

Minutes of the proceedings of Annual Pittington Parish Meeting held in Pittington Village Hall, 7pm, High Pittington on Tuesday 21st May 2019

Present: Councillors: R Newlove (Chair), A Toal (Vice Chair), J Everett, G Patton, V Patton, D Hall

Also in attendance: M Toal (Parish Clerk), 1 Member of the public

01/19 Introduction and Welcome

Chairman, Councillor R Newlove welcomed everyone to the meeting.

02/19 Apologies for absence

Councillors: S Mitchell

Apologies accepted and approved

03/19 Annual Chairman report of the Parish Council 2018/19

Councillor Newlove gave his annual report:

1. People - I make no apology for starting with some of the people in the Parish, because it is the people who form the backbone of community - some, exceptionally. There will be others who are beavering away on a daily basis to ensure we have a community in which everyone is proud to live:

- Previous Chairman, David Turnbull retired earlier this year and I wish to record thanks for his enormous contribution over some five years to forging a more pro-active Parish Council.
- Cllr. Brian Fenwick who sadly died just before Xmas. Over several decades Brian gave great service to the Parish Council and his local community at Littleton.
- Handyman Kevin Stock who, as in previous years, has continued to use his best endeavours to keep up the physical appearance of those assets in the villages belonging to the Parish Council. He has been ably assisted in his valuable work by the Council's acquisition (from a local supplier) of a new ride on mower.
- Kathy and Mick Fall, a lovely married couple actively engaged in many community activities. Their contribution to litter picking, Community Speedwatch campaigns and PIP has been immense.
- John Steer continues to manage and drive forward the success of the Village Hall as a key venue for community activities
- Paul Johnson, Managing Director of P.J. Engineering, who kindly donated a redundant storage container that now stores Parish Council equipment much more securely.
- New Councillors who have joined us in the past year are Aarron Toal (now Vice-chairman), Julie Everett, Gillian Patton and her daughter Victoria, and this brings a welcome and much better balanced representation of the sexes, with the Clerk no longer feeling outnumbered when attending the monthly meetings! However, this still leaves us with one vacancy and we would welcome some fresh input to support an increasingly active and committed Council.

2. Estates and Property

Village Hall: continues to be well supported with constant bookings, an Autumn Show and Christmas Fayre featuring a guest appearance from Santa Claus whose real identity remains a mystery... Ho, Ho, Ho! War Memorial: After receiving conflicting advice from stonemasons, work on the War Memorial is on-going. The next phase will be to restore the bottom section, which will include cleaning and restoring/adding inscriptions of the fallen soldiers.

Cemetery: This has continued to be very well maintained by our handyman, and many positive comments have been received by the community regarding the cemetery and its appearance. Importantly, the process of determining how the cemetery can be extended has begun. Whilst additional space may not be needed for some years, given the legalities involved it is vital that this be pursued in a timely manner.

3. Footpaths - Footpaths running through the Parish have been well maintained and any issues reported to Durham county Council have been quickly and efficiently dealt with.

4. Crime and Grime - Information supplied by Durham Constabulary confirms the crime rate continues to be low in the Parish, but in recent weeks there. Appears to have been a spike in senseless petty crime such as theft from allotments and car break-ins. Litter picking has, unfortunately, had to remain high on the agenda, but has been vigorously pursued by some committed locals. Dog fouling - remains a constant issue both in the villages and the wider area. It is particularly offensive and potentially harmful to health on playing field areas when owners do not pick up their dog's poo. The Parish Council is constantly seeking cooperation from the County Council to alleviate the problem. Dust: Incidents of dust settlement have been reported over the year and the county Council has been asked to investigate each report.

5. Finances - Precept: This year's precept, was raised by 5% to £24,150 in order to ensure key commitments can be pursued during the coming year. Donations given by the Council to support local bodies including Durham Marching Cavaliers, Durham Area Youth (Youth Club) and Macmillan Cancer.

GOING FORWARD INTO THE NEXT YEAR

I also want to briefly look forward to this coming year and things that might be achieved.

- Getting a full Council: fill the final vacancy
- Xmas Tree: resolving a location for a celebratory Xmas Tree
- Cemetery: storing or restoring fallen headstones, both for safety and appearance of the cemetery.
- Promoting the Work of the Parish Council - Marketing, reviewing the website and updating more regularly

- Making the Council more visible and accessible to the community
- Speedwatch - pressing for more support from the Police

04/17 Pittington Village Hall

The Village Hall continues to be a very popular, well-used facility, which is enormous asset to the community. It hosts many group who use its facilities and grounds, these include: Brass Band, Ethicare, Camera Club, Youth Club, Dance Sessions, Marching Band and Toddler Group. As well as being used weekly for various groups the village hall also takes bookings for events such as parties, meetings and social events. It was recently used b the Rotary Club who raised money for a defibrillator, which will be located in the village. This was a very successful evening and well attended. The Autumn Show that made a whopping £920 and Christmas Fayre were again very well attended with another year of support and engagement with the community. This year unfortunately saw another break in of the hall with extensive damage to exterior and interior doors. A new internal CCTV was installed for further security. Many thanks were given to Frankland Prison who re-covered many chairs and made the village some beautiful planters. Thanks were given to Pittington Parish Council who donated £200 to the Christmas Fayre. We have another busy year ahead with the Autumn Show, Brass band Concert and Christmas Fayre already scheduled. M Toal

05/17 Litter Picking

Regular litter picks continue to be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month, a small, but reliable team try to tidy the village of what seem to be an endless supply of bottles and cans (not always empty either), take away cartons and other items that some think it is acceptable to deposit on the roadside. It was pleasing to see several families, and Ethicare taking part in the BIG CLEAN event before just Easter, hopefully it wasn't just the lure of tea/coffee and biscuits afterwards, which made them want to take part. Hopefully we can continue to make a difference to the village. K Fall

06/17 St Laurence Church

Heather has settled into the work of both churches, it seems hard to believe it is nearly a year since she joined us as Priest in Charge.

In June it is hoped that some much needed repairs to the roof will be undertaken.

Open Saturday afternoons between May and September are still popular, especially during August when we also have the cream teas on offer.

Following, the churches inclusion in, successful wedding fairs at Hallgarth Manor more couples are expressing a desire to get married at St Laurence and we have seen a rise in the number of weddings, bringing a rise in the number of younger people attending regular worship.

Once again it is always good to welcome new faces into the congregation and we hope people are always made to feel welcome. K Fall

07/17 Camera Club

The camera club continues to meet every Monday night, this year having enjoyed photography trips to The Northern Spire, Newcastle Quayside, South

Yorkshire Wildlife Park and Low Burn Hall, alongside our regular weekly meetings. New members are always welcome. K Fall

08/17 Northumbria in Bloom/Pride in Pittington

The Parish Council agreed to retract from entering in to the competition this year sadly due to lack of support for attending to planters and planted areas. Instead the parish council will be working with the small PIP group and again Ethicare who have volunteered to assist in all aspects of the planting project in the community. Donations from the Parish Council and County Councillors will help with the cost of the project throughout the year. M Toal

09/17 Pittington Brass Band

The brass band, which was formed in 1992, has approx. thirty band members, though at some practices visiting musicians turn up to join us. The starter/junior band, which takes beginners of all ages and provides free loan of instruments and free tuition reached twelve strong during this last year. The senior band meets every Thursday evening at Pittington village hall, from 7-30pm to 9-30, and is conducted by Richard Stelling formerly a resident of the village and was tuba player in the band for many years. The starter band meets every Thursday from 7pm to 8pm. Over the last year the band has performed at over twenty gigs, some for charity such as MacMillan nurses and Marie Curie, and has performed at weddings, Durham Regatta, the Big Meeting, launch of Xmas tree lights at a number of villages, church fetes, our Autumn show, remembrance Sunday service and various carol services. The band plays a wide variety of music from classical, traditional brass band, through to Queen hits, Led Zeppelin, Blues, Elvis, Duke Ellington and many more. For bookings or interest in joining either band please contact the band secretary at oveyshouse@yahoo.com. The atmosphere is a relaxed friendly one; the band does not contest but plays just for the enjoyment and pleasure of music. B Patterson

10/17 Youth Club DAY

DAY currently has almost 100 young people attending the sessions at Pittington Village Hall. As well as various activities at the hall the young people have recently had the chance to go to Infinite Air and Battlefield Live and are currently preparing for the DAY talent show. DAY has recently received funding from the National Lottery Communities fund which along with funding from each Parish Council has allowed it to push ahead with plans to recruit more youth workers and has secured the future for DAY for the next three years. DAY will be running a variety of activities over the summer holidays; more details will be available nearer the end of term. J Steer

11/17 Opencast Mining

Work to date

- Noise and dust monitoring. No noise complaints received. Two dust complaints received in the period. First received on 26th April from West Rainton and Low Pittington. Complaints investigated found the wind direction to be towards West Rainton not Low Pittington. An additional water bowser had been put to work

that week to suppress nuisance dust. Second on 16/05/19 regarding dust to properties on Priors Grange, Pitlington. Complaint investigated, dust monitoring point at south of site checked and no significant dust deposits found. Travelled to Priors Grange, Pitlington and surrounding area, found a farmer's field that had recently been cultivated the field backed onto the south side of Priors Grange. Suspect the nuisance dust from farmers field not from site. Complaint recorded as not justified.

- Coal sales from site continue, tonnage dispatched from site up to the end of April 182,169t.
- The excavation of the box cut completed, excavated overburden now being placed below ground level. The hard rock above the Main seam continues to slow progress but the use of a third RH120 excavator plus dump trucks is keeping the site on programme.
- Work continues grading Overburden Mound 1 ready to accept grass seed.
- Remedial work to road surface to site entrance and radius from the A690 now completed
- **Future work** - Grading of outer face of Overburden Mound 1 to be completed when it can be seeded to grass.

12/19 **Public Forum**

Member of the public asked about the resurfacing of paths at Church Vale, Cllr D Hall stated that it maybe done later this year by DCC

Signed by:
