DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 24TH AUGUST 2023 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chair Mr A Wake, Mrs. A Bell, Mrs. M Duncan and Mr. J Tate
County Councillors –Mrs. A Batey, Mr. P Pringle and Mr. D. Wood
Other Attendees – Lisa Blondrage - Parish Clerk, OCA Board Member Mr. D. Hindmarsh, Resident Mr. B Howlett.

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 20TH JULY 2023

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Mr Howlett said Neighbourhood Watch and No Cold Calling Zones are no longer being supported by DCC. He added that No Cold Calling Zones used to be supported by Trading Standards but it is being phased out. Mr Howlett said the No Cold Calling Zones are not being funded and he is currently funding Neighbourhood Watch and No Cold Calling Zones from his own money. Mr Howlett said the Police have been reluctant to support the scheme and the No Cold Calling Zones advise companies not to call, but it is not illegal. CC Batey said it is difficult for DCC as some streets are NCC Zones but others aren't, it is not consistent. It is not enforceable so the Police wont back it or fund it. Mr Howlett said the residents are happy to be part of the Neighbourhood Watch area but he receives little support from residents when he needs volunteers to form Committees. Cllr Wake asked Mr Howlett to compile a list of volunteers and report back to the PC. LB to email DCC and ask NCCZ about postering.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

CC Wood presented the County Councillors report. For more information on the CC report please contact the County Councillors.

CC Wood said DCC told him they will remove the weeds from the two alley ways raised at the Parish Assembly by a concerned resident.

CC Wood said the CCs are waiting for an update from Highways as the CCs would like to apply for AAP Towns and Villages funding for the Pelton Division Traffic Calming Scheme. He said hopefully Highways Officers will be able to attend the October meeting.

CC Batey said the proposed BMX track start date is 29th August but no cutting back has started yet. CC Batey to follow up.

CC Batey said it is a daily occurrence that an off-road bike is riding through Ouston. She asked residents to be vigilant and report any information to her.

7. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

7.1 Information from the OCA Board

Mr Hindmarsh said the OCA Fun time Fridays have been a huge success. They have all sold out and there has been a lot of positive feedback from attendees.

7.2 106 Funding Application - Roof

The PC unanimously agreed to support the OCA 106 Funding Application for the roof replacement. LB to email Planning.

Mr Hindmarsh said the land lease is expiring in two years. The Asset Transfer is agreed in principle but there is an issue with the drains. Mr Hindmarsh said the drainage issue is on the front the building and is due to tree roots ingressing into the drains. CC Batey added that the willow trees were causing issues with drainage from the men's toilets. CC Batey said DCC were asked to cut the trees a few years ago but they did not maintain them. DCC are now saying the trees belong to the OCA and it is their responsibility. Now the trees are a lot bigger so will cost a lot more money. Cllr Duncan asked how much it would cost for drain repairs. Mr Hindmarsh said the OCA had not asked for any estimates yet.

LB to write to DCC, supporting the Asset Transfer of the Community Centre.

Mr Hindmarsh asked if the OPC Annual Donation will be given soon. LB said it was being issued after the meeting. Mr Hindmarsh added Paul McFarling is the new OCA Chair.

8. ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Plot 1 and Plot 30 – Re Inspection

The Allotment Sub Committee re inspected Plot 1 and Plot 30 as they failed the previous two inspections. LB sent both tenants an email and a letter sent 1st Class Signed For, terminating the tenancies.

Plot 1 sent an appeal letter explaining that his livestock had escaped and destroyed his plants. The tenant explained the plans and how they would like the PC to give them six months to sort the plot out. Cllr Bell said the tenant had a lot of work to do. However, the PC had previously given two other tenants an extension to tidy and cultivate their plots. The PC discussed and agreed that that if their plot has made a substantial improvement by the next full site inspection on Thursday 7th September, they will give them a six-month extension. The PC specified that the extension will only be given if the inspectors think the plot has substantially improved. LB to email the tenant.

LB has had no communication from Plot 30. CC Pringle said the tenant has moved out of the village and LB said was aware and she had their new address.

8.2 Plot 44b

Plot 44b asked the PC if they could go on the waiting list for a full plot if 44a ever became available. The PC said our allotment rules state, only one plot per household is usually allowed unless an existing tenant applied for a vacant plot when no one else is on the waiting list. Unfortunately, our waiting list is still extremely long at the moment. The PC said the only option we can suggest is if the tenant would like a new full plot, we can place them on the list. LB to email the tenant

8.3 Proposed Revision of Allotment Rules

Cllr Tate, Cllr Bell and LB to discuss the revision of the rules. LB said this will include registering all birds with DEFRA (before 31st December 2023) due to the rising threat of Avian Flu, 12 Bird Rule, and an unfounded allegation clause.

LB was contacted by Cllr Tate who had saw an allegation posted by one of OPC's allotment tenants on social media. The tenant was alleging that OPC allocate the allotments to their "friends and family." LB investigated the allegations and spoke to the tenant who the rumour was about. The tenant confirmed the did not know any of the PCs and the local Cllr they knew was a County Councillor that they had not seen for 10 years until recently. Therefore, the unfounded allegation was untrue. The tenant who made the allegations removed the post and at the request of the PC, the tenant posted an apology on social media to the PC and stated that the information he had received prior to the post he made was "unreliable."
On the OPC Allotment Rules (see website for a copy):
2.3 A Waiting List shall be kept by the Clerk to the Parish Council and vacant plots shall be allocated in strict rotation by date of application. Applicants who live in Ouston Parish will get priority. Only one plot per household is usually allowed, unless an existing Tenant applies for a vacant plot when no one else is on the Waiting List.

The same allotment tenant emailed LB alleging that "years ago two OAA members spent PC money on Whiskey at Perkinsville shop." LB spoke to the OAA members who the allegations were about and they said, a tenant mentioned at one of the Ouston Allotment Association meetings that after seeing the OAA balance sheet (they think it was at the OAA AGM) the tenant believed the OAA had purchased whisky at Perkinsville food store. This comment was made directly to the OAA treasurer at the time, during the meeting. The Secretary asked the tenant about the comment and he was obviously quite taken aback about it as the tenant actually visited Secretary's house and stated that he had meant it as a joke. The Treasurer was obviously quite upset at the time accepted the tenant's apology. The comment was made about OAA's money not Ouston Parish's money and the comment was made as a joke which the tenant later apologised for. Again, the allegation was untrue and LB emailed the tenant who made the allegation to explain what actually happened.

LB emailed the tenant to say, if the tenant has any questions or concerns in the future, please contact the PC and they can answer any queries. If the PC aren't aware of issues they can't help.

LB suggested that an allegations clause be added to the tenancy agreement as this is the third time allegations have been made about the PC or OAA by allotment tenants, and they have been investigated and found to be untrue.

LB, CC Batey and CC Pringle have contacted DCC regarding cutting back bushes on the single Track leading to Perkinsville Rec.

9. <u>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</u>

Cllr Duncan said the meeting was really positive and Pelton's Clerk gave her the maps, but they weren't very clear. LB to contact CDALC to source a bigger map. CC Batey said once a list was compiled the PC need to list reasons for protection, such as nature area or recreation area. Cllr Duncan asked for help identifying green spaces. LB suggested the PCs list the green spaces they are aware of such as open spaces where they live or where they walk.

10. <u>PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCIES</u>

OPC currently have 3 Parish Councillor vacancies, two Co Option and one Casual vacancy.

CC Wood sent an email requesting to be Co Opted onto the PC. The PC unanimously agreed and Co-Opted CC Wood onto the PC. LB to send CC Wood the relevant documents.

11. <u>CLERK'S REPORT</u>

The three unsightly, neglected tubs have been removed. One from Cannock and two from outside of the barbers under the tree canopy. They are being stored on the allotment site to replace broken ones in the future.

The allotment tenant on Plot 5 replaced the leaking tap near the weathervane for free. The PC thanked them.

12. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

12.1 Monthly Accounts & August Invoices

The expenditure for August was reviewed by the PC's.

13. Items to Follow Up for Next Meeting

The September monthly meeting agenda will include:

- Allotments – Inspections 7th September
- OCA – October Half Term Event

The monthly meeting will be held on 28th September at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.30pm hours.

APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING

Cheque Nbr		Paid to	Description
102136		L Blondrage	August pay 5 weeks
102137		L Blondrage	August HWA
102138		D Johnston	August pay 5 weeks
102139		HMRC	August PAYE 5 weeks
102140		PFG Waste	Empty 3 tubs
102141		Lifestyle Print	2023 Newsletter
102142		OCA	Annual 2023-24 Donation