DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2023 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chair Mr A Wake, Mrs. A Bell, Mrs. M Duncan, Mr. J Tate and Mr. D. Wood
County Councillors – Mr D Wood, CC A Batey and CC P Pringle

Other Attendees – Lisa Blondrage - Parish Clerk, OCA Board Member Mrs. C. Marshall, Residents Mr. B Howlett, Mrs C. Dodd, Allotment tenants from Plots 27, 40a, 44a and 42, Residents from Woodlands and Another Resident.

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D Wood declared an interest for Item 8.1 Plot 27 Appeal and Items 9 & 12.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 28TH SEPTEMBER 2023

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Residents from Woodlands raised their concerns regarding anti-social behaviour at the BMX Pump Track. CC Batey said the Community Wardens and Police are visiting the area when on duty. CC Batey said it is a small minority of youths from outside the area causing problems. A resident asked, "what is the plan to monitor the track?" they went on to say the ASB will be worse in the summer than in the winter. CC Batey said the new track replaced the old track that was installed 40 years ago. CC Batey said a consultation had taken place 5 years earlier to discuss the project. CC Batey said the NHW and Police were aware that the track was reopening. CC Batey said residents must report any ASB to the Neighbourhood Warden via Do It online and to the Police via 101. Do It Online reports are sent immediately to the wardens and the 101 reports are sent to Chester Le Street Police. CC Batey said the only complaints made relate to one Saturday night and said the track is still a valuable community asset. The resident's said litter is an ongoing issue. CC Batey said the litter bin still needs to be installed, and cutting back and thinning out of surrounding areas still needs to be carried out. The UPC litter picker visits the area. A resident volunteered to litter pick. CC Batey said she has UPC hi vis jackets and hoops for volunteer community litter pickers. The residents asked for updates at a later date and asked the best place for communication. CC Batey said she will think about the best way to communicate / meet and feedback to residents.

Claire Dodd asked for an update regarding the RAAC issue at St Benet's. CC Batey said she, CC Wood, Kevan Jones MP had a meeting with the Head and Kevan Jones is liaising with the Trust. Currently the Trust are waiting for an update from the DFE regarding funding. Y1-Y6 are being educated at the Stanley Business Centre for the foreseeable future until a decision is made. Nursery and Reception remain at the school using the unaffected areas. Updates will be given in future meetings when accurate information is provided. Claire Dodd said she would like to say a big thank you to the staff, parents and pupils of St Benet's.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

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

CC Batey said the Brooms Park bucket swing had been installed. CC Batey said the court lines are to be redrawn on the MUGA.

7. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

7.1 Information from the OCA Board

Clare Marshall said the OCA are holding a Halloween Event on 31st October for 54 children and it is sold out. She thanked OPC for their contribution which has bought the lunches for the children. UPC's donation has bought Pumpkins for the children to calve and OCA have provided the venue, snacks and books for the children. The CC's have provided funding for craft supplies.

The OCA Remembrance Service will take place on Friday 10th November, time tba.

The OCA are holding a Christmas Wreath making event on 26th November 2-4pm. Tickets are £35.00.

The OCA are holding a Christmas Fayre from 3-5pm followed by the OPC Christmas Tree Lighting event at 5pm. Volunteers needed. Stalls are available at £10.00 per stall.

The PAT testing will take place in the centre on Monday 6th November. OPCs Christmas tree lights box to be tested.

CM said the flat roof issue is ongoing. OCA have applied for 106 funding and are waiting for quotes for the roof. There are also ongoing issues with the drains.

CM said the OCA are awaiting the next stage of the asset transfer. The building is community owned funded by the Buy a Brick project in the 1970s. A resident suggested that the history of the building should be taught in local schools and should be in the OCA newsletter.

8. ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Appeals – Plots 40a, 42 and 27

It was agreed by the PC, allotment tenants, CCs and residents, that due to personal information being discussed, item 8.1 would be held under exempt information and would be discussed at the end of the meeting, each case individually. Cllr Bell encouraged tenants to contact the PC if they suffer any health or personal issues that affect their allotment maintenance.

At the end of the meeting, with the public exempt due to confidential and personal information being disclosed, the Parish Councillors and the tenants discussed the appeals. CC Wood was present for plot 40a and 42's appeal but left the meeting for plot 27's. Cllrs Bell, Duncan, Wake and Wood agreed that their appeals were successful and informed the tenants that it was on condition that their plots must pass the next inspection held in March / April 2024. If their plot fails the next inspection their tenancy will be terminated. Cllr Tate opposed vigorously the decision reached by the other Cllrs.

8.2 Cockerel Complaint from Resident

A resident on Institute Terrace sent an email to the PC regarding cockerels crowing on the allotment site. The tenant works night shift and said due to cockerel noise they are unable to sleep through the day. LB said there is nothing in our rules regarding keeping cockerels. Cllr Wake advised that the resident should contact DCC and make a noise complaint if it continues.

8.3 Request to Keep Pigeons – Plot 44a

LB received a call from plot 44a asking if they could keep 8 Tumbler pigeons on their plot. They already had them but another tenant advised that they needed permission from the PC. The PC agreed they could keep them. The tenant currently has 8 pigeons and 6 hens. The PC asked

the tenant to allow their birds to naturally decrease so the number of birds kept by the tenant is 12 or less.

8.4 Proposed Revision of Allotment Rules

The allotment subcommittee made the following proposals:

1.1 Cultivation and Use - Cultivation to be at least 60% - Cllr Wake said this needed further discussion.

3. Conduct and Nuisance - Introduction of allegation clause – After an investigation is carried out by the Clerk, any tenants found to be making any false / libellous allegations about Ouston Parish Councillors or Ouston Allotment Association Board members will have their tenancy terminated with immediate effect – wording to be agreed.

11.1 Livestock - All fowl must be registered with Defra.

11.5 Livestock - A maximum of 12 pigeons' sentence to be removed – to be discussed further.

The PC are to discuss the revisions further before they are agreed and approved for consultation.

8.5 Allotment Gates

A resident emailed the PC to report that the allotment gates are left open overnight and they were concerned about undesirables going onto site at different times of the night. LB to display another poster reminding tenants to close and lock the gates at all times. Tenants are reminded that failure to close and lock the gate puts tenant's personal safety at risk as well as a risk of damage / theft of livestock, crops and equipment.

9. TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

Cllr Wood said he declared an interest due to the CC's committing Neighbourhood budget to the scheme. The CCs are seeking Towns and Villages funding from the AAP too. CC Wood said the Ouston element will cost £65,000 and would like OPC to contribute £8,000.00. Cllr Wood left the room while the PC discussed and made a decision. Cllr Wake confirmed that sufficient reserves have been made by OPC and agreed in principle to contribute £8,000.00.
CC Wood said a public consultation will take place at a later date.

10. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

LB said OPC Remembrance Sunday Service will take place at the Memorial Garden on Sunday 12th November at 10.55am. CC Batey asked LB to contact Ouston Football and ask them not to use the car park. CC Batey has kindly arranged a bugler.

11. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Wood declared an interest due to also being a Pelton and Urpeth Parish Cllr. Cllrs Wood and Duncan said OPC and UPC would benefit the least from a NHP due to being largely surrounded by greenbelt. They stated that a large multi area plan would weaken the plan. Cllr Wood recommended that OPC do not proceed. Cllr Wake said at the present moment OPC will suspend involvement in the NHP. The PC's agreed.

12. CLERK'S REPORT

A resident on Carnoustie emailed the PC to report a street light still off after 9 months despite being reported. LB reported the street light via Do It Online. LB received an email stating that it was a major fault and the repair will be completed within 25 days due to the complexity of the works needed but could take up to 35 days. LB to send the FS reference number to CC Wood and he will follow it up with DCC.

LB attended an online webinar which launched DCC's Warm and Well Winter campaign. For more information visit www.durham.gov.uk/warmandwell or speak to the customer services team on 03000 26 00 00. LB shared useful information such as "Grab Bag" contents, flood and extreme weather advise on the OPC website's Emergency Plan page.

LB said Allotment plots 30 and 2b are free and plots 50 and 44b will be free soon. The OAA will contact residents on the waiting list.

Due to no nominations for the Casual Vacancy, the next notice will be displayed on the 2nd November. We currently have one Casual Vacancy and one Co Option Vacancy.

CC Pringle said the lights are off on Station Lane. LB to report.

13. <u>FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL</u>

13.1 Monthly Accounts & October Invoices

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

13.2 2nd Quarterly Bank Reconciliation – 1st July to 30th September

The second quarterly bank reconciliation was reviewed by the PC's.

14. Items to Follow Up for Next Meeting

The November monthly meeting agenda will include:

- Allotments – Revision of rules
- Traffic Calming Scheme
- Christmas Lights Event

The monthly meeting will be held on 23rd November at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

<u>The Parish Council meeting closed at 9.30pm hours.</u>

<u>APPENDIX ONE:</u> <u>CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING</u>

Chq No		Paid to	Description
102151		L Blondrage	Oct pay 4 weeks
102152		L Blondrage	Home working allowance
102153		D Johnston	Oct pay 4 weeks
102154		HMRC	Oct PAYE 4 weeks
102155		Bugler	Remembrance Day
102156		Royal British Legion	Annual Poppy Appeal Donation