

Minutes for the Monthly Parish Meeting of Croxdale and Hett Parish Council
Wednesday 29 July 2026, 7.00 pm
Hett Village Hall

Parish Council Members Present:

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

Also Present:

County Councillors J Blakey and G Hutchinson were in attendance.

35/26. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies of absence was received from County Councillor Genner.

36/26. Declarations of Acceptance of Office – Ruth Gardner:

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Ruth Gardner read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Parish Councillor.

Resolved: That Ruth Gardner is now a Member of the Parish Council.

37/26. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

38/26. Policing:

The Clerk shared Policing crime stats: 6 incidents being recorded for the period May 2026 within the Parish. The next PACT Meeting is on Wednesday 12 August 2026, 10.30 am, Croxdale Community Centre.

In relation to June's meeting, there was an incident which required PCSOs which was the reason for no-one attending.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

39/26. Public Participation:

Two members of the public were in attendance to discuss the future of Hett Pond. A briefing paper had been circulated to Members under separate cover. The residents sought the Parish Council's support in relation to the future restoration strategy and upkeep of Hett Village Pond, particularly in light of the current climate and ongoing drought conditions, which in turn were also impacting on the wildlife. They also requested the Parish Council's support in identifying future grant and funding opportunities and establishing a working group to consider the ongoing maintenance and management of the pond.

County Councillor Hutchinson advised that he would make enquiries with the Fire Service regarding the possibility of them filling the pond, as has been done in the past. The issue of street lighting in the vicinity of the pond was also raised, specifically column 706. County Councillor Hutchinson agreed to investigate the matter further.

Resolved: The Parish Council confirmed its full support for the work being undertaken in relation to the future of Hett Village Pond. Councillor Clark agreed to act as the Parish Council's representative on the working group. The Clerk agreed to contact DEFRA to establish what support and assistance may be available to Town and Parish Councils.

40/26. Minutes:

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 24 June 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

41/26. Parish Clerk's Report:

i. Hett Litter Pick:

DCC confirmed Hett litter pick will take place on 31 July 2026.

Resolved: For Members' information.

ii. Abandoned Vehicle at Salvin Street:

Has now been removed, however, Councillor Hollingsworth reported a further abandoned vehicle also located at Salvin Street. Clerk reported initially to DCC however they confirmed that the vehicle was not abandoned and that no further action would be taken. As the vehicle is untaxed this has now been reported to DVLA.

Resolved: For Members' information.

iii. Tree Maintenance, Sunderland Bridge:

Clerk contacted DCC on 14 July 2026 to clarify the requirements and process for a Tree Preservation Order in relation to the tree being located within a conservation area. A quotation for the required works has been obtained; however, further enquiries are required with DCC to confirm land ownership.

Resolved: For Members' information.

iv. Hett Road Planings:

An additional load was delivered on 1 July 2026.

Resolved: For Members' information.

v. Let's Chat Benches:

County Councillor Hutchinson confirmed that funding would be provided for two benches at Salvin Street. It was noted that funding applications may take up to 8 weeks to process once submitted. County Councillor Blakey also confirmed that funding would be provided for two benches, one at Croxdale Playing Field and one at Hett.

The Clerk advised that installation costs were estimated at £200 and confirmed that Believe Housing had been contacted to enquire whether they would be able to install the Salvin Street benches at no cost. No response had been received to date. In relation to the plaques, the Clerk advised that these are fitted prior to the benches being dispatched and that the wording is subject to a character limit. The Clerk also provided Members with examples of plaques fitted to other benches of a similar theme.

Councillor Hollingsworth provided feedback received from local residents regarding the accessibility of the proposed benches at Salvin Street. It was suggested that installing a

footpath or suitable access across the grassed area would improve accessibility and enable greater use of the benches by wheelchair users and residents with mobility difficulties.

Resolved: The Parish Council thanked County Councillor Blakey for agreeing to provide funding for the benches at Croxdale and Hett. The Clerk is to follow up with Believe Housing to establish whether they would be willing to install the benches located on their land at no cost. If this was not possible, the Parish Council agreed to meet the installation costs, given the location when delivery is made. It was also agreed that the Parish Council would fund the plaques to allow for additional wording and provide flexibility should the information require updating in the future. Clerk to pass on the feedback from local residents to Believe Housing as landowners regarding the accessibility of the benches at Salvin Street.

vi. Overgrown Public Right of Way, Croxdale:

Was reported to DCC on 29 June 2026, the Public Rights of Way Team are still looking into the footpath in question and maintenance.

Resolved: For Members' information.

vii. Overgrown Public Right of Way, Hett:

Was reported to DCC on 29 June 2026, the Public Rights of Way Team confirmed on 9 July 2026 that the footpath was sprayed in April and is due 2 more cuts over the summer.

Councillor Griffiths raised could the width of the footpath be reviewed again; while it may meet the required width when it is regularly maintained, once the vegetation becomes overgrown, the path can become virtually impassable.

Resolved: For Members' information. Clerk to contact DCC accordingly.

viii. Grass Cutting, Croxdale Tommy:

The cemetery maintenance contractor confirmed that 3/4 visits over the summer for the 2 Tommies would be sufficient at £30 a visit.

Resolved: For Members' information. The additional grass cutting maintenance was approved.

ix. Damage - Hett Bus Stop:

Was reported to DCC on 26 June 2026; repairs remain outstanding.

Resolved: For Members' information.

x. Trees Obstruction, Hett:

Was reported to DCC on 14 July 2026 as a highways concern near to number 1, the Grove and currently awaiting a response.

Resolved: For Members' information.

xi. Cricket Field Byelaw:

Councillor Pyle requested for the existing byelaw prohibiting dogs on the cricket field to be discussed following feedback from residents. It was noted that the byelaw is not currently enforced and that residents regularly use the playing field to exercise their dogs. Members therefore discussed whether the Parish Council should consider revoking the existing byelaw.

Resolved: Given that the field is used for multiple purposes, it was agreed that the existing byelaw is no longer considered fit for purpose and should be formally revoked. The Clerk is to investigate the relevant procedures for revocation.

42/26. Financial Matters:

(i) Financial Report for the Period 1 April – 30 June 2026:

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 30 June 2026. The current net bank balances totalled £66,484.11.

The following payments were approved for the period July 2026:

Parish Clerk	Clerk's Wages – July 2026	£487.90
HMRC	Tax Contributions	£121.80
Dave Dove	GDPR Email Accounts Fee – Monthly Charge	£80.00
Oliver's Tree Services	Tree Survey – Croxdale Cemetery	£204.00
Destro Landscapes	Cemetery Maintenance – February – July 2026	£2,603.47
ICO	2026/27 GDPR Fee	£47.00

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

43/26. Hett Drainage:

Clerk confirmed no further update from the PC solicitor regarding the land survey cost and its purpose has been received.

Resolved: For Members' Information. Clerk to contact DCC's Drainage Team regarding the drainage project, including any potential issues associated with Hett Pond on the village green, which is located nearby.

44/26. Parish Council Allotments, Garages and Cemeteries:

The following updates were provided by the Clerk in relation to allotments:

- Road plainings for the Poultry Centre were delivered to the Croxdale Inn car park on 2 July 2026.
- Allotment inspection is proposed to take place on the afternoon of 1 September, time TBC.
- A tenant at the Poultry Centre has recently passed away; a joint tenancy is in place.
- The tree to the rear of Front Street East was to be re-inspected today by DCC, however no report has yet been received.

Resolved: Updates For Members' Information. Allotment inspection was agreed to take place at 4.30pm on 1 September 2026. The Clerk to contact the family member in due course regarding the existing joint tenancy arrangement, as the tenant does not reside within the Parish.

Croxdale Cemetery:

Clerk confirmed the tree survey at Croxdale Cemetery was undertaken on 26 June 2026 by Oliver's Tree Services. A total of 15 trees were identified as requiring works, however all were classed as desirable and non-essential. Costs for undertaken the works required were also provided.

Clerk queried the anticipated timescales for the required scheme of works to the Cemetery building, following confirmation that the building could not be classified as a listed building. The quotations previously received are now approaching one year old, with all contractors recommending that the roof be replaced.

Resolved: The tree works were approved to be carried out ahead of the next scheduled tree inspection by Oliver's Tree Services. Clerk to arrange accordingly. It was agreed that the scheme of works for the cemetery building would be reconsidered at a future date. Members noted that the Parish Council obtained possessory title for Croxdale Cemetery in April 2025 and will not obtain absolute title until 2035.

45/26. Planning Issues:

No new planning applications was discussed/received.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

46/26. County Councillor Reports:

County Councillor Hutchinson provided an update on a number of local matters, including fly-tipping incidents reported on Hett Mill Lane, the refusal of the planning application for the installation of a wind turbine at Amazon, a joint walkaround of the Parish with Believe Housing, and upcoming events at Croxdale Community Centre.

Resolved: For Members' Information.

47/26. Other Reports:

Path Maintenance:

Councillor Clark requested that a letter of thanks be sent to a Croxdale resident in recognition of their efforts in clearing a public right of way through Croxdale Woods.

Resolved: Clerk to issue letter accordingly to the resident concerned.

48/26. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 30 September 2026 at 7.00 pm, Croxdale Community Centre.