

LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 24 January 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 29 November 2016 were signed.

5 Finance and Accounts:

5.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 January 17 was £6477.17 and £84.00 in petty cash. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £4703.62.

A grant of £1449.16 has been received from County Durham Association of Local Councils to fund the set-up of a website for compliance with the Transparency Code.

5.2 An application has been made for a precept of £10390 for the next financial year (an increase of 88%) has been submitted and accepted by DBC. This includes an additional £2000 for Planning Consultancy above the precept agreed at the November meeting. This was agreed by all Cllrs.

5.3 Expenses approved since the last meeting: Hire of St Edwins Church Hall (£180.00), Refreshments for Christmas Carol event (£119.50), Hire of Cockerton Brass Band (£75.00), Printing of documents associated with Planning Application Gate Lane East (£111.19). Expenses approved at the meeting: Clerk salary Dec/Jan (£166.66), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£41.66), Laptop, scanner and software for PC website (£637.97 from Transparency Code grant), Parish maintenance Oct to Dec 16 (£110.00), Maria Ferguson for planning consultancy (£650.00), M Ellerton for printer ink (£20.00).

5.4 It was resolved that Cllr M Ellerton has authority to approve future expenditure of up to £1000 on planning consultancy without needing further approval from all Cllrs.P

6 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

6.1 Spare batteries and power consumption for speed visors. These have been received. The suppliers advise the power consumption for recharging is 0.06 kW/h. It was agreed this expense should be reimbursed to Cllr T Stuckey.

Action: M Bailey to calculate expense for 2017 & arrange reimbursement. By 14 Feb 17

6.2 Inaccurate information in Conservation Status assessment report. This is under investigation by S Clark who will raise findings directly with the DBC Conservation Assessment Officer.

Action: S Clark to complete investigation and raise with Officer. By 28 Feb 17.

6.3 Adoption of Phone Kiosk in Low Coniscliffe. The kiosk has now been formally adopted by the Parish Council. It was suggested it might be used as a 'library'. A decision on a suitable use will be taken at a later date.

6.4 Enforcement action re untidy land in Low Coniscliffe. It was reported that some progress has been made with regard to the appearance of the site. A further site visit is required to

Actions: M Bailey to arrange site visit with Cllrs Gatenby and Steel during w/c 30 Jan 17 to determine what further works are necessary. M Bailey to write to M Conyard and request completion date (again). By 10 Feb 17.

6.5 Neighbourhood Plan. It was reported that attempts to make contact with people from Blackwell Grange area have been unsuccessful. A meeting has been arranged with DBC to complete the documentation to apply for Neighbourhood Status. This is the first step in the process leading to application for funding and then consultation with the residents of the Parish to identify content for the Neighbourhood Plan.

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

6.6 Website for compliance with Transparency Code. M Bailey reported that a grant of £1449.16 has been received to fund this project. A laptop and scanner have been purchased. The website is under construction at this address: lowconiscliffeandmerrybentpc.org.uk. Documents from 2014 to date are to be scanned and uploaded by the Clerk.

Action: M Bailey to scan documents and upload to website. By 31 March 2017.

7 Planning applications and decisions:

7.1 A letter of objection from the PC has been submitted with regard to application 16/01231/FUL for a proposed development of up to 34 dwellings to the east of Gate Lane.

7.2 Cllr M Ellerton reported that a meeting with Andrew Harker had taken place to discuss the planning applications under consideration. The proposed development to the west of Gate Lane lacks responses to multiple requests for information (environmental etc) and ownership of the hedgerow is still uncertain. It is likely that the decision will be deferred (again) to March and may be taken to the Planning Committee for a decision at same time as the proposed development to the east of Gate Lane.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton to send note to WC G Lee about lack of response to enquiries sent to A Harker and the serious concern about the further delay to the decision. By 4 Feb 2017.

7.3 It is noted that several planning related decisions have been taken by the PC outside of formal meetings. These have been necessary due to the high volume of potential developments currently in progress. All Cllrs were in agreement with:

Letter of objection to 16/01231/FUL, Response to ELG regarding the pre-application consultation on the proposed development 'Coniscliffe Park', Authorisation of recent expenses (£650) due to Maria Ferguson for planning consultancy, and agreement to meeting with DBC to initiate the process for the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was recognised it may become necessary to hold additional PC meetings to make decisions on planning matters given the amount of activity anticipated in the months ahead.

8 Highway Matters: Works have been completed by DBC to repair a streetlight on Back Lane, and to remove overhanging branches that were obstructing the footway near the bus shelter on the A67 near the entrance to Gate Lane.

9 **Parish Matters:**

9.1 Planting services provided by Elmridge. It was resolved that the contract with Elmridge for the supply of plants and watering / maintenance should be extended for a further 12 months at a cost of £1246.71 (a 3% increase).

Action: M Bailey to inform Elmridge that the PC have agreed to extend the contract and payment will be made in April 2017. By 10 Feb 17.

9.2 Noticeboard in Merrybent. It was reported that one of the posts supporting the noticeboard has rotted at ground level. It was agreed that 3 quotes should be obtained before a vote to approve the expenditure.

Action: M Bailey to obtain 3 quotes from local suppliers. By 24 Feb 17.

9.3 Big Spring Clean. It was agreed that the community should participate in this annual event which runs between 27 Feb and 16 April 17. WC G Lee thanked the PC for involvement in this initiative.

Action: M Bailey to request details by 10 Feb 17 and work with Cllr T Stuckey to organise the event. Date TBA.

9.4 Subscription to Co Durham Association of Local Councils. M Bailey proposed that the PC join this association to benefit from the advisory services information resources that are available. The cost is 16.73p per elector (this financial year).

Action: M Bailey to make arrangements to join CDALC from start of next financial year. By 10 March 17.

10 **Items for future consideration:** A bank account is to be set up by the Events Committee and £424 held by the PC on behalf of the committee will be transferred across.

11 **Correspondence:** None

12 **Feedback from meetings attended:**

12.1 PACT – theft from vehicles. WC Lee reported that there have been a number of thefts from vehicles where access was gained by breaking the window.

Theft from vehicles is often as a result of valuables being on display. To prevent against loss it is good practice to remove items of high value when leaving the vehicle, or leave out of direct sight.

12.2 Cyclists on riverbank footpath. There is concern about the behaviour of some cyclists on the riverbank footpath. Consideration will be given to placement of signage to improve the situation.

Action: M Bailey to investigate appropriate signage. By 10 March 17.

12.3 Campaign for the Protection of Rural Areas. Cllrs M and P Ellerton attended a recent meeting.

13 **Meeting schedule for 2017:** 14 March, 16 May, 11 July, 12 September and 14 November, (all at 7.00pm)

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

M Ellerton
14/3/17

Summary of Decisions and Actions from LC and Mb Parish Council Meeting – 24 January 17

Minute Ref	Decision/Item	Action
5.2	Precept for next financial year to be increased to £10390 (88% rise). This has been accepted by DBC.	
5.4	Resolved that M Ellerton can authorise future expenses of up to £1000 on planning consultancy without need for further approval from Cllrs.	
6.1	Power expenses for speed visor	M Bailey to calculate expense and reimburse Cllr T Stuckey. By 14 Feb 17.
6.2	Inaccurate information in Conservation Status assessment report	S Clark to complete investigation and raise with DBC Conservation Assessment Officer. By 28 Feb 17.
6.4	Enforcement action regarding untidy land	M Bailey to arrange further site visit with Cllrs Gatenby and Steel during w/c 30 Jan 17. M Bailey to write to Enforcement Officer requesting completion date. By 10 Feb 17.
6.5	Neighbourhood Plan (gain Neighbourhood Status)	Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at next PC meeting.
6.6	Web-site for compliance with Transparency code	M Bailey to scan documents and upload to website. By 31 Mar 17
7.2	Concerns re failure of DBC Planning to respond to enquiries on planning applications and further delays to making decision	Cllr M Ellerton to write WC G Lee with concerns. By 4 Feb 17.
7.3	Planning decisions agreed by PC outside of formal meetings: Objections to 16/01231/FUL; pre-application consultation response to EGL on proposed development 'Coniscliffe Park'; authorisation of planning consultancy fees (£650) for Maria Ferguson; agreement to meeting with DBC to progress Neighbourhood Plan.	
9.1	Elmridge planting / maintenance services contract	M Bailey to advise Elmridge that quote has been accepted. By 10 Mar 17
9.2	New noticeboard for Merrybent	M Bailey to obtain 3 quotes. By 24 Feb 17.
9.3	Big spring clean.	M Bailey to obtain details by 10 Feb 17 and work with Cllr T Stuckey to organise event between 27 Feb and 16 April.
9.4	Subscription to Co Durham Association of Local Councils	M Bailey to make arrangements to join from next financial yr. By 10 Mar 17
12.2	Concern about behaviour of some cyclists on riverbank footpath	M Bailey to identify suitable signage to resolve the situation.