

LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 13 March 2018
St Edwin's Church Hall, High Coniscliffe, 7pm

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

1 Apologies: WCllr G Lee (other meeting), WCllr P Crudass

2 Declarations of Interest: None

3 Public Forum: S Clark was welcomed to the meeting as a representative of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

4 Minutes of Last Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 Jan 18 were signed.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

5.1 Update of minutes from Parish Council meeting of 14 Nov 18. The minutes have been updated and signed.

5.2 Feedback to DBC regarding replacement street lighting, Low Coniscliffe. Feedback expressing views of the PC and residents was sent to DBC. The feedback was acknowledged by DBC and they reported that their test results demonstrate there is no evidence of light pollution.

5.3 Planning application for untidy land in Low Coniscliffe. No further update available

Action: WCllr G Lee to update PC at next meeting.

5.4 Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The draft NP has been circulated to all Parish Councillors for comments. It was agreed that the draft plan is suitable for the purpose of wider consultation.

S Clark gave an update on progress with the NP. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is being completed by the Local Authority. A 6 week consultation period will commence once this is received and incorporated into the draft plan. The draft plan will be posted in strategic places within the Parish and posted on the NP web-site. A consultation engagement event will be held in St Edwin's church hall, High Coniscliffe (date to be confirmed).

The Parish Council thanked Sue Clark on behalf of the Steering Group for the time and effort involved in progressing this initiative.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton to report on progress at the PC meeting 15 May 18.

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 15 May 18.

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

5.6 Potential costs arising from withdrawal from tribunal associated with application for land ownership, Gate Lane. Following withdrawal from first level tribunal on 8 Jan 18 the Parish Council have received a letter from HM Land Registry regarding an application for costs. A response has been submitted on behalf of the Parish Council.

5.7 Repair of damaged speed visor. It was reported that the repair has been completed and the unit will be returned within the next week. The cost of repair will be covered by the Parish Council insurance subject to a policy excess of £100.

Action: Cllr T Stuckey to reinstall speed visor when received. By 22 Mar 18.

5.8 Attendance at External Audit training. M Bailey has arranged attend session at Durham on 28 Mar 18.

6 Finance and Accounts:

6.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 Mar 18 was £11677.64 and £45.72 in petty cash. This includes a Neighbourhood Plan grant residue of £4771.26 and £1260.21 from donations / funds raised at the Pie and Pea Supper. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £8770 (including donations).

6.2 Expenses approved since the last meeting: None.

6.3 Expenses approved at the meeting: NP printing supplies (£68.70 from grant), Printing supplies and postage (£33.76), NP office supplies (£14.88 from grant), St Edwin's church hall hire (£60.00), Clerk salary Dec / Jan 18 (£191.67), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£47.92), Printer cartridge (£78.99), NP consultant fees (£3240.00 from grant).

6.4 VAT recovered, £360.00

7 Planning applications and decisions:

Application 18/00023/OUT. Outline planning permission for development of up to 14 dwellings, Low Coniscliffe. The Parish Council have submitted an objection to this application.

8 Highway Matters:

Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent. It was reported that, as expected, the verges have become severely damaged due to the recent weather and increased parking. DBC Highways have threatened residents with legal action for placing stones and planters on the verges outside their property. These have since been removed.

Cllr T Stuckey has suggested multiple solutions with DBC Highways. All of these options were dismissed by DBC on grounds of public safety or cost.

It was agreed the matter should be escalated to WCllr P Crudass for support.

Action: Cllr T Suckey to arrange for copies of correspondence on the matter to be sent to M Bailey. M Bailey to bring to attention of WCllr P Crudass and request support with finding a solution. By 29 Mar 18

9 Parish Matters:

9.1 Update on legal matters. Correspondence has been received regarding from Close Thornton LLP regarding Parish Council interests in land on Gate Lane. The Parish Council have taken legal advice and discussed a draft response. It was agreed the response can be sent (5 votes for, 1 abstention Cllr C McLay, 1 vote against Cllr P Ellerton).

Action: M Bailey to send response to Close Thornton LLP. By 15 Mar 18.

9.2 Big Spring Clean. This will be held on 8 Apr 18 from 12 to 1pm.

9.3 Summer event. A date is to be arranged.

9.4 Planting of floral displays. Services provided by Elmridge over the last year were thought to be disappointing. Cllr T Stuckey offered to make a proposal to be considered as an alternative to Elmridge for the next 12 months.

Action: Cllr T Stuckey to submit a detailed proposal for consideration at the PC meeting on 15 May 18.

9.5 M Bailey tendered his resignation from the position of Clerk to the Parish Council. The last day of employment will be no later than 30 Apr 18. It was noted that the workload has increased substantially over the last 2 years. Recruitment of a replacement Clerk is to be initiated.

Action: Cllr M Ellerton to progress recruitment of a replacement Clerk.

10 Items for future consideration:

Cllr T Stuckey reported that maintenance of speed visors in Merrybent is very time consuming and that the PC should consider this as a matter of Parish Maintenance rather than as a duty of a PCllr.

Action: Cllr T Stuckey to provide details of frequency / hours involved in maintenance of speed visors for Parish Council to make a decision on the case to include this in the expenses for parish maintenance. To discuss at PC meeting on 15 May 18.

11 Correspondence: Cllr P Ellerton read out some information in a newsletter circulated by WCllr G Lee. This highlighted some of the successes achieved by the Parish Council and the NP Steering Group. It was noted that these should also be highlighted in the Chairpersons' Annual Report.

12 Feedback from meetings attended: None

13 Date of next meeting: 15 May 18 at 7.00pm. This is the Annual Parish Assembly and AGM. To encourage attendance by the public this meeting will be advertised on the Parish noticeboards, web-site and newsletter.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

M Ellerton 2018 22/5

Summary of Decisions and Actions from LC and Mb PC meeting – 13 Mar 18

Minute Ref	Decision/Item	Action
5.3	Planning application for untidy land, Low Coniscliffe.	WCllr G Lee to provide update at PC meeting 15 May 18
5.4	Neighbourhood Plan	Cllr M Ellerton to give update at PC meeting 15 May 18.
5.5	Community Forest	Cllr M Ellerton to provide update at PC meeting 15 May 18.
5.7	Repair of damaged speed visor.	Cllr T Stuckey to reinstall repaired speed visor. By 22 Mar 18
5.8	Training in changes to requirements for External Audit	M Bailey to attend training on 28 Mar 18.
8	Nuisance parking on grass verges in Merrybent	Cllr T Stuckey to send relevant correspondence to M Bailey. M Bailey to escalate the matter to WCllr P Crudass for support with finding a solution. By 29 Mar 18.
9.1	Latest correspondence from Clouse Thornton	M Bailey to send response agreed by P.C. By 15 Mar 18.
9.2	Big Spring Clean	To be held on 8 Apr 18. 12 to 1pm
9.4	Planting of floral displays	Cllr T Stuckey to submit detailed proposal for consideration at PC meeting 15 May 18
9.5	Resignation of Clerk	Cllr M Ellerton to progress recruitment of new Clerk
10.1	Maintenance of Speed Visors	Cllr T Stuckey to provide details of frequency / hours involved in maintenance of speed visors. By 15 May 18.