

Minutes of the proceedings of Annual Parish Meeting held in Pitlington Village Hall, 7pm, High Pitlington on Tuesday 15th May 2018

Present: Councillors: D Turnbull (Chair), J Lee, B Fenwick, A Toal, R Newlove, S Mitchell, D Hall

Also in attendance: M Toal (Parish Clerk), 3 Members of the public

01/18 Introduction and Welcome

Chairman, Councillor David Turnbull welcomed everyone to the meeting.

02/18 Apologies

None

03/18 Annual Chairman report of the Parish Council 2017/18

Councillor Turnbull gave his annual report:

Precept – This years precept, 2018/19 was agreed by Councillors to remain at the same rate as 206/17 at £23,000, 0% increase.

Durham Area Youth – A donation of £5,000.00 was given to Durham Area Youth to continue their services to provide youth clubs for children of the area. It will ensure its sustainability to provide funding for a lead youth worker, as well as receiving a grant from the Haswell Wind Farm Project.

Cemetery – The cemetery has continued to be excellently maintained by our handyman. Many positive comments have been received by the community regarding the appearance. A special thank you goes to Kevin Stock, our Parish Council handyman. Kevin continues to do his job above and beyond to keep the villages clean, tidy and safe.

War Memorial – The second phase to restore the bottom section, which will include cleaning and restoring/adding inscriptions of the fallen soldiers is on-going. A grant application from the War Memorial Trust will allow us to complete the refurbishment before the centenary celebrations.

Footpath Improvements – Steps were installed on footpath 15 at High Pitlington. 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 of 2017/18 continues to be lower than the national average.

Newsagents – The village newsagents continues to be supported by the local community.

Notices and Information – All 4 noticeboards are in place throughout the parish. Constantly being updated with agendas, minutes and events in the community. The website and social media are also a means to access information, which is used for residents to get in touch.

Litter Picking - A special thank you was given to Mr and Mrs Fall and their team for their contribution to the litter picking efforts continuously throughout the year again. We provide funding for equipment to support the volunteers.

Speedwatch – The speedwatch efforts of Mr and Mrs Fall were gratefully welcomed. Unfortunately the speedwatch services offered by Durham Constabulary are undergoing changes, meaning that some volunteers will not be able to participate due to time commitment and training.

Ethicare – We are working with the Ethicare group to improve the appearance of the villages by utilising their skills in horticulture and enabling the members to engage with the local community. In addition the allotments constitution was re-aligned to allow them to acquire a plot at Church Vale Allotments.

Pip Pony – We supported the Pit Pony Project throughout the development and planning application to ensure that the whole process was a success. It was unveiled in all its glory in July. It was unfortunate that it was vandalised but we also ensured the reparation was sought and actioned.

Vacancies – The parish currently has 2 vacancies that can be filled by co-option. If anyone is interested please get in touch with our Clerk.

04/18 **Pittington Village Hall**

Report read out: 2017 saw the refurbishment of the Village Hall continue. During this year, we had the main hall redecorated throughout including the refinishing of the hall floor, which now looks fantastic. New metal doors were fitted at the entrance and the main hall emergency exit to replace the existing wooden doors that had been causing access problems. The work on the toilets was completed with the addition of electric hand dryers in all three toilets.

It has been great to hear so many positive comments from visitors to the hall regarding the improvements that have been made but we are not finished yet! The entrance will see further improvements over the next 12 months with the removal of the old metal railings to open up the entrance so that it is accessible via the steps as well as the ramp. A stair lift is also planned for the internal staircase to allow wheelchair users easier access to the canteen. The Village Hall grounds saw a new addition with the installation of Kip, the pit pony. Kip was the culmination of a long running youth project involving the 'Mining Lasses' from Pittington Youth Club run by Mid-Durham Projects. Despite damage from vandalism shortly after the installation, Kip is now back in pride of place by the Village Hall entrance.

2017 has been a good year for fundraising; we received £5,000 from Royal London's community support programme which will help with the costs of the stair lift. Last month, we were very grateful to receive over £2,000 from the Co-op thanks to proceeds from co-op members and Sherburn branch customers. Jon Steer, a trustee and our treasurer collected the cheque. This money will be used to replace our aging bouncy castle and other equipment at the hall. We also received funding from our County Councillor Bill Kellett that enabled us to purchase several refurbished laptops, a printer and lockable storage for the hall as well as help towards the cost of our broadband internet connection. Once set up, we hope to use these laptops as part of an adult education project and to make them available to the various groups that currently use the hall.

Our Autumn show and Christmas fair were also both very successful and raised over £1,500. Thank you to all who entered the Autumn Show, we had a record number of entries and some of the winners can be seen on the front cover! Thank you also to all those who came and supported us at both events.

The hall had a new group start this year – Ethicare Durham provides person centred supported living, day support and domiciliary care services to adults

who have a learning disability. The main aim of their work is to enhance the quality of life for their users by supporting them to learn new skills, have new experiences, develop their interests and hobbies and develop new friendships and relationships. Ethicare use the hall as one of their bases and are there most days. More details on their plans for the hall and the community can be seen in their article earlier in this magazine, including the launch of the Hen House Café.

Our new book exchange proved to be hugely successful and we now have a great stock of books available for visitors to swap – you can even pop into the new café and enjoy a drink at the same time.

2018 will see the 50th anniversary of the Village Hall. The first lease was signed on the 27th June 1968 between the County Council of Durham and three members of the first management committee – Thomas Percival from South End, Robert Shipley from St Lawrence Road and Robert Chadwick from Jubilee Villas. The lease was a non-expiring lease with a yearly rent of one shilling, although there is no record of this rent ever being demanded or paid! The lease ran until it was replaced on 20th November 2014 under Durham County Council's asset transfer program with a new 30 year lease which moved all running costs and liabilities of the Village Hall to the newly formed Pitlington Community Association.

We'd love to hear from anyone that has pictures or memories of the early days of the Village Hall. Contact details are on the back of the magazine.

05/18 **Parish Magazine**

The magazine has now been handed to the PCA to produce, print and distribute for a fee of £300 per issue. The magazine is very well received by residents, although there has been teething problems with correct distribution to certain areas of the parish. This has now been rectified. It is also available to read online through social media also.

06/18 **Ethicare**

Report read out: Both of Ethicare Hubs are based in Pitlington at the Village Hall And Southbrook House. We are a service that support people with a learning disability in the community. Over the last year we have become established and this is partly due to the parish council, which we greatly appreciate. We run a cafe 2 days a week which we recently were awarded a 5star rating in Pitlington and have taken on a community allotment, again with the support of the parish.

We are pleased to continue with planting the flower beds in the village and Littletown.

We have just received word today that we very shortly can go ahead with the refurbishment of Southbrook which will allow us to have lunch clubs enabling us to further develop relationships in the community. It will also possibly be available evenings and weekends for hire for suitable parties in and around the parish.

We feel that our presence is both beneficial to ourselves, and the parish working together to break down barriers, developing relationships and developing a sense of belonging.

I will take this opportunity to thank the committee for all support given to our service users. Barbara Reynolds Director.

07/18 **Litter Picking**

Report read out: A few dedicated villagers take part in a litter pick every 3rd Thursday of each month, trying to help keep our village tidy.

More volunteers are always welcome, pickers, hoops, bags etc are provided and if Thursday morning is not a suitable time bags can be left from Monday to Wednesday that week beside the village hall gates. It is surprising how much litter one person can collect in an hour and there is some satisfaction in looking back along a path or road and seeing it clear of rubbish.

For more information contact Sheila Phillips email sheila55@tiscali.co.uk or Mick on 07890435508

08/18 **St Laurence Church**

Report read out: Since last June the church has been without a vicar, following Miranda's move to take up a position in Liverpool. A team of dedicated volunteers, and visiting clergy have ensured that services have proceeded and St Laurence has been open for business as usual.

Members look forward to the arrival of Rev Heather Murray, who is joining us from Anfield Plain, in July, when she will take up the post of Priest in Charge of the United Benefice of St Mary Magdalene, Belmont and St Laurence Pittington. Heather's licensing will take place on July 8th, firstly with a welcome in St Laurence church, followed by a service at St Mary Magdalene, watch our face book page St Laurence Church, Pittington for details nearer the time.

We are extremely grateful to staff at Hallgarth Manor who have been instrumental in encouraging couples to look at the church as a wedding venue, the number of church weddings has increased tremendously.

During the year the church has been "open" unattended for a week at a time, several times. The notes in the visitors book suggest that this is very popular, people come to view the church, sit, pray, for quiet reflection or to just light a candle. More volunteers would enable us to do this more often.

The church is open every Saturday afternoon between May and September and our well loved "Cream Teas" will be available again during August.

We look forward to welcoming even more visitors during the coming year.

09/18 **Camera Club**

Report read out: The club meets every Monday evening in the village hall at 7.30pm, except during the months of July and August, Local venues are arranged for evenings out, offering different photographic opportunities especially during the warmer, drier evenings. Members are pleased to be invited to put on a display at the annual Pittington show, giving them the chance to show a wide, varied display of their work.

New members are always welcome, with any kind of camera and ability, but it is worth contacting Mick on 07890435508 to confirm where we are meeting on any particular Monday.

10/18 **Northumbria in Bloom/Pride in Pittington**

All 3 villages are again entered into this years Northumbria in Bloom competition. With the help from the Pride in Pittington 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.
Pride in Pitlington (PIP) continues to hold meetings 4 times a year. The meetings are open to all residents who would like to participate in the appearance of our villages.

11/18 **Open Cast Mining**

We have become attendees on the Field House Opencast Community Liaison Committee to ensure that the community is heard and represented.

Work Completed to date:

- All pre-commencement planning conditions have been discharged
- Performance bond is in place
- Site works commenced Monday 26th March 2018
- Site entrance completed
- Main access road into site completed
- Car park and fencing complete
- Coal stocking ground prepared
- Surface water treatments have commenced
- Archaeological survey yet to be completed due to adverse weather conditions
- Noise and dust monitoring started at end of March 2018
- Ecology site visits are continually ongoing to inspect trees and hedges

Coal operations to commence in July

12/18 **Public Forum**

None

Cllr D Turnbull, Chairman