



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF**  
**OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE**  
**THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.**

**1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

Cllrs Mr A Wake (Chair), Mrs D Rowe (Vice Chair), Mrs M Duncan, Mr J Tate, Mr E Brown and Mrs A Bell  
**County Councillor** A. Batey  
**Other Attendees** - Parish Clerk Lisa Blondrage, Mr D Nichol (OCA), Mrs Dodd and Mr Howlett.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

CC's Wood & Pringle

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON AGENDA**

None Declared.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – JANUARY 2022**

Previous minutes were agreed by the Parish Council.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE, REPRESENTATION FROM RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS**

Mrs Dodd asked if there was an update on the dim street lights on Cromarty. CC Batey to follow up.

Mrs Dodd asked if there were any further updates on the traffic survey that was carried out in September 2021? CC Batey said the outcome was that there is an increase from 23k vehicles per day to 31k vehicles per day and that the report is imminent. CC Batey added that since the traffic survey was carried out, there has been more accidents on the A693 Sausage about. Mrs Dodd said she requested the information from CC Wood but has not received it. Mrs Dodd asked what was happening with the traffic calming through the village. CC Batey said she was waiting for recommendations from DCC Highways. CC Batey added that the County Councillors were working with the 3 Parish Councils in Pelton Ward regarding traffic calming schemes.

Mr Howlett said CC Wood was looking at the reduction in bus services and asked if there was an update? CC Batey said the Ouston bus services were reinstated. Cllr Bell said the bus services returning from Newcastle had been moved from Eldon Square to the streets and therefore there are no shelters in Newcastle for bus users. CC Batey said she will contact Go Northeast.

Mr Howlett said the former Head Mistress of Ouston Infant School has sadly passed away. He added that she was well known in the community. The PC passed on their condolences to her family.

The PC received two separate emails regarding an allotment tenant throwing stones at a cat. Cllr Brown will said he will speak to the tenant informing them that cats have the right to roam.

A resident and an allotment tenant informed the PC that a section of the external allotment fence has fallen over due to high winds. LB contacted Sam Davies Property Maintenance and he said he will install 3 new posts for £160. Cllr Brown asked if Sam could check the full perimeter fence for damage. The PC agreed it should be checked and repaired if necessary.

Cllr Tate had been contacted by a concerned resident regarding a neighbour's conifers restricting the light into their house and also the roots growing into their garden which has resulted in raising their paving stones. The paving stones are a dangerous trip hazard. CC Batey will investigate due to the roots causing a trip hazard.

Dave Nichol introduced himself as the Treasurer of Ouston Community Association. He informed the PC that the board has been restructured and formed sub groups which are more proactive and productive. Mr Nichol said there is 4 years left on the lease and this is restricting funding applications. Mr Nichol said the funding OCA was awarded has paid for the new reception window, refurbishment of men's toilet (AAP grant), loft access, fire safety improvements, new internal noticeboards and a new hall floor. Future projects include roof repairs and the resurfacing of the car park. Mr Nichol is currently trying to secure funding for a part time Caretaker. Mr Nichol said the board are reviewing and increasing room hire costs. LB commended Mr Nichol and said his commitment to sourcing funding for the Centre has completely turned the Centre around. Mr Nichol encouraged the centre users to become members of OCA.



## **6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

CC Batey said there will be a 3% rise in Council Tax. This is due to a rise in the Adult Social Care precept. The Police and Fire Authority precepts are also increasing.

CC Batey said the damaged light on Ouston Bank has been removed. The other lights leading to Station Lane are also off. LB confirmed the lights are OPC's as we pay for the lights down Ouston Bank and along Station Lane within our Parish Boundary. CC Batey will report.

Urpeth has been affected by power cuts and a burst water main which resulted in Baytree Terrace being partially closed.

The refurbishment of Ross Park has begun.

Drainage engineers have carried out initial works at Ross Park playing fields to improve drainage. More work is required. CC Batey will keep us informed.

CC Batey said the Police have been working with local farmers regarding incidents of antisocial behaviour. There have been reports of illegal shooting and offroad bikes on farmland.

Cllr Rowe said despite LB and CC Pringle reporting the state of Turnberry bus stop, it still has not been cleaned. CC Batey said she will report.

## **7. EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR OUSTON PARISH**

Representatives from the three Parishes attended the meeting to discuss the plan for Pelton Division. CC Batey proposed one plan for Pelton Division which will include sub plans for the three Parishes. The PC's agreed.

CC Batey said there will be a core plan with different scenarios with core members. There will be a specific action plan for severe snow and ice on Ouston Bank.

Mr Nichol confirmed to use the kitchen, volunteers must hold an NVQ Level 2 in Food Hygiene. CC Batey said Cornerstones in Chester Le Street hold free courses. CC Batey added that there are free online courses. LB said she would print and laminate certificates.

## **8. 2022 PARISH EVENTS AND SUB GROUPS**

### **8.1 Queens Platinum Jubilee 4<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

For the Queens Platinum Jubilee 4<sup>th</sup> June 2022 LB asked, are we lighting a Beacon? The PC said no due to fire safety restrictions.

The Jubilee flower bed is now in place. The PCs thanked Cllrs Bell, Brown and Tate who have planted the roses. LB to source a short plaque. Cllrs Bell and Brown to source bulbs with the £100 funding that was awarded by the County Councillors via the AAP.

Cllr Bell suggested a celebration in the Community Centre. Mr Nichol confirmed the OCA were planning a celebration and asked Cllr Bell to contact Claire Marshall (an OCA Board Member). The Jubilee sub group members are Cllrs Bell, Brown, Duncan and Tate. Cllrs Brown, Duncan and Tate are to attend the next OCA board meeting to discuss Jubilee Event proposals.

### **8.2 Best Allotment & Runner up 2022**

Cllr Brown said the Best Allotment and Runner Up will be judged from Spring through the growing season by Cllrs Bell, Brown and Tate. Results will be announced in September / October 2022.

### **8.3 Best Residential Garden & Runner up 2022**

The Best Garden and Runner Up Competition judged by Cllrs Duncan and Rowe from Spring though to Winter. Results will be announced later in the year.



#### **8.4 Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday is 13<sup>th</sup> November. LB to draft order of service in September / October.

#### **8.5 Christmas Tree Lighting & Lights Competition 2022**

The Christmas Tree Lighting Event will take place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. May be to coincide with a Christmas Event in the Community Centre. The Christmas Lights competition 2022 will be judged mid-December.

### **9 MEMORIAL GARDEN AND VILLAGE TUBS**

Cllr Brown said he will propose a rota at the next OAA meeting, where OAA volunteers will cover the maintenance of the Memorial Garden on a regular basis. Cllr Brown and the Chair of OAA have planted some free bulbs and seeds for the garden which include Cala Lilies and red Poppies which will flower later in the year around Remembrance weekend. Cllrs Bell and Brown planted some Snowdrops last year which have grown. Mrs Dodd said she will donate some Primrose plants. Cllrs Tate and Wake asked if we needed a new flag. LB said the bottom loop has frayed and snapped but she will repair it as it is only 18 months old.

LB asked if we are keeping the tubs. The PC agreed we will keep them until they split and dispose of them but not replace them. Mrs Dodd asked if she needed permission to plant the three, she has adopted. The PC said she did not need permission and thanked her for looking after them. Cllr Brown said the tubs can be planted with bedding early Summer. Date TBC next meeting.

### **10 PROPOSED MEETING DATES FOR 2022/23**

The PC agreed the meeting dates for 2022/23 are:

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July  
Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October  
Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

### **11 NEWSLETTER**

Cllr Rowe said she has information to draft the newsletter. OCA to send some information to be included. The PC agreed it's better to have Spring and Autumn Newsletters to give residents notice of events.

### **12 CLERKS REPORT**

The new Noticeboards are nearly complete but Signtech are still waiting for a part for the boards.

Memorial Garden Paving update. LB asked Greenfinger's to inspect and repair the paving area as there are now at least 3 loose paving stones. Greenfingers were on site repairing the stones on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

LB will meet with the Litter Picker to carry out their appraisal in April.

Cllr Brown said DCC pest control have not been consistent and we are not getting the service we are paying for. The Operatives have changed several times and are not passing on the gate key to their colleagues. LB asked for a quote from Kevin Walker the previous Pest Controller. The PC agreed although he is more expensive the level of service is better, with 26 visits proposed on a Saturday morning. The PC's agreed to award Kevin Walker the 2022/23 contract.

LB said several tenants have reported the OAA side gates being left wide open. As stated in the tenancy rules 6.3 Tenants must ensure that the gates are locked at all times after they enter and leave the allotment site. Failure to do this is a breach of the agreement and security of the site. LB to display notices instructing tenants to close and lock gates. Other gates are being closed but not locked and the OAA gates are left open on a regular basis. It's both gates so it is possibly a vehicle user that it doing it. The PC said **all gates must be closed and locked at all times.**



LB was contacted by a representative from Heritage 100. The project he is working on is called Heritage 100 – 100 Walks 100 Stories. The first walk is in Beamish but they'd like to put a one in and around Ouston. They explained that to do this they needed the help of local people to help create the walk and to tell a story of the walk. The PC agreed they were welcome to come to the next meeting and explain more about the project.

### **13 FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **13.4 Monthly Accounts and February invoices.**

The expenditure for February was reviewed and agreed.

### **14 ITEMS TO FOLLOW UP NEXT MEETING**

The February meeting agenda will include:

- Platinum Jubilee Event
- Big Spring Clean
- Memorial Garden & Tubs
- Newsletter
- Heritage 100 Walks Presentation

**The next Parish meeting will be held on THURSDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022 business to discuss will be as per Agenda.  
The Parish Council meeting closed at 21.01 hours.**

#### **APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING**

102019	L Blondrage	February pay
102020	L Blondrage	February HWA
102021	D Johnston	February pay
101022	HMRC	February PAYE
101023	CDALC	Allotment Training