



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF**  
**OUSTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2025 IN OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE**  
**THE MEETING OPENED AT 6.45PM.**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Cllr Wake was elected as Chair and Cllr Batey as Vice Chair.

**2. COUNCILLORS PRESENT**

Mr A Wake, Mr G Batey, Mrs A Bell, Mrs. M Duncan and Mr. T Fenwick.

**County Councillors –**

**Other Attendees –** Lisa Blondrage - Parish Clerk, OCA Board Member – Mrs C Marshall and residents Mr B Howlett, Mr A Lister and a resident from Carnoustie.

**3. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE**

Cllr D Wood

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 11 – Cllr Fenwick is an allotment holder and Item 10 – Cllr Batey is one of the coaches.

**5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025**

Previous minutes agreed and accepted by the PC.

**6. REPRESENTATION OF RESIDENTS AND ALLOTMENT TENANTS**

*Raised in Parish Assembly*

*Cllr Bell said, when the refuse collector's empty resident's bins, they are put back unsafely, blocking residents drives and blocking paths. LB to contact DCC to ask if the bin men can put them back responsibly.*

*Cllr Bell added that when drivers are exiting Abernethy, the view is restricted by a resident's fence. LB to report to DCC.*

*Mr Lister said the parking around Ouston Primary is becoming an issue again. LB to report to parking enforcement.*

Cllr Wake said the damage to the Cooks Corner bus stop has still not been repaired despite being reported to DCC last year. LB said the Turnberry bus stop has not been replaced. LB to follow up with DCC.

A resident emailed raising concerns regarding vehicles parking on the pavement in Cannock. LB said she would raise it at the meeting and continue to include it in our Newsletter.

**7. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

LB said she had emailed Pelton Divisions new County Councillors to invite them to our meeting, but they did not respond or attend. Cllr Batey said the new CC's were currently taking part in a 12-week induction.

**8. OUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE – INFORMATION FROM THE BOARD**

OCA Board Representative Clare Marshall said their Chair Paul McFarling has taken a step back at the moment, due to other commitments. She added he is still on the board but not actively. Vice Chair Joanne Watson is acting Chair in the interim.

CM said the VE day event was a success and they had received positive feedback. CM said the board were going to introduce a comments book so community centre users and event attendees can leave feedback.

CM said OCA are holding an Afternoon Tea event in July and are proposing to hold another summer event.

CM said next week they are collecting a set of carpet bowls that have been donated, and they are looking forward to offering carpet bowls sessions in the centre.

CM said the small kitchen will be out of use for refurbishment in July / August.

CM said the drainage works have been carried out by DCC. The drains were collapsing and have been lined. OCA would like to thank the former CC's and DCC for their financial contributions.

CM said there will be PACT meetings in Ouston Community Centre on 6<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm. Residents are encouraged to attend if they have any issues or concerns

CM reported that the funding for their caretaker runs out in July. Cllr Bell suggested OCA meet to discuss costs and potential funding opportunities. CM said, the OCA are looking at funding opportunities, but they need to meet to work out what hours they need to cover. Cllr Batey asked if OCA could afford to fund the position until they are awarded more funding, CM replied, yes, she thinks money has been set aside.

CM said, the OCA have advertised for new members with HR or Health & Safety skills.

CM warned that the footpaths around the building unsafe are due to uneven surfaces. CM said she will suggest signs asking centre users to use the perimeter public footpath.

CM said due to County Councillor funding not being guaranteed, OCA may have to charge for previously free events and increase the cost of paid events.

The OCA said they would like to thank the previous CC's, Alison Batey, Danny Wood and Paul Pringle for their financial support and time. CM added that Alison Batey is now a OCA board member. A resident said he and his wife set up a direct debit to donate £2.00 per month to the community centre. The resident suggested that a request for direct debit donations be included in the OPC newsletter. CM to ask the board if they agree with their request and let LB know.

Cllr Duncan suggested that the OCA hold an event such as a welcome meeting for the new CC's to attend. Cllr Duncan said it will be an opportunity for the new CC's to introduce themselves and meet with the board and PC. Cllr Batey said the invitation must come from OCA.

## **9. CO OPTION VACANCY**

LB said as a result of the uncontested election we have one co-option vacancy. Details of how to apply are on OPC's website.

## **10. DONATION REQUEST – LOCAL GIRLS FOOTBALL TEAM**

Cllr Batey said he is coaching the Chester Le Street District School Girls Team for next academic year. Cllr Batey asked if our PC could donate, as we have representation from Ouston Primary. Cllr Batey left the room whilst the PC discussed it. The PC agreed to a £100.00 donation.

## **11. ALLOTMENTS**

### **11.1 Inspections**

Cllr Batey will speak to OAA to agree an inspection date.

### **11.2 Rent Arrears**

Plot 16b and 17a have not paid their rent despite me sending texts, letters and emails. Cllr Batey and the OAA Chair said no works have been carried out on site and they appear abandoned. The PC agreed to terminate of tenancies and instructed LB to send the letters. LB said we may need to revise the rules because current rules state, if tenants don't pay their rent, then it is May / June by the time we can terminate the tenancy and relet the plot. LB said another plot has not paid their rent, but she will not disclose the plot number for confidentiality reasons. LB said she contacted the tenant regarding the outstanding rent, they replied saying they had taken 5 months off work due to health reasons and had recently returned. LB suggested paying in instalments and the tenant agreed. LB said she would ask the PC if it was possible to pay £15 10<sup>th</sup> June, £15 10<sup>th</sup> July and £20 10<sup>th</sup> August. Cllr Batey said the plot

appeared to have not been worked and asked if the tenant would be able to rectify the plot. The PC agreed to the payment terms and stated that the repayment terms must be met, and the plot must be rectified as it will be subject to inspection.

Cllr Batey reported some areas of concern regarding the condition of the tracks, the grass is high in places and the track is eroding. Cllr Batey suggested that the OAA apply for a lottery grant to repair the tracks.

Cllr Batey said tenants had asked for a noticeboard to be installed at the top of site. LB said, this has been raised before, and the request was discussed and rejected by the PC. LB said tenants can check the OAA board and added all information posted in the OAA board is sent to the tenants by email. The PC thanked Cllr Batey for his role on site.

LB said the Animal and Plant Agency, Government and DEFRA have lifted the Mandatory Housing Order for our area. Tenants must remain vigilant.

**12. MEETING DATES FOR 2025-2026 MEETINGS**

26<sup>th</sup> June

24<sup>th</sup> July

25<sup>th</sup> September

23<sup>rd</sup> October

27<sup>th</sup> November

18<sup>th</sup> December

15<sup>th</sup> January – Precept

26<sup>th</sup> February

26<sup>th</sup> March

23<sup>rd</sup> April

28<sup>th</sup> May - PA & AGM TBC

**13. PARISH EVENTS & SUBGROUP MEMBERS**

Remembrance Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November – Cllr G Batey is the OPC Poppy Project Co Ordinator, we need to book the Bugler. LB to email OFC to inform them in advance of date and time. LB to apply for lamppost permissions for this year.

Garden Competition – Cllr Duncan, Cllr Bell and Cllr Batey

Christmas Lights Competition - Cllr Duncan, Cllr Bell and Cllr Batey

Christmas Lights Event – Sat 29<sup>th</sup> Nov or Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Dec – need to liaise with OCA

Allotment Sub Committee – Cllr Batey and Cllr Bell / Appeals – Cllrs Wake, Wood & Duncan

Newsletter – Clerk

**14. CLERKS REPORT**

LB to buy replacement tubs and compost.

The PC asked LB to write to Alison Batey, Paul Pringle and Danny Wood to thank them for their help and support during their time as County Councillors.

**15. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – TO REVIEW AND APPROVE**

**15.1 Standing Orders**

The Standing Orders were reviewed and approved by the PC.

**15.2 Financial Regulations**

The new Financial Regulations were drafted by the Clerk and were reviewed and approved by the PC.

**15.3 Asset Register and Risk Register**

The Asset Register and Risk Register were reviewed and agreed by the PC.

The Digital and Data compliance policies were reviewed and adopted by the PC.

**16. FINANCIAL MATTERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**16.1 Monthly Accounts & May Invoices**

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

**16.2 Year End Bank Reconciliation**

The 2024/25 year end bank reconciliation was reviewed.

**16.3 Approve AGAR 2024/25**

The 2024/25 AGAR was approved.

**16.4 Appoint an Internal Auditor**

The PC agreed to appoint Gordon Fletcher to carry out the internal audit.

**17. ITEMS TO FOLLOW UP FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The June Monthly meeting agenda will include:

- Allotments
- Newsletter

**The Parish Monthly Meeting will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7.00pm. Business to discuss will be as per Agenda.**

**The Parish Council meeting closed at 7.45pm hours.**

**APPENDIX ONE: CHEQUES SIGNED AT MEETING**

<b>cheque nbr</b>	<b>Paid to</b>	<b>Description</b>
102288	L Blondrage	May pay 5 weeks
102289	L Blondrage	May HWA
102290	D Johnston	May pay 5 weeks
102291	HMRC	May PAYE 5 weeks
102292	CDALC	1 x copy of Good Cllr Guide
102293	CDALC	Annual Subscription 2025/26
102294	OCA	Annual 2025-26 Donation
102295	Cllr A Bell	VE80 Flowers for Memorial Gdn
102296	CDALC	Elections Training