



## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

**Wednesday 22 May 2024, 7.30pm at Barrasford Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Edward Heslop (Chair), Cllr Dorothy Pigg, Cllr Fiona Charlton, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Bruce Lowden, Cllr Malcolm Johnson, Cllr Andy Bennett  
County Cllr Nick Morphet

### **1. Appointment of Chair to Annual Parish Meeting**

Cllr Edward Heslop was proposed as Parish Councillor Chair by Cllr Fiona Charlton and seconded by Cllr Malcolm Johnson.

### **2. Welcome**

Cllr Edward Heslop welcomed all those present to the meeting.

### **3. Apologies for absence**

Cllr Maggie Tarbit

### **4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Cllr Dorothy Pigg pointed out that the War Memorial was to be noted in the asset register along with the Defibrillators at Gunnerton and Barrasford Village Hall.

**ACTION: Mel Bramley will add these to the register.**

### **5. Chair's report**

Cllr Edward Heslop read from his written report of the last year.

*We seem to have had a busier year than normal; however, our main tasks are very similar. We continue to support local causes within the Parish, including the play areas, grass cutting, Jubilee party and children's party.*

*Undoubtedly one of the main events centred around the Queens Jubilee - sadly followed by her death and the succession of King Charles. These events were commemorated within the Parish.*

*The Broadband B4RN project has gathered impetus again and I look forward to its completion.*

*Worryingly we saw the closure of the Barrasford Arms - a trend within the rural areas that in some cases seems inevitable- the next few months will be important, but I fear we may have lost it.*

*We are indebted to the people within the Parish who do such important voluntary work to improve the lives of others. The social events at Gunnerton church and other settlements within the Parish that help combat isolation some of our people experience. Once again, the Barrasford Monday volunteers have made a difference.*



*Links with local businesses are so important- I am disappointed the links with Barrasford quarry are not what they used to be- but, having recently spoken to the Area manager I feel confident these can be restored.*

*I believe the dealings with NCC have, on the whole, been an improvement on previous years. A great deal of this is down to the work of Cllr Morphet - I thank him for the way he deals with our issues and carries out his Councillor duties and the enthusiasm he has for the species-rich grassland project which has already been recognised by NCC.*

*During the year Melanie Bramley has replaced Jayne as our clerk. Jayne was an excellent clerk and Mel has impressively and seamlessly continued that work.*

*As a council I feel we are a well spread, knowledgeable group of individuals who know our area and the people in it. It is fair to say, between us all, we will know the vast majority of people within the Parish and what their concerns and views are.*

*We are not the size of many Parish Councils; indeed, we are one of the smallest, but we deal with businesses, organisations and people at the very level that makes a difference. I thank you for your support whilst being chair, your hard work and above all, your common sense which makes so much difference.*

## **6. Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

The statement of accounts for 2023/24 and asset register were submitted to the Parish Council for approval.

As previously stated, the war memorial is required to be added to the asset register by Mel Bramley as agreed at the Annual Parish meeting of May 2023.

The following were noted:

- There was an overlap on payments relating to grass cutting due to late invoices being submitted from the previous financial year. The payment of £4080 for 2024 related to both 2023 and 2024.
- It was also noted that VAT refund of £711 was due to the Parish Council and will be credited in due course.
- With these two amendments the end of year account balances for 2023 and 2024 were similar with no noticeable extraordinary expenditures.

It was **AGREED** that the accounts be approved by all present as a true and accurate record and they be duly signed by the Chair and Clerk.

**ACTION: Mel Bramley will submit signed accounts to the external auditors.**



## 7. Future Chollerton Parish Plan

Cllr Morphet stated that the Parish Plan was now referred to as a Neighbourhood Plan. The last plan drawn up was in 2010. He informed the meeting that the neighbourhood plan could incorporate both long and short term plans for the Parish.

- The plan must incorporate an effective community engagement exercise which represents the whole of the local population.
- A written Plan usually commences with a history of the Parish and then includes policies and community action plans (actions that make a commitment to the local people and area).

In Humshaugh a Neighbourhood Plan has recently been established which resulted, for example in an extra layer of policy when planning permission is considered. Incorporating a Neighbourhood Plan allows a local area to get extra support from specialist staff at the Council e.g. housing and planning departments. Cllr Edward Heslop stated that Chollerton is a unique parish with outspread communities. The plan involves a huge amount work and fact finding and is time consuming. It was noted however that Chollerton could learn from other similar councils where a plan is already incorporated.

Cllr Andy Bennett emphasised that a Neighbourhood plan must deliver, and it cannot contradict, the Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and must be consistent with the Local Plan. It must deliver on what the Local Plan has stated. If the local community are happy with a Local Plan, then a Neighbourhood Plan is not necessarily required. The Parish Council are there to assist in the Neighbourhood Plan, but it must have commitment and involvement from the local community. Also, it will need to be reviewed every 5 years.

Cllr Edward Heslop noted that in the role of Parish Council, Councillors are obliged to see matters through for the local area whereas volunteers can walk away at any time. Potentially this could leave the burden of drawing up the plan with the Parish Councillors.

Cllr Dorothy Pigg stated gaining sufficient community support to develop the plan is unlikely.

It was **AGREED** that the community must be consulted to see if there is enough interest to help develop a plan.

It was **AGREED** to publicise the proposal of a Neighbourhood Plan to gauge interest and seek volunteers. Information would be placed on the Chollerton Parish Council website and in the church newsletter as well as via posters on noticeboards.

**ACTION: Mel Bramley will draw up a poster and forward to Cllr Dorothy Pigg for approval.**

Cllr Andy Bennett **AGREED** to provide information to go on the website regarding a Neighbourhood plan. He suggested that we ask people who are interested in getting involved to come along to the next Parish Council Meeting. Cllr Nick Morphet suggested inviting the Neighbourhood Planning Officer to the next PC meeting. Cllr Pigg suggested we



wait to see what interest there is before bringing the Neighbourhood Planning Officer to a meeting.

It was agreed by all in attendance, if no one came forward to the next meeting then the production of a Neighbourhood Plan will not be pursued further.

**ACTION: Neighbourhood Plan to be added to Agenda for next Meeting.**

#### **8. Any Other Business**

There were no further matters raised.

The Chair thanks everyone for attending the Annual Meeting and for their contribution. The meeting closed at 8.05pm

A meeting of Chollerton Parish Council then followed.

Minutes of this meeting will be ratified at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2025.