



**Minutes of the meeting of Chollerton Parish Council held on Wednesday  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7.30pm in Gunnerton Church**

**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 Nick Morphet

Mr Colin Hall from the Environment Agency was in attendance for agenda item 6(a).

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; he asked everyone to stand for a moments reflection following the sad news of the bereavement of Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, earlier that month.

**1. Apologies for Absence.**

There were no apologies for absence.

**1. 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*

Ms Liz Atkinson had raised concerns on the letting policies of Old People's bungalows in Barrasford by KARBON and NCC.

It was **AGREED** to invite a NCC housing representative to the November meeting.

**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*

Cllr Dorothy Pigg; insurance matters concerning Gunnerton and Barrasford play areas.

Cllr Michael Smith; items concerning Chipchase Estates.

#### **4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the PC Meeting held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 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.

The Chair noted that the Hallington Mill road had been patched.

It was noted that the Clerk was employed at Pay Scale Level 8; which was £11.08 per hour. The updated amount (from £11 per hour) would be implemented with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**(b) External emails forwarded by the Clerk**

*Please note that emails received from external stakeholders are being distributed for information. It is proposed that if anyone wishes to raise any points then they should contact the Clerk*

#### **5. Barrasford Quarry Management**

It was noted that the Barrasford Quarry Management Team would hopefully attend the January 2023 Meeting which would take place at Barrasford Village Hall.

#### **6. County Councillor Report.**

**(a) Colin Hall, Environment Agency**

Mr Colin Hall was a Flood Resilience Engagement Officer for the Environment Agency, working closely with NCC. Mr Hall had been working with Cllr Morphet recently, as well as other stakeholders, to build flood resilience. He noted the changing weather patterns with intense downpours which could affect properties after long dry spells meant the ground did not absorb the water as quickly.

The creation of a Community Flood Group was an option in order to consider lessening the impact of potential flooding. Earlier warnings of potential bad weather would be provided via a specific alert system.

Mr Hall was working with Karbon Homes to add information to tenants' induction packs and let them know about potential dangers of flooding.

It was noted that we had two reservoirs and three burns in the Chollerton Parish and therefore flooding was always a risk.



Cllr Andy Bennett noted the PC Community Emergency Plan and it was suggested that Mr Hall's proposal would be added to this document.

Cllr Bruce Lowdon mentioned the flood issue at the top of Gunnerton Village with water flowing from various directions into one channel.

Cllr Morphet asked how long it would take in practice to produce a plan; Mr Hall noted it would take a couple of weeks. As part of this process, Councillors would play a part in making this plan bespoke.

Cllr Morphet asked about the pros and cons for combining this plan with the Community Emergency Plan; Mr Hall replied that it depended on what the PC required and also on how important flooding risks were within the Parish. Cllr Dorothy Pigg felt that flooding was not high risk within the Parish and therefore this part should be Annexed within the CEP.

It was **AGREED** that Mr Hall would prepare a draft plan for circulation to the PC for their comments.

Mr Hall was thanked for attending and then left the meeting.

**(b) County Cllr Nick Morphet reported to the meeting as follows:-**

- The potholes by the railway bridge at Gunnerton had been repaired. This was financed with £2,000 from Cllr Morphet's allowance.
- The traffic calming scheme was completed, except for the slow road markings and red lines at both ends of the village. Cllr Morphet had not been able to get a date for when this was to be done,
- The problem on the C213 just East of Barrasford Park, where water was rising through and out of the road surface; Cllr Morphet did not have an update on this. He was aware of a huge backlog of drainage work to be worked through and had emailed Highways Maintenance for an update.
- The reflector posts on the A68 (on the blind summit just south of Errington Red House Farm). They were still to be installed and were on Highway's radar. This straightforward job would require expensive traffic management – so they were waiting until another job came up in the same vicinity. This would allow them to share the costs of the traffic management over two jobs.
- The 20mph speed limit sign on Woodbine Terrace in Barrasford was still to be installed. Cllr Morphet would remind the Highways Dept about this.

- The extension of the crash barrier to the north of Chollerton Viaduct. Cllr Morphet referred to “Phase One Design Work” as noted back in March, and he would continue to remind Highways Programme. The PC had made it one of their LTP programme requests, therefore the Highways Programme were obliged to consider it before next Spring.
- The road sign on the A6079 near Middle Farm; Highways Maintenance were currently replacing damaged signs on A roads, so this would be done imminently.
- The planning application for a wedding venue at Hallington Mill; planning permission for a new-build wedding venue had already been granted. The applicant had since decided not to build a new venue but to submit a new planning application to convert an existing building into a wedding venue instead. The application had not been determined yet, but the weddings they were holding in marquees under permitted development had been causing a few complaints. A planning enforcement officer had investigated the weddings and found no breaches of planning permission.
- The Parish Council received an email expressing concerns regarding an address in West Crescent, Gunnerton. Cllr Morphet had spoken to Karbon’s Team Leader for Housing North, who assured him that Karbon were working closely with Adult Social Care and that the matter was in hand. He had visited the address that day and found the situation to be much improved. He could not comment on some aspects of the email that the Parish Council received due to concerns over privacy.
- The species-rich grassland project in Barrasford was going well. Mr Lishman from Fell Lane Farm had cut the verge on Saturday. Cllr Morphet’s colleague from the Royal Horticultural Society and two members of Tynedale Green Party helped Cllr Morphet to rake the clippings up on Sunday and the verge looked tidy. With a few details to iron out first (public liability insurance, ownership, responsibility, location, design, who’s paying for them and how etc.), the signs would be ordered shortly. He has discovered that they were going to cost a bit more than originally thought, but Tynedale Green Party had offered to make up the difference in exchange for Cllr Morphet putting the Green Party logo on the sign. The RHS were also contributing and would like Cllr Morphet to do the same. It was **AGREED** that, whilst other logos may be added to the sign, it was felt that the Green Party logo should not be included as the PC should always remain apolitical. Cllr Lowdon suggested



that cow parsley should be cut down at the earliest opportunity to minimise the spreading of the seed.

- The bench for the children's playground was still to be ordered as Cllr Morphet was still waiting for quotes to install the benches at the other sites. It was **AGREED** that our PC bench would be brown in colour. Also, given The Queen's recent passing, it was **AGREED** that we would remove reference to the Jubilee and change the dates to reflect her whole life rather than just her reign. The revised wording would read:-

In Honour of  
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
1926 – 2022

- There was a Community Resilience event for parish councils/community groups at Newbiggin Leisure Centre between 10am and 3pm the following day. If anyone wanted to attend, they would need to email [communityhubs@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:communityhubs@northumberland.gov.uk). Cllr Morphet would be attending and would report back. There may also be a similar event in West Northumberland in the future.
- The County Council were extending Community Action Northumberland's Warm Hubs network by inviting community hubs, village halls, cafes and businesses to become part of the Northumberland Warm Places and Spaces network. Network members would be asked to provide warmth and other support if necessary to anyone who needed it. In return, the County Council would provide a tailored package of support that could include help with utility bills, food bills or cooking equipment. For more info, go to: <https://bit.ly/3CVfOyh>. To register an interest in joining the scheme go to: <https://nland.cc/WarmSpacesPromise>. It was **AGREED** that a web link would be shared with the Clerk and this should be added to the PC website.
- Northern Powergrid had launched their £7.5m Energy Resilience Grant. Grants of between £1,000 and £20,000 were available to parish councils and community groups, and they would cover improvements to the energy resilience of village halls such as back up batteries, installing renewable energy generation, preparing the electrics for a generator, or buying a generator. At this stage applications must be submitted through our MP, Council Leader or Local Resilience Forum. It was noted that this was a long term scheme which was still in its early stages. Capital expenditure was permitted within this scheme. Cllr Bennett said we should account for items which had not been planned for; it was **AGREED** that Cllr



Bennett would word this appropriately and forward to the Clerk for distribution to William Wearmouth.

**(c) Gunnerton Sign Damage**

The “Children Playing” sign had become loose and untidy, Cllr Lowdon agreed to tidy it up and consult the locals to find if there was a better location.

The Chair thanked Cllr Morphet for his report and persistence.

**7. Items for Discussion**

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

**(a) Appointment of Honorary Internal Auditor**

The Chair informed the meeting that Mr Hugh Denholm had volunteered for the post of Internal Auditor. Hugh had been involved in finance internationally, having spent 30 years with Shell Petroleum and ending up as Financial Director of Thai Shell. It was **AGREED** that Mr Denholm would be appointed to this role; with the Parish Council being delighted to have him on board in this capacity.

**(b) Community Emergency Plan Update**

Cllr Bennett provided an update on the Community Emergency Plan which he had prepared jointly with Cllr Maggie Tarbit.

Cllr Bennett noted he was contacting relevant stakeholders to ensure they were happy to have their contact information included within the document. It was **AGREED** that the Chair would speak to Jen Dover to check she was happy to be included as the WI representative.

Cllr Bennett asked for PC phone numbers and authorisation to include this information within the Plan (which would not be made public); it was **AGREED** that members should send this information to Cllr Bennett if happy to have it included.

It was noted that, when complete, the Plan would be included on the website for those in the Parish to access.

Cllr Lowdon felt it was quite a cumbersome document and suggested it could be abbreviated to aid ease of access.

Cllr Michael Smith said we needed to make sure the document was sustainable and make sure it could be used as a long-term solution.

The Chair felt that we benefit from having a short-sharp Executive Summary of options included should any issues happen in the future; this would make it easier for people to access in an emergency.

Cllr Fiona Charlton considered that Northern Powergrid had learnt lessons from previous experiences such the time following Storm Arwen.

Cllr Pigg said we had limited resources to deal with future emergencies as this was down to NCC in the event of a major incident.

Cllr Morphet noted that NCC wanted PC help as the PC's knew their communities better. They also wanted PC's to know that they shouldn't wait for authorisation from NCC before putting any necessary actions into place. He added that Humshaugh PC were happy to share their Plan with Chollerton PC in due course.

The Chair thanked Cllr Bennett and Cllr Tarbit for their hard work in preparing the plan; it was **AGREED** that the Plan be made as accessible as possible and move this on in conjunction with Mr Colin Hall's Plan. This would be reviewed again at the following meeting.

It was **AGREED** that, as part of the Plan, the PC notify Cllr Morphet about what was going on so that he was fully aware of any developments.

**(c) B4RN Broadband**

Cllr Andy Bennett updated the PC on this item. The project had met a £70K shortfall; the Ray Windfarm were suggested as a possible source of income to plug the gap for this project.

**(d) Permissive Footpaths: email from Mark Smith of the Galbraith Group and letter from Professor Allen Wright**

Cllr Smith declared an interest as his brother was the Land Agent for the Galbraith Group.

Mr Mark Smith from the Galbraith Group had written to the PC, to inform them that they had been instructed by the owner of the Chipchase Estate, Jonathan Elkington, to raise the question as to whether they would be interested in entering into a permissive footpath agreement along the routes roughly shown in red on their attached plans.

Galbraiths and the Chipchase Estate felt there would be mutual benefits to be gained from entering into such an arrangement, particularly from a



safety perspective and they had asked that the PC give this some consideration.

Professor Allen Wright had since written to the PC to raise his views about the Chipchase estates proposal for a Permissive Path near Money Hill (as Prof. Wright was currently away, Cllr Lowdon had kindly agreed to share his views at the meeting). Cllr Lowdon agreed that there may be a possible alternative route to the Money Hill route, as suggested by Professor Allen Wright in his letter.

Cllr Pigg noted that, if the PC agreed with the proposals, then we would be liable for their upkeep.

It was **AGREED** that:-

- (a) A meeting and site visit be arranged for a few PC members together with Mr Mark Smith to look at this in further details and establish some further facts.
- (b) We would look at minutes from either July 2018 or July 2019 Meetings to see what was agreed for a previous similar scenario.
- (c) We would acknowledge receipt of the letter from Professor Allen Wright and inform him we were looking into this further.

Cllr Lowdon said the Gunnerton Railway proposal was straight forward.

**(e) Trees in Barrasford Playpark**

Cllr Pigg noted that one tree in Barrasford Play Park was badly overhanging the footpath and the sycamore needed work a long time before lockdown which had not been carried out. It was **AGREED** that we contact Northumberland Estates to express our concerns and ask if they were able to look into this further.

**(f) Gunnerton Play Area Insurance**

The Gunnerton Playing Field Committee had written to the PC asking whether they would look favourably upon a proposal to contribute to this years increase in the cost of the Playing Field insurance.

It was **AGREED** that:-

- (i) The Parish Council would pay the shortfall of £168, the cost of the playing field inspection and Rospa risk assessment at £84, totalling the sum of £252.
- (ii) The Gunnerton Playing Field Committee would be contacted to ask them to arrange their insurance for the following year in advance and suggest they contact Ray Windfarm for possible financial assistance.



**(g) Gunnerton Play Area: Galbraiths Invoices**

It was **AGREED** that rental for Gunnerton Play Area for 2021/22 and 2022/23, for £300 in total (£150 for each year), be paid and sent together with a covering letter to Galbraiths.

**(g) Defibrillators**

Cllr Lowdon had received a message from 'the circuit' - that the manufacturer of the type of defibrillator we had at Gunnerton had been issued with a product recall notice, and that ours may be affected.

The issue was related to a software problem whereby the defibrillator overstated battery status was full although the battery energy condition was low which could mean the device was unable to operate. After interrogating the device Bruce had found that the software version in ours was current and hence not an issue. Our defibrillator remained on 'the circuit' as available for use.

**(h) Remaining Jubilee Mugs**

The remaining Jubilee Mugs were now at Barrasford Shop and currently being sold. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Pigg would get an update from Louise at the Shop.

**(i) Checking of Grit bins**

It was **AGREED** that relevant PC's would be responsible for checking their village grit bins.

**(j) Japanese Knotweed**

Cllr Malcolm Johnson noted Japanese Knotweed should be treated when the shoots were low.

It was **AGREED** that the Chair would raise this issue when meeting with Chipchase Estates/Galbraiths.

**8. Correspondence**

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

**(a) Tynedale Hospice at Home: Grant Application**

Tynedale Hospice at Home had issued a grant application letter to the PC.

It was **AGREED** that we would support them to the tune of £200.

- (b) Meetings to discuss preparations being made for winter with Northern Powergrid and Guy Opperman MP**

This item had previously been discussed.

- (c) Gunnerton Housing concern - Karbon Homes For Information**

This item had previously been discussed.

## **9. Financial Matters**

- (a) Bank reconciliation as at 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022: £11,270.17**

This figure was noted and accepted.

- (b) HMRC VAT Refund: £599.17 received on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022**

This figure was noted and accepted.

- (c) Online Banking Update**

It was **AGREED** that the remaining signatories (Cllr Pigg and Cllr Tarbit) would go into Lloyds Bank and complete the necessary authorisation process. Whilst doing this, Cllr Pigg would ask whether we could progress with three signatories instead of four.

- (d) Duncan Coulson: Barrasford Playground Committee Insurance**

Duncan Coulson had sent a copy of their 2022 playground insurance invoice, with an amount of £501.97 having been paid to Lycetts from the playground funds back in March 2022. In previous years the Parish Council had reimbursed the playground for 50% of the insurance costs.

It was **AGREED** that that the same process would take place in 2022 with £251 to be refunded to Barrasford Playground Committee.

- (e) Hire of Gunnerton Church for July and Sept 2022 Parish Council Meetings: £20 per meeting. £40 in total, paid on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

It was **NOTED** that £40 had previously been paid to Gunnerton Church for the hire of this venue for July and September 2022 meetings.

- (f) Clerks Wages (June to September 2022)**

it was **AGREED** that a payment of £693 would be paid to the Clerk, as payment for wages from June to September 2022.

**To be ratified at Chollerton Parish Council Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

## 10. Planning Applications

- (a) **Permission Granted: Fishing Lodge at Colwell NE46 4TP**
- (b) **Permission Granted: Land West of Hallington Mill**
- (c) **Permission Refused: Barns at Demesne Farm, Coal Road, Gunnerton**

These decisions were noted.

## 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) Knotweed: South of Barrasford Quarry

Cllr Lowdon noted the Knotweed located on the right-hand roadside travelling South from Barrasford Quarry; it was **AGREED** that Cllr Morphet would follow this up with Highways.

### (b) Quarry Waggons at Dunkirk

In response to Cllr Morphet's question, it was stated that there were currently no accessibility restrictions for Quarry Waggons to travel past Dunkirk.

## 12. Date and Venue for Next Meeting

Wednesday 23rd November 2022 at 7.30pm, Barrasford Park

The Chair thanked everyone for attending for their contributions. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm.