

Lothersdale Parish Council

Clerk: Esther Barrows
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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2013, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Councillor Stephen Cohen (Chairman)
Councillor Catherine Gott
Councillor Peter Harrison

Councillor Pat Fairbanks (CDC)
Councillor Patrick Mulligan (NYCC)
Councillor Mark Wheeler (CDC)

Clerk Esther Barrows

Three members of the public were in attendance

13/1 Apologies were received and accepted from:

Councillor Eddie Cullen
Councillor Julian White

13/2 Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 24th 2012 were approved at the July 2012 Parish Council meeting, and signed by the Chairman.

13/3 The Chairman's Report including finances April 2012-March 2013:

The Parish Council will charge local residents £13,663 for the coming year, which is £597, or 4.2%, less than the year just ended. Although the council plans to spend £14,559, there is a Government subsidy of £896 for the first time. This subsidy is not expected to be repeated in future years.

A band D property will pay £61.50 for the council's activities. In comparison, residents in Ingleton will pay £91.34, Bentham £85.58, Skipton £80.86, Sutton £66.12 and Farnhill £63.45.

A copy of the accounts for last year and this year is attached.

In the year just finished, the major item of spending was on the recreation ground which saw £3,648 on maintenance and £3,137 on improvements, including new steps and the Sports Zone.

Despite spending large sums in previous years on efforts to improve the drainage in the park, further work is needed to cure repeated flooding. Engineering work is expected to start this summer.

The play equipment has been inspected and several minor issues have been raised which will be attended to over the coming year. A storage box for the tennis nets is to be provided and a replacement oak sapling will be planted after the disappearance of the Jubilee oak.

The Queen's Jubilee was a successful event in the park which the council subsidised with £342 donations for insurance and public lavatories. Some £200 of this was repaid from the profit made during the event. A handsome stone plaque marking the Jubilee was installed in the park and a party to celebrate the completion of the Sports Zone was also held at the same time. The party was funded by a grant.

After lengthy negotiations, the Sports Zone installers have lowered the height of the perimeter fencing so tennis balls do not roll through it.

A new contract has been agreed with Lothersdale Community Primary School for the use of the park during term-time. Children from the school have also planted 60 shrubs in the woodland area as part of a conservation project.

At its meeting in April, 2013, the council agreed to look at a long-term plan to revitalise parts of the recreation ground and the war memorial. A professional survey has been commissioned to look at the state of the trees and shrubs and make recommendations.

Five street lights have been replaced or repaired during the year. The cost of approximately £3,700 will appear in next year's accounts. The cost of bringing the entire village street lights up to a standard which would allow the county council to accept responsibility for them has risen to a maximum of £60,100. The parish council decided not to pursue this approach. Negotiations are underway to find a cheaper electricity supplier.

A dispute in the Mill Yard over collection of blue recycling bins was resolved with the help of Cllr Pat Fairbank of Craven District Council. The collection service has now been restored.

A new bench has been installed at Four Lane Ends, paid for by a donation.

The village map will be redrawn in the coming months after a number of houses had their names changed and three outlying properties were included within the parish boundary for the first time.

On planning matters, 24 applications were received for comment, half of which related to wind turbines. The council is concerned that the village could become surrounded by turbines because of the peculiar topography of the area and has written to the district council to ask it to take this view into consideration when deciding on planning permission.

Councillors attended a training course on new planning laws.

The advisory white 'no parking' zone outside the Club House has been moved to become a compulsory, enforceable zone outside the school. It is hoped that this might ease the traffic 'bottleneck' problems at the beginning and end of the school day.

A request from the council to have a post box in the Fold painted gold in recognition of Danielle Brown's achievements in the 2012 London Olympics was turned down as Danielle had asked for a box in Skipton to be given that honour instead.

Plans for new stone name signs to replace the metal signs at the East and West entrances are in progress.

High speed broadband was introduced into the village following the work of Graham Wadsworth who had become a 'Digital Champion'. Reception is limited to properties on higher ground at the moment, but work is in hand to bring the service to more houses and farms.

An appeal for volunteers to help tidy up the village has been made and the council is to consider appointing a permanent 'lengthsman' to keep roads and verges tidy.

A new councillor, Eddie Cullen, was appointed following the resignation of John Brown. Thanks are due to John for his work since 2011. Our clerk, Esther Barrows, continues to provide first-class service.

Draft statement of accounts 2012 – 2013

	Last year	This year
	2011-12	2012-13
	£	£
Balances brought forward	11,540	22,933
+ annual precept	21,085	7,130
+ total other receipts	46,032	5,841
- staff costs	2,200	2,319
- loan repayment	907	
- total other payments	52,617	12,755
= balances carried forward	22,933	20,830

Stephen Cohen, May 8th 2013

13/4 District and County Councillors report:

Annual Reports to Lothersdale Parish Council

(i) Councillor Patrick Mulligan:

There are two significant things to report: there are to be more and more cuts, with up to £20 million per year across the country. The challenge for Councils is how to operate, services will be affected. There are three ways cuts can be made:

- 1- Front line service cuts
- 2- Raise the Council Tax
- 3- Charge higher fees for services offered

The civil parking enforcement may be an opportunity for the Council to charge not only for on-street parking but also to charge on sets on non-market days. This may be one way considered to raise money.

Another way the council is considering saving money is to merge services. There are seven district councils in North Yorkshire, and Selby is piloting a scheme to merge services. NYCC and District representatives are looking at merging services such as legal and web. For example NYCC web site has links to six district websites, which could mean there would only be one contact centre, not seven. Each district council would be more general and special services would be contracted out.

This has already been tried with mixed results, and the way local authorities work will have to change, it will be very challenging for councils in the next few years.

(ii) Councillor Pat Fairbank

The garden waste subject (collection of brown bins) has been debated since July 2012. The total cost to run the garden waste service is now £140,000. Originally there were only 10,500 bins in 2003, with these being allocated to people with medium or large gardens only. There was one wagon with two crew. Then the C.E.O decided to allow everyone a brown bin, with the results being there are now over 15,000 bins. There is not enough budget for this service to continue as is, so the subject went to full council with two options being considered:

- 1 – To charge for the service
- 2 – To dispense with it completely

At present to collect all these bins the council has to pay the crews overtime to help the garden crew. There is no budget for this, it is a discretionary service. So now the Council has decided it is fairer to let the residents decide if they want the system to continue. The council would need one third of residents to be in the scheme for it to continue. (Approximately five thousand households) The alternative is for residents to take their garden waste to the tip or to compost it. Bin shares are possible, but only one resident would get the license and take responsibility for it.

The charge of £9 per bin through council tax is low in comparison to Sheffield who are paying £69 per bin. In Huddersfield for example there is no service at all; you have to ring when you want your garden waste collecting and they will only collect a minimum

of 5 bags, charging £1 per bag. You also need to pay up front over the phone. When Craven District Council was given the option of what to charge residents for the service, they went for the cheapest, which is guaranteed to stay the same for the next 15 months.

If the council does not get enough households joining the scheme then it will have to stop. One third of households joining would bring in £120k, which would still be £20k short of what is needed to run the service. However, the council is confident that as more new properties are being built more households will join the scheme.

(iii) Councillor Mark Wheeler

Craven DC took the “freeze grant” offered by Pickles to local authorities that opt for a no increase in council tax. Short term it was helpful, but with no increase in the tax base, it is storing up trouble for the future.

The council delivered services within budget and found some savings in the year on its revenue budget. Capital spending was suspended mid-way through the year until asset sales were realised. There was some disquiet over long-term capital spending, and the need to borrow to finance schemes was considered. If asset disposals come to fruition and realise projected levels of income then borrowing may not be necessary.

LDF – new planning framework process continues. Other councils have raced ahead and had their LDF’s rejected by central government. Craven’s steady approach, while criticised, hopefully will be accepted 1st time. This year, housing numbers for next 15 years were agreed, process for selecting land for development also agreed. There will be a full consultation on all pieces of land that have reached the final consideration stage.

Fees and Charges were increased (apart from car-parking charges) and will be annually reviewed. Other ways to increase council income will be considered as a way to bridge the shortfall between government funding and the cost of delivering services. Shared services, outsourcing, cutting discretionary services – all will be considered over the next few years.

13/5 Any other business

Feedback and questions from the public:

Road repairs:

One resident queried the damaged footpath on the Brow which has still not been repaired. The clerk informed the resident that this matter had been reported to NYCC, with the response being it was not seen as damaged enough at present to repair. The clerk is to contact NYCC again.

Water Problem, MUGA:

Questions were raised about the water problem from the Bethel chapel and MUGA flooding. The school has had to cancel home football matches as the playing field is too waterlogged. The clerk informed the residents that hopefully the new residents of the Bethel Chapel were going to repair the pipe, and the council is currently carrying out

investigative work on the MUGA to ascertain if repairs can be made to drains to ease the flooding on the playing field.

Lengthsman:

Two residents objected to the possibility of the council employing a lengthsman. The council is hoping to run a 'clean the village day' first, hopefully with volunteers helping out. Complaints about the metal railings before Side Gate Lane were raised and will be discussed at the meeting in June.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Signed :

Date:

**Stephen Cohen
Chairman**