

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 24 September 2025, 7.00 pm
Hett Village Hall

Parish Council Members Present:

Councillor L Griffiths (Chair), Councillor I Clark, Councillor G Hollingsworth, Councillor P Kerrison, Councillor D Pyle, Councillor A Smith, Councillor M Walker, Councillor I Watt.

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey and G Hutchinson were in attendance.

49/25. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from Councillor A Watt.

50/25. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

51/25. Policing:

The Clerk shared Policing crime stats: 6 incidents being recorded for the period July 2025 within the Parish. The next PACT Meeting is on Friday 10 October 2025, 6.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.

Clerk received feedback from the Police on 9 September 2025 regarding the Police Custody Suite advising all detained persons leaving the custody facility are provided with bus timetables and a map, and if needed bus travel voucher to assist in them returning home.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

52/25. Public Participation:

A resident from Salvin Street, Croxdale, was in attendance who requested assistance from the PC in relation to a neighbour's 8ft fence that has been erected to the rear of a property. The property is believed to be private and claims is an obstruction and questioned if there is a standard height for garden fences.

Resolved: Clerk to report to DCCs Planning Enforcement Team in the first instance on the resident's behalf.

Two representatives were in attendance in relation to Croxdale's Heritage 100 walk and requested financial assistance from the PC by sponsoring the walk by way of a 2-year sponsorship. The sponsorship costs were £350.00 for each walk which covers the costs of replacing lost marker discs and any damage to the marker posts, in addition to other costs for the project, such as maintenance of the website, membership and associated fees payable to DCC. It was reported over 2,000 people have walked the route to date and plans are in progress for the route between Hett and Bowburn to be combined in the future (2026).

Resolved: Following a vote, x6 Members voted in favour of sponsoring Croxdale's walk over the next 2 years at a cost of £350.00 and x1 against. Future sponsorship beyond this would need to be agreed at that time.

53/25. Minutes:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 30 July 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

54/25. Matters Arising:

i. Hett Litter Pick:

DCC confirmed August's litter pick took place on 21 August 2025; a date is to be confirmed for September.

Resolved: For Members' information.

ii. Allotments:

The following updates were provided by the Clerk:

- Tree – rear of Front Street East – an allotment tenant agreed to remove the dead tree branches once the leaves have fallen.
- Repairs to the wire fencing at the Poultry Centre are now complete.
- A tenant at the Poultry Centre who has a small holding requested approval for new fencing/gate to the front of their small holding in addition to placing a shed and field shelter on site. Dimensions for a metal shed - 8x8 or 10x8, depending on pricing. Wooden field shelter, approx. 8x6.
- Allotment inspection took place on 5 September 2025, with Councillors Pyle and Smith and the Parish Clerk. Letters were issued on 15 September 2025 to the following tenants with plots to be re-inspected during October that were identified as not being maintained or kept as per the allotment rules and regulations:
 - Poultry Centre – x2 small holding tenants and x1 allotment tenant, however it was noted the allotment tenant has been unable to see to the plot due to being out of the area.
 - Front Street East: x7 allotment tenants.
 - Rear of Rogerson Close/Terrace: all satisfactory – no matters to report.
 - Clerk shared feedback from x6 tenants to date for information.
 - Clerk highlighted an allotment to the rear of Front Street East has remained vacant since March/April with the condition deteriorating in terms of being overgrown and not maintained.
 - As part of the inspection, Councillors suggested of installing new internal boundary fencing between 3 allotments to the rear of Front Street East to help make look more presentable and easier to inspect as the existing boundary is not clear. Councillor Kerrison suggested new external boundary fencing to be considered also.
 - In relation to the tree works at the Poultry Centre, as part of the inspection, it was noted the trees had not been cut down to ground level as per the quotation. Clerk has since raised with the contractor who confirmed the allotment tenant requested for them to be left at that height as they are holding the fence up.
 - At the same allotment, the area behind the fence was queried with the tenant and confirmed the fence was already in place when the tenant took over the allotment.

Garages:

- Langley Lodge Developments confirmed on 6 August 2025, when they re-start works on the WMC, they will also demolish the garage, however, no further update has been received. Councillor Pyle raised there may be confusion over the garage demolition/removal (including its contents) following discussion with a local resident.

Resolved: Updates For Members' information. Approval was given to the small holding tenant to erect a shed and field shelter as well as new external fencing/gate to their plot. A date of the allotment re-inspection is to be arranged during October. Clerk to respond to allotment tenants following feedback. Internal/external fencing quotations to be sourced for consideration at a future meeting.

Clerk to contact Langley Lodge Developments to clarify the removal of the garage, including its contents and determine if there are any associated costs to the PC.

iii. Funding for Boulders:

Clerk confirmed no response has been received following the initial contact from Tarmac in July and questioned if the PC is to await for a response or to re-visit alternative options via Durham County Council.

Resolved: Preference was to await contact from Tarmac in the first instance.

iv. Tree Planting Scheme:

A response was received from DCC on 13 August 2025; the proposed new location is not in Croxdale and Hett Parish area; it is within Spennymoor's boundary with the proposal being planting of the small paddock near the school in Tudhoe, with a native broadleaf woodland to be planted in the coming winter and spring. Although the new proposal is not officially in Croxdale and Hett boundary, Members were still supportive of the scheme.

Resolved: For Members' information.

v. Browney FC:

Clerk confirmed the container was removed on 4 September 2025 with a few items still to be disposed of in addition to the goal posts to be moved back to their original location.

Resolved: For Members' information. Councillor Kerrison offered assistance in removing the items, if required.

vi. Breach of Planning – Fencing at Front Street, Croxdale:

A response was received from DCC on 09 September 2025 confirming they are continuing to actively engage with the owners of these properties in order to rectify the breaches of planning control that has been identified. This matter remains under investigation and are monitoring progress to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to resolve the situation.

Resolved: For Members' information.

vii. Pothole, Hett Lane:

Clerk confirmed this was reported to DCC on 31 July 2025, with the case now been resolved.

Resolved: For Members' information.

55/25 Parish Clerk Update / Correspondence:

(i) 2025/26 Parish Council Insurance:

The Parish Council's annual insurance premium for 2025/26 is £499.64.

Resolved: For Members Information.

(ii) Street Lighting Hett Phase 2:

Correspondence was received from DCC on 2 September 2025 in relation to phase 2 of the street lighting works at Hett. Consideration was given in relation to the relocation of the street lighting columns on the Village Green, however, the relocation of lamp post 721 was queried given, the proposed new location is approx. 30 yards from column no. 701, and whether it is necessary to have x2 columns in close proximity of each other. In view of the new proposed location, it is preferred for the existing location of 721 to be retained, given there's been no recorded incidents (to the PC knowledge) of incidents involving the street lighting.

Resolved: For Members Information. Clerk to feedback to DCC accordingly.

56/25. Financial Matters:

(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 31 August 2025:

A financial update prepared by the Clerk was circulated to Members which included a detailed schedule of receipts and payments for the financial year to date and bank reconciliation to 31 August 2025. The current net bank balances totalled £67,986.98.

The following payments were approved for the period August 2025:

Parish Clerk	Clerk's Wages – August 2025 + 2025/26 Pay Award	£548.34
HMRC	Tax Contributions	£137.00
Dave Dove	GDPR Email Accounts Fee – Monthly Charge	£32.00
Amazon	Dog Fouling Stencils and Spray Paint	£22.11

Resolved: For Members' Information. The above payments were approved for payment.

57/25. Hett Drainage – Deed of Easement:

Clerk confirmed the land easements have now been finalised for one of the landowners, Mr Gregory, and requires signature from the Chairman and Clerk. Clerk also confirmed their Solicitor costs have been confirmed as £1,200 (inc. VAT), which was paid last year (as undertakings), therefore no further payment is required.

The revised land easements were also shared with the remaining landowner, Mrs Willets, and are currently awaiting feedback in addition of confirmation of Solicitor fees.

Resolved: The land easements documentation was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk. Clerk to contact Alliance to request revised costs with a view to agree a proposed start date for the drainage works.

58/25. Scheme of Works: Croxdale Cemetery Building Restoration:

Clerk shared quotations that had been sought in respect of the following works:

The stone-built cemetery building (within the cemetery grounds) is to be made water tight in the first instance by way of roof repairs (or replacement roof as required) following assessment, new / replacement guttering and fascia's (including paint work to fascia's) and painting/repair of x2 external doors. Masonry pointing works are also required to enhance the appearance and protect the structure from water penetration and weathering.

Quotations received were as follows:

- Contractor 1 = £720.00 – painting works only
- Contractor 2 = £43,600 – all works
- Contractor 3 = no quotation received

Resolved: Clerk to source quotations for consideration at the next PC meeting, in relation to roof repairs only.

59/25. Planning Issues:

The Clerk reported the Parish Council has received the following planning application(s) for consideration:

- a) DM/25/02428/FPA – Lightsource Limited - Engineering operations including the installation of underground electricity cables, erection of gate and creation of internal service footpath

Resolved: No specific comments / objections were made with regard to the above planning applications.

60/25. County Councillor Reports:

County Councillors had left the meeting when this item was discussed.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

61/25. AOB:

Rubbish, Public Right of Way:

Councillor Hollingsworth raised if the rubbish located on the public rights of way into Croxdale woods could be removed as previously reported.

Resolved: Clerk to follow up with DCC in the first instance.

62/25. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 29 October 2025 at 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.