

CORBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CORBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th DECEMBER 2024 AT 19:00 IN ROOM ONE OF CORBRIDGE PARISH HALL

PRESENT: Cllr N M Oliver together with Cllrs C G Curry, Ms C Burns, L Rogers, J A Shackleton, R Tipping and S Ahmed.

Attendance by Colin Hall, Environment Agency and Mary Jordon, Chair of the Corbridge Flood Action Group.

Mary Jordan had asked for support from the Parish Council which had been agreed at the last meeting. The Parish Council had RESOLVED to allow the Flood Action Group use of the Parish Hall during any flood events for meetings or as a warm space, to sign up for flood alerts and to co-ordinate a list of volunteers who can help before, during and after flood events. The Flood Action Group will prepare an article for Corbridge Matters and Colin Hall advised that he could provide posters to be displayed on notice boards and the website. Colin also discussed surface flooding as there is now an increased risk of surface flooding and it is very difficult to predict and forewarn people. There had been an event in April-May 2024 around the Stagshaw Road/Corchester Lane area. Problems had also been seen around Windsor Terrace and there are current issues around Synclen Avenue, Milkwell and Kiln View with water run off from the new estate which is flooding gardens. Colin Hall advised that the Environment Agency mapping is being updated and the flood plan has been updated. The Environment Agency can provide training and support for volunteers. The clerk will contact Colin Hall to sign the Parish Council up to flood alerts. Flood Re was discussed. Flood Re is a joint initiative between the Government and insurers. Its aim is to make the flood cover part of household insurance policies more affordable.

1224.01 Residents present raised several issues and where relevant they are listed together with the actions that will be taken, if required. In due course, if necessary, reports will be made back to the Council.

- a) Large Pothole. There is a large pothole on Windsor Terrace opposite No 28 St Wilfrid's Road. This fills with water during heavy rain. Cllr N M Oliver advised he would report this to NCC.

1224.02 Apologies for Absence received and accepted from Cllrs W Clouston, A Berrington and M J Stone.

1224.03 Declarations of Councillor's Interest. Cllr N M Oliver declared personal and prejudicial interest in items 1224.07 as a member of Northumberland County Council's Planning Committees.

1224.04 To approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on **27th November 2024**. It was RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2024 as an accurate record.

1224.05 Actions taken following the meeting held on **27th November 2024**.

- a) West Cheynes Footpath. Minute 1124.05a refers. It was noted that NCC would be happy to help to get this footpath adopted. There is a process to go through and it will have to be proved that the footpath has been used for 20 years without interruption. In the meantime, NCC would have no objection to the Parish Council clearing and maintaining the footpath. The clerk will arrange for the handyman to strim/clear the footpath.
- b) 3G Pitch. Minute 1124.05c. Unfortunately, the meeting scheduled for 6th December had been cancelled at the last minute. Cllr N M Oliver will push for a meeting in January.
- c) Car Park Extension. Minute 1124.05e refers. NCC has promised to resolve the issue with the Environment Agency. The land acquisition is continuing through the legal system and Cllr N M Oliver will update at the January meeting.
- d) Wheatsheaf Car Park. Minute 1124.05f refers. Cllr N M Oliver had spoken with the landlords of the Wheatsheaf and they would be happy for their car park to be used. It is a pay to use car park.
- e) Anti-Social Behaviour. Minute 1124.12b refers. The police have been very pro-active in tackling the recent anti-social behaviour and are taking action against 5 young people. They have been patrolling most weekends and the situation is improving.
- f) Generator. Minute 1124.09d refers. The clerk had arranged for a quote to install the appropriate connection in the Parish Hall for a generator. This should be received in the next couple of weeks.
- g) Mileposts. Minute 1124.06b refers. The clerk had been approached by another contractor to quote for the refurbishment of the two mileposts. Unfortunately, the work was not something they could carry out. Cllr N M Oliver to liaise with NCC for advice.

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1224.06 Finance/Administration

- a) Accounts for payment. It was RESOLVED to accept and approve the items of expenditure on the list previously circulated. [Appendix A]

1224.07 Planning Applications. It was RESOLVED to accept the decision of the Planning Advisory Group in accordance with the list circulated. [See appendix B]

1224.08 Planning Decisions. Nothing to report.

1224.09 To receive reports, if appropriate from Working/Liaison Groups with enclosed minutes, if applicable including reports from the Chairman and County Councillor

- a) Chairman's Report – To consider report from Tim Speed Consulting on traffic movements in the Market Place and discuss next steps. The report had been received from Tim speed advising that he does not consider pedestrians walking in the carriageway to be a serious road safety issue as that carriageway is very lightly trafficked with slow moving vehicles. He advised that there is no reason why the left turn from Middle Street is necessary or should remain. The Parish Council, through its Scheme of Management, would be able take the appropriate measures to block off the left turn. Tim Speed had provided drawings showing the swept paths of vehicles accessing and egressing delivering to the retain units should access from the north be prevented. It was RESOLVED that Cllrs W Clouston and N M Oliver would meet with the owners of the two affected retail units in January and report back to the January meeting.
- b) County Councillor's Report
 - i. Newcastle Road. Cllr N M Oliver had forwarded the original information regarding traffic calming measures from 2018-19 to NCC who will provide a report in due course.
 - ii. Active Travel Route. Work on the active travel route had now started.
- c) To receive update from Corbridge in Bloom representative and address issues raised. Cllr C Burns had attended the last meeting of Corbridge in Bloom and raised several issues.
 - iii. Neighbourhood Liaison Group. CiB requested if this meeting could be re-instated. The clerk will arrange a meeting of the Group in the New Year.
 - iv. General Untidiness around the Village. Discussions took place around the responsibility for clearing leaves, overgrown trees, grass cutting and weed spraying. It was noted that any areas of concern around overgrown trees would be the responsibility of the landowner. Issues will grass cutting should initially be reported to the Clerk. Cllr N M Oliver advised that NCC had an additional £1m of funding to carry out work on gulleys, drains etc. It was RESOLVED that the handyman would carry out general weed/leave clearance if areas could be reported to the Clerk.
 - v. Howden Dene. A vehicle activated sign was requested at the entrance to Corbridge at Howden Dene and also an elderly person crossing sign. Cllr N M Oliver agreed to look into this.

1224.10 To consider recommendations from the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Finance and General Purposes Committee had met on the 6th December 2024 and the minutes circulated to all members of the Council to consider. The following recommendations were made, and it was RESOLVED to accept and implement the recommendations.

- a) To agree precept for 2025-26. It was RESOLVED to levy a precept of £182,214 on Northumberland County Council. This is a 2.3% increase per household.
- b) Review of Parish Hall Fees 2025-26. It was RESOLVED for the Parish Hall Fees to remain unchanged in 2025-26.
- c) Review of Cemetery Fees 2025-26. It was RESOLVED to increase the cemetery fees by 5% for 2025-26.
- d) Rent Review for Parish Council Properties. It was RESOLVED to increase the rent for the Cemetery Lodge from £500 per calendar month to £600 per calendar month with effect from 1st April 2025. The rent for the Community Led Houses will be increased from £90 per week to £95 per week with effect from 1st April 2025. This is still lower than comparable properties in Hexham.
- e) To consider staffing matters on the attached confidential report. It was RESOLVED to increase the spinal point for the Clerk to 39 due to the increased responsibilities and also increase the spinal point for the Caretaker to 11 with effect from 1st April 2025.

1224.11 The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 19:00 in Room One of Corbridge Parish Hall.

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APPENDIX A

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – 18th DECEMBER 2024

Payee	Description	Gross payment	VAT	Net	Payment method
Rentokil	Washroom supplies	426.33	71.06	355.27	DD
BT Plc	Parish Hall telephone/WIFI – August	111.36	18.56	92.80	DD
EE	Mobile phone contracts	68.34	11.39	56.95	DD
Engie	Parish Hall gas supply	593.95	98.99	494.96	DD
Corona Energy	Parish Hall Electricity supply	130.41	6.21	124.20	DD
H M Revenue and Customs	PAYE – December 2024	972.49		972.49	BACS
T W Pension Fund	Pension contributions – Dec 24	959.73		959.73	BACS
Everflow	Parish Hall water rates	20.78		20.78	DD
A Curtis Window Cleaner	Bus stops and Parish Hall	90.00		90.00	BACS
Corona Energy	Cemetery electricity supply	52.09	2.48	49.61	DD
Oakwood Domestic Appliance Services	Oven repairs – Plot 111	77.68		77.68	BACS
Lyons Property & Maintenance Services Ltd	Hedge cutting – The Chains	840.00	140.00	700.00	BACS
Grenke Leasing Ltd	Photocopier equipment protection	110.00		110.00	DD
Agilico Technology Ltd	Photocopier maintenance contract	41.40	6.90	34.50	DD
Elan City Ltd	Extended warranty – VAS signs	2149.20	358.20	1791.00	BACS
ADT Fire and Security Plc	CCTV Maintenance contract	124.21	20.70	103.51	BACS
Northumberland CC	Adverts – Homefinder 2023-2024	108.00	18.00	90.00	BACS
Unity Trust Bank	Bank account charges – monthly	14.55		14.55	DD
Unity Trust Bank	Bank account charges – monthly	6.60		6.60	DD
Tim Speed Consulting	Highways report – Market Place	1068.00	178.00	890.00	BACS
Urwin Joinery	Shed reconfiguration – Parish Hall	880.00		880.00	BACS
Staff Wages	January 2025	3610.92		3610.92	BACS
Total		12,349.42	912.72	11,436.70	

MULTIPAY CARD TRANSACTIONS – DECEMBER 2024

Payee	Description	Gross payment	VAT	Net
Lloyds Bank Corporate Card	Monthly fee	3.00		3.00
Viking Direct	Stationery/P/Hall supplies	92.99	15.50	77.49
Totals		95.99	15.50	80.49

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INCOME RECEIVED – DECEMBER 2024

Reference	Detail	Amount	Date
Tenant	Social housing rent – Plot 109	390.00	02.12.24
Tenant	Social housing rent – Plot 66	390.00	02.12.24
Tenant	Social housing rent – Plot 110	390.00	02.12.24
Karate (699)	Parish Hall Hire	30.00	03.12.24
Pilates	Parish Hall Hire	64.00	03.12.24
Yoga	Parish Hall Hire	99.00	04.12.24
Children's Party	Parish Hall Hire	32.00	05.12.24
Carpet Bowls Club (700)	Parish Hall Hire	96.00	05.12.24
Indoor Market	Parish Hall Hire	120.00	05.12.24
Choir	Parish Hall Hire	128.00	09.12.24
Tenant	Cemetery Lodge rent	500.00	09.12.24
Tenant	Social housing rent – Plot 111	390.00	10.12.24
Art Group (Thursday)	Parish Hall Hire	66.00	10.12.24
Zumbini	Parish Hall hire	27.50	10.12.24
Children's Party	Parish Hall Hire	64.00	11.12.24
WI (576)	Parish Hall Hire	48.00	12.12.24
Art Group (Wednesday)	Parish Hall Hire	80.00	12.12.24
Children's Party	Parish Hall Hire	72.00	13.12.24
Various (577)	Parish Hall Hire	274.00	16.12.24
Ballet Classes	Parish Hall hire	128.00	16.12.24
Zumba Classes	Parish Hall Hire	96.00	16.12.24
Art Group (Tuesday)	Parish Hall Hire	110.00	16.12.24
Bridge Club	Parish Hall Hire	176.00	17.12.24
Advertiser	Corbridge Matters advert	540.00	18.12.24
Soulful Healing	Parish Hall Hire	22.00	19.12.24
Art Appreciation Group	Parish Hall Hire	22.00	19.12.24
Choir	Parish Hall Hire	104.00	20.12.24
HMRC	VAT refund	716.30	24.12.24
Various (579)	Parish Hall Hire	130.00	27.12.24
Various (578)	Parish Hall Hire	180.00	30.12.24
Various (580)	Parish Hall Hire	1872.00	31.12.24
Unity Trust Bank	Bank Account interest	812.10	31.12.24
Total		8,558.90	

APPENDIX B

PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION ON 18th DECEMBER 2024

REFERENCE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	ADDRESS
24/04071/LBC	Listed Building consent for like-for-like repairs to stone wall with works including removal of ivy and underpinning of wall and 2 no buttresses	Land East of Lumley Cottage, Main Street, Corbridge
24/04217/FUL	Removal of conservatory, construction of rear extension and front porch enlargement	11 Woodside Avenue, Corbridge

CORBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2024

PRESENT. Councillors W Clouston, N M Oliver, J A Shackleton

1. REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS UP TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024. The clerk had updated the accounts for the period ended 30 November 2024 for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes committee. Items to note: Forecast income for Parish Hall £32K, cemetery income £25K and social housing rent of £18,720. The forecast balance for the year ended March 2025 is £131,709.
2. TO CONSIDER DRAFT BUDGET AND AGREE PRECEPT FOR 2025-2026. The clerk had prepared a draft budget for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes committee. Items to note: Forecast income for Parish Hall £30K, cemetery income £25K, Community Housing rent £18,720 (based on rent of £90 per week per property, this will be reviewed). There has been a budget of £10,000 in the budget for the last few years for street lighting. Cllr N M Oliver gave an update on the installation of additional columns around Corbridge, in particularly dark areas. £10,000 will be left in the budget for the coming year. A discussion took place around Corbridge Matters and a review of the fees. It was agreed to review the frequency and cost of Corbridge Matters in March 2025. After discussion, it was proposed to increase the precept to £182,214. This equates to an increase of 2.3% per annum on an average Band D property.
3. REVIEW OF PARISH HALL FEES 2025-26. The Parish Hall charges were last increased in April 2023, with no increase implemented in 2024. Current usage is 127 hours per month for the Main Hall and 70 hours per month for Meeting Rooms. The Finance Committee considered options for 2025, including maintaining current rates or implementing a modest increase. The review factors in inflation, operational costs, and comparisons with nearby venues. Community groups and regular hirers form a significant portion of the hall's users. Market comparisons show similar venues charging slightly more, but raising rates could impact community use. Recommendation: Given the nature of the hall's users—primarily community groups—it is recommended not to increase the hire charges for the Main Hall and Meeting Rooms for 2025. However, to align with market trends for weddings, charges for weddings should increase to £750 for a 48-hour period.
4. REVIEW OF CEMETERY FEES 2025-26. It was AGREED to propose an increase of 5%.
5. TO CONSIDER RENT REVIEW FOR THE CEMETERY LODGE AND COMMUNITY LED HOUSING.
 - a) **Cemetery Lodge.** Current rent is £500 per month. The property has been occupied by the Parish Hall caretaker and his family since December 2019. The rent has remained unchanged for several years. It is an old property which requires ongoing maintenance (much of this work is carried out by the tenant) however the rent level is below current market standards. **Recommendation:** Increase the rent to £600 per calendar month. This adjustment is still below the market rental value and reflects an appropriate increment considering the property's value and current financial conditions.
 - b) **Community Led Houses.** Current rent is £390 per month. Bungalow has been occupied since February 2023 and the houses since July/August 2023 as part of a community initiative to provide affordable housing. Rent levels were set in line with the initiatives goals but are lower than rates charged by other social housing providers like Karbon Homes who charge £100-£105 per week for similar properties in the area. **Recommendation:** Increase rents in line with other social housing providers to ensure alignment while maintaining affordability. Rents will be reviewed on an annual basis each year when setting the precept.
6. TO DISCUSS THE COMMUNITY LED HOUSING PROJECT AND UPDATE ON CURRENT ISSUES. The Community Led Housing Project is running smoothly regarding tenants, with no issues reported and rent being paid on time. However, there are several problems with the new-build houses, such as oven breakdowns, electrical problems, sticking or jamming doors, and leaking bathroom pipes. The caretaker and his son are available on call to address these issues. Tenants typically report problems by phone to the clerk, but this often occurs during evenings, weekends, or the clerk's annual leave, creating challenges in communication and response.