



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 18th JANUARY 2024 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.00PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chair Mr A Wake, Mr G. Batey, Mrs. A. Bell, Mrs. M. Duncan and Mr. D. Wood

County Councillors – Mrs A. Batey and Mr P. Pringle

Other Attendees – Parish Clerk - Lisa Blondrage, OCA – Mr D. Nichols and Resident Mr A. Lister.

Garden Competition Winner and Runner Up – 8 Rothesay and 17 Milbanke

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Christmas Lights Competition Winner and Runner Up – 35 Rothesay and 64 Ross

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 14th DECEMBER 2023

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. LEGACY YOUTH CARE – NEW RESIDENTIAL HOME FOR CHILDREN – DH2

6. A representative from Legacy Youth Care emailed the PC on the 12th December to introduce herself as a new provider of children's residential care, hopefully, in Chester Le Street. They have seen a 5-bedded home and have put an offer on it. She wanted to join the Parish meeting on the 14th of December and explain to the Council about their goals, aims, vision, and ambitions for local children and local people interested in working with them. She went onto explain in the email that there are local shortages of placements in Durham and they know that Legacy Youth Care will be very beneficial to the local children's services and their KPI's, to children themselves and to the local economy. She explained that Legacy Youth Care can deliver a disciplined, structured, empathetic, and nurturing family-like home. LYC wanted to explain about their background, plans, ideas and vision, including how we would heavily invest in the workforce and its development. LB replied by email to explain that unfortunately the agenda for the meeting on the 14th December had already been published on Friday 8th December due to legal requirements and invited her to January's meeting instead. LYC sent LB an email to say they were no longer operating from Chester Le Street and therefore, no longer needed to meet with the PC.

7. COMPETITION RESULTS 2023 – CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND BEST GARDEN

Cllr Duncan presented the winner 8 Rothesay and runner up 17 Milbanke with their prize. The PC congratulated them both for their efforts. The runner up said their teenage son helped maintain their garden as he is a keen gardener. Cllr Wake said it was good to see young people taking an interest in improving the local area.

8. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

None.

9. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

CC Batey said that DCC have removed free parking and the CCs were going to ask at their next meeting whether DCC would reconsider.

The Leisure consultation has been put back until February. CC Batey had requested a meeting for an update on the Masterplan. CC Batey was being interviewed on BBC Look North regarding the

needs of leisure facilities in Chester Le Street and surrounding areas. The interview took place in Pelton and a business owner said there is limited parking for customers.

CC Batey said the DCC council tax will increase by 4.99%

CC Batey said residents must be aware that the postal vote has changed.

CC Batey said the Towns and Villages funding was agreed in principle for the traffic calming scheme.

CC Batey is looking at the locations of defibrillators in the local area and maybe purchasing more. CC Batey added that the pads need to be replaced when used and they have a limited shelf life.

10. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

10.1 Information from the OCA Board

OCA Treasurer Mr Nichols said the Community Centre had received 106 funding to repair the roof. He added that the Christmas event was a success and it had raised £500. OCA applied for an AAP grant for February half term but were unsuccessful on this occasion.

The OCA income was £89k, £38k of which were grants (24k 106 funding for the roof) and the expenditure was £94k. OCA have been successful in securing a grant to fund the Caretaker for 2024/25. Mr Nichols added that the OCA have net reserves of £25k. Mr Nichols said the next project is the ladies' toilets being refurbished and he hoped to get a grant. He also added that OCA were looking at purchasing CCTV due to experiencing antisocial behaviour related vandalism. Mr Nichols said they are waiting for drain quotes. CC Batey said she will ask for an update regarding the asset transfer.

10.2 OCA Donation

The current annual donation from OPC is £2,500. The PCs discussed and agreed to increase it to £3,000 for 2024/25. The PC said that the OCA can put additional funding applications to the PC for funding events.

11. OPC WEBSITE

Parish Online, the new website provider, sent LB a number of questions regarding the PC website. The PC wanted to keep the logo and the colours the same. The PC agreed that the web address will be oustonparishcouncil.gov.uk and the email address will be clerk@oustonparishcouncil.gov.uk

12. CDALC PRESIDENT VOTE

The PC's discussed and agreed to vote for Mary Foy MP. LB to inform CDALC.

13. ALLOTMENTS

LB raised her concerns again regarding the vacant allotments not being let. Cllr Wake asked LB to contact the waiting list and one of the PC's will meet the prospective tenants on site. Currently plots 2b, 30, 44a & 44b are vacant. The OAA AGM is in February, if there aren't enough volunteers, they may not be able to form an association. Cllr Wood said if an association cannot be formed the PC may need to employ someone part time to manage the allotments. The rent will increase to cover this.

LB to collect rents on Saturday 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th March at OAA from 10-11am. Cllrs Bell and Wake said the rents would be reviewed in June.

14. 2024/2025 BUDGET AND PRECEPT PROPOSALS

14.1 RBL Poppy Purchasing

Cllr G Batey has conducted the survey of sites for RBL Poppies in our Parish.

Within the OPC main road area, we have 45 lamp posts, including telegraph poles which have lightening attachments. There are a further 11 telegraph poles. We have three parish notice boards and one OCA board, the village sign and possible consideration for sites such as the community centre, school etc.

Cllr G Batey said he is minded to strike a balance between developing an increased visual display, but not over the top, and that represents value for public money. He added that he is happy to engage with businesses e.g. Red Lion, Garage, Cooks Corner etc to see if they would voluntarily contribute to the costs for those Poppy's outside of their premises.

Cllr G Batey thinks if the PC purchase approximately 100-150 poppies would enhance the village. The upper range is if we double sided each lamppost etc. Cllr G Batey is happy to seek agreement of a budget and then seek contributions from our County Councillors and local businesses.

Cllr Batey said he would be looking to finalise an actual plan for where the displays will be sited and then liaise with the other Parish Councils next month to start dialogue and get this all agree by April.

The PC agreed to 150 Poppies at £5.00 each which is £750.00, less CC match funding. The CC's agreed to contribute £350 from their Neighbourhood Budget. The PC agreed to a budget of £400 including cable ties. Cllr G Batey asked LB to draft a letter to ask businesses if they would like to contribute.

14.2 Discuss, Agree and Sign 2024/25 Precept Form

Cllr Wood suggested that the Precept needed to increase to cover rising costs. CC A Batey said Pelton's Precept was increasing by 4.28% and Urpeth's by 4.5%. Cllrs Wake, Batey, Bell and Duncan said they did not want to increase the Precept due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. Cllr Wake said he felt confident that the money that we have in the bank with the 2024/25 Precept will cover the increase in costs and the additional £500 needed for the OCA donation. LB said we have £9161 for election reserves in a separate account and ear marked reserves for the Traffic Calming Scheme (£4000), Street Lights on Station Lane (£4000) and Brooms Park Refurbishment (£2000). Cllrs Wake, Bell and Duncan voted to keep the Precept at £36000. LB said it will show as a small increase as the LCTRS Grant is £17.00. The Precept request for 2024/25 is £36000 plus the £17.00.

The PC agreed to continue the Annual Gardening competition and the Annual Christmas Lights competition.

15. CLERK'S REPORT

Cllr Bell asked LB to contact DCC regarding the installation of traffic lights on the sausage about at Perkinsville.

Do It Online

LB reported the street lights on Station Lane again, stating that they have been off for a while, they have been reported by several people and that the Parish Council pay for them to be on. Post Meeting Note: They are now fix as of Friday 19th January.

Former Cllr Tate carried out some litter picking and tidied the Memorial Garden on Tuesday. He asked when will the litter bin be replaced. LB asked again for another litter bin to be located in the car park.

Two Parish Councillor Co Option Vacancies

Due to no nominations been submitted Cllr Tates vacancy is now a Co-opted Vacancy. OPC now has two Co Option Vacancies.

Tree Planting – Update

The tree officer said care needs be taken on the replanting locations due to sight lines etc along the highway. The locations mentioned may infringe the HW and footpath. He asked if we have any alternative locations? LB to email an suggest Hawthorn hedgerow be planted instead.

Neighbourhood Plan Update

The consultation for the parish council's application to amend the neighbourhood area will commence this Friday and run to the 1st April: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/18184/Neighbourhood-planning-what-s-happening-> LB posted the updated consultation of the amended NHP on the OPC website. The proposed neighbourhood area is based upon the area covered by Pelton Parish Council boundary, along with an area of allotments adjacent to Grange Villa which lie in Edmondsley Parish Council area. The application details that this is seen as a more appropriate area due to common issues important to the communities within the area.

16. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

16.1 Monthly Accounts & January Invoices

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

16.2 3rd Quarterly Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was reviewed by the PC's

17. Items to Follow Up for Next Meeting

The February monthly meeting agenda will include:

- Allotments

The monthly meeting will be held on 22nd February at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.36pm hours.

APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING

Chq No		Paid to	Description
102172		L Blondrage	January pay 4 weeks
102173		L Blondrage	Home working allowance
102174		D Johnston	January pay 4 weeks
102175		HMRC	January PAYE 4 weeks
102176		NSALG	Annual Subscription
102177		DTE Landscapes	Lights and trees
102178		Wave	Water Allotments