

LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 14 Nov 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:

S Clark and M Armstrong were welcomed to the meeting as a representatives of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and Planning Action Group respectively.

4 Minutes of Last Meeting:

The minutes from the meeting held on the 19 Sept 17 were signed.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

5.1 Street lighting replacement in Low Coniscliffe. A meeting of the PC has been arranged for 16 Nov to further discuss this matter with Steve Brannan and Martin Clarkson of DBC. The case will be made for replacement street lighting that is in keeping with a rural location rather than the standard solution being implemented by DBC. This would follow the principles of a guidance given in 'Lighting in the Countryside – Best Practice'.

5.2 Consolidation of current and business reserve accounts / additional signatory for cheques. This is now complete – Cllr T Stuckey is an additional signatory.

5.3 Enforcement action re untidy land in Low Coniscliffe. The land remains in an unsatisfactory condition and the long-term intention for the land is still unknown.

Action: WC G Lee to raise the matter with DBC – by 22 Nov 17.

5.4 Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Sue Clark gave an update on progress with the NP. It was reported that a draft plan has been formulated. A Housing Needs Assessment and Design Codes were being worked on through the Technical Support Grant. A community drop-in event is to be organised for early Jan 18 and also a meeting to update the DBC liaison contact.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at the PC meeting 16 Jan 18.

5.5 Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent. DBC Highways Dept have visited and concluded that currently there is only limited evidence of a problem and that there is no risk to public safety. The situation will be monitored during the coming months and any areas of concern will be brought to the attention of Steve Pryke.

A letter has been received from a resident seeking advice on how to prevent damage to the grass verge outside their property. The PC discussed this and advise the resident refers the matter directly to Steve Pryke at DBC.

Action: M Bailey respond to resident with the PC advice. By 26 Nov 17.

5.6 Damage in Community Forest. A report on actions required to prevent further damage to trees and saplings in the Community Forest has still not yet been received. The matter will be carried forward to the PC meeting 16 Jan 18.

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

5.7 External audit 2016 - 17. The conclusion of the audit has been publicised and is now complete.

5.8 Adverse possession of hedgerow Gate Lane, Low Coniscliffe. Legal advice has been received regarding an assessment of probability of success if the PC wish to take the matter to tribunal. Concern was expressed regarding the potential costs associated with being unsuccessful at tribunal. A further meeting will be organised to discuss the advice received and make a decision on the way forward. This meeting needs to take place before 28 Nov 17.

Action: M Bailey to arrange meeting. By 21 Nov 17.

5.9 Maintenance of verge adjacent to A67. A response has been sent to Close Thornton and no further information received.

5.10 Provision for legal expenses in PC insurance policy. Zurich Municipal have confirmed that cover for defence costs following a property dispute made by a third party would be considered and does not extend to any additional damages claimed by a third party.

5.11 Defibrillator. It has been confirmed that there is no funding available from DBC for community defibrillators. British Heart Foundation operate a scheme subject to location, availability and training conditions. Through this scheme the PC would need to make a contribution of £600 per unit, and it was suggested that 3 units would be required. Matter to be considered as a future project.

6 Finance and Accounts:

6.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 Nov 17 was £14981.36 and £45.72 in petty cash. This includes a recent Neighbourhood Plan grant of £6350 and a VAT rebate of £436.75. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £4081.

6.2 Expenses approved since the last meeting: Printer ink / postage (£31.00), NP stationery (£18.74 from grant), NP consultancy (£1560.00 from grant), Return of unused NP grant funds (£410.01), Planning consultancy (£665.00), Printer cartridge / paper (£75.09), St Edwins church hall hire for 8 meetings (£240.00).

6.3 Expenses approved at the meeting: Clerk salary Oct/Nov 17 (£191.67), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£47.92), Parish maintenance Oct to Nov 17 (£10.00), Supply and fitting of DVD shelves in library (£110.00).

6.4 A final version of the PC budget and proposed precept for 2018-19 financial year was presented and discussed. It was resolved (with 1 abstention) to set a precept of £11450 (10.2% increase) for the 2018-19 financial subject to no further planned expenditure being identified before 12 Jan 18.

7 Planning applications and decisions:

7.1 Approval has been granted for application 17/00870/FUL, erection of a first floor extension and timber storage building at 73 Low Coniscliffe.

7.2 It was reported that an Environment Impact Assessment will be required as part of the pre-approval application for the proposed development of 1520 dwellings to the north of Coniscliffe Rd. A request by the Parish Council to the Secretary of State for a screening direction has raised serious concerns about the potential traffic, noise, and pollution implications of the proposed development.

7.3 Mark Armstrong reported that a letter of complaint had been submitted to DBC by the Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Action Committee. This expressed dissatisfaction with the processes and procedures adopted by DBC planning department during consideration of the planning application 16/01231/FUL.

7.4 The Parish Council and Planning Action Committee wish to thank WC G Lee for his attendance and support at a meeting with Ben Houchen (Tees Valley Mayor) where serious concerns regarding DBC application of planning processes were raised.

8 Highway Matters: None

9 Parish Matters:

9.1 Christmas carols. This will be held on 18 Dec 17. Refreshments for the event are to be purchased during the previous week.

9.2 Pie and Peas Supper. This will be held on 18 Nov 17 and will raise funds towards planning and legal costs associated with planning applications.

9.3 Wildflower planting. Deferred to a future meeting.

10 Items for future consideration: None

11 Correspondence: None

12 Feedback from meetings attended: Cllr P Ellerton reported on a number of planning related issues raised at a recent meeting of the Darlington Association of Parish Councils. All of the PCs in attendance appear to be having the same concerns with DBC planning policies and procedures.

13 Meeting schedule for 2018: 16 Jan, 13 Mar, 15 May (Annual Parish Assembly and AGM), 10 Jul, 11 Sep and 13 Nov. All at commence at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

M. Allen
19/1/18

Summary of Decisions and Actions from LC and Mb PC meeting – 14 Nov 17

Minute Ref	Decision/item	Action
5.3	Enforcement action regarding untidy land	WC G Lee to raise matter with DBC. By 22 Nov 17.
5.4	Neighbourhood Plan	Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at next PC meeting.
5.5	Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent	M Bailey to update resident with PC advice. By 16 Nov 17.
5.6	Community Forest	Cllr M Ellerton to provide update at next PC meeting.
5.8	Tribunal for adverse possession of hedgerow Gate Lane, Low Coniscliffe	M Bailey to arrange meeting to discuss legal advice and make decision on whether to proceed to tribunal. By 21 Nov 17.
6.4	Approval of budget and precept for 2018 -19 financial year.	It was resolved (with 1 abstention) to approve the budget and set a precept of £11450 (10.2% increase) subject to no further planned expenditure being identified before 12 Jan 18.