

LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 14 March 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

2 Declarations of Interest: None

3 Public Forum: No members of the public were present.

4 Minutes of Last Meeting:

The minutes from the meeting held on the 24 Jan 17 were signed.

5 Finance and Accounts:

5.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 March 17 was £5141.84 and £74.12 in petty cash. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £5120.

5.2 Expenses approved since the last meeting: Spare batteries for speed visors (£237.60), Web-site development and commissioning by LJ Digital Media (£495.00 from Transparency Code grant), Parish Council document scan and upload to web-site 2014 to 2016 (£237.50 from Transparency Code grant).

Expenses approved at the meeting: Clerk salary Feb / Mar 17 (£166.70), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£41.68), Parish Council document scan and upload to web-site Jan to Mar 17 (£37.50 from Transparency Code grant), Parish maintenance Jan to Mar 17 (£39.99), Document copying for hedgerow ownership application (£104.09), Transfer of funds held on behalf of Events Committee (£424.00).

5.3 Recovery of VAT. The Clerk reported that £819.98 of VAT from the purchase of speed visors has been received. A further application for £171.97 of VAT for expenses between Nov 16 to Jan 17 is in progress.

5.4 Clerk salary review. It was resolved that a 3% salary rise be awarded, and that an additional £120 / annum be included in respect of additional workload associated with Transparency Code compliance. Total salary effective 1 April 17 to be £1150 and £287.50 tax.

6 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

6.1 Expenses for charging speed visor batteries. Cllr T Stuckey has been reimbursed £5.88 for electricity used over the last 6 months.

6.2 Inaccurate information in Conservation Status assessment report. It was reported that S Clark has evidence of buildings in Low Coniscliffe that pre-date the information contained in the DBC Conservation Assessment Report.

Action: S Clark to send information to DBC conservation Officer. By 7 Apr 17.

6.3 Adoption of Phone Kiosk in Low Coniscliffe. It was suggested the phone kiosk might be used as a 'library'. Project scope and costs to be determined. A decision on a suitable use will be taken at a later date.

Action: Cllr P Ellerton to assemble project information and costs. By 28 Apr 17

6.4 Enforcement action re untidy land in Low Coniscliffe. It was reported the landowner is currently having a house designed and will be seeking pre-application advice from DBC planning dept. The Enforcement Officer has committed to monitoring appearance and safety of the land while this is progressing.

Actions: M Bailey to request monthly progress updates from the Enforcement Officer. By 14 Apr and 14 May 17.

6.5 Neighbourhood Plan (NP). It was reported that DBC will provide support for the development of the NP as set out in the DBC Statement of Community Involvement. A meeting has been arranged with the Whittington NP committee to learn from their progress to date. An application is underway for funding from Locality for initial NP activities due to complete by Sept 17. This will include an engagement session with the public to generate ideas for the NP. This information will be used to draft a vision and objectives for the NP

Actions: M Bailey to complete grant application by 24 March 17. Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at the PC meeting in May.

6.6 Website for compliance with Transparency Code. The Parish Council web-site was launched on 27 Feb 17.

6.7 Elmridge planting and maintenance. This will commence in mid-May.

6.8 Merrybent noticeboard. It was reported that the noticeboard had become unsafe due to rotten posts and has been removed. Costs from 3 suppliers were discussed and it was agreed that a further quote should be requested from Simco of Darlington.

Action: M Bailey to request quotation from Simco by 7 Apr 17.

6.9 Big Spring Clean. The date for this has been moved to Saturday 8 April 17, 1400 to 1530h, to allow greater attendance.

6.10 Subscription to Co Durham Association of Local Councils. Arrangements have been made to subscribe from 1 Apr 17.

6.11 Concern about cycling on riverbank footpath, Low Coniscliffe. It was agreed that it would be necessary for the individual(s) creating a risk to the public to be identified and reported to the Police for action.

7 Planning applications and decisions:

7.1 A planning application (17/00149/FUL) for erection of a first floor extension to the rear of 66 Merrybent 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 24 Mar 17 then M Bailey to inform DBC of the PC decision on the application.

- 8 **Highway Matters: Large stones on grass verges in Merrybent.** Residents have been informed by DBC that they must remove any large stones from the grass verges next to the A67 as they are a trip hazard. There is concern that this will lead to damage to the grass verges due to increased car parking. Several potential solutions were discussed, including the installation of white posts or moving the stones to greater than 18 inches from the roadside. Further dialogue with DBC Highways Manager is required.

Action: Cllr T Stuckey to contact Highways Manager and Ian Thompson (Streetscene) to raise concerns and seek solutions. By 7 Apr 17.

9 **Parish Matters:**

- 9.1 **Activity in the Community Forest.** It was reported that a large number of saplings have been cut down. This has been reported to DBC and a formal response is awaited. A copy of the conditions of ownership of the Community Forest have been sent to DBC. It was resolved that notices should be posted to give guidance to the public on reasonable behaviour whilst in the Community Forest.

Action: Cllr P Ellerton to display notices by 24 Mar 17.

- 9.2 **Air pollution monitoring.** DBC have removed the equipment for the on-going monitoring of air quality. Cllr P Ellerton gave details of monitors available from Friends of the Earth at a cost of £10 each. It was resolved that 3 should be installed.

Action: Cllr P Ellerton to arrange for 3 air quality monitors to be installed. By 28 Apr 17.

10 **Items for future consideration:** None

11 **Correspondence:** None

12 **Feedback from meetings attended:** None

13 **Date of next meeting:** 16 May at 7.00pm, this is the Annual Parish Assembly and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

M Ellerton
16/5/17

Summary of Decisions and Actions from LC and Mb Parish Council Meeting – 14 March 17

Minute Ref	Decision/item	Action
5.4	Clerk salary review (3% increase and additional £120/yr for work associated with transparency code)	Resolved this should increase to £1150 from 1 Apr 17
6.2	Inaccurate information in Conservation Status assessment report	S Clark to send new information to DBC Conservation Assessment Officer. By 7 Apr 17.
6.3	Suggestion that phone kiosk in Low Coniscliffe is to be used as a library	Cllr P Ellerton to assemble project information and costs. By 28 Apr 17.
6.4	Enforcement action regarding untidy land	M Bailey to request monthly progress reports from the Enforcement Officer. By 14 Apr and 14 May 17.
6.5	Neighbourhood Plan	M Bailey to complete grant application. By 24 Mar 17. Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at next PC meeting.
6.8	New noticeboard for Merrybent	M Bailey to request quote from Simco. By 7 Apr 17.
7.1	Planning Application 17/00149/FUL for first floor extension to rear of 66 Merrybent.	Cllr L Steel to arrange site visit by 24 Mar 17. M Bailey to advise DBC of PC decision.
8	DBC request to remove large stones from grass verges in Merrybent	Cllr T Stuckey to liaise with DBC Highways Manager and Streetscene to raise desire to protect grass verges from damage due to vehicles. By 7 Apr 17.
9.1	Community Forest	Cllr P Ellerton to display notices to give guidance on reasonable behaviour to public whilst in Community Forest
9.3	Air pollution monitoring	Cllr P Ellerton to arrange for 3 monitors to be installed at cost of £10 each. By 28 Apr 17.