

**DARRAS HALL ESTATE COMMITTEE
MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 2021**

Present: Mr D Haley (Joint Chair) Mr S Savin (Joint Chair)
 Mr D Gardener Mr J Scott
 Mr A Gilchrist Mr D Stangroom
 Mrs S Hill Mrs C Thompson
 Mrs S Jaidka Mr G Warrender
 Mr A Pile Mr G Wright
 Mr S Ramsey

1. Apologies for Absence:

-

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 07 December, 2020 were signed as correct.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous Meeting:

-

4. Planning Applications:

Please refer to plans minutes.

5. Financial Report:

- The financial report was distributed for review.
- Mrs Duffy gave an explanation on the operation of the accounts.
- It was agreed that due to costs involved that would apply for payments to be made on new website via card, that the only online option available would be via online banking.
- Discussion took place regarding various methods of distribution of invoices/rent charges and it was agreed that due to the charges incurred, payment by direct debit was not a feasible option. This matter would be looked into further. Mrs Duffy is currently looking into a new Sage account which could create all invoices/rent charges.

6. Sub-Committee Reports:

6.1 Highways

- Pedestrian crossing at Broadway is now complete.
- Gulley wagon has been out and has cleaned drains on Woodside.

6.2 Land & Property

- Annual walk still to be organised.
- Concern was expressed that Phase 1 of the resurfacing of the Bridlepath is not satisfactory. The main problem is that a camber was not installed, thus resulting in accumulation of water on the path. It was agreed that the Estate Office contact Debmatt to carry out a survey to assess the problematic section which needs to be rectified before work commences on the second section of the path.

6.4 Media

- Sub-Group to be formed to discuss way forward.
- Prior to going live, the Committee request that a staging area be available for the new website which would give the opportunity to view content and layout.
- Formal notice has been submitted to Retox who have stated that our agreement requires a three month termination period. As there is no written contract, the Committee agreed that they would give 30 days' notice from the date of notice of termination.

6.3 Airport

- It was reported that KLM have withdrawn their service from Newcastle Airport.

7. Letters Received & Any Other Business:

Ponteland United Reform Church

The Church is now considering various options for its future, including giving up its lease or assigning it to a third party. Advice needed from Committee on how the Church might go about that and what requirements the Estate Committee might have?

The Committee are going to have to involve their lawyers in this and would expect the Trust to settle any such fees. Confirmation of acceptance required.

Ponteland Community Partnership

As a result of audit, it has transpired that no official thank you has been sent from the Committee to Ponteland Community Partnership for the educational information pedestal that has been installed at Grasslands.

Mrs Woodall to action.

Form of Proxy

Suggested new wording/layout for Form of Proxy has been received from Mr D Turner. Committee were thankful for the suggestion and would look into this matter further at a later date.

Graeme Dorwood

Correspondence received and content noted.

Privacy Notice

A privacy notice was distributed for review. Mr Gilchrist expressed concern regarding the personal information section. Committee agreed that this notice be used on the website.

AGM 2021

Due to the special circumstances that still very much apply, the Committee were in agreement that the AGM scheduled for 31 March, 2021 would be deferred until late May 2021 which would enable the Committee to provide a more impressive virtual meeting with better communication and feedback ability etc. All communication regarding this deferral will be included in rent charge notice envelopes, together with request for preference for communication and any other relevant information. It was agreed that the website will be the main information point in the way forward.

19 Old Station Court

Correspondence received from potential purchasers seeking the consent of the Estate Committee for the property to be transferred. Strictly speaking, the potential purchasers do not qualify under the Old Station Court restrictive covenants.

The Committee were in agreement that they would consent for the property to be transferred on the basis that the potential purchasers were previously long-standing owners on Darras Hall for 35 years. This is a one-off and is not setting a precedent.

Darras Hall Fibre Scheme

A campaign to secure full fibre broadband for Darras Hall has been boosted by news the estate could be included in a £5bn nationwide gigabit programme. Intervention by MP Guy Opperman comes in response to the Darras Hall Community Fibre Scheme campaign, which aims to improve the poor broadband that some areas of Darras Hall continue to suffer.

The Committee agreed to support the infrastructure of the fibre scheme.

7 Darras Road

Due to the extent of demolition of property, Committee agreed that three inspections were necessary for this major structural alteration.

3 Station Cottages

Extensive refurbishment of property is required in order to bring it up to habitable standard. Committee agreed that three quotations be obtained for work required in relation to list prepared by Mr Gardner. Discussion took place as to whether or not it would be financially beneficial in the long run to consider the removal of internal wall between kitchen/living room and the installation of patio doors. Mr Savin to liaise with Dobsons Estate Agents to discuss this matter further.

Date & Time of Next Meeting: Monday, 22 February 2021 at 19:00 hours via Zoom.

Committee members were instructed to erase all emails and plans accordingly.

