



**Minutes of the meeting of Chollerton Parish Council held on Wednesday
22nd November 2023 at 7.30pm at Barrasford Park**

Present: Cllr Edward Heslop (Chair) in the Chair

Cllr Dorothy Pigg (Vice Chair)

Cllr Andy Bennett

Cllr Fiona Charlton

Cllr Malcolm Johnson

Cllr Bruce Lowdon

Cllr Michael Smith

Cllr Maggie Tarbit

County Cllr (CC) Nick Morphet

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from; Ms Jayne Longlands.

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

Jen Dover and Claire Dickinson from Chollerton PCC were in attendance to discuss the PCC request for one-off additional funds this year from Chollerton PC.

They outlined the ongoing financial pressures on the PCC to maintain the buildings and grounds, and the services expected from parishioners. These pressures had been exacerbated by Storm Arwen damage which had not been covered by insurance. Fund raising and grant awards had raised about £150K but there was still a deficit in the graveyard fund of £4,000.

Cllr Bennet raised the issue of rewilding in the churchyard, a move which is currently used by a growing number of PCCs.

The Chair discussed the need to communicate effectively with the whole community about fundraising events and financial difficulties, and suggested that the local wind farm grants are explored more.

The Chair thanked the PCC members for their attendance. See 9 below.

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

None.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 27th September 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

Cllrs Charlton and Johnson reported that the sign next to the Barrasford Arms was working in the morning but not in the evening. Cllr Lowdon reported that the sign at the other end of the village was not working at correct times. Further request for reprogramming will be made. Possibly look at addressing potential solar panel problems due to overhanging trees.

(ii) Colwell Parking Issue

The issue with unused vehicles was still ongoing but it was now off road, and is a landowner responsibility, The “speed restraint” parking is still an issue but is not illegal.

(iii) Trees in Barrasford Playpark

Cllr Pigg **AGREED** to contact Adam Johnson to assess the trees.

(iv) Barrasford Quarry

The Clerk had contacted Adam Smith about a proposed visit but has not yet had a response.

(v) Dog Waste Bin

Cllr Lowdon reported that the dog waste bin at tip corner had been replaced. However, the reflective post near to it needs repair, CC Morphet **AGREED** to look into it.

(vi) Water on Chollerton Lonnen

CC Morphet reported that the leak causing this had now been repaired. It was agreed that this seemed to be satisfactory but, given the current weather conditions causing field run-off, there is still some standing water.



(vii) 70th Annual Town and Parish Council Conference

Cllr Heslop attended some of this event and reported an open and positive, well-attended experience.

5. B4RN Broadband

Martin Dickson-Green attended the meeting to present an update on B4RN Broadband in the Parish.

There are 4 routes from the main cabinet at Barrasford Village Hall. The cables are laid at a depth of 2 feet and routes are kept as close to field/road margins as possible. Three sets of contractors are being used. Properties are being connected as the cables are laid. The Village Hall was first to be connected and provides public WiFi. Chollerton School is also connected. There had been a public meeting at Barrasford Village Hall to keep the community informed and address any concerns. There had been concerns from some in the community that they would be expected to arrange cables to their property themselves but it was emphasised that this is no longer the case, everything is done by B4RN. Also, any repairs etc. are done by B4RN. There is also the possibility of transferring landline phone to B4RN and keeping the same number - Cllr Tarbit reported that she had done this at her property and the changeover was easy and effective. B4RN is a “not for profit” organization, belongs to the community, and surplus profits are invested into the community. There is funding from the Government via a voucher scheme, and also investors are encouraged to buy shares. There is also flexibility in charges for individuals on benefits.

6. Recruitment for Parish Council Clerk

The Chair updated the Parish Council on the clerk vacancy. The deadline date for receipt of applicants was 20th November and we had received one expression of interest. The deadline will be extended to 14th December. The Chair and Cllr Bennett will visit the interested party next week for an informal chat.

7. County Councillor Report

NCC Nick Morphet reported as follows:-

- Local Highways: there will be resurfacing on the A68 south of Colt Crag, and north of five lane ends.
- The dropped kerbs in Gunnerton will go ahead.
- The crash barrier at Chollerton will not be done.

- The footpath between Barrasford and the Quarry will not be renovated. As it is a very popular walking route there was discussion about possibly looking into private contract work, and whether it will qualify for a wind farm grant. Cllr Tarbit will make enquiries.
- The grass at the species rich grassland was raked on September 30th with help from some local residents.
- Blocked gullies on the A68 had been cleared but there was more to be done.
- The issues on Coal Road had been investigated. There are no actionable defects. The possibility of watercourse pollution from the muck heap, and growth of unfavourable vegetation within it will be regularly checked.
- Sewage pollution; Hexham Council do not want a presentation on this. The possibility of local action group was discussed.

6. Items for Discussion To discuss issues which have arisen or are causing concern within the Parish of Chollerton

(a) Tynedale Flood Forum: 30th November 2023 at The Beaumont Hotel
Cllr Andy Bennett would attend this event.

(b) B4RN installations: the grass in front of The Croft in Barrasford
During the B4RN installations the grass in front of The Croft in Barrasford was dug up to install the new ducting, obviously considered by the Council and the installers as Council property. The owner of The Croft has been paying to have that bit of grass cut since she moved in. It was **AGREED** that the strip of grass was Council land but that it is a small area to add on to the grass cutting contract, to be reassessed in the Spring.

(c) Grit Bins in the Parish
It was noted that the Colwell grit bin is still to be filled . It was noted that piles of grit had been left in areas that had been ignored in the past.

(d) Grass Cutting Tender
It was **AGREED** that an advert would be put out for a 3 year grass cutting tender to Chollerton PC. The deadline date for submission of tenders would be 31st December 2023.

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

(a) Letter from Gunnerton Playing Field: October 2023
The Gunnerton Playing Field Committee had written to thank Chollerton Parish Council for their support in arranging for the wall to be mended.

(b) Email from Gemma Nixon, Gunnerton Playing Field Insurance: received 24th October 2023

The Gunnerton Playing Field Committee have asked about the amount of monies that we would like to contribute to their insurance. The quote for insurance is less than previous and they are asking if we can leave our contribution at the previous level so that they can cover other costs. It was **AGREED** that Barrasford and Gunnerton should liaise about where the best cover could be found so that both committees could benefit from reduced costs. It was also **AGREED** that we pay 50% of insurance costs to both committees and that should remain the case. Both committees are welcome to apply to the PC for help with other issues.

(c) Email from Karbon Homes: received 24th October 2023

Karbon Homes were currently looking at the fences at Gunnerton and Barrasford. It was **AGREED** that we would need to follow this up with Karbon Homes.

(d) Letter from Chollerton PCC received 28th October 2023

Following the discussion earlier in the meeting the matter was further discussed and it was agreed that no further monies would be granted.

(e) Letter from Tynedale Hospice at Home: received 13th November 2023

We had received a thank you letter from Tynedale Hospice at Home; thanking us for our donation in 2022. Within the letter they asked whether the PC would be willing to make a further contribution in 2023? It was **AGREED** that we would make the same contribution that we made last year, i.e. £200.

(f) Email from Ethos Environmental Planning: received 13th November 2023

Northumberland County Council is working with Ethos Environmental Planning to undertake an assessment about how much and what type of open space and outdoor recreation facilities are required to meet the needs of local people.

8. Financial Matters

(a) Bank reconciliation as at 12 October 2023: £12,643.29

This figure was noted and accepted.

(b) NCC Precept for 2024/25

It was **AGREED** that the PC would complete an application for a £8,000 precept in 2024/25.

(c) Chollerton Parish Christmas Party Committee: £225 payment made in October 2023

Retrospectively, it was **AGREED** that a payment of £225 be made to Chollerton Parish Christmas Party Committee.

(d) Neil Carruthers: £190 payment made in October 2023

Retrospectively, it was **AGREED** that a payment of £190 be made to Neil Carruthers (for mending the dry stone wall at Gunnerton Playing Field).

9. Planning Applications

(a) Permission Granted: 23/02728/FUL Coal Burn Bothy Colwell Hexham Northumberland NE46 4TJ

(b) Permission Granted: 23/03035/FUL Threpwood Hill Cottage Birtley Hexham Northumberland NE48 3HJ

These applications were noted.

10. Information Items

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

None.

11. Any Other Business

Business taken under this agenda item is for discussion only.

(a) EV Charger at Barrasford

Cllr Pigg asked about progress on looking at the EV charger in Barrasford; it was **AGREED** that the application process will be checked.

12. Date and Venue for Next Meeting

(a) Business Meeting

Wednesday 24th January 2024 at 7.30pm at Barrasford Village Hall.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.35pm.