

LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 11 July 2017

St Edwin's Church Hall, High Coniscliffe, 7pm

ATTENDANCE: Cllrs: M Ellerton (Chair), L Steel, S Gatenby, C McLay, P Ellerton, T Stuckey, A Craggs, WC G Lee, M Bailey (Clerk).

1 Apologies: WC P Crudass (on holiday)

2 Declarations of Interest: None

3 Public Forum: Street lighting replacement in Low Coniscliffe.

P Clark, S Clark and B Hall were welcomed to the meeting as members of the public and raised concerns regarding the replacement street lights that Darlington Borough Council are intending to install.

Cllr P Ellerton presented some background information on street lighting in Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent. The current lights were purchased by the PC in 1966. It was subsequently agreed that they would be maintained by Durham County Council whilst ownership remained with the PC.

DBC have embarked on a program to replace street lights that are more energy efficient and meet all current standards of public safety. DBC have not consulted with the PC on the replacement units which the PC believe are completely unsuitable for a rural location.

Some members of the PC and residents have directly raised the concerns about proposed locations and style with Martin Clarkson in Highways Department who appeared sympathetic to the situation. DBC have agreed to attend a meeting with the PC and residents to further discuss the matter, including solutions that are acceptable to the community.

The PC unanimously resolved that the proposed replacement lighting is unsuitable and that information on a suitable alternative should be gathered and presented to DBC for consideration.

Action: M Bailey to write to DBC to formally express the view of the PC by 15 July 17. M Bailey to gather information on suitable alternative street lighting by 5 Aug 17 then arrange meeting with DBC to consider the alternative solution.

4 Minutes of Last Meeting:

The minutes from the meeting held on the 16 May 17 were signed.

5 Finance and Accounts:

5.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 July 17 was £13916.12 and £45.72 in petty cash. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £3962.

5.2 Expenses approved since the last meeting: Neighbourhood Plan (NP) sundries (£15.23 and £259.17 from grant), NP web-site development and commissioning by LJ Digital Media (£420.00 from grant), NP printing (£18.88 from grant), Donation for use of hall for NP drop-in event (£75.00 from grant), Donation for summer event (£250.00), M Ferguson for planning consultancy (£855.00), Printing signs / postage (£48.45).

5.3 Expenses approved at the meeting: Clerk salary Jun / July 17 (£191.67), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£47.92), Parish maintenance Apr to Jun 17 (£180.33).

5.4 Consolidation of Current and Business Reserve Accounts. It was resolved that these are to be consolidated due to the very low rate of interest on the Reserve Account.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton and Cllr L Steel to arrange transfer of funds from Reserve Account to Current Account and close Reserve Account. By 31 Aug 17.

5.5 Additional signatory for cheques. It was resolved that Cllr T Stuckey be registered as an additional signatory for cheques to cover in the absence of Cllr M Ellerton / Cllr L Steel.

Action: Cllr T Stuckey to be registered as signatory by 31 Aug 17.

6 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

6.1 Register of Interests and Acceptance of Office Declarations. These have been completed by all Cllrs and taken to the Town Hall. They are not required to be uploaded to the PC web-site.

6.2 Annual Return 2016-17. It was reported that this has been accepted by the External Auditor with no comments.

6.3 Inaccurate information in Conservation Status assessment report. Information to be sent to Conservation Officer.

Action: S Clark to send information to DBC conservation Officer. By 31 July 17.

6.4 Book Exchange in Low Coniscliffe. This is now in operation with many donations of books being made. Thanks to Cllrs C McLay and S Gatenby for organising the donations and periodic monitoring of the exchange. It was reported that only one instance of books left on the floor so far. A maintenance checklist has been created by Cllr T Stuckey and the first inspection completed by Cllr C McLay. A member of the public raised the suggestion of obtaining a red telephone kiosk for the village. It was estimated this might cost £1000 to £3000 and could be considered at a later date as this would need to be built into a future precept.

6.5 Enforcement action re untidy land in Low Coniscliffe. The appearance and public safety of the land continue to cause concern and distress. It is understood that the land owner is due to make a pre-approval application for development of the land for construction of a residence for personal use. The Enforcement Officer has agreed to a site visit with the PC and land owner at a future date to directly hear the concerns of PC / residents and to explain the circumstances under which enforcement action can be taken.

Actions: M Bailey to request monthly progress updates from the Enforcement Officer. By 14 Aug and 14 Sep 17. M Bailey to arrange site visit with PC, Enforcement Officer and land owner by 31 Aug 17.

6.6 Neighbourhood Plan (NP). S Clark gave an update. There have been lots of meetings and a database of information from the drop-in event has been compiled. This is to be used by the NP consultant to prepare the draft vision and objectives for the NP. A meeting has been scheduled with a new contact at DBC to present progress to date and ensure they are satisfied with the plan development activities.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at the PC meeting in Sept.

6.7 Merrybent noticeboard. This is now scheduled to be installed by 31 July 17.

6.8 Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent. DBC Highways have stated they have not identified any solutions to resolve the risk of nuisance parking now that white stones and plant barrels have been removed. The PC have a preference for white posts to be installed approx. 6 inches from the roadside. The possibility of small signs on the verges was also discussed.

Action: M Bailey to send the PC preferred solution to P Ibbertson and request a meeting to discuss further. By 8 Aug 17.

6.9 Damage in Community Forest. A report on actions required to prevent further damage to trees and saplings in the Community Forest has not yet been received. A follow up e-mail to enquire on progress has been sent to P Roxby.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton to give update at next PC meeting.

6.10 Air pollution monitoring. Friends of the Earth have not supplied the monitoring equipment that was requested. Not to be progressed further.

6.11 Campaign to Protect Rural England. It was resolved to subscribe to CPRE at a cost of £36 per year.

Action: M Bailey to arrange payment of subscription by 31 Aug 17

6.12 Parish Council Insurance. It was reported the premium has been paid.

7 Planning applications and decisions:

7.1 A planning application 73 Low Coniscliffe(17/00327/FUL) for a first floor extension and associated works at 73 Low Coniscliffe was reviewed. It was concluded that a site visit should be arranged to reach a decision.

Action: Cllr L Steel to arrange a site visit by 21 July 17 then M Bailey to inform DBC of the PC decision on the application.

7.2 It was reported that the planning application for 33 dwellings to the east of Gate Lane (16/01231/FUL) is being amended to make provision for affordable housing. New drawings will be required and this will extend the date of determination.

8 Highway Matters: Diversion of Public Right of Way. DBC have responded to the concerns raised by the PC at informal consultation. DBC have decided to progress the diversion order and formal consultation.

9 Parish Matters: None

10 Items for future consideration: A member of the public asked about the possibility of reinstating the 4 old style street signs in Low Coniscliffe at a cost of £240. It was recognised that permission would be needed from Highways Dept and that funds would need to be raised.

11 Correspondence: None

12 Feedback from meetings attended: It was reported that the minutes of a recent meeting of the Association of Parish Councils highlighted that a presentation on planning had been given and included a view that small villages should not be targeted for development activities.

13 Date of next meeting: 19 Sept 17 at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

M Bailey
19/9/17

Summary of Decisions and Actions from LC and Mb PC meeting – 11 July 17

Minute Ref	Decision/Item	Action
3	PC resolved that the proposed replacement street lighting in Low Coniscliffe is unsuitable for a rural location.	M Bailey to write to DBC with PC decision by 15 July 17. M Bailey to gather information on a suitable alternative by 5 Aug 17 then arrange meeting with DBC to discuss.
5.4	Consolidation of Current and Business Reserve accounts.	Cllrs M Ellerton and L Steel to arrange transfer of funds by 31 Aug 17.
5.5	Cllr T Stuckey to be registered as a signatory for cheques.	Cllr T Stuckey to register with bank by 31 Aug 17.
6.3	Inaccurate information in Conservation Status assessment report.	S Clark to send information to DBC conservation officer by 31 July 17.
6.5	Enforcement action regarding untidy land	M Bailey to request monthly progress reports from the Enforcement Officer. By 14 Aug and 14 Sep 17. M Bailey to arrange site visit with PC, Enforcement Officer and land owner by 31 Aug 17.
6.6	Neighbourhood Plan	Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at next PC meeting.
6.7	New noticeboard for Merrybent	Scheduled to be installed by 31 July 17.
6.8	Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent	M Bailey to send PC preferred solution to P Ibbertson and request further meeting. By 8 Aug 17.
6.9	Community Forest	Cllr M Ellerton to provide update at next PC meeting.
6.11	CPRE subscription	M Bailey to arrange subscription at cost of £36 per year. By 31 Aug 17.
7.1	Planning application 17/00327/FUL, 73 Low Coniscliffe.	Cllr L Steel to arrange site visit by 21 July 17 then M Bailey DBC of PC decision.