net zero county.

The week before last the government amended the Energy Bill to facilitate a switch to **renewable liquid heating fuels** such as Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) after the 2026 ban on new fossil fuel boilers in off gas

grid areas came into effect. However, last week the government scrapped the fossil fuel boiler ban altogether, meaning that off gas grid areas are off the hook for the time being, but that it'll be much harder for Northumberland to become a net zero county by 2030.

NCC were re-launching the Climate Change Fund in October; being called the **Northumberland Environment and Climate Fund**.

Discussions ensued on **environmental issues** and the following points made; Net zero emissions within the County were reliant on negative emissions from Kielder Forest. Cllr Bennett asked about recycling plans within NCC; CC Morphet noted NCC plans were in place to recycle items such as tetra packs. Cllr Bennett suggested that rag recycling would be a beneficial service. Cllr Pigg and Cllr Smith noted a lack of viable energy alternatives to replace existing practices.

The **grass at the species rich grassland** site was cut last weekend and clippings would be raked on Saturday 30th September, meeting at the rear quarry entrance at 10am. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Pigg would add this to the Barrasford Facebook page, encouraging local residents to support and attend.

6. Items for Discussion

To discuss issues which have arisen or are causing concern within the Parish of Chollerton

(a) Finance and Planning Assistance to Chair

The Chair noted that finance and planning items were being managed by the Chair, with support from the Vice Chair.

(b) Flood Plan Addendum to the Emergency Plan

Cllr Bennett updated on this item; he would look at the Emergency Plan and make the necessary amendments. The updated document would be sent to the Clerk; this would be added to the website and also be circulated to PC members.

(c) Trees in Barrasford Playpark

Cllr Pigg noted the various tree issues within the Playpark; it was **AGREED** that Cllr Pigg would contact Adam Johnson to assess the trees and the recommended priorities.

(d) B4NTR Broadband

Cllr Bennett updated the meeting with B4RN developments, making the following points:-

- B4RN were an established non-profit making organisation which had been going for a number of years and the Barrasford £872K project had been given the go ahead
- Max. £7,000 vouchers would be provided per household.
- Cost to households would be £60 for each connection (averaged out with all costs covered), plus £33 per month.
- Residents can run a B4RN contract alongside their existing contract for £5 a month for up to 12 months.
- For the B4RN project to be financially viable at least 116 of the current 250 plus residents who signed up as interested would need to take up a contract. In addition funding will need to be found from Ray Wind Farm etc to secure phases 3 and 4.
- B4RN will be going live at Barrasford Village Hall by the end of October and Chollerton School over the half term holiday.
- There were four phases to this scheme with a lot of pressure on B4RN to make this project work.
- Martin Dickson-Green, Chair of Bellingham PC, was a local representative and telecom professional, who would be responsible for the whole project.

It was **AGREED** that the PC would support this project via our website, issuing the facts when information became available (in approx 7 to 10 days), to keep members of the public up to date.

(e) Barrasford Arms Closure

The Chair acknowledged the fact that the Barrasford Arms was now closed.

(f) Barrasford Quarry

It was **AGREED** that we would follow up the proposed visit with Adam Smith of Barrasford Quarry.

7. Correspondence

To note items received and sent out and consider their contents, as necessary

(a) Letter from Chollerton PCC regarding Church Grant

The Church had asked if the PC would consider increasing their contribution to cover the PCC's increased maintenance costs. The PCC had forwarded a copy of their accounts together with a written note.

Discussions ensued and the following points were made:-

- The PC were currently providing almost a 17% contribution of our precept to the PCC.
- Chollerton PCC had received funding from other sources.

- Consistency and fairness in PC donations was important.
- The contribution made by the Monday Men was noted.
- Grass cutting costs could potentially be minimised, with part of the churchyard left to nature.
- The Church were renowned as being asset-rich and it was felt they could help themselves.
- It was recognised that the churchyard is available to all members of the Parish but it was felt that while the church does fundraising there could possibly be more events utilising village halls.

It was **AGREED** that the Chair and Clerk would reply to Chollerton PCC, saying that we politely decline their request for additional funding.

(b) Thank you email from Sport Tynedale

Cliff Thornton, Sport Tynedale Treasurer, had written to the PC to thank them for their £200 contribution. This would help with the organisations cause and purpose of offering financial support to sportspersons in “our area”, be they involved in competition or in coaching. He asked that Sport Tynedale’s thanked be relayed to the Councillors for their support, which was greatly appreciated.

It was noted that 7th December 2023 would be the date for the next Sport Tynedale Annual Awards Evening. The Chair said that, as well as presenting awards, funding and bursaries were available to support local athletes.

(c) Email from Nicole Boyd regarding Chollerton Christmas Party

Nicole Boyd has written to the PC. She noted that Kelly Adshead in the village had received a form from Barclays Bank for an update on organisation details for Chollerton Parish Christmas Party Committee, and asked if we could help with providing this information.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would respond to Nicole Boyd to say that Chollerton PC were keen to see the Children’s Christmas Party continue and would proceed to support it.

(d) Water on Chollerton Lonnen

Catharine Williams had written to the PC on 12th September to raise the issue of water on Chollerton Lonnen. Although Northumbrian Water had looked at this, it may be part of an ongoing problem and it was **AGREED** that CC Nick Morphet would follow up this matter.

(e) 70th Annual Town and Parish Council Conference

NCC’s 70th Annual Town & Parish Council Conference was taking place on Thursday 5th October 2023 at County Hall, Morpeth from 2pm to 6pm. Cllr Glen Sanderson, NCC Leader, had written to the PC earlier that day to

encourage a delegate to attend this meeting. It was **AGREED** that the Chair would attend this event.

8. Financial Matters

(a) Bank reconciliation as at 11th September 2023: £13,439.61

This figure was noted and accepted.

(b) Clerks Wages (June to Sept 2023): £601.68 to pay to the Clerk, £150.40 to pay to HMRC for tax

It was **AGREED** that these payments would be made.

(c) Barrasford Park Bench

It was **AGREED** that a payment of £24.24 would be made to Mr John Pigg as payment for the concrete used to install the park bench at Barrasford. The Chair added that this was paid with the PC's thanks.

(d) Hire of Gunnerton Church on 27th Sept 2023

It was **AGREED** that a payment of £20 would be paid to the Parish of St Giles, Chollerton for the hire of Gunnerton Church for the PC Meeting on 27th Sept 2023.

(e) Colwell Village Hall: 26th July 2023

It was **AGREED** that a payment of £20 be paid to Colwell Village Hall (to hire it for the previous PC Meeting on 26th July 2023).

9. Planning Applications

(a) 23/02481/CCM Swinburne Quarry Ridsdale Northumberland NE48 4DN

(b) 23/02728/FUL Coal Burn Bothy Colwell Hexham Northumberland NE46 4TJ

(c) 23/03035/FUL Threpwood Hill Cottage Birtley Hexham Northumberland NE48 3HJ

These applications were noted; with responses to all three applications having been submitted to NCCs Planning Department on behalf of the PC.

The planning application for Mr & Mrs Nickson in West Crescent, Gunnerton was still ongoing and we had yet to hear from NCC about this.

10. Information Items

To note information items received and passed to Parish Councillors via email.

None.

11. Any Other Business

To be ratified at Chollerton Parish Council Meeting on 22nd November 2023

Business taken under this agenda item is for discussion only.

(a) Dog Waste Bin

Cllr Bruce Lowdon noted that the dog waste bin had been removed from tip corner in the village. It was **AGREED** that CC Morphet would follow this up.

(b) Fence at West Crescent, Gunnerton and Eastacres

Cllr Bruce Lowdon said that farm animals were starting to get out of the field and into West Crescent (at the bottom end, approx 80 metres in length). Cllr Dorothy Pigg said that this was also an issue at Eastacres, Barrasford (just off the square, adjacent to the flags). It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to Karbon Homes about these issues.

12. Date and Venue for Next Meeting

(a) Business Meeting

Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 7.30pm at Barrasford Park.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.