



**Minutes of the meeting of Chollerton Parish Council held on Wednesday
25th January 2023 at 7.30pm at Barrasford Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Edward Heslop in the Chair

Cllr Andy Bennett
Cllr Fiona Charlton
Cllr Malcolm Johnson
Cllr Bruce Lowdon
Cllr Dorothy Pigg
Cllr Michael Smith
Cllr Maggie Tarbit
Ms Jayne Longlands in attendance

County Cllr (CC) Nick Morphet

Angela Watt (Locality Coordinator from NCC) and Kimberley Blackith, Cath Glen and Frank Peel (from Karbon Homes (KH)) were in attendance for agenda item 3.

Rex Robson, Gemma Nixon and Philippa Craig were in attendance to discussion their respective agenda items of Japanese Knotweed (4a) and Gunnerton Playing Fields (4b).

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence.

All members present.

2. Declaration of Interest from Members

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

None.

3. NCC Housing

(a) Angela Watt, Locality Co-ordinator from NCC

Angela Watt spoke to the meeting.

Angela explained that preventative support was being put in place for communities; it was noted that this was a growth sector with additional LC's currently being recruited to help people facing the current difficult financial climate. She explained that incoming calls were triaged by the LC's and people put into contact with the appropriate stakeholders (within



the co-ordination and development of services). A micro-grant of up to £500 was available to help support local services. The LC's looked for gaps and helped to fill them, they built capacity and enabled resilient communities to support each other.

It was noted that the nearest local Warm Hub was based at Wark Town Hall.

It was **AGREED** that:-

- (i) We would advertise the LC service on the PC website and leaflets would be distributed within the Parish.
- (ii) If members had details of things happening in the Parish then they should pass Angela's information on to them; Angela would be very happy to go and visit people who may need her help.

(b) Kimberley Blackith, Cath Glen and Frank Peel from KH

Kimberley Blackith, Cath Glen and Frank Peel were introduced to the meeting.

Kimberley noted KH's current home finder process where properties were advertised and those registered could logon each week to check available properties. KH were able to assist those who were not registered on request. Bid entitlements were based on eligibility and those with a connection to the Parish were always given priority. Those outside of the Parish with higher needs would then be given consideration for available housing.

Cath Glen said that vacant properties would be advertised as soon as KH received the termination notice. However, if the vacancy was due to a death, KH would speak to the family and be respectful of outside considerations. KH only banded their own tenants (NCC did this for everyone else under the same system). Cath outlined the band criteria for their bands which were; P, 1, 2, 2R and 3. She confirmed that KH advertised all vacant properties.

There were various options available to communicate vacant properties; a weekly newsletter with images and addresses of all properties, a weekly email issued to the Clerk for circulation. It was noted that PC members were able to push local residents in need forward and KH would then assist them with the process.

It was **AGREED** that:-

- (i) The auto-bid process would be the preferred way forward (with individuals to select their housing needs criteria. When the relevant

property became available, KH would contact that individual. It was noted that KH could place a bid on behalf of a customer).

- (ii) Kimberley would provide the Clerk with a list of relevant bullet points for inclusion on the PC website. Kimberley said she would be happy to provide additional assistance should this be required in the future.

Angela, Kimberley, Cath and Frank were thanked for attending the meeting and then departed.

None.

4. 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

This item had been moved after the NCC Housing item.

(a) Mr Rex Robson – Japanese Knotweed

Rex Robson said that the 1988 Countryside Act stated that all Japanese Knotweed was to be eradicated, and this weed was now on the edge of his field at Gunnerton.

The Chair explained that it was not the PC's responsibility to deal with the knotweed (as previously informed by NCC's Legal Dept). CC Nick Morphet clarified that land ownership had not been established. However, he said he would be willing to help Mr Robson (as would both Cllr Bruce Lowdon and Cllr Michael Smith) with this issue.

It was **AGREED** that we would investigate and look for NCC's legal letter to say who had advised the PC of this matter.

Mr Robson was thanked for attending the meeting.

(b) Gemma Nixon (Secretary) and Phillipa Craig (Treasurer) of Gunnerton Playing Field

Gemma Nixon and Philippa Craig introduced themselves to the PC; they noted that their new Gunnerton Playing Field Committee was here to make a difference. They were grateful for the PC's contribution towards insurance, grass cutting and rent of this facility in previous years.

With regards to further assistance, it was noted that local funding sources included the Wind Farm and NCC S106 funding.

Gemma queried who was responsible for the wall at Gunnerton Playing Field; it was noted this was not the PC's responsibility.

Both ladies were thanked for attending the meeting; the Chair added that, if the PC could help in any way, the playing field committee should ask.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the PC Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd November 2022 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) **Susan Ogle**; the Chair noted that we were still waiting for the relevant information to come through from Susan Ogle.
 - (ii) **Chollerton Emergency Plan**; it was **AGREED** to add this to the website as a news item, saying that we have a plan and outlining what people needed to do in the case of an emergency (the same item would be pasted onto the documents page of the website).
 - (iii) **Community Flood Plan**; it was **AGREED** that the Chair liaise with Colin Hall and Cllr Bruce Lowdon to progress this matter forward.

6. County Councillor Report

CC Nick Morphet's report was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. CC Morphet then reported to the meeting as follows:-

- (a) The drainage work on the C213 near Barrasford Park was completed. NCC had re-cut the ditches and grips on the corner where the drainage problem was and for about a mile towards Gunnerton. It was noted there was less water coming up following these works.
- (b) The broken road sign on the A6079 near Middle Farm was removed late last year and was still to be replaced. There were two additional damaged signs at Edge House Farm and Five Lane Ends; it was **AGREED** that CC Nick Morphet would contact Highways about this.
- (c) Re: "twenty when lights flash" scheme in Barrasford. PC's noted that the lights were currently not working and it was **AGREED** that CC Nick Morphet would follow this up.

- (d) It was noted that the Japanese Knotweed on the A68 was located 100m past the entrance to Barrasford Quarry on the road verge. CC Nick Morphet said he would investigate this further.
- (e) Japanese Knotweed at Gunnerton; Cllr Malcolm Johnson suggested this area could be covered in tarpaulin to help control the weeds. Cllr Maggie Tarbit said that Chipchase Caste may be the owners of this land; she suggested we could access the deeds online for a small charge in order to obtain the relevant information. It was **AGREED** that CC Nick Morphet would make tentative enquiries.
- (f) A Chollerton PC resident had complained about a muck heap on the east side of the Coal Road between Gunnerton and Birtley. Water appeared to be draining through the muck heap and the effluent was pooling on a dip in the road. The recent change in ownership was noted by Cllr Bruce Lowdon which it was hoped would help this situation in due course.
- (g) It was noted that other PCs had been quoted around £500 to install benches on concrete. It was **AGREED** that Chollerton PC may be able to encourage a local person to help install it (it was noted that installing the bench on spikes on the soft grass in the play area at Barrasford would not cost the PC any money, it would only be installation on concrete that would cost £500).
- (h) CC Nick Morphet had designed the signs for the species-rich grassland project over Christmas. The next step was to find locations where they would be easy for people to read; CC Nick Morphet would speak to Paul Lishman (about a suitable location which did not interfere with grass cutting) in the next few weeks and then place the order.
- (i) The Rural Link 882 Saturday bus service between Hexham and West Woodburn had been replaced by the new Go North East 682 Saturday service, there were now two buses every Saturday. Cllr Andy Bennet noted the DigiGo Buses in Essex which may be of interest to CC Nick Morphet.
- (j) Unfortunately the Bus Service Improvement Plan money had been delayed by over 10 months, and NCC's public transport officers would need to spend it quickly when it arrived. The Department for Transport had placed a £2 cap on bus fares, so people would be able to travel on any Northumberland bus for £2 or less until the end of March 2023. The cap might be extended if it was successful, so people were encouraged to make as much use of it as they could. Bus usage was now at 84% of pre-pandemic levels and the government had extended its pandemic recovery funding for buses again. The bus network had shrunk since before the pandemic, so the aim was now to get usage back to 90% of what it was.

- (k) The £200 Alternative Fuel Payment would be paid to all households that were not on the gas grid next month. This would be compensation for the fact that other fuels (such as oil) were not covered by the Energy Price Guarantee, and it was in addition to the £400 that every household was receiving through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. Payment would be via electricity suppliers and no action would be required by households (unless living off the electricity grid, in which case residents would have to apply through the gov.uk website).

Cllr Michael Smith noted he provided 15 properties with electric; it was stated that the tenants would all need to apply themselves for this funding through the gov.uk website, from 23rd January 2023 onwards. It was **AGREED** that CC Nick Morphet would share the website address with the PC.

CC Nick Morphet Update: 31st January 2023

CC Morphet confirmed that all properties in “metered estates” (i.e. park homes) would be eligible for the £200 Alternative Fuel Payment, and that each household would have to apply through the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website. CC Morphet noted he had been wrong about the applications going live on 23rd Jan - which was the date that households without their own private electricity supply were supposed to be able to apply for the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding via the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website. Unfortunately, that website doesn’t appear to have been launched yet. He believes that households without their own private electricity supply would be able to apply for the AFP sometime in February. He will share both weblinks when he has them.

- (l) Cllr Andy Bennet noted that Barrasford Quarry were leaving their lights on at night, and Cllr Michael Smith considered the lights were as bright as they always had been. He noted the crusher noise was extremely loud and it was queried whether they were carrying out the relevant tests to check acceptable tolerance levels. It was **AGREED** CC Nick Morphet would check whether the Quarry were fulfilling their obligations in terms of monitoring.

The Chair thanked Cllr Morphet for his report.

7. Items for Discussion

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

- (a) **Coronation Mugs**

The Chair noted that he had 7 Jubilee mugs to donate to Barrasford Village Hall.

Cllr Pigg questioned if we should proceed with Coronation Mugs. After discussion and positive support, it was **AGREED** that we should proceed with the purchase of Coronation Mugs, with 150 mugs to be ordered in time for the King's Coronation on 6th May 2023. PC's preferred the flag design with the flag merged into background, made out of bone china (the Clerk would circulate two possible design options for members' to select their favourite choice).

(b) Barrasford Garage

Cllr Dorothy Pigg had been contacted regarding the vehicles outside Grieves Garage, resulting in a recent near-miss due to obscured vision.

The Chair considered that the issues did not seem atrocious at the present time but would observe this over time (he confirmed he would be happy to have a word with Mr Grieves if necessary).

(c) Bicycle Mayor

John Ord, Chair of the Planning and Infrastructure Committee, Hexham Town Council had written to the Parish Council, seeking expressions of interest from PC's along the Tyne Valley for a Bicycle Mayor (which would be advantageous in promoting the implementation of its Active Travel policies).

Cllr Michael Smith noted that this would be excellent if done in the right way.

It was noted that we were aware of this proposal and would support it in due course.

(d) Electric Vehicle Charge (EVC) Points

NCC had invited Parish Councils to submit location proposals for EVC Points. They would be installed free of charge but people would pay to use them.

It was **AGREED** that the cobbled area outside of Barrasford Village Hall (as noted by Cllr Fiona Charlton) would be suggested as a relevant place for two of these points. West Crescent (where the bottle banks were located) at Gunnerton was also suggested for the installation as a suitable EVC point.

8. Correspondence

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

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

(a) Chipchase Woodland Consultation

It was **AGREED** that we would write to Galbraith's to thank them for their email, saying we were pleased they were managing the woodlands and that we had no comments, we would look forward to hearing how they would sensitively manage the woodlands in future.

(b) Parish.UK Network

The Parish UK network had been recently launched to provide a consistent and recognisable framework on which to display open-source data about parishes across England and Wales. Data included information about the Parish Council, demographic, electoral results, details on education establishments, a directory of local businesses, recent planning applications, local property data, historical precept amounts, plus links to CQC and IOPC reviews. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk's contact details would be added to this website.

(c) Permissive Footpaths at Gunnerton (response received from Galbraith's: 6 Jan 2023)

Mr Mark Smith from Galbraith's had written to Chollerton PC to say that he had discussed this matter with Tim Fish at NCC. Unfortunately, the NCC did not have the resources to assist with the preparation of the access agreement. He would be taking instructions from Jonathan Elkington as to how he would like to proceed.

It was **AGREED** we would write to acknowledge the email, potentially using the briefing email from CC Nick Morphet expressing the PC's desire to see a positive outcome to this issue.

(d) DMMO (No 13) 2018 (received from NCC on 20 January 2023)

The Legal Department of NCC had written to Chollerton PC on 20th January 2023 to say that DMMO (No 13) 2018, BOAT number 39 was confirmed on 19th December 2022.

(e) Parking near Barrasford Village Hall

There was a small patch of grass, surrounded by the kerb between the layby at Barrasford Village Hall and Alice and Ashleigh Bell's reserved parking space. It was noted that drivers insisted on putting their cars on this land and were ruining the grass.

It was suggested that we would observe this situation over time and review it in due course.

9. Financial Matters

(a) Bank reconciliation as at 9th December 2022: £13,431.14 (enclosed)

This figure was noted and accepted.

(b) Online Banking Update

It was noted that the Online Banking application was making progress. We now had a Lloyds Bank cheque book and, once the appropriate forms had been submitted by the clerk and relevant signatories, the online part of the account would then be made live.

(c) Clerks Wages

It was **AGREED** that a payment of £602.84 (net pay) would be paid to the Clerk, as payment for wages for four months (from October 2022 to January 2023). A tax payment of £150,60 would be paid directly by Chollerton Parish Council to HMRC.

10. Planning Applications

(a) Permission Granted: 27 East Acres, Barrasford

(b) Application Withdrawn: 2 The Cottages, Colwell

(c) Permission Granted: Reiver Shield, Gunnerton

These decisions were noted.

(d) Planning Application: St Christopher's Church, Gunnerton

It was **AGREED** that we would respond with 'no objections' to this planning application.

(e) 27 East Acres, Barrasford

CC Nick Morphet had received a complaint about the retrospective planning application for the extension at 27 East Acres, the planning case officer considered that the difference between the permitted height (2.3m to the eaves) and the actual height (2.74m to the eaves) was minimal and that he was minded to approve the retrospective planning application. The case officer told CC Morphet that there were no grounds for 'calling in' the application (for asking for it to come to Tynedale Local Area Council).

(f) Swinburne Quarry

CC Nick Morphet informed the meeting that we were still awaiting a decision on the extension to Swinburne quarry (22/04061/DISCON).

11. Information Items

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

None.

12. Any Other Business

Business taken under this agenda item is for discussion only.

(a) Pads for Barrasford Defibrillator

Cllr Dorothy Pigg said we would need new pads for the Barrasford defibrillator in May 2023, Cllr Bruce Lowdon said that the Gunnerton defibrillator would need new pads in August 2023.

(b) Layby at Dalla Bank

Cllr Malcolm Johnson suggested that the Dalla Bank layby would benefit from being swept; it was **AGREED** that a requested visit by the NCC road sweeper be made.

(c) Chollerton Viaduct

Cllr Fiona Charlton asked if work was due to be carried out at the Chollerton Viaduct; it was noted that signs were now laid down flat and the work concerned had taken place at a different location.

13. Date and Venue for Next Meeting

Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 7.30pm at Barrasford Village Hall

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.55pm.