

Minutes of the proceedings of Annual Pittington Parish Meeting held in Pittington Village Hall, 7pm, High Pittington on Tuesday 30 May 2017

Present: Councillors: D Turnbull (Chair), J Lee,
B Fenwick, A Toal

Also in attendance: M Toal (Parish Clerk), 2 Members of the public

01/17 Introduction and Welcome

Chairman, Councillor David Turnbull welcomed everyone to the meeting.

02/17 Apologies for absence

Councillors: R Newlove
Apologies accepted and approved

03/17 Annual Chairman report of the Parish Council 2016/17

Councillor Turnbull gave his annual report:

Litter Picking - A special thank you was given to Mr and Mrs Fall for their contribution to the litter picking efforts continuously throughout the year again.

Dog fouling - An issue, which is constantly a problem in the villages, has been pursued by the Council to alleviate the problem. New bins have been installed and even more requested to tackle the concern. Working with Neighbourhood wardens has been on going throughout the year to target individuals offending. Residents have been aware of the new PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) law that will be introduced in June. This will see offenders being fined up to £1,000. A thank you goes out to the individual who has been leaving free bags at areas in the village for residents to use.

NIB - All 3 villages have been entered into this years Northumbria in Bloom. Ethicare has voluntarily offered to undertake the task of planting, weeding and tending to pots and targeted areas throughout the villages this year and the upcoming months.

Handyman - A special thank you goes out to Kevin Stock, our Parish Council handyman. Kevin continues to do his job above and beyond expectations, covering many aspects of keeping the villages clean, safe and tidy.

Village Hall - The Village Hall continues to be well used by many groups and residents. It offers a community hub for all age groups across many aspects that we hope will continue to be well supported for the future years.

Footpaths - The footpaths of the parish have been well maintained and any issues, which have been reported to DCC, have been quickly and efficiently dealt with.

Drone - A drone has been used to cover an aerial aspect of St Laurence Church at High Pittington. It was suggested that the drone could be used in the future to assess the landscape at the site of the proposed excavation by Hargreaves.

Cemetery - The cemetery has continued to be excellently maintained and its general appearance managed by our handyman. Many positive comments have been received by the community regarding the cemetery and its appearance. The bottom corner has been cleared of the excessive weeds and

rubble accumulated over many years. This will now be used for future burial plots.

War Memorial - The top section of the War Memorial at St Laurence Church has been successfully restored to its full glory. The Cavalry Cross was taken down and stonework carried out to repair the wear and tear of many years of weathering. The second phase will be next to restore the bottom section, which will include cleaning and restoring/adding inscriptions of the fallen soldiers.

Footpath 15 - Steps were installed on footpath 15 at High Pittington. The work was carried out with monies secured by the section 106 application from DCC.

Crime - The information supplied by Durham Constabulary confirms the crime rate continues to be low in the parish.

Precept - This years precept, 2017/18 was agreed by Councillors to remain at the same rate as 2016/17 at £23,000.

Newsagents - The village newsagents continues to be well supported by the local community. A recent installation of a cashpoint has proved to be useful.

Noticeboards - All 4 noticeboards are always updated with agendas, minutes and events in the community. The website and social media pages are also a point of information for residents.

Councillors - After the recent elections our Parish has 5 Councillors. 4

Councillors remain for the previous year, Councillors D Turnbull, R Newlove, B Fenwick and J Lee, with 1 new addition being Councillor A Toal.

Vacancies - After recent elections the Parish has 4 vacancies that can be filled by co-option.

04/17 **Pittington Village Hall**

The last 12 months has seen Pittington Community Association continue with the refurbishment of the Village Hall. The kitchen and canteen areas have been improved and redecorated with new flooring, new cupboards and a new cooker. The outside of the hall has been repaired and repainted and we've had CCTV installed. Further improvements will take place over the coming summer months with the floor in the main hall being resurfaced and the main hall itself redecorated. The front doors and the main hall fire escape will also be replaced within the next six months.

Most of the funding for these improvements has come from County Councillors and Durham Area Action Partnership.

PCA has also received a grant towards the purchase of a number of laptops and supporting equipment. Once in place these will open up a new range of possible activities including Adult Education courses.

The hall continues to be busy and well used both in the evenings and at the weekends. Recently a new group – Ethicare – have begun to use the hall during the two days a week during the day.

We are also in the process of establishing a mini free library – our first bookcase is in the foyer area and we would be grateful for any donation of books.

PCA has been included on the upcoming Field House Farm Community Liaison Committee where it will be working towards minimising the disruption of the mining and maximising the benefits to the community through the funding available from the scheme.

PCA are currently working on the next edition of the parish newsletter, which will be going to the printers within the next 10 days. If anyone has any contributions then please get them to us as soon as possible.

Finally if you shop at the Co-Op please join in their membership scheme and then choose 'Pittington Village Hall' - New Play Equipment as your chosen beneficiary. This will mean we get money every time you shop and also a share of the revenue from carrier bag sales at the Co-Op.

05/17 Litter Picking

Report read out:

A handful of dedicated litter pickers help to keep the village as litter free as possible. The third Thursday of every month we meet at the village hall for 10.30am. All equipment is supplied – bags, hoops and pickers. Some volunteers who are unable to meet on Thursday morning will pick in the days leading up to our regular council collection – all bags are left just outside the village hall gates.

We are especially grateful to Pittington Parish Council for purchasing new pickers to replace our old well used, but sadly broken ones. It's amazing how much litter can be collected in the course of an hour or so, and we always welcome anyone who wants to join us.

06/17 Camera Club

Report read out:

The last year has seen an increase in numbers, which has prevented the club from folding. Members meet regularly every Monday evening, 7.30pm in the village hall from October to end of April. During summer months they use the opportunity to visit and photograph various events etc. With trips to the Farne Islands, Lake District & Holy Island included in the programme.

As last year, members work will be on display at Pittington Annual Show in September, a chance to see some of the excellent photos taken throughout the year.

New members are always welcome.

07/17 St Laurence Church

Report read out:

The highlight of the year has to have been having the floor completely sanded and re-varnished, the difference is amazing.

Two very successful "open church" weeks where the church is left open unattended from 10am to 4pm have resulted in some very favourable comments, and have encouraged us to run the same this year.

Harvest Festival, Christmas Services and Palm Sunday have all been very well attended. Being part of "Small Pilgrim Places" has meant we have hosted various groups who visit the church, they are all appreciative of St Laurence hospitality as well as the beautiful surroundings both inside and outside the church. We have managed to hold 2 photographic evenings offering photographers the opportunity when no other visitors are present.

The church is open every Saturday afternoon from May to the end of September, and August will see the return of the "cream teas" which is always a popular event.

Challenging times lay ahead in the coming months as we say goodbye to Miranda, our vicar, we wish her well in her new post in Liverpool, but it will mean a period of visiting clergy until the post is filled. St Laurence Church looks forward to another interesting and exciting year ahead.

08/17 Parish Magazine

The Parish magazine will now be produced by Pitlington Community Association. The editor, Jon Steer, will produce, edit, print and deliver 4 editions per year with information from the Parish at a cost of £300 per issue.

09/17 Northumbria in Bloom/Pride in Pitlington

All 3 villages are again entered into this years Northumbria in Bloom competition. With the help from the Pride in Pitlington group, residents and Ethicare we hope to maintain the many pots and areas within the parish to produce flowers and foliage for judging in July.

10/17 Annual Parish Garden Show

The Annual Parish Garden Show will take place on Saturday September 16th. It will be an opportunity for the community to get together for a fun day and enter in to the many categories for judging. Categories will include home grown produce, photography competitions, baking and crafts.

11/17 Open Cast Mining

The upcoming mining project by Hargreaves will begin this year. A Liaison Committee has been created with representation from Pitlington Parish Council, Pitlington Community Association, West Rainton Parish Council, County Councillors, STOPWR group, Durham County Council and Hargreaves representatives. The aim of the group will be to keep the community up to date with events and answer any questions throughout the mining project. There will a funding scheme available for groups to submit application for money for their use. This will be an opportunity for the groups in the Pitlington Parish to identify areas of improvement within the area.

12/17 Public Forum

The public attended raised points about when the War Graves sign will be erected. The Clerk informed them that it is currently ongoing with the War Graves Commissioners. The lighting at Belmont was raised in relation to new light posts being erected next to the golf course for the new housing development. Also a suggestion of speedwatch signs being erected in the parish. After recent speed watch occasions it was asked if signs could be erected to inform motorists that it is a speedwatch area.

Meeting ended at 8.10 pm.

Cllr D Turnbull, Chairman