



Delivering Quality Services to  
Coxhoe & Quarrington Hill

## Coxhoe Parish Council

<b>Meeting</b>	Monthly
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 22nd September 2010
<b>Time</b>	6.45 pm
<b>Venue</b>	Landsdowne House, Coxhoe

### **Minutes of the proceedings of the monthly Coxhoe Parish Council meeting held at 6.45 pm in Landsdowne House, Lansdowne Road, Coxhoe, on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2010.**

**Present:** Councillor P. Dodsworth (Chair) and Councillors S. Dunn, Mrs. B. Hepplewhite, R. Mayo, K. Pounder, G. Shotton, D. Smith, and J. Taylor. **Clerk:** Mrs. M. Forster

**Also Present:** County Councillors D. Morgan and Mrs. M. Plews (part of meeting) and I. Forster (Assistant Clerk).

**10.202 Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Rowe, C. Thirlaway and Mrs. C. Wigham.

**10.203 Members' Declarations of Interest:** Councillors K. Pounder, G. Shotton and Mrs. C. Wigham had declared interests in mediation between Quarrington Hill Village Partnership Management Committee and members of the Partnership / residents; and Councillor D. Smith had declared an interest in Sanderson Street.

**10.204 Questions from the Public:** The Chair asked whether any members of the public present had any questions. As these all related to planning applications it was agreed to bring that item forward on the agenda and allow the public to raise their queries at that point. The Chair of the Coxhoe Community Partnership was present and advised that the Parish Council had requested that the County Council undertake a litter pick of St. Mary's Churchyard as part of their usual maintenance routine. This had happened for a while but it appeared that it was no longer happening. It was agreed that the Parish Council raise this with the County Council.

**10.205 Police Report:** The Police report had been circulated for 20<sup>th</sup> August to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010. M. Ogilvie advised that there was currently a problem with thefts of scrap metal. This included drain covers. Other agencies were being brought on board to assist in combating this and issues of missing drain covers also needed to be reported to the Highways Action Line as a matter of urgency due to the safety implications. The Clerk gave details of a phone call from a resident who had expressed concern that a policeman had visited her home as a result of a referral from a Parish Councillor. Members discussed that whilst residents were encouraged to raise matters direct, issues under the jurisdiction of the Police or County Council were often raised with Councillors who passed them to the appropriate organisations. This had been the case in this instance as the concern was that a van parked on a residential estate may have caused a hazard by reducing visibility. The Chair offered to write to the concerned lady explaining the situation and offering apologies for any alarm caused by the appearance of a policeman at her home. Members discussed parking issues at Sanderson Street as a result of the bollards not being replaced and M. Ogilvie advised that he would raise this with the appropriate authorities. It was stated that the matter had been an issue for a while and had been discussed at PACT meetings. County Councillors Mrs. Plews and Morgan entered the meeting. The Police representatives left the meeting.

**Resolved** (i) That the Police Report be noted and displayed on the village notice boards; (ii) That the Chair send a letter to the concerned resident; (iii) That M. Ogilvie raise the issue of parking problems at Sanderson Street with the appropriate authorities.

**10.206 Minutes of Monthly Meeting** held 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010 had been circulated. A Member asked that it be added that he had said that the situation regarding Quarrington Hill had only gone on for a year after the words "others considered that the situation had gone on for years and needed to be resolved as it was affecting the workload of the organisations." at minute 10.185 (5).

**Resolved** That the minutes of the last monthly meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010 be approved and signed as a true record.

**10.207 Matters of information: (1)** The Clerk reminded Councillors Dodsworth and Hepplewhite that they had been nominated to attend as representatives of the Parish Council and Coxhoe Community Partnership at the meeting in connection with the potential procurement of improved **CCTV in Coxhoe** and having the park monitored centrally at Durham. **(2)** Councillors Dunn and Pounder had not yet discussed the differing information on the land ownership of the **rough land adjacent to the allotments at Quarrington Hill** with a view to the Parish Council procuring this to provide additional allotment sites. **(3)** Councillor Dunn would draft a letter on the **Asset Transfers**. **(4)** Notification had not yet been received regarding the Durham Rural Community Council Annual General Meeting when the decision on the **DRCC Community of the Year Competition** would be announced. **(5)** The replacement **seat at The Grove** was yet to be ordered. **(6)** An appropriate response had been sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government on the **consultation on local referendums to veto council tax increases** and a copy had been sent to the County Durham Association of Local Councils. **(7)** A cheque and accompanying letter had been prepared for the contribution to the **Durham City Centre Youth Project**. An invitation from the Member of Parliament had been received to an open day for funders on 7<sup>th</sup> October and Members were asked to contact the Clerk should they wish to attend as the Council's representative. **(8)** The requisite notices had been displayed regarding the **Conclusion of the External Audit of Accounts** for the appropriate time. A small amount of paperwork to be sent to BDO would complete the process for the year. **(9)** Nothing had yet been received in connection with the information requested on the **speed visors**.

**Resolved** That the information be noted, the outstanding resolutions be actioned and progress be requested on those issues raised with other parties.

**10.208 Minutes of Special Meeting** held 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010 had been circulated.

**Resolved** That the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Parish Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010 be approved and signed as a true record.

**10.209 Planning Applications:** Details had been circulated of planning applications that had been determined under delegated authority from 24<sup>th</sup> August to 20<sup>th</sup> September and of applications received since the last meeting. Members commented that Ref 548 for the erection of replacement detached bungalow and detached outbuilding to rear at Bogma Cottage should be supported. This was currently a derelict eyesore and approval of the application would ensure a welcome addition to the street. Members discussed Ref 625 outline application for residential development of 9 houses seeking detailed approval of means of access at Lowfield Bungalow in detail. Concern was expressed in connection with the layout and alignment of the road; that 6 of the 9 dwellings would be served from a shared access which was a highway safety issue; the proximity of the proposed development to the village green; loss of open space; the potential impact of a precedent being set for further development on adjacent land; that this had been an amber site in the Housing Settlement Strategy and therefore not recommended as suitable for immediate development; it was not in line with proposals for affordable housing; and would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. Several members of the public were in attendance and expressed concern in connection with this application which would shield a row of attractive traditional cottages that had been built in 1902; put their properties at risk; change the view of the village; adversely affect their amenities and privacy; would result in them being surrounded and losing open aspects and that the area would be over-developed and result in loss of open space; and that the development would be overbearing and result in loss of daylight and sunlight to their properties. In view of the number of objections discussed, it was proposed and agreed that the County Council be requested to refer this matter to County Councillors by way of a Planning Committee, rather than it being dealt with under authority delegated to Officers. Members agreed that there were no comments in connection with four other planning applications.

**Resolved** (i) That the information on delegated authority decisions be noted; (ii) That the County Council be advised that the Parish Council supports application Ref 548 for the erection of replacement detached bungalow and detached outbuilding comprising garage, barns and tack room to rear at Bogma Cottage, Bogma Avenue, Coxhoe; (iii) That the County Council be advised that the

Parish Council objects to application Ref 625 – outline application proposing the residential development of 9 no. houses, seeking detailed approval of the means of access only at Lowfield Bungalow, Foundry Row, for the reasons stated at the meeting, and that the Parish Council request that the County Council handle the application by way of a Planning Committee; (iv) That the information on applications Ref 646 for the erection of single storey pitched roof extension to rear of existing dwelling at 14 Belgrave Avenue, Coxhoe; 669 for the erection of two storey detached dwellinghouse with accommodation in dwelling roof and garage roof at land to rear of Roslyn House, The Avenue, Coxhoe; Ref 659 for the erection of single storey pitched roof porch extension to side of dental practice at 2 Blackgate East, Coxhoe; and Ref 671 for the substitution of house type to include erection of conservatory to rear elevation of plot 52 at Commercial Road East; be noted and no objections be made.

Eight members of the public left the meeting.

**10.210 Items Requiring Council Resolution:** A Working Party had been held 8<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the excessive workload of Officers. The Clerk advised that current hours worked and unpaid amounted to 454 or 565 if unclaimed holidays were added. Some items agreed at the Working Party required a resolution of the Council. These included items that had previously agreed actions where it had been decided to handle these initially by way of a meeting of the Environment Committee. One such item was the additional Memorial Garden in Coxhoe. The Clerk advised that contact had been made with the Clerk to Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council. Their Clerk had advised that they were in the early stages of looking at designs and costs and would send information following a visit to Spennymoor as it was no longer intended to invite a Superintendent to their meeting. A Member suggested that Ferryhill's garden may be more along the lines required at Coxhoe. If the Environment Committee considered that working with Groundwork was the preferred option for moving progress on this then they would be able to arrange visits, etc. The Working Party had agreed that the Council be recommended to increase payment of the Clerk's working hours to 100 per month on consideration of the minimum hours recommended by NALC and SLCC guidance and of the huge workload of the proactive Council. It was agreed to defer consideration of a scheme of delegation unless this was considered to be necessary for effectiveness and for the Clerk and Chair to work together on prioritisation. Members proposed that Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30 p.m. be explored for a meeting of the Finance Committee to look at the budgets for the following year.

**Resolved** (i) That a meeting of the Environment Committee be convened for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 7.00 p.m. in Landsdowne House and that consideration be given at that meeting to the best way forward on improvements to St. Mary's Churchyard; regeneration of the Front Street at Coxhoe; potential for additional Christmas trees and lights; investigation of planter tub at The Grove and additional Memorial Garden in Coxhoe; Miners' Memorial and Greenscape and Medical Centre plans; additional hanging baskets and future bloom expectations; (ii) That from October 2010 the Clerk be paid for hours worked up to 100 per month to accord with NALC and SLCC guidance and additional workload; and that outstanding unpaid hours continue to be recorded for further review at the budget setting meeting in November 2010.

**10.211 Ratification of Expenditure agreed in principle at the last meeting:** The Clerk advised that it had been agreed at the last meeting that she, in consultation with the Chair, consider and agree an appropriate contribution to the payment for a mediator between the Quarrington Hill Village Partnership Management Committee and a group of residents of Quarrington Hill. As consideration of this matter included legal / professional advice and terms proposed for a contract it was **Resolved** That this matter be considered following the exclusion of the press and public.

**10.212 Christmas Tree Lights:** It had been agreed at the last meeting that the Vice-Chair make progress on Christmas lights in terms of procurement for the fifteen new lamps in the Front Street at Coxhoe and arrangements with the County Council to have these installed in 2010; and in terms of looking at possibilities and costs for other lights such as the Memorial Garden at the Village Hall at Coxhoe and the Community Centre at Quarrington Hill. Councillor Dunn had contacted three companies in connection with costs as Durham County Council had requested that the Parish Council purchase the lights. He circulated a report to Members that detailed the quotes received and risk management implications for various options and elaborated on this. Members discussed costs for 2010 and future years and stated that it would be beneficial to the villages to have Christmas lights.

**Resolved** (i) That the spiral lights be ordered from Blachere Illumination who had provided the lowest quote and that arrangements be made with the County Council for erection of these on the fifteen new street lamps in Coxhoe Front Street and subsequent removal, storage, checking and re-erection on an annual basis thereafter; (ii) That the Vice-Chair carry out further investigations into

costs and possibilities for having Christmas lights in the trees at the Memorial Garden outside the Village Hall in Coxhoe and for having a Christmas tree with lights inside the compound of Quarrington Hill Community Centre and report back to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

**10.213 Coxhoe Community Partnership:** The Clerk updated that further work had been carried out on uploading information to the new Council website. The Assistant Clerk announced that the website had gone live that day and that he would provide a demonstration on this at the end of the meeting. A Member who had viewed the site that afternoon commended the work done and stated that the site was fabulous. The Clerk advised that responses were still awaited on the possibility of hearing aid induction loop, assistance with broadband, and the possibility and costs of the Council insuring the History Group's equipment. A Member advised that broadband was available at £15.99 per month and currently had free installation. They suggested that the alarm providers at Landsdowne House be contacted to ascertain whether the alarm line could be used and if it couldn't that the Clerk look at having a phone line and broadband installed if assurance was provided from the County Council that the Parish Council could continue to use the offices at Landsdowne House. The Clerk advised that this would result in the office equipment budget being overspent for the year. Members noted this, advising that it would create a benefit in terms of efficiency and to the computer classes. The decision to have a joint meeting to move forward on the plans for the regeneration at Coxhoe Front Street had been superseded by it being agreed that this be one of the items to be discussed at the Environment Committee. Other organisations such as the County Council and Groundwork could be invited to future meetings once the Committee discussed how to move forward and prioritisation of the various issues. It was suggested that the Local Councils Liaison Officer could be approached at the appropriate time to advise the most relevant people to invite from the County Council.

The agenda for 1<sup>st</sup> September, minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> September and Partnership project updates for 31<sup>st</sup> August and 17<sup>th</sup> September had been circulated. The Clerk asked those present from the Partnership to refer back that the Parish Council had not objected to the planning application for the additional housing on the industrial area as set out in the latest set of minutes. The Parish Council was not even in receipt of the application as yet and had not yet considered it but merely listened to Hellens and Barratt Homes on the proposals at this stage. A Member provided an update on the Cycle Routes and advised that the Partnership had requested Hellens to assist with the publicity. The application for funding for Youth Room improvements had been refused as only one quotation had been provided due to the VAT savings provided by way of this being County Council property. A decision from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for £5,000 funding towards the Village Hall entrance refurbishment was awaited but they had advised that the application was all in order. It was anticipated that if that was completely successful then there would be no need to pay for project management. The Partnership representative advised that the works needed to be ordered in October to meet the provider and County Durham Foundation Trust timescales but funding approvals from CRT would not be known until November. If the project management could be included in the funding approvals then there would be a shortfall of £171.58. If project management could not be paid for from the funding then an additional £1522.63 would be required. The Parish Council had previously provided a letter to indicate that they would support the project up to £1,020 but had been made aware that it may be slightly more and it was considered that £2,000 may have been provided for in the budget. The side doors would not proceed if the CRT application for funding was not successful. This would result in a maximum shortfall of £2,700. The County Councillors advised that they could look to pay £500 towards this. It was clarified that this would leave the Parish Council paying a maximum of £2,200. The additional potential expenditure would be added to the next Parish Council meeting for ratification.

The Partnership representative expressed concern that the September edition of the Coxhoe Chronicle caused difficulties due to holidays. Three editions per year had been looked at but due to other requirements it would be the Christmas edition that would need to be lost. It was also a requirement of Quality Status that four newsletters per year be produced. The Vice-Chair of the Council advised that the Council and residents were extremely grateful to the Partnership for the production of the newsletters. He stated that he would assist in chasing content and pulling the information together.

Members agreed that the newsletters should continue at four per year, with each edition being no longer than twelve pages and with the September issue being a shorter edition issued at the middle to end of the month. The Chair of the Partnership asked that the County and Parish Councils bear the Partnership schemes in mind if any funding was available for the village, such as planning gain monies. Sourcing funding was becoming increasingly difficult and the Partnership had been advised that aggregates levy would be put to a single pot rather than being available for communities for local schemes. There were a lot of initiatives that could still be undertaken in Coxhoe to meet the aspirations of the Parish Plan and Coxhoe Community Partnership would continue to deliver but needed funds. He added that a letter had been received from the Member of Parliament advising that the Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust had advised that Coxhoe was not listed in the top ten areas of preference for a new Medical Practice but more would be known later in the year. A Member clarified that there were two parts to the scheme; with approval already received for a like for like replacement funded by the G.P. Practice, and the other part being community health facilities that would require funding from the PCT.

**Resolved** (i) That the information be noted; (ii) That further information from the County Council in connection with the possibility of the provision of broadband and a hearing aid induction loop at Landsdowne House be awaited; (iii) That the response of Zurich be awaited in connection with the possibility and cost of the History Group's equipment being added to the Council's insurance policy; (iv) That the alarm providers at Landsdowne House be contacted to ascertain whether the alarm line could be used and if it couldn't that the Clerk look at having a phone line and broadband installed if assurance was provided from the County Council that the Parish Council could continue to use the offices at Landsdowne House; (v) That the Parish Council agree to pay up to a maximum of £2,200 towards any shortfall in funding for the Village Hall doors, with this potential expenditure being added to the agenda for ratification at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

**10.214 Quarrington Hill Village Partnership:** Members had asked at the Working Party held 8<sup>th</sup> September to discuss workloads that this item be placed on the agenda for every Council meeting in case agendas and minutes were received from the Partnership. None had been received for the month.  
**Resolved** That the information be noted.

**10.215 Crowtrees Heritage Group:** The agenda for 16<sup>th</sup> September and minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> July had been circulated. Members stated that the Group should be made aware of Hellens' most recent proposals.  
**Resolved** That the information be noted.

**10.216 Remembrance Services:** An invitation had been circulated to a remembrance service at St. Mary's Church that was being held jointly with St. Andrew's Church. A letter from the County Council had also been circulated that requested information relating to all services and ceremonies. The Secretary of the Coxhoe Village Hall Association had ordered the wreath for the Coxhoe service on November 14<sup>th</sup> and Clive Lawson had ordered the wreath for the Quarrington Hill service on November 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**Resolved** That Councillors Dodsworth and Pounder lay the wreaths on behalf of the Parish Council at the Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill services respectively.

**10.217 Correspondence for consideration / decision:**

**10.217.1 County Durham Association of Local Councils:**

**a) Charter Review Group Meetings** were to be held to discuss how the Local Councils Charter had worked since its inception. Any views that Members wanted to be raised should be advised to the Clerk prior to the meeting to be held 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Resolved** That the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Councillor Pounder attend the Charter Review Meeting to be held at County Hall on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010.

**b) Durham County Council was arranging training for Parish and Town Councils on Section 106 Agreements** and the Community Infrastructure Levy. Each Council had been provided with up to four places.

**Resolved** That the Clerk book places for her, the Assistant Clerk and the Chair at Chester-le-Street on 4<sup>th</sup> November and for Councillor Pounder at Easington on 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**10.217.2 Other Correspondence:**

**c) McInerney Homes** had asked if the Council would like them to attend a meeting to discuss ideas for working together re Building Better Communities and ensuring that the needs of the community were met. Members commented that this organisation had carried out regeneration work that had resulted in social housing. It was considered that it would be beneficial to invite them to a meeting to hear their views and whether they could look at housing for senior citizens in the Parish.

**Resolved** That the Clerk provide McInerney Homes with the dates of the October and November Parish Council meetings and ask if a representative could attend one of those meetings (with a ten minute presentation followed by a ten minute question and answer session proposed).

**d) East Durham Leader** had offered to meet the Parish Council and community members to discuss their funding and what kind of projects this may be available for. Members agreed that this would be beneficial and information could be provided to other organisations once it was known what the funding could be used for.

**Resolved** That the Clerk provide East Durham Leader with the dates of the October and November Parish Council meetings and ask if a representative could attend one of those meetings (with a ten minute presentation followed by a ten minute question and answer session proposed).

**10.218 Correspondence for Information:** Items circulated for information during the month included EDRC Area Action Partnership – notes of bus trip of 27<sup>th</sup> July; EDRC AAP Board – agenda for 15<sup>th</sup> September and minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> July; Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10; Durham City Homes Update; Decisions on electoral boundary changes for County Durham put back; The Future of Standards for England and the Standards Framework; NALC E-Bulletins of 13<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> September; Durham Association News August 2010; EDRC AAP Local Councils Committee – agenda for 21<sup>st</sup> September and minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> July; NALC Events Bulletin of 18<sup>th</sup> August; Invitation to Durham Citizens Advice Bureau Annual General Meeting; Key Messages from the EDRC AAP Board meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> September; details of Durham County Council’s Dog Fouling Campaign; the Safe Durham Partnership’s Bonfire Night Strategy; a further update on the axing of Standards for England; details of free Local Council places on training at County Hall for Councillors on Community Leadership, Neighbourhoods and Community Development; Registered Trader Scheme; and the Royal British Legion’s Festival of Remembrance Concert. A Member asked that the Key Messages from the EDRC AAP Board meetings and minutes of such meetings be placed on the Parish noticeboards when space was available. Members discussed that the Limestone Linx would be extended to Sedgfield and Hardwick and the idea was to link up the whole area and look at access to schools as part of this as traffic congestion occurred outside many schools. Members expressed concern at the additional work that could be caused if the Ombudsman service was extended to Town and Parish Councils.

**Resolved** That the information be noted.

**10.219 Finance:**

**10.219.1 Budget Update:** A financial account summary had been circulated that showed the balance at the end of the last meeting and income and expenditure during the month and the balance at the end of the month. A budget summary had also been circulated showing that the Council was pretty accurate with budgets five months into the year. The variances were mostly unchanged from the previous month’s explanations.

**Resolved** That the information be noted.

10.219.2 **Accounts for payment:** Details of financial payments required for the month had been circulated, together with the month end bank balances figure after the expenditure and further income that had been received during the month.

**Resolved** That all payments presented be signed and paid:

<b>Creditor</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>£</b>
T P Gardens	Grass cutting and maintenance September	850.00
Total Business Group	Landsdowne House Copier copies Jul-Aug and Village Hall Copier contract Aug-Nov	96.29
Total Business Group	Paper, printer cartridges and stationery	86.74
Society of Local Council Clerks	SLCC Membership Subscription 2010	106.00
Durham City Centre Youth Project	Section 137 Contribution	50.00
3 Mobile	Broadband & Mobile August	33.66
M. Forster	Clerk Salary September and reimbursement postage	
Post Office Ltd.	HMRC – PAYE Tax and N.I. Contributions Jul-Sept	

10.219.3 **Applications for Grants and Donations:** Details had been circulated of a request for a donation from **Windlestone School** towards their Big Draw Event. The letter mentioned that the event would see the launch of a community project of a mosaic at the school and that this would be a fabulous day for the residents of Chilton, Ferryhill and Spennymoor.

**Resolved** That as the event was outside the Parish area, no donation be made.

**10.220 Parish Plan:** A Member had requested that this be placed as a standard item on every agenda. Articles had been placed in the newsletters and on the new website advising the community that Parish Plan 2 was about to commence and requesting their views on what they would like to see included, their priorities and how they would like to be involved. Work would start on Parish Plan 2 prior to the end of the year.

**Resolved** That the information be noted; the Clerk investigate whether it was possible to have a separate email account set up for the Parish Plan; and the Vice-Chair email a copy of the previous Plan timeline to the Clerk.

**10.221 Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at 6.45 p.m. in Landsdowne House.

**10.222 Exempt Information – Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public:**

**Resolved** That in view of the confidential nature of the following items, the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1960.

**10.223 Co-op and Village Hall Car Parks:**

**10.224 Sanderson Street:** Councillor D. Smith **declared an interest** in this item and left the meeting during its consideration.

**10.225 Ratification of Expenditure agreed in principle at the last meeting.** Councillor D. Smith re-entered the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

**Signed on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010 as a true record of the meeting:**

**Cllr. P. Dodsworth (Chairman)**

**Cllr. S. Dunn (Vice Chairman)**