

## **LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 16 Jan 2018**

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

**ATTENDANCE:** Cllrs: M Ellerton (Chair), L Steel, S Gatenby, P Ellerton, T Stuckey, WCllr G Lee, M Bailey (Clerk).

**1 Apologies:** WCllr P Crudass (holiday), C McLay (illness), A Craggs (illness).

**2 Declarations of Interest:** None

**3 Public Forum:** None

**4 Minutes of Last Meeting:**

It was requested that item 5.8 be updated to include a statement regarding potential tribunal costs before the minutes of the meeting held on 14 Nov 2017 are approved.

**Action: M Bailey to update minutes and then to be signed by Cllr M Ellerton. By 25 Jan 18**

**5 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**5.1 Street lighting replacement in Low Coniscliffe.** The replacement street lighting has recently been installed and the imposed solution is considered unsuitable by the Parish Council. Many residents have expressed concern regarding loss of quality of the night sky due to light pollution. A small number of residents have expressed positive views about the replacement street lights. The PC resolved that feedback should be sent to Steve Brannon.

**Action: M Bailey to send feedback from the Parish Council to Highways. By 25 Jan 18**

**5.2 Enforcement action re untidy land in Low Coniscliffe.** A site visit by DBC has concluded that the land had been improved and that further enforcement action was unlikely to be successful. The land owner is progressing a potential planning application.

**Action: WCllr G Lee to follow up with DBC on when the planning application is expected. By 7 Feb 18.**

**5.3 Neighbourhood Plan (NP).** Cllr M Ellerton gave an update on progress with the NP. The draft plan will be available by 3 Feb 18 which is the start of a 6 week consultation period. The draft plan will be posted in strategic places within the Parish and posted on the NP web-site. A consultation engagement event has been organised for 24 Feb 18 (11am to 1.30pm) in St Edwin's church hall, High Coniscliffe.

**Action: Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at the PC meeting 13 Mar 18.**

**5.4 Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent.** It was reported that, as expected, the verges were becoming damaged due to the recent weather and increased parking. Residents are placing stones and planters on the verges outside their property.

**5.5 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 13 Mar 18.

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

**5.6 Adverse possession of hedgerow Gate Lane, Low Coniscliffe.** Legal advice has indicated that if the matter is taken to tribunal there is a low probability of a successful outcome. The PC have withdrawn from the first level tribunal before the date at which papers were required to be submitted. The land owner has been identified and does not wish to further engage with the PC.

**5.7 Precept for 2018-19 financial year.** A precept of £11450 (10.2% increase) has been requested.

## **6 Finance and Accounts:**

6.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 Jan 18 was £14225.59 and £45.72 in petty cash. This includes a Neighbourhood Plan grant of £6350 and £1260.31 from donations and funds raised at the Pie and Pea Supper. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £5236 (including donations).

6.2 Expenses approved since the last meeting: Printer ink / postage (£32.41), Printer paper (£4.00), sundries for Christmas event (£52.75), further sundries for Christmas event (£84.42), Cockerton Brass Band (£75.00).

6.3 Expenses approved at the meeting: Clerk salary Dec / Jan 18 (£191.67), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£47.92), Stamps / printer paper (£10.72), legal fees for tribunal advice (£2160.00), hosting fees for PC website (£85.00).

6.4 It was resolved that the Clerk salary (inc tax) should increase by 3% from £1437.50 to £1480 effective 1 April 18.

## **7 Planning applications and decisions:**

WCllr G Lee updated the PC on several concerns related to planning consultations that he is raising with DBC. These are:

- (i) Consultation feedback that is submitted by developers to DBC is not always included in the reports that are presented to the planning committee
- (ii) Section 106 financial settlements are not disclosed to the planning committee (or Parish Councils)
- (iii) Lack of guidance / instruction from DBC to developers on the nature of housing type that must be included within any approved development (eg number and size of affordable housing or properties suited to older residents).

## **8 Highway Matters:**

It was reported that one of the speed visors in Merrybent has been vandalised. The matter has been reported to the police and a temporary repair made by Cllr T Stuckey. The damaged unit is to be returned to the supplier for repair. A claim on the PC insurance may be made to recover the costs, dependant on the extent of the expense vs the policy excess of £100.

**Action: Cllr T Suckey to arrange repair of damaged speed visor. M Bailey to make insurance claim if required. By 28 Feb 18**

## **9 Parish Matters:**

9.1 Data Protection Officer (DPO). New regulations from May 18 will require the PC to appoint a DPO for advice / compliance with the Data Protection Act. This is likely to be an external consultant and may be appointed by the local authority.

9.2 Big Spring Clean. This will be held between 19 Feb and 15 Apr 18 and as in previous years will be supported by the PC. Details to be agreed at next PC meeting.

9.3 External audit of PC finances. This is no longer mandatory for PCs having income / expenditure of less than £25000 provided the PC comply with the Transparency Code for Smaller

Authorities by publishing prescribed information on a publicly accessible website. The PC will need to certify it meets these criteria in order to be exempt from external audit. Training in these requirements is available on 28 Mar 18.

**Action: M Bailey to attend training on 28 Mar 18.**

9.4 WCllr Lee thanked the community for its' response to the shoebox appeal in support of disadvantaged children.

**10 Items for future consideration:**

A community event is being planned for the summer and several ideas were explored. This will be discussed further at the next PC meeting.

**11 Correspondence:** None

**12 Feedback from meetings attended:** Cllrs P Ellerton and M Ellerton attended a recent meeting of CPRE. There are several concerns shared by many PCs regarding the application of planning policies by local authorities. Bringing these concerns to the attention of the media is actively under consideration.

**13 Date of next meeting:** 13 Mar 18 at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

M Ellerton  
13/3/18

## Summary of Decisions and Actions from LC and Mb PC meeting – 16 Jan 18

Minute Ref	Decision/item	Action
4	Point 5.8 in minutes requires update before minutes can be signed	M Bailey to update minutes then Cllr M Ellerton to sign. By 25 Jan 18.
5.1	Replacement street lighting, Low Coniscliffe. Considered unsuitable by PC and many residents.	M Bailey to send feedback to DBC. By 25 Jan 18.
5.2	Planning application for untidy land, Low Coniscliffe.	W/Cllr G Lee to follow up with DBC Planning. By 7 Feb 18.
5.3	Neighbourhood Plan	Cllr M Ellerton to give update at PC meeting 13 Mar 18.
5.5	Community Forest	Cllr M Ellerton to provide update at PC meeting 13 Mar 18.
5.6	PC have withdrawn from tribunal for adverse possession of hedgerow Gate Lane, Low Coniscliffe	None
6.4	Increase of clerk salary to £1480 (inc tax) effective 1 Apr 18 was approved.	None
8	Repair of damaged speed visor.	Cllr T Stuckey to arrange repair with supplier. M Bailey to make insurance claim as necessary. By 18 Feb 18.
9.3	Training in changes to requirements for External Audit	M Bailey to attend training on 28 Mar 18.