

# LOW CONISCLIFFE & MERRYBENT PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 12 Nov 2019

St Edwin's Church Hall, High Coniscliffe, 6.30pm

**ATTENDANCE:** Cllrs: K Marshallsay (Chair), C McLay, M Ellerton, L Steel, A Craggs (until 9pm), S Clark, M Armstrong, M Bailey (Clerk), BC G Lee, BC P Crudass

**Apologies for Absence:** None

- 1 Declarations of Interest:** M Armstrong stated that he may have additional Interests to Declare. It was not obvious whether these should be declared.

**Action: M Armstrong to discuss with DBC Monitoring Officer and declare additional interests if considered appropriate.**

- 2 Public Forum:** The meeting was attended by one member of the public.

- 3 Minutes of Last Meeting:**

Some amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 17 Sep 19 were discussed and agreed (online banking, leaving gift for P Ellerton). Some amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 Oct 19 were discussed and agreed (name of Action Committee, remit of Action Committee). The minutes are to be updated then signed by Chair.

**Action: M Bailey**

- 4 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

**4.1 Housing development off Gate Lane (east).** The street name of Ash Lane has been agreed by DBC and Robertson Homes.

- 4.2 Talk on bronze-age site.** Richard Carlton of Archeological Practice Ltd and visiting Professor at Newcastle University gave an informative presentation on the process and findings associated with the archeological survey on land to the east of Gate Lane. Some of the artefacts were thought to be associated with a burial mound dated late bronze-age. The PC thanked Prof Carlton for an interesting and insightful presentation.

**4.3 Salt boxes.** This is being progressed by Street Scene.

**Action: M Ellerton to update at next meeting.**

**4.4 Risk management plan.** To carry forward.

**Action: M Bailey to review status of draft plan and identify next steps for progress.**

**4.5 Dog signage.** Signs were circulated for approval. It was also reported that dog owners have been observed to trespass in fields and that the current signage has been removed / deteriorated.

**Action: L Steel to arrange for posting of signs.**

**4.6 Replacement of speed visor, Merrybent east.** A solar powered speed visor has been received. The installation will require scaffolding and modification to the mounting post (once this has been replaced by DBC).

**Action: P Crudass to enquire with DBC about timing for replacement of damaged post and arrange installation of replacement speed visor.**

**4.7 Replacement of speed visor Merrybent west.** It was agreed the obsolete speed visor at Merrybent West is to be replaced by a mains powered speed sign of the same model located in High Coniscliffe.

**Action: P Crudass to obtain estimate from DBC for wiring of speed visor into street light.**

**4.8 Litter Bin, Devonshire Court.** It was reported this has not yet been provided.

**Action: M Bailey to enquire on progress with DBC.**

**4.9 Consolidation of bank accounts.** The Business Reserve account has been closed and funds transferred to the current account.

**4.10 Budget provision for 20/21 financial year.** It was agreed that £6K should be allocated for planning consultancy for the next financial year. This is in recognition of the emerging local plan and the potential for large developments.

**4.11 Maintenance of hedgerow north of A67.** It was agreed the landowner be contacted to do this as in previous years.

**Action: P Crudass to contact landowner and request maintenance.**

**4.12 Constitution.** To be carried forward

**4.13 Code of Conduct.** It was noted that a version of the DBC code is in place and should be made available to PCllrs who do not have a copy.

**4.14 Arrangements for Christmas Carols.** M Ellerton reported that the Cockerton Brass Band have been booked for the event on 16 Dec 19 at 6.30pm.

**4.15 Defibrillators.** It was reported that Baydale Beck is raising funds to install a defibrillator on the premises. It was agreed that provision should be included in the PC budget for 2 units.

## **5 Finance and Accounts:**

5.1 Balance in bank account as at 1 Nov 19 was £22263.45 and £11.96 in petty cash. The estimated bank balance at the end of financial year is £11100.

5.2 Expenses approved since last meeting: Parish maintenance (£85.00).

5.3 Expenses approved at the meeting: Clerk expenses printer cartridge and paper (£82.49), Clerk salary Oct / Nov 19 (£232.00), Tax on clerk salary to HMRC (£58.00).

5.4 The draft budget for 2020/21 was presented and discussed. A precept of £12600 (2.9% increase) was agreed. In addition to regular outgoings this includes £6K for planning consultancy, additional £2K towards potential election costs (£5K total) and £3.5K for 2 defibrillators.

**Action: M Bailey to notify DBC of precept**

5.5 Online banking. To be progressed at a later date.

## **6 Planning applications and decisions:**

6.1 M Armstrong gave an update from the most recent meeting of the Action Committee. Matters included Robertson Homes activities, correspondence from the public, fly-tipping, proposed letter to landowner.

6.2 Proposed terms of reference for the Action Committee were discussed. It was proposed this should function as a Committee, not an advisory group, with a remit to address planning applications and other matters where agreed with the PC. It would be termed Planning Committee and would operate in accordance with NALC legal guidelines. It was resolved with 4 votes in favour and 2 votes against to adopt these terms of reference (A Craggs not present for this item).

6.3 The potential planning application and condition of walling at untidy land in Low Coniscliffe was not discussed. Carry forward to next meeting.

## **7 Highway Matters: None**

## **8 Parish Matters:**

**8.1 Hedgerow maintenance.** M Armstrong summarised a recent email from a resident regarding hedgerow maintenance and provided a response to address each point. It was stated that the hedgerow on each side of Gate Lane are to be maintained in full by the owners and not at PC expense. If the hedgerows are not maintained then DBC have authority to instruct the owners to do so, or to carry out the maintenance themselves. A proposed letter to a landowner regarding hedgerow maintenance was circulated – it was resolved with 2 votes in favour and 4 against that the letter should not be sent (A Craggs not present for this item).

**8.2 Leaving gift for P Ellerton.** It has been advised leaving gifts for PClls / clerk should be funded by personal donations and not from PC accounts.

**Action: PCllrs to advise K Marshallsay of any donation they wish to make. K Marshallsay to purchase leaving gift.**

## **9 Items for future consideration:**

Climate change champion. G Lee described a DBC initiative to become carbon neutral by 2050 with a desire to bring this forward to 2030. There was a request for the PC to support the initiative and adopt policies that will be issued by DBC. It was suggested the PC should designate a climate change champion in support of the initiative.

**10 Correspondence:** A further e-mail has been recently received from P Ellerton. To carry forward to next meeting.

**11 Feedback from meetings attended:** M Ellerton / S Clark recently attended a meeting of the Darlington Association of Parish Councils. A presentation from DBC planning indicated an intention to give greater consideration to the wishes of PCs regarding expenditure of S106 funds.

**12 Date of next meeting:** 14 Jan 20 at 7pm

**Action: M Bailey to confirm meeting dates for the remainder of 2020**

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.