



Delivering Quality Services to  
Coxhoe & Quarrington Hill

## Coxhoe Parish Council

**Meeting** Public Meeting

**Date** Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015

**Time** 7.00pm

**Venue** Coxhoe Village Hall

### **Minutes of the proceedings of the Coxhoe Parish Council - Public Meeting held at 7.00pm in Coxhoe Village Hall on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015.**

**Attendance:** Councillors; S Dunn, W Lavelle, K Simpson, E Thompson.

**Apologies:** B Hepplewhite, K Pounder, C Hogarth, T Rowe.

**Other:** The Clerk Mr G Price, Durham County Councillor's M Plews and 50 parishioners.

#### **117. Introductions and welcome.**

The chair of the council introduced the parish Councillors and Durham County Councillor and welcomed the audience for attending this meeting.

The chair gave an outline of the reason for this meeting and its importance to the parish of Coxhoe.

#### **118. Developing a Neighbourhood Plan.**

The chair presented to the audience an outline of the current position regarding planning decisions made by Durham County Council (DCC) and the impact that these were having upon the community and infrastructure. Of particular interest was the scenario of the recent application agreed at Parkhill that had been approved despite it originally being refused. This U-turn had repercussion for many settlements in County Durham as it illustrated that without a recognised approved Durham County Local Plan developers could challenge DCC planners and have developments approved.

Further adding to this frustration is that virtually all parish councils in county Durham do not have approved Neighbourhood Plans in place that can provide the power to guide future development in their areas.

The presentation concluded that there was a great need for Coxhoe to develop its own Neighbourhood Plan that once approved will have the power to control development in the parish.

The chair advised that this meeting was not held to determine what would be in the Neighbourhood Plan but to advise its community the parish was leading on the project of developing it and that this process would necessitate the community taking part in its production and to help share the workload. The parish council sought volunteers to step forward offering their services, skills and abilities to assist in this process and form a steering group to drive this issue forward.

#### **119. Question and Comments from the public.**

Parishioners from Parkhill express their dismay at the decision made by DCC on the development to build 190 houses there. Despite, many objections the developers had managed to provide the right answers, within the guidance of the National Planning Guidance to support their case and were audacious in their replies to public concerns.

Coxhoe parishioners were concerned that over 30 years of housing development in Coxhoe had proved little benefit to the settlement. As a result of historic development this was having a

profound impact upon the infrastructure (shops, business, school places, Medical Practice and many highway issues). For some parishioner, Coxhoe had been transformed from a community settlement into a commuting settlement and despite efforts to address the infrastructure issues the situation for school places and medical services were always a cause of concern and traffic a persistent problem.

The chair advised that the parish council had already had discussion with the medical practice and would help fight a campaign to seek better facilities in a new location. The chair also advised that despite the school being previously extended further funding from developers is anticipated to help expand it even further to accommodate further growth.

Parishioners added that the site of the old school that had recently been approved for housing was a suitable site to place a new Doctor's surgery.

Parishioners also expressed concerned at the motorway intersection at Bowburn (Junction 61) which was viewed by planners and developers as a gateway to this area and hence it has attracted their interest to suit commuting clients who seek to live outside larger conurbations where property prices can be more affordable.

Parishioners also commented on the Integra 61 development that was a suitable place to build a new senior school to accommodate children from Coxhoe, Parkhill and Bowburn as the present situation of shipping pupils out to a variety of schools in the surround small towns and Durham was detrimental to community life and most of all proving to be costly to families with busing fees being levied.

Parishioners also spoke of developing a New Town to take up the housing need, restrict development by having areas listed as SSSI site and land assessments to identify suitable land for development.

Of the many issues raised by parishioners this would necessitate lengthy studies to determine the capacity to build in Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill. Such studies would need to cover Schools and school placements, Young people study and their needs, survey of local businesses, land assessment, traffic assessment, parking assessment and medical services. The chair advised that whilst some of these may require specialist studies some could be generated by the steering group.

Parishioners expressed concern that the parish could not be fully responsible for developing the Neighbourhood Plan and needed local input, engagement and volunteers to make this happen. The more people who participated in the plans development the more emphasis it would have during its examination and final referendum.

**Signed on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 as a true record of the meeting.**

**Cllr. S Dunn (Chair)**

**Cllr. C Hogarth (Vice-Chair)**