

Corsenside Parish Council Annual General Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th May 2021
Corsenside Parish Hall at 7.30pm

Present: - **Councillors:** C. Hamilton (Chair), C. Hawman, A. Wilson & S. Smith, **Clerk:** K. Traill **Members of the Public:** J. Fenwick

Opening Remarks:- Cllr C. Hamilton welcomed all to the meeting and said how good it was to see everyone in person once again. Cllr C. Hamilton reminded everyone that the High Court had ruled that council meetings, including Parish councils, should no longer be held via virtual means and that this meeting was being held on a Thursday to comply with the regulations which state that a meeting must be held within fourteen days of an election to allow for formal acceptance into office declarations to be completed.

1) Apologies for absence: - Cllr A. Harding & J. Northwood

2) Election of Chair & Vice Chair: - Cllr C. Hamilton explained to all that as the meeting was our Annual General Meeting that a Chair and Vice Chair had to be elected. Cllr C. Hamilton stated that as he had previously held the position of Chair, he would now hand the proceedings over to Cllr C. Hawman. Cllr C. Hawman wished to thank Cllr C. Hamilton for his role as Chair over the last year. Cllr C. Hamilton said he was willing to act as Chair, once again if other councillors wished this but was equally happy if they wished to propose someone else. Cllr C. Hawman proposed Cllr C. Hamilton & Cllr A. Wilson seconded the proposal. Cllr C. Hamilton accepted the position. Cllr C. Hamilton explained that for over a year CPC had operated without a Vice Chair and that for best practice this position needed to be filled. Cllr C. Hamilton explained that the Vice Chair role was not a demanding role however should Cllr C. Hamilton be unable to attend a meeting then the Vice Chair could step up. Cllr C. Hawman said she would be willing to take on the position, Cllr S. Smith proposed Cllr C. Hawman, and Cllr A. Wilson seconded the proposal. Cllr C. Hawman accepted the position of Vice Chair.

3) New Declarations of Interest & Acceptance into Office forms: - All Councillors have completed their new Declaration of Interest forms for the clerk to pass on to NCC. All Councillors signed the necessary Acceptance into Office forms and the clerk signed as witnessing the signatures.

4) Covid – Meeting Safety Measures: - All safety measures as advised by the Government and as from the parish hall hire agreements, were adhered to by all councillors and the clerk. Cllr C. Hamilton informed all that KT had sought advice from the Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding the legislation around the need to hold an Annual Parish Meeting and safe conduct of parish council meetings. NALC had advised that at the present time members of the public should be discouraged from attending parish council meetings until Government measures were further eased. NALC had advised that this could be in the form of a point on the agenda where councillors voted to exclude any members of the public. Cllr C. Hamilton stated that CPC had noted on the agenda that any members of the public wishing to bring an item to the attention of councillors do so by initially contacting the clerk or a councillor who would bring the matter to the attention of the full parish council on their behalf. As such CPC will hold a APM later in the year, (perhaps in July) when it is safe and restrictions have been further relaxed to allow us to do so. All councillors agreed that this continue to be the stance CPC takes until the advice changes.

5) Councillor Vacancies: - Cllr C. Hamilton informed all that because of the recent elections CPC had 5 candidates who were uncontested and duly installed therefore leaving 2 positions still to fill. Cllr C. Hamilton explained that usually parish councils would have to advertise the councillor vacancies and wait a set period of time. If less than 10 parishioners contact NCC to request an election, then CPC would be free to co-opt a

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suitable candidate. If more than 10 parishioners contacted NCC regarding the vacancy, then CPC would be obliged to hold an election. Cllr C. Hamilton however informed all that he had asked the clerk to contact NALC and the elections office to seek advice given that we had just gone through the election process. NALC confirmed that as we have just had an election, CPC are not obliged to follow normal procedures and that we were free to co-opt 2 councillors straight away as any parishioner who had wanted to stand could have put themselves forward at the elections. Cllr C. Hamilton introduced J. Fenwick as a parishioner interested in becoming a councillor. J. Fenwick introduced herself and talked about her experience and what she hoped to offer to the parish council. J. Fenwick was then asked to leave the parish hall while councillors discussed her suitability to fill one of the positions. All councillors agreed that J. Fenwick would make an excellent addition to the PC. J. Fenwick returned to the meeting and accepted the position as Corsenside Parish Councillor. KT will liaise with Cllr J. Fenwick making sure she has all the information she requires.

Cllr C. Hamilton also informed all that there was another potential parishioner interested in filling the last position on the PC however due to illness they had been unable to attend tonight's meeting. KT will continue to seek advice from NALC to see if CPC are free to co-opt immediately at the June meeting should the parishioner still be interested.

6) Code of Conduct (Declarations of Interests): -Cllrs C. Hamilton in respect of The Gun at Ridsdale & the Corsenside Flood Resilience team, Cllr C. Hawman in respect of Revitalising Redesdale, North Tyne Youth and The Gun at Ridsdale, Cllr A. Wilson in respect of The Gun at Ridsdale & The Green Rigg Steering Group & Cllr S. Smith in respect of Bellingham Middle School Parents, Teachers and Community Association & the Corsenside Flood Resilience team.

7) Opportunities for members of the public to raise issues: None raised.

8) Minutes of the Corsenside Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 1st of March 2021: Signed as a true and accurate record.

9) Matters arising from the minutes not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda: KT informed all that as a result of discussions at the March meeting, she had purchased 16 small rigid dog fouling signs. KT explained that she hoped to source some suitable wooden stakes to fix the signs to and that these could be located throughout the parish at spots known to be troublesome. KT also informed all that she had emailed NCC asking if CPC could locate a dog fouling bin on the corner of the West Woodburn Lonnen, she was awaiting a response. Cllr C. Hawman wished to state that she had noticed a considerable improvement to the issue of dog fouling in Ridsdale.

10) Notification of any other business for discussion, at the chairman's discretion, under item 25 below: - Cllr C. Hamilton & KT had matters to discuss.

11) County Councillors Report: - None

12) Update on adopting & signing of new policies, regulations & risk assessments: - KT informed all that she had once again reviewed the Financial Regulation policy in keeping with good financial practices and coinciding with the audit. KT issued all councillors with suggested changes to the following paragraphs so that the regulation was more in keeping with our small PC – 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8, 5.2, 5.6 & 5.7. All were happy with KT's revised wording. All original wording is contained within the regulation in the appendices and any alterations are clearly pointed out within the document so that both the original and revised wording can be easily viewed.

13) Action point list: - 91. Traffic calming measures West Woodburn A68 – KT updated councillors on traffic calming measures. KT informed all that she had spoken with M. Chilvers of Otterburn & Rochester PC regarding sharing a ANPR speed camera. MC had stated that they were unable to progress any further at

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present as Northumbria Police had stated that the ANPR system was not something they would authorise as they had concerns over the data storage and vandalism. MC had stated that many other police forces have authorised this system and the data is not accessible to everyone, it works in the same way as the camera's used by voluntary members of the community, in that data of speeding vehicles is stored and given over to the police who issue warning letters. MC is continuing to address this issue and will keep KT informed.

KT explained to all that she had received 2 quotes for interactive speed signs to replace the 2 school signs in West Woodburn which are to be removed by NCC as they no longer meet legislation now that the school is closed. KT stated that the Ray Wind Farm Community Foundation application process was currently only open until the end of May. Councillors have asked KT to get an application in before the deadline so that CPC will have a decision sometime in the summer.

95. Goal Posts & Nets West Woodburn – Cllr C. Hawman explained that it had proved difficult to find a goal post supplier who would also install the goal posts. As a result, she had spoken with some colleagues who had stated that the installation process was relatively easy and that they had used local farmers to help install theirs. Installation involved digging a deep hole and concreting the sockets in the ground, the suppliers provide specifications. Cllr C. Hawman discussed the possibility of just getting one set of sockets rather than 2 sets to rotate the goal posts as previously discussed. Cllr C. Hawman felt that the goal posts were not currently used enough to cause the grass to wear. If this did become a problem, we could remove the goal posts for a short amount of time or order a second set then. Cllr C. Hawman stated that the total cost of 2 goal posts including fixtures, fittings and VAT was £1314. KT to enquire with CPC's landscaper to get a quote to carry out the works. Once CPC has someone in place to fix the posts, CPC will place an order.

96. Lonnen West Woodburn – Nothing further to report.

97. Armstrong Street Speeding Traffic – KT stated that after the March meeting she had contacted NCC Highways Programme stating that speeding traffic was still a significant issue and asking whether initially a couple of speed humps could be installed to help with the problem in the short term. KT explained that she had received an email from R. McKenzie of NCC who stated that there were regulations in place governing the installation of speed humps so this would need to be investigated properly and a design scheme drawn up. RM stated that NCC did have some capacity in the programme from April to carry out some initial design work and that if a solution could be agreed upon, they could consider allocating some budget for it the following year. KT responded asking RM to go ahead with the initial design works. KT informed all that she had spoken with RM to see if these works had begun. RM had stated that it was now with the design team who had to be given 3 months to complete a design, however he had had discussions with them so was aware that things were underway. Councillors asked KT to thank RM for the work being carried out on this issue however to stress that residents and councillors are becoming increasingly concerned about the risks speeding traffic poses to residents and especially children. KT is to ask that Armstrong Street be reduced to 20m.p.h. Councillors discussed immediate measures that could be put in place to help combat speeding traffic. Unfortunately, CPC & councillors are bound by certain rules and regulations and can only act within the correct legislation. Any parishioner with concerns should raise these with their local County Councillor.

14) Play Area – West Woodburn: - Cllr C. Hamilton explained that he had carried out a play area inspection and that all appeared well other than some missing screw caps which do not pose a safety issue and which Cllr C. Hamilton is able to replace himself. Cllr C. Hamilton explained that he is not in a position to carry out safety inspections as often as he once did however CPC have the play area ROSPA inspected annually by a certified

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body and have fixed signs up asking that members of the public report any issues to the clerk with contact details included.

15) Wind Power Stations & BANTR update: - KT read out an update on behalf of Cllr A. Harding which included the following points – The Community Interest Company (C.I.C) is still concentrating on awarding Covid alleviation grants until the end of the grant year in June. The emphasis has been to try and assist local businesses and individuals to continue during and after the various lockdowns. Cllr A. Harding stated that they are expecting an influx of cash in early July and that they hoped some kind of normal service would be resumed. Cllr A. Harding stated that when restrictions allowed the C.I.C would hold at least one public meeting to publicise and glean feedback from the local community and that any suggestions to help local businesses would also be gratefully received. Lastly Cllr A. Harding stated that Vattenfall's recent criticism was that the CIC board was not diverse enough and as a result the CIC have been trying to recruit other member's with very little success. The successful volunteer will be a full Director of the Board, anyone interested in this position please contact the clerk who will pass contact details onto the relevant person.

KT informed all that she had received an update regarding BANTR and that Corsenside was moving onto the next phase although unfortunately were still 30 vouchers short.

16. Parish Hall: - KT informed all that she had received word from the parish hall committee in April informing CPC that the parish hall would hold it's AGM as soon as were practical and invite CPC to appoint a trustee to sit on the board. Cllr C. Hamilton explained that for some years now CPC had not been represented on the board of trustees despite numerous attempts to recruit someone. Cllr C. Hamilton briefly discussed what this may involve and asked new councillors to consider the position or to please mention it to someone they thought may be suitable for the role.

17) Six Parishes Youth Engagement Project: - Cllr C. Hamilton explained the history behind the creation of the Six parishes Youth Engagement Project for the new incoming Councillors. Cllr C. Hawman explained how initially CPC were intending on applying for a grant on behalf of the 6 parishes which would pay for the RTC and North Tyne Youth to carry out a study on what barriers children faced in accessing facilities. Cllr C. Hawman explained that the grant giving authority had previously awarded grants to NTY and therefore preferred that NTY, who were now a group of their own, separate from the RTC, apply for the grant themselves. The grant application was successful and NTY have completed the initial study. Cllr C. Hawman stated that NTY had now built into their budget any projects which have been created as a result of the study, such as travelling pop up youth clubs and various summer events. Cllr C. Hawman is happy that as far as CPC involvement is concerned, CPC has completed this action and it can be removed from the agenda. All agreed.

18) Community Volunteers & Spending: - Nothing to report. KT stated that there was a list of things needed doing around the parish however she felt like she always asked the same people and did not want them to feel obliged. KT stated that she would have to reconnect with those who had previously said they would volunteer. Cllr S. Smith suggest putting a note on the Clarion page just listing the things that needed doing and people may volunteer for a particular task. Cllr S. Smith also suggested sticking a list up on the noticeboards especially outside the shop as people were currently more likely to read these notices. KT to action this.

19) Revitalising Redesdale & Heritage Fund update: - For the benefit of the new councillors, Cllr C. Hawman explained that RR had been a big strategic bid encompassing the whole of Redesdale. The environment and

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heritage in the area were at the heart of the bid with the aim to revitalise the area for those living there and to encourage visitors to stop and explore Redesdale rather than simply passing through. Cllr C. Hawman stated that there was upwards of 20 projects of various sizes within RR which included events and projects such as wildlife, wild-flower, archaeology, nature, heritage etc.

Cllr C. Hawman stated that the last RR meeting had been in March with the next meeting being held mid-May. Cllr C. Hawman informed all that Bruce Wilkinson was now the new manager and Katie Bridger was the new project officer. Cllr C. Hawman explained that RR had introduced a new under £500 grant which applicants can apply for at any time. Other heritage grants between £500-£2000 run on a 3-month cycle with the next application window opening in September and running until summer 2022.

20) Environment agency Flood Resilience: - Cllrs C. Hamilton & S. Smith, wardens on the Corsenside Flood Resilience team, updated all on the progress made so far. Cllrs stated that a meeting involving 4 wardens and The Environment Agency representative, met in March to discuss the issues faced in Corsenside and to complete a plan which can be adhered to in the event of any alert issued. Cllrs C. Hamilton & S. Smith explained that P. Sinclair was the lead warden and although the group was not yet fully operational, they did have the alert system in place and a process to follow in the event of such an alert. The group had discussed the issues caused when the Bellingham road flooded and how usually it was drivers from outside the area, who were unfamiliar with the roads, who generally took the risks and got stranded. The group discussed interactive signs being located at the Bellingham end of the road to warn drivers and give them the opportunity to use an alternative route. Wardens would also look to alert the main holiday lets in the area for example the Kielder lodges, so that holiday makers can be made aware of the situation before they set off. Cllrs discussed the road raising scheme which was due to be implemented last year on the Bellingham road. This cannot go ahead at the present time however NCC can look at improving the drainage to help alleviate the issue to some extent. Wardens will soon receive formal training from The Environment Agency and will all meet again to review the plan on the 30th of September.

21) Grit & Grit Bins: - KT stated that she had contacted A. Olive of NCC 5 times via email and called his mobile, however had been unable to get through. KT stated that she had also contacted one of A. Olive's assistants in the hope they would be able to respond. KT had forwarded on an historic email regarding numbering the Ridsdale grit bins and a NCC list of grit bins they were responsible for in 2014 which included the 2 green bins in Ridsdale. CPC believes that this is sufficient evidence to prove that the bins were, and have always been, the responsibility of NCC and not previously purchased by CPC. Cllrs have asked KT to email A. Olive stating that CPC assume that after all evidence they have provided and NCC's lack of response, that the grit bins will continue to be filled free of charge by NCC.

22) Planning Matters: - a) For decision – Planning ref: 21/01236/VARYCO Variation of condition 2 (approved plans on approved application 20/01645/FUL to allow change in orientation of holiday cottage. Cllrs stated that they had been unable to view this application online as the NCC page would not open. KT to inform NCC Planning that CPC is unable to comment as a result of this issue.

b) Decisions from NCC – a) – None

23) Other correspondence: - i. Treescape – KT read out the e-mail received from NCC regarding a grant NCC were hoping to apply for in order to purchase trees. PC's with any open spaces that may benefit from planting trees could get in touch with NCC regarding the scheme. Cllrs discussed this and felt that there were no areas within the parish which were suitable ii. NALC – KT read out the email which had been sent by NALC to all local PC's in the North Tyne & Redesdale constituency requesting nominations for a representative to join the NALC County Committee, iii. Letters of resignation – Cllr C. Hamilton read out the 2 letters of resignation received,

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one from C. Currie and one from G. Scott. Cllr C. Hamilton discussed the time all previous Cllrs had dedicated to CPC over the years. It is hoped that when it is safe to do so CPC can thank these parishioners more formally.

24) Finances: - a) Invoices for payment – i. C. Mowatt Landscaping - £108.

b) Bank Balance - £14,898.80

c) Monies received – £3875.00 (first instalment of precept)

d) Final budget 2020-2021 – Councillors had viewed the final budget in preparation for the meeting. KT noted that at the meeting in November 2020 she had previously overestimated the reclaimable VAT for the year ending 2020-2021 and that the actual reclaimable amount was £2435.47. Although there were overspends within some sections of the budget, mainly due to unforeseen circumstances, CPC equally had sections where there had been underspending. In total, once grant spending had been deducted and the VAT claimed back, CPC's total expenditure was well within the original predicted amount.

e) New banking signatories – KT stated that banking signatories would need to be updated however as signatures are needed for each change and as CPC had such tight measures in place to avoid any misuse of funds, all agreed KT should wait until a 7th councillor had been co-opted.

f) Election Expenses – All councillors who took part in elections have handed completed election expenses forms over to the clerk who will post them off to NCC.

g) Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020-2021

i. Internal review of Financial Procedure – review of effectiveness of the system of internal controls, banking mandate, asset register recording. See point 12 above – review of Financial Regs, Cllrs read over the banking mandate and financial procedures that CPC had in place. KT stated that the banking mandate would need a small update once all new councillors were in place. All agreed that measures in place were still valid and sufficient to safe-guard CPC's finances.

ii. To consider and agree any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor in 2020. There were no points of significance made by the external auditor for the audit year 2019-2020. The external auditor made a comment regarding the internal auditor being unable to comment on the date of the exercise of public rights however this was merely a note. This year KT will take photographic evidence to prove the dates set are adhered to.

iii. To consider the Annual Internal Audit Report - KT stated that our internal auditor had audited CPC's finances for 2020-2021 and was happy to sign these off. The internal auditor had made a couple of suggestions regarding the recording of VAT on our asset register and recommended CPC claim for VAT on all qualifying goods even if those goods are purchased by an individual and the funds claimed back from CPC.

iv. To approve the Annual Governance Statement section 1 – Cllr C. Hamilton read out each statement including what a 'yes' answer would mean. Each 'yes' box was ticked after all councillors agreed that CPC met each statement.

v. To approve the Accounting Statement section 2 - This was previously completed by the Responsible Financial Officer (K. Traill) and sign by the RFO prior to the meeting. All councillors had previously been sent all financial spreadsheets to which the accounting statement figures had derived from. All were happy that the RFO had completed boxes 1 – 11 correctly.

vi. To confirm and approve the Certification of Exemption – KT announced the total income for 2020-2021 and the total expenditure. As both were under the £25,000 mark, CPC were free to certify themselves as exempt from needing an external audit. All councillors agreed that CPC met the criteria to certify themselves as exempt.

vii. The Chairman and clerk sign the Annual Governance Statement and the Chairman signs the Accounting Statements – Signed, dated and minute point recorded.

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viii. RFO to set the period for the exercise of public rights – The RFO set the period of the exercise of public rights as the 14th of June – 23rd of July as suggested by the external auditors. KT will ensure that all necessary statements are displayed both on noticeboards and on CPC's website on the 13th of June and removed the 24th of July.

ix. The Certificate of Exemption is signed by the Chairman & the RFO – Signed and dated. KT to send a copy to the external auditor and upload all relevant audit paperwork onto CPC's website.

25) Matters for discussion at the Chairman's discretion: - KT stated that she had noticed the damaged sign at the Ridsdale/Knowsgate junction had now been replaced. Councillors however believe the cattle grid signs to Hindhaugh have not yet been repaired. KT informed all that the emergency food parcels were now stored at her house. KT stated that she had taken out any out-of-date food and had donated any food that was due to go out of date in the next month, to the North Tyne Food Bank. Cllr C. Hamilton informed all that trail improvement works had begun at the Foulaw's Community Forest by Forestry England and would hopefully be completed by the autumn of this year. Cllr C. Hamilton had met earlier in the year with their representatives and discussed measures to make the walk more accessible and to avoid the worst of the damp ground. The information board had now also been renewed. Cllr C. Hamilton wished to thank Forestry England for their willingness, speediness and enthusiasm to involve and engage with the public in carrying out the repair works.

26) Next Meeting: - Monday 7th June 2021 – CPC will continue to monitor advice and guidance from the Government and the Northumberland Association of Local Councils and decide nearer the time as to the location/type of meeting to hold.

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