



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2023 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chair Mr A Wake, Mr G. Batey, Mr. J Tate and Mr. D. Wood

County Councillors – Mrs A Batey and Mr D Wood,

Other Attendees – Lisa Blondrage - Parish Clerk, Residents Mr. B Howlett and another Resident.

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Cllr Bell, Cllr Duncan, OCA and CC Pringle

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D Wood declared an interest for Item 12

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 26TH OCTOBER 2023

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Mr Howlett said the Neighbourhood Watch is no longer in existence in this area as he was unable to get enough volunteers. Mr Howlett said most of the “No Cold Calling Zone” signs are in the applicable areas. 51 are required in total.

Mr Howlett said he would like to thank Cllr Tate for his participation as a Parish Councillor and at the allotments. Mr Howlett said he would like to see the PC as a whole pay more attention to the allotments. Mr Howlett said he feels that the rules are not being enforced by the PC and he would like to see more involvement from the PC. Cllr Wake said there has already been a lengthy discussion at the last meeting regarding allotments and rules.

Mr Howlett said the gullies do not get cleaned at the right time of year. CC Batey said DCC are committed to responding to service requests (report issues via Do It Online). If the reports aren't actioned by DCC, CC Batey will follow them up. Mr Howlett said the salt bins are not being maintained, the salt is solid. CC Batey said salt bins are not classed as a priority.

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, Well done to OPC for their Remembrance Service. It was attended by 125 residents and 10 dogs. The Pelton Division RBL collection raised £131.70 from all 3 services.

PPC had been asked to put up RBL Poppies at their meeting on 25th October. CC Batey said historically, CC's put-up Poppy Curtains in Pelton Division. The curtains were made from repurposed plastic bottles and were sprayed, drilled and put together by volunteers, no costs taken from budgets. CC Batey asked if RBL Poppies on lampposts could be discussed at the next PC meeting as an agenda item. The PC agreed to CC Batey's request and Cllr G Batey will count the lampposts from the top of Ouston Bank to the Perkinsville boundary to see how many Poppies are needed and LB to look at possible costs.

CC Batey thanked the PC for agreeing to support the Traffic Calming Scheme. It will be discussed at Monday nights AAP Meeting and there will be a request for Towns and Villages funding to support the project. As Chair of the AAP CC Batey will declare an interest.

CC Batey said the police had received no recent reports regarding the BMX track. The Neighbourhood Wardens have received 5 reports since it opened including the car on the track and the fireworks incident. CC Batey also raised it at UPCs meeting as the track is in Urpeth's Parish. CC Batey will contact residents who requested litter picking equipment.

7. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

7.1 Information from the OCA Board

The OCA are holding a Christmas Wreath making event on 26th November 2-4pm. Tickets are £35.00. The event is being run by CC Batey to raise money for OCA.

The OCA are holding a Christmas Fayre from 3-5pm followed by the OPC Christmas Tree Lighting event at 4.30pm. The raffle will be drawn after tree lighting. Stalls are available at £10.00 per stall.

CC Batey said the Asset Transfer is still progressing.

The OCA were awarded 106 funding for the roof. The value of the 106-funding awarded is £50,000.

7.2 Donation Request – OCA Christmas Event

OCA asked via email if OPC would consider making a financial contribution of £100 to contribute to costs of the selection boxes for the children (80 @ £1.25) and prizes for the raffle. Ouston Community Association will provide the various tombola stall prizes, toys for the toy stall, heating and lighting costs and gifts for Santa and his 4 elves. The PC discussed the request and agreed to donate the £100.00 for selection boxes and prizes.

8. CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING EVENT

The tree lighting will take place at 4.30pm. The lights will be switched on by Santa. The timings for the event are as follows - General fair throughout 3-5pm, light switch on 4:30pm then back inside for raffle draw.

OCA asked the PC by email if they could take over the maintenance and PAT testing of the outside box and if they could if they could purchase their own plug-in commercial lights for the tree located at OCA. The PC agreed.

9. PARKING IN ARISAIG

LB said Cllr Bell attended the PACT Meeting held in the community centre to raise the issue of parking in Arisaig. The PCSO said they cannot issue tickets. Cllr Bell said cars are parking on the pavements and blocking resident's driveways. LB added that the litter picker had been approached by residents stating that they are concerned about cars parked on pavements. LB said reminders are printed in Parish Newsletters reminding residents to park responsibly. Cllr Wake said due to Cllr Bells absence, it will be listed on the next agenda. Cllr Wood said the contact details for DCC Parking Services are 03000 263 985 or parkingservices@durham.gov.uk The form on Do It Online is called "Road or Footpath Obstruction - Vehicle".

10. ALLOTMENTS

10.1 Future Inspections

Cllr Tate said he would like to express his disagreement with the outcome of the last meeting regarding inspections. He added it takes 2-3 hours to carryout a full site inspection.

Cllr Tate said he had recently visited plot 1 who is due to be inspected on the 23rd December and he said the tenant has 24 birds, they have not altered the Harris fencing or disposed of the

waste pile as instructed. Cllr Wood said we can't enforce the 12-bird rule if we let off a tenant last month for the same rule breach. Cllrs Wake, Wood and G Batey agreed there would be not December inspection for plot 1. LB to email the tenant to inform them that their plot will be inspected as part of the March full site inspections. Cllr Wake said the tenant must adhere to what the PC asked him to do – altering the Harris fencing and disposing of the scrap pile.

Cllr Wake said the PC need to discuss the allotment structure. He added if the PC can't enforce the rules, then they need to be revised. LB to email the PC the rules and tenancy agreement.

11. CDALC TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Cllr Wood said he felt it was good practice to include CDALC training opportunities on the agenda often. Cllr Wood added that CDALC provide some training for free via Zoom and other courses have a small cost. Cllr Wood said CDALC also provide the option of a trainer coming out to Parishes to provide training. Cllr Wake said LB forwards CDALCs emails to the PCs and the PC budget for training. Cllr Wake agreed it is good practice.

12. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Wood declared an interest due to also being a Pelton and Urpeth Parish Cllr. Cllrs Wood and Duncan stated at the last meeting, OPC and UPC would benefit the least from a NHP due to being largely surrounded by greenbelt. It had previously been discussed that a large multi area plan would weaken the plan. The revised proposed plan will be within Pelton Parish boundary plus the Grange Villa allotments. The PC's agreed that OPC would no longer be included and agreed to support the revised plan.

13. NALC PAY REVIEW 2023/24

LB said the NALC pay review has been agreed. The NALC pay scales apply to the Clerks wage. The PC agreed the pay rise. Cllr Wood asked if it applied to the litter picker. LB said the litter picker is paid National Minimum Wage.

14. CLERK'S REPORT

CDALC sent out a list of new Parish website hosts as DCC are no longer hosting PC websites. Cllr Wake said Parish Online's proposals appeared to be best suited to the PC. LB said she would see if any other recommendations or additional information are sent by CDALC. LB said it will be listed as an agenda item for the next meeting.

15. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

15.1 Monthly Accounts & November Invoices

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

16. Items to Follow Up for Next Meeting

The December monthly meeting agenda will include:

- Tree Planting on Ouston Bank
- Budget / Precept 2024/25 – OCA Donation & RBL Poppies
- OPC Website Host
- Parking Arisaig
- Website

The monthly meeting will be held on 14th December at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.01pm hours. APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING

Cheque No		Paid to	Description
102157		L Blondrage	Nov pay 4 weeks
102158		L Blondrage	Home working allowance
102159		D Johnston	Nov pay 4 weeks
102160		HMRC	Nov PAYE 4 weeks
102161		A Bell	Plants for Memorial Garden
102162		Green Fingers	Relaying Memorial Garden Paving
102163		OCA	Christmas Event Donation