

LOTHERSDALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on 24th May 2012 At 7.00pm in the Village Hall

Present: Councillor John Brown
Councillor Stephen Cohen (Chairman)
Councillor Catherine Gott
Councillor Peter Harrison (Vice Chair)
Councillor Julian White
Clerk Esther Barrows

In attendance: Councillor Pat Fairbank
Councillor Patrick Mulligan
Councillor Mark Wheeler

Two members of the public were in attendance.

1 To receive and accept apologies for absence:

There were no apologies for absence.

2 The minutes of The Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th May 2011 were approved at the June Parish Council meeting, and signed by the chairman.

3 The Chairman's report 2011 – 2012

The average home in the village will pay just £1.25 a year more in council tax to fund the parish council's activities for the year ahead. A band D property will pay £60.16. In comparison, residents in Ingleton will pay on average £88.92, Bentham £79.24, Skipton £76.28 and Sutton £63.08.

The precept will raise £14,260 for Lothersdale and is a 2.14% increase on the previous year. A copy of the budgets for last year and this year is attached.

In the year just finished, the major item of spending was on the replacement tennis court which is now called Lothersdale Sports Zone, after a competition organised by the primary school. £42,000 was spent on the project and it was fully funded and supported by grants from Community Spaces, Groundwork and the Big Lottery Fund.

The Sports Zone is a multi-use games area and has been guided to completion by the Village Social Club with Gerry Foster, Helen Ball and Amanda Taylor as the leading members. The council's sincere thanks are offered to all of those who took part in the work.

Although the recent extremely severe cloud-burst has caused some damage to the newly-installed drain (as well as flooding several houses in the village) repairs are in hand and it is hoped the Sports Zone will become a much-enjoyed feature of the recreation ground.

Plans have also been made to repair, restore and, if necessary, replace the playground equipment which is now becoming 'tired' in appearance. Its safety is still uppermost in the council's mind and there has been the usual annual inspection which revealed no major issues of concern. There was a disappointing incident of vandalism to one piece of equipment where several wooden steps were deliberately ripped off. An insurance claim was made to cover the £637 cost of repair, but the council still had to pay the first £250 'excess'. A police report was made and information on the perpetrators is still being sought.

The village Under-5s Group held a fund-raising event for new play equipment which brought in a welcome £150.

A new bench has been placed in the Millennium Walk with a plaque to commemorate Mike Gover, former chairman of the council. It was funded by a donation.

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A phased replacement of some of the village's street lights has begun after a report from North Yorkshire County Council revealed that two of the concrete columns were cracked and three of the wooden pole-mounted lamps needed new lanterns and wiring. The total work is estimated at £3,900. One concrete lamp, next to Johnny's Croft, has been replaced already and money has been set aside for the remainder in the current year's budget.

Negotiations began with NYCC to see if they would take over responsibility for the street lighting. Last year, the parish paid £4,100 for maintenance and power. If the county takes over the lighting, then there could be a correspondingly big saving in the parish precept. It would, however, involve a large capital outlay of £39,000 from the parish to bring the village lights up to modern standards before the county would accept them.

A further payment of £250 was made to pay off the accumulated debt of previous years when street lighting electricity costs had not been paid.

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An issue of wide-spread interest in the village was the sale, by auction, of Johnny's Croft next to the village hall. Following approval given at a public meeting, the council submitted a bid for the land along with the village hall trustees and the owner of a property adjacent to the croft. The bid was not high enough and the land has been sold to a private buyer.

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A number of residents contacted the council after alterations were made in the Mill Yard which restricted access for delivery vehicles and the refuse collection van. The district council sent inspectors who reported that the alterations did not breach any planning guidelines and alternative arrangements were made by the cleansing department to collect and return wheelie bins. The fire service was contacted and they reported that although a fire engine might not be able to pass through the obstruction, they would still be able to get hoses to a property.

An initiative from NYCC on high speed broadband is being followed up and Graham Wadsworth has become the village's 'digital champion'. If you have not already done so, you are requested to enrol on the county council's website to record your interest in the scheme. We hope to be able to persuade LN Communications to expand their wireless broadband service in Bradley and Cononley so that it covers our parish. So far, 70 people have signed up. Bradley residents are enjoying speeds of up to 25Mbps (about 10 times faster than in Lothersdale) for about the same price that BT charges.

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A complaint made against Cllr Catherine Gott was considered by the District Council's standards' committee which ruled unanimously that, although there was a technical breach of the code of conduct, there was no need to impose any sanction. The committee also bore in mind and encouraged the informal nature of the proceedings of the parish council.

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The police speed radar gun which the parish contributed towards was not used during last year. However, it has been used this year and a number of drivers were cautioned for speeding through the village. We have been given an assurance that the speed gun can now be used on a weekly basis if required.

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Our new clerk, Esther Barrows, was employed in November, 2011 and has quickly settled into the role. She is performing her duties in an excellent way and the council is fortunate to have her services.

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On planning issues, the parish approved an application from the Hare and Hounds for change of use of the end of the building into a cottage, but the district council turned it down. A further application to turn it into a holiday letting cottage was accepted by both councils.

An application for a new building in the Fold was objected to by the parish on the grounds that it was in the wrong position. The application was later withdrawn.

Conversion of the former Methodist Chapel into two homes was approved by the parish but rejected by the district council.

A café and shop at the foot of Sidegate Lane was rejected by both councils.

Objections were also made to two applications for wind turbines on land outside the parish but visible from within it. The outcome of these plans is still awaited.

Approval was given and granted to applications for alterations to Highfold Cottage and the entrance to the primary school.

Lothersdale Parish Council

Annual accounts 2011-2012

Statement of accounts

	Last year 2010 - 2011 £	This year 2011 - 2012 £
1 Balances brought forward	10,976	11,540
2 (+) Annual precept	11,175	13,955
3 (+) Total other receipts	2,350	46,032
4 (-) Staff costs	2,517	2,200
5 (-) Loan interest	1,000	907
6 (-) Total other payments	9,445	52,617
7 (=) Balances carried forward	11,540	15,803
8 Total cash and investments	11,540	15,803
9 Total fixed assets	18,567	58,710
10 Total borrowings	902	0

4 Responsible Financial Officers report

This report was incorporated into the Chairman's report

5 District Councillor's Annual Report – Cllr Wheeler

As reported in previous years it was a mixed year for Craven District Council. Last year I predicted hard times ahead for all councils, Craven being no exception, due to Government cuts to local government funding. As expected cuts were hard and deep but fortunately Craven had gone through the process of efficiencies and savings for the last two years so the process was in place and the task was easier, unfortunately 2 years of savings meant that the areas for savings were less obvious. In spite of this a balanced budget was delivered for 2011/12 and there was also a contribution to rebuild reserves. The total cost of service delivery was £6.537m vs budget of £6.458m, an underspend of £79k.

The major question arising from the situation outlined above was what affect it would have on the delivery of council services. The council measures its effectiveness through a basket of "performance indicators", usually a year behind, but compared with current year to date information, we can gauge trends and comparative performance. 2010/2011 indicators show varied performance –

Improvement against target =

Contribution to reserves £598,000 vs target of £400,000

Museum visits = 1137 vs target of 1100 (but down on previous year)

Planning – processing of major applications (please also see decreases against target)

Residual household waste (kg/household) – 511 vs target of 540

Fly-tipping incidents reported – 124 vs target of 134

Decrease against target =

Fly – tipping enforcement actions 137 vs target of 186

Household waste recycled/re-used/composted – 42.9% vs 43%

Processing of housing and council tax benefits – 8.9 days vs target of 3.9 days

Street cleanliness

Environmental Health high risk food inspections 80% vs target of 95%

Planning - processing of minor and other applications

Affordable homes delivered – 117 vs target of 159

Vacant dwelling back into occupation - 25 vs target of 35

Year to date (3 out of 4 quarters) performance key results –

Improvement against target =

Museum visits (reversal of l/y trend)

Delivery of affordable homes (reversal of l/y trend)

Fly tipping incidents reported (same as l/y trend)

Decreases against target =

Car parking income vs budget (down by £60k)

Planning- processing major, minor, and other applications (same as l/y trend and reversal on major)

Processing of housing and council tax benefits – (same as l/y trend)

Residual Household waste (reversal of l/y trend)

Household waste recycled/re-used/composted - (reversal of l/y trend)

The council approved its 4 year council plan this year (2012/2016) setting out the Council's agenda for improving service delivery to Craven communities, business transformation and organisational change. The updated Plan covers the period to 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2016. The plan focuses on the Council's top priorities for improvement. It will not include everything the Council will do. It sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the next 4 years. It details the actions to be taken by the Council against its priorities in delivering and improving services. (Please use link to view full plan)

<http://www.cravenc.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1301&p=0>

The council Plan focusses on 5 Key priorities =

Affordable Housing

Enterprising Craven

Empowering Communities

Reducing Carbon

Council Transformation

This plan also outlined the council's vision -

'The Council's vision is for Craven to be a prosperous place with strong, vibrant and diverse communities.'

It would be remiss of me not to mention the relocation of the council offices to Belle Vue Square. I have been (and still am) against the move. The move cost the council £4.120m vs a budget of £4.090m of capital, and there is an on-going revenue expense of £51,000/year service charge payable to the landlord (999 year lease). The council anticipates revenue savings of £105,000/year arising from efficiency savings from the move. The impact of this move on capital cannot be underestimated, all capital spend was put on hold due to the lack of capital funds, and all capital projects for 2012/13 (approximately £700,000) are subject to the council realising projected capital receipts, otherwise they will not happen.

Other major decisions/policies adopted in the year -

Review of Environmental Health Service Delivery resulted in an internal restructure (rather than merging with other councils) that will not have a detrimental impact on the service and will deliver efficiencies of £53,000/year.

Contaminated Land Strategy

Planning Guidance on Development and Flood Risk

Value for Money Framework

Review of Homelessness and Housing

Asset Management Plan

Food Hygiene Rating System

South Skipton Master plan

Culture Plan

It has been a pleasure and a challenge representing the residents of Lothersdale as one of your District Councillors over the past year. I look forward to doing this to the best of my ability for the forthcoming year, through working with your parish council and through direct contact. Thank you.

6 **District Councillor's Annual Report – Cllr Pat Fairbank**

Since election Pat has been assigned to 'overview on scrutiny', 'licensing' and is the older persons champion. She is also interested in waste management.

Skibden Quarry in Skipton is now full. Alston East is to be opened shortly which is just a few hundred yards away from Skibden. The site at Skibden has made improvements and is generating methane gas from waste products.

The council is looking at other means of collecting paper and card than the blue bags in use at the moment. White goods used to be free to remove; now there is a charge for this service of £18.00. Although this charge may have increased recently. Fly tipping has increased with the introduction of this charge.

Pat is to investigate how much fly tipping removal is costing the council in relation to how much it cost to remove white goods free of charge.

Statistics

Craven District Council is now recycling 47% of its domestic waste. By selling the recycling material the Council generates £230k per annum in income (£160k for paper/card and £70k for glass/cans/plastic bottles).

The cost of delivering the waste management service has reduced by £400k over the last two years thanks to alternative collections and improved contracts for the sale of the recycling material.

Where the Recycling Material goes

Glass, cans and plastic bottles

These are all taken to a site on Teeside for sorting. The tins are then separated with the aluminum going to Novelis in Warwickshire where it is sold to steel mills to be melted down.

The glass is reprocessed at Ardagh Glass in West Yorkshire where they are recycled back into glass bottles and jars.

Plastic bottles are taken to JA Young in Leicester where they are made into plastic pellets.

Paper and card

This is delivered to a paper mill in Kings Lynn, Norfolk where they are recycled into newsprint. Card is recycled back into packaging.

7 County Councillor's Report – Cllr Patrick Mulligan

The budget cuts have started to bite this year. One issue is the closure of libraries. The subsidies of bus services has been reduced. The highways budget has been left off this year which means that NYCC are not coming to fill small potholes at the moment. There has been a call from members of County Hall to address these and other problems.

There has been £37 million of cuts this year, with an estimated £16 million for next year. Front line services have been preserved, although in appearance they are present but lacking in background support. There is no sign of the economy improving or of getting better deals from Highways.

If services from Highways appear to be falling short, please let the clerk or Patrick Mulligan know.

Civil Parking enforcement: Powers have been transferred from the Police to Local authorities. The issue of people parking outside schools and on pavements is still ongoing. More provisions may come in later this year.

Broadband: There is a broadband antenna on Elslack Moor, but it is difficult to get a line of site to Lothersdale. There is the possibility of a signal from the other side of the moor and one from Bradley. If local communities can be identified as needing broadband (Elslack, Thornton, Broughton etc) then LN Communications (or other such) may be able to introduce a service and integrate this better.

Broadband will make a huge difference to communities: With current fuel costs and the expectation of increasing travel expenses, having broadband will enable more people to work from home, internet TV will be available and property values will be affected. The plan is to hopefully get high speed here in the next year or so.

8 Clerks Report

There was no clerks report this year. Any information was incorporated into the Chairman's report

9 AOB

Feedback and questions from the public

Questions from the public were raised and discussed during the Annual Meeting of Lothersdale Parish Council.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm

Signed:

Date