



MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF
OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 29TH AUGUST 2024 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.05PM.

1. COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

County Councillor – Mr P. Pringle

Other Attendees – Parish Clerk - Lisa Blondrage, Mrs C Dodd, Mr A Lister & Mr D Mole

2. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Cllr A Wake and CC A. Batey

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 25TH JULY 2024

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

5. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS

Mr Mole said the paths around Athol bus stop flood after heavy rain and is dangerous in the winter as it freezes. Mr Mole added that the paths have been left in a diabolical condition since the gas works have taken place. CC Pringle said that he was informed by the Gas Company that the works needed to be checked and signed off. He added, the paths may need to be dug up in that area again. LB to email the Gas Company with supporting photo provided by Mr Mole.

Mr Mole said the trees near the Brooms Park are overgrown and in previous years they have been thinned out. CC Pringle said it is still bird nesting season so DCC cannot undertake any works at present. Cllr Wood said CC Batey usually does a walk round with Clean and Green and added that there had been a change of staff this year. LB to report to CC Batey and DCC. Mr Mole said there is grass growing in between the paving stones near the Brooms Bungalows. He said it is a trip hazard. LB to report to DCC with supporting photo provided by Mr Mole.

Mrs Dodd said residents still have an ongoing issue with the refuse collectors not returning their bins in a respectful and safe manner. LB to speak to CC Batey.

CC Pringle said he had been approached by a resident (bungalow behind the Petrol Station) regarding a land dispute between their property and Rothesay. CC Pringle said he wasn't sure if it was Parish land behind the Petrol Station. LB said as far as she was aware the only land the Parish own is the allotment site. LB said the resident could check with Land Registry.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Wood said the CCs are still in recess and there are no formal DCC meetings.

Cllr Wood said that the AAP consultation is still open and encouraged residents to give their feedback by 20th September. DCC are proposing to take Pelton Division (Ouston PC, Pelton PC & Urpeth PC) out of Chester Le Street put them in with Stanley. For further information, please contact the County Cllrs.

Cllr Wood said that he is arranging a meeting with Highways, to discuss Pelton Divisions Traffic Calming Scheme. Cllr G Batey said he feels the traffic has increased again since the Gas / roadworks have ended.

7. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

7.1 Information from the OCA Board

There was no representative from OCA. LB said she spoke to the Centre Manager, and she felt that due to recent events in Stockport and knife crime increasing in the UK it would be a good idea to purchase and store a Bleed Kit in the Defib Cabinet. The Centre Manager told LB that the Defib Cabinet had been accessed 14 times since January. LB asked if the PC would cover the cost of £90.00 as the kit would be used on a resident or visitor in our Parish and could save a life. The PC agreed to purchase and replace when needed, as it is an important and useful piece of kit to have. The emergency services call handler will talk the user through how to use the equipment if an incident occurs.

8. ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Plots 4 & 17 -Proposed Halving

Cllr G Batey said it is possible to split plot 17 and plot 4 at the tenant's request. Cllr G Batey will contact plot 17 to discuss how it will be split. LB to contact plot 4 and speak to OAA.

8.2 Allotment Rules, Tenancy Agreement, False Allegations, Bullying and Harassment Documents – Approve and Adopt

The revised documents were discussed by the working group and the final draft documents were displayed in the OAA noticeboard with a covering letter stating any further feedback must be sent to the clerk by Monday 26th August. There was no further feedback, and the PC agreed and adopted the revised documents.

8.3 Site Security

LB visited site on Saturday 18th August and a tenant reported that another tenant's helper, leaves the Rec gate open on a daily basis. LB contacted the named tenant and asked them to tell their helpers to lock the gates at all times.

Cllr Bell visited site as there were several plots broken into on site on Thursday 22nd August. None of the external gates were damaged which suggests that a gate/s may have been unlocked when the perpetrator entered the site. Several internal plot gates had been accessed using bolt cutters. The tenants were told to report the incident to the police. Mrs Dodd said she had reported the incident and was told an officer would contact her, but they have not to date. Cllr G Batey said he will contact the Neighbourhood Policing Team and follow it up.

The PC said the gates MUST be closed and locked at all times after entering and exiting. An extensive discussion was held around the issue of site security and the PC agreed the purchase of additional security measures. Mrs Dodd asked how the PC was paying for the additional security measures. LB said they will be paid for using the allotment income, as since she took over as clerk, she has built up a contingency reserve to cover additional costs. Cllr G Batey to meet with the OAA to discuss the additional security measures and he will let LB know so she can purchase them.

Mrs Dodd asked if tenants can put cameras on their plot? The PC said yes but they must display a CCTV in operation sign.

Cllr G Batey said he had spoken to the OAA Chair as some plots that passed the last inspection and are now untidy. Cllr G Batey to speak with OAA to arrange an inspection date for September, provisionally 22nd or 29th. Once an agreed date is set, LB will display a notice informing tenants of the Inspection date.

Cllr G Batey said he will continue to attend the OAA meetings and will meet with the OAA Chair on site at least once a month.

Plot 63 asked if they can site a polytunnel on their allotment. The PC agreed.
Cllr Bell said the path behind OCA was overgrown. LB to report to DCC.

9. POPPY PROJECT – UPDATE

Cllr G Batey said Street Lighting have still not responded to our permission request despite LB and Cllr G Batey emailing frequently. If we do not get permission soon, we will miss out on funding and purchasing them in time. The PC agreed that if we do not get permission in the next two weeks, we will purchase a smaller number and display them on Ouston Football Clubs fence on the school's fences and on our noticeboards. LB will email the DCC employee who is dealing with it when they return from their annual leave on Monday 2nd September.

10. FLOWER TUBS AND JUBILEE FLOWERBED

LB received an email from a resident saying the Jubilee Flowerbed needed maintaining. LB weeded the flowerbed and planted some bedding pla, CC Pringle asked a resident to water it. LB said she would adopt the Pit Tub as she passed it daily. A resident emailed the LB saying some of the flower tubs were overgrown with weeds. Cllrs Wake and Bell weeded and planted the tub at Abernethy entrance, 3 round Cooks Corner bus stop, 1 on Iris Crescent traffic lights and the 3 near the Red Lion. The traffic lights tub and the tub at the Petrol station will be removed in the Winter due to the poor condition of the tubs. LB put another appeal in the Newsletter asking for the tubs to be adopted. Cllr Bell said if the tubs are not maintained by resident volunteers, she would like them to be removed.

11. PELTON YOUTH PROJECT

Cllr G Batey spoke to a PYP Youth Worker regarding the ASB reports from residents around the BMX track. They agreed to an Outreach session working with young people in the Autumn from October to Bonfire night. Cllr Wood suggested £300 and said he would ask UPC for match funding and the County Councillors would discuss match funding using their Neighbourhood budget, potential total £1200.00. The PCs agreed to up to £300. Cllr G Batey will speak to the Youth Workers to agree a final figure. The PC said they would like the Neighbourhood Wardens and Local Police to visit during the sessions. Cllr G Batey said he would attend on behalf of OPC.

12. OPC SUMMER EVENT 2025

Cllr Bell said she would like the PC to host a community event for residents, similar to what Waldridge host. LB said we may need to be cautious if we use an outdoor location due to noise complains and Cllr Wood added that an Entertainment Licence would be required for an outdoor location. Cllr Bell suggested a Mobile Cinema in the Community Centre. Cllr Wood suggested that Cllr Bell set up a working group to discuss ideas.

13. CLERK'S REPORT

LB said she has received our Annual Newsletter and sorted into streets. It will be delivered by volunteers in the next few weeks.

Cllr Wood reported the overgrown hedges / bushes to DCC on behalf of Mr Howlett. Another resident has also complained about overgrown hedges encroaching over footpaths, Cllr Wood will response to resident.

LB said another resident sent an email asking for the litter bin on Cromarty to be removed. It is an ongoing issue for the resident that the bin is full / overflowing. LB responded to the resident via email, explaining that due to ongoing litter issues in the Parish, it is unlikely that DCC will remove the bin. LB sent a request into Do it Online asking the bin to be emptied more frequently.

LB said another resident had emailed asking if her family could ride their horse through Ouston Park. LB explained that in the Highway Code No 54 it states that you must not take your horse onto a cycle track, footpath or pavement. She could not find any guidance regarding recreational playing fields. LB advised the resident to contact Public Rights of Way for further guidance. LB will email PROW also.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL

14.1 Monthly Accounts & August Invoices

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

15. Items to Follow Up for Next Meeting

The September meeting agenda will include:

- Allotments
- Traffic Calming Scheme update
- Flower Tubs
- OPC Summer 2025 Community Event

The next Parish Council monthly meeting will be held on 26th September at 7.00pm Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.

The Parish Council meeting closed at 8.59pm hours.

APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING

Cheque No		Paid to	Description
102222		L Blondrage	August pay 5 weeks
102223		L Blondrage	August HWA
102224		D Johnston	August pay 5 weeks
102225		HMRC	August PAYE 5 weeks
102226		A Bell	Flowers for tubs
102227		Lifestyle Print	2023 Newsletter
102228		A Wake	Water carrier & plants for tubs