



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 28TH MARCH 2024 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. D. Wood

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

Other Attendees – Parish Clerk - Lisa Blondrage, Joanne Watson OCA and Residents Mrs C Dodd, Mr B Howlett, Mr A Lister and Mr J Tate.

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Cllr G Batey

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 22ND FEBRUARY 2024

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Mr Howlett said hens were being kept as pets on the allotment site and were being passed to other tenants if plots were given up. Cllr Wake said he did not agree with healthy hens being put to sleep.

Mrs Dodd reported the pot holes on Wentworth Park via Do It Online and said some of them have been repaired but not all. She said the quality of the work carried out was satisfactory.

Mr Howlett said he is concerned about the litter blowing round the village. He said we all need to do our bit and pick up litter. He is also concerned about Gas workers not leaving areas as they found them. He said there is grit gathering in gullies from works. CC Batey said a Community Litter Pick could be carried out. CC Batey said Gas workers carried out a daily check before they start work each day. If any barriers have blown over or are blocking views they are corrected by the workers. Cllr Wake said the grit in gullies would be monitored to see if it was cleared up at a later date. CC Batey said if there are any issues or concern's they can be reported to her.

CC Pringle asked if the PC reported the litter in the farmers field to DCC. LB said the PC had not reported it. CC Batey said the Neighbourhood Warden possibly reported it on their rounds.

Mr Tate said he is concerned about the overgrown hedges at Ouston House. Mr Tate and Mr Howlett will speak to the resident. LB to report it via Do It Online.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

CC Batey said she had heard rumours of anti-social behaviour at the BMX track. No issues had been reported to the PC or CCs. CC Batey said residents must let the CCs know if there are any issues.

CC Batey said a motion had gone to Full Council meeting regarding the DLI site and the felling of trees. The Councillors were asking for DCC to stop work until ashes are located. They were also asking for the area to be a Garden of Remembrance and Reflection instead of a new building – the motion was lost.

For further information, please contact the County Cllrs.

7. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

7.1 Information from the OCA Board

Board Member Joanne Watson said last year was a successful year for the OCA being awarded funding. She added that this year has not been as successful to date due to the lease running out and the funding criteria changing (funding now specifically for families eligible for free school meals). Joanne added that it is hard to plan events for mixed attendees, some eligible for FSM and some who aren't. CC Batey suggested hosting low cost events with external funding from PC's. Cllr Duncan said the OCA have worked hard on past events and have built up a good base of attendees.

Joanne said membership fees have been revised and are being reintroduced this year.

The asset transfer is still ongoing. CC Batey spoke to DCC Assets and to the new officer who has carried out the undervalue and it has been past to their line manager. CC Batey hoped to have an update next week.

7.2 Telephone Box Library

Cllr Wake asked if the OCA would consider housing the Telephone Box Library? Joanne said there is no space in the porch due to accessibility access. She will speak to the other Board members at the next meeting and let us know. LB to resend the dimensions.

7.3 Easter Event Donation Request

OCA are hosting an Easter event for children. The Board have asked for a donation of £45.00 to buy 30 eggs for the attendees at £1.50 each. The PC unanimously agreed to the £45.00 donation.

8. ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Site Manager

Cllr G Batey was unable to attend the OAA meeting but will attend the May meeting. Cllr Bell attended the last OAA meeting and said if the OAA won't run the site then the rents would be raised accordingly to employ a site manager. LB said the OAA Chair has agreed to continue running the shop and will show new tenants round site. Cllr Wake said the PC will keep site manager on the agenda as it is ongoing and being monitored.

Cllr Wood said he would like tenants to be left alone to look after their allotments and the PC will deal with the worse bits. Cllr Bell said when the last tenants appealed, they had valid reasons so that's why the reprieves were granted. Cllr Wood added that the point of the allotment rules is not to catch tenants out and if the PC aren't happy with gardens or whatever the issue is, then they can warn people and hopefully see some improvements. He added, if a tenant wants complain about someone else's garden and they have done their bit, they can get more involved with how the allotments are run, by becoming a PC, the elections are next year. Cllr Wake added they could also be on the OAA Board.

Mr Tate said an inspection was due in March but the Chair and Treasurer of OAA are not prepared to carryout site inspections. He asked with that in mind, where would the PC go from there regarding inspections. LB said that when tenants were paying rents, they had said they were limited to what they could do due to it being an extremely wet winter and parts of the site were water logged and flooded. Mr Tate agreed. She added tenants were struggling with the ground so it was probably just as well the March inspections had not taken place.

Mr Tate suggested that the PC speak to the Chair and the Treasurer of the OAA.

Cllr Duncan asked what was happening with the registering of birds. LB said tenants were told to register all birds and fowl with DEFRA. The poster is still in the OAA board. LB to add the DEFRA registration to the proposed draft rules.

9. POPPY PROJECT – UPDATE

Cllr Wood said the Pelton Division Poppy meeting was very positive. The clerk from Pelton PC asked how many Poppys OPC were proposing. LB said OPC agreed at the January meeting that the proposed figure was 150 but Cllr G Batey, said he will confirm the final figure at the next meeting as our Parish boundary includes Station Lane leading to Birtley.

CC Batey said businesses could sponsor a lamppost. LB said she had emailed a draft letter to Cllr G Batey to send to businesses. CC Batey suggested the PC use reusable RBL cable ties. Cllr G Batey to calculate the cost of cable ties.

10. D-DAY 80 FLAG

CDALC informed the PC that there is a D-Day 80 Flag of Peace available now in various sizes, varying in price from £22.80 to £28.80 incl. VAT. It's suggested that they should be flown from 9am on 6th June. The PC unanimously agreed to purchase one for our flag pole to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. LB to purchase.

11. FLOWER TUBS AND FLOWERBEDS

LB said the DCC flower bed quote for 2024/25 is £3930.02 plus vat is £4716.02.

OPERATIONS LOCATION COST

Flower Bed Bank Top £805.76

Flower Bed Comm Centre £1,486.11

Flower Bed Comm Centre £247.33

Flower Bed Sunningdale £1,390.82

Cllr Wood asked if there was enough money in the budget. LB said there is as she had used last year's cost to budget. The PC agreed to renew the contact.

The volunteer who maintained the flower tubs in the past can no longer plant and water them. CC Pringle said he would ask the resident to continue to water the tubs near Cooks Corner bus stop as they have done so in the past. Mrs Dodd said she will continue to plant, weed and water the three tubs she has adopted. The PC said Mrs Dodd will be reimbursed for the cost of compost if she gives the receipts to the clerk.

12. CLERK'S REPORT

Allotments

Plot 30 is now vacant. It is a large untidy plot. The OAA Chair has suggested that it be split in half across the middle, width ways. A gate could be put at the top and the bottom for access. The PC said it is to be kept as a whole at the moment. If it cannot be let as a whole, they may consider splitting it.

Do It Online

A resident rang LB to requested an additional street light on the access path between Iris Crescent (rear of the community centre and Aberfoyle. The path is uneven and a trip hazard in the dark. LB told the resident she would put a request in via Do It Online. However, it was up to DCC if they would install it or not.

Cllr Bell asked if a handrail could be installed to help residents use the three steps behind the Petrol Station in the dark and during the Winter. Cllr Wood said it was not DCC adopted highway. Cllr Wake asked LB to contact planning to ask if the PC can install one. Cllr Bell will send LB photos.

Cllr Wake asked what was happening with the burn marks on the stone bus stop. CC Batey said it had been reported to DCC and she will follow it up.

Evidence of Drug Use

LB said our litter picker has reported more evidence of drug use near the Council garages on Iris Crescent and also Ross recreational park in the children's play park. They are distinctive bottles as they have been adapted for drug use. The litter picker said a resident had found syringes in the area too. LB has reported this to the PCSO and DCC. The litter picker has reported it to 101.

CLlr G Batey emailed LB to say he would like it noted about the state of the grass adjacent to the Red Lion after the recent Gas works. The reinstatement work looks like it has not been done yet. To be monitored.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

13.1 Monthly Accounts & March Invoices

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

14. Items to Follow Up for Next Meeting

The February monthly meeting agenda will include:

- Allotments – Site Manager
- Revision of Allotment Rules
- Flower Tubs

**The monthly meeting will be held on 25th April at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.
The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.21pm hours.**

APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING

Cheque No		Payment to:	Description
102188		L Blondrage	March pay 5 weeks
102189		L Blondrage	March HWA
102190		D Johnston	March pay 5 weeks
102191		HMRC	March PAYE 5 weeks
102192		OCA	Easter Event Donation
102193		Wave Water	Allotment Water
102194		Mr Eric Brown	Copies of allotment gate keys