

Longhirst Parish Council

Bi-Monthly Parish Council Meeting
Village Hall, Longhirst
7PM on THURSDAY, 05 MARCH 2020

Draft MINUTES

[Minutes can also be found online](#)

PRESENT:

Chair: Cllr Catherine Farrell
Parish Councillors: Cllr Peter Coates, Cllr Mark Davies, Cllr Glen Fahy, Cllr Maureen Lowes, Cllr Chris Marr, Cllr Richard Tordoff

APOLOGIES:

NCC Cllr David Towns (NCC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Clerk: Helyn Douglas
Public: Residents x4

A	Introduction To Councillors
B	<p>Gullies & Potholes discussion - Martin King (Highways, NCC) - including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashington Road (C126) Flooding • Footpath clearance at Colliery <p>Unfortunately Mr King did not attend - this item will be rescheduled for another meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: CLERK</p>
C	<p>PUBLIC FORUM (10 minutes)</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, members of the public are invited to:</p> <p>(a) make representations</p> <p>(b) ask questions</p> <p>(c) give evidence relating to the business to be transacted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If more than one member of the public wishes to speak on the same topic please nominate one person to speak on behalf of all to avoid duplication and make best use of the time available. • Written statements must be received by the Clerk at least 3 days prior to the meeting. • Members of the public are welcome to stay for the following Parish Council meeting as observers, but will not be able to join in the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chair.
	No issues were raised, but one resident thanked the Parish Council for putting a copy of the agenda in the Ulgham Lane notice board.

D	Update from Cllr David Towns (NCC)
	<p>Cllr Towns was unable to attend due to a prior College Governors' meeting but had supplied a short update by email. The main items he is involved with are the road safety scheme and the new speed signs (funded from his Members' Small Schemes monies). He also noted that Martin King would be able to give an update on the pathways and road along to the station. Regarding the path clearance item, Cllr P Coates clarified for the record that there had been a misunderstanding and the Parish Council members had not offered to clear that pathway, though they had offered to help tidy up the bus shelter.</p> <p>Cllr D Towns had also offered to take up any action points from tonight, and to meet at a different time if there are particular issues. Members agreed to ask if he would be able to attend more regularly if a different night was chosen for these meetings.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: CLERK</p>

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

2 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

[Use this link to check individual Declarations of Interests for Longhirst Parish Council.](#)

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - [02 JANUARY 2020](#)

These minutes were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Paddock Wood

Cllr C Marr was very pleased to report that the work at the entrance to Paddock Wood is now complete, along with the hedging. Councillors were grateful to the Woodland Trust for funding this, and Cllr Marr has written directly to Richard Wilson to express his thanks. (Some additional levelling may be required in a few months' time once the new surface has settled.)

4.2 Defibrillator Training

There have not been enough people interested in taking part in formal training. If Cllr Tordoff can access some training equipment he plans to hold informal 'open' sessions probably during April where anyone is welcome to come along.

ACTION: CLLR TORDOFF

4.3 Kerbstone repair opposite War Memorial

This has been reported but the repairs have not been done. This matter was to be raised with Martin King.

ACTION: CLERK

4.4 Planning Meeting with Rob Murfin, NCC

The Clerk requested this but the response from NALC was unclear and still needs to be chased up.

ACTION: CLERK

5 PLANNING

5.1 Anerobic Digester - [18/04533/FUL](#)

Further information is still awaited.

5.2 Domino's Field - [19/00991/FUL](#)

Cllr P Coates has looked at the most recent documents on the NCC Planning Portal and noted in particular a letter from the developers putting forward the argument that as the field was owned by the Coal Board it was technically within the open cast site. Parish Councillors maintain that the site was never ear-marked for any mining and was in fact only ever used for grazing. The new Local Plan does list the field as green belt, and though formal adoption of that document has not yet happened it does carry some weight. When or if the proposal goes to a Planning Committee, Cllr Coates is confident that the Parish Council has its case prepared.

5.3 Two Dwellings NW of Micklewood House - [19/04265/REM](#)

Cllr P Coates reported that residents of Longhirst Hall and Micklewood House have objected to use of the grounds for the construction storage compound and construction traffic. However the planning application states these arrangements. (Cllr Coates confirmed that the entrance in the wall for construction traffic will be replaced once work on the properties is complete.)

Access to the village from Longhirst Hall and Micklewood Close

There is now access to and from Longhirst Hall for residents of the estate "through the gate onto Dairy Lane. One side of the gate is permanently locked, and the other side can be opened using a key fob. (It was noted that as this is a gated community only residents will have key fobs, so people from the village do not have access, unless a resident lets them in.) It was also noted that if both sides of the gate were opened then a vehicle could pass through (it is hoped this is only for use in specific circumstances and is not for everyday use).

Regarding access for residents of Micklewood a route has been identified but no work has yet taken place. Members agreed to await further developments.

6 FINANCES

6.1 [Bank Statements](#)

The bank statements were presented (these are also available online) and noted that the refund from Hearst Magazines has come through. Also the £9k from the County Council for the speed warning signs was paid, and then refunded (as this activity is to be paid for direct by Northumberland County Council).

6.2 HMRC Update

HMRC have contacted the Clerk with a request for clarification on some earlier payments. The Clerk is pulling together the relevant information and will give an update in due course.

6.3 [Budget](#)

Updated budget information was circulated - to date the expenditure is in line with expectations.

6.4 Income & Expenditure

The following items of expenditure were agreed - both reimbursement for installation of electricity supply in the bus shelter outside the Village Hall:

- Cllr Richard Tordoff - £49.57
- R Y Electrics - £139.78

Football Field - Farm Tenancy

The Parish Council agreed to continue the lease of the field to Mr Jordon in 2020/21. The Clerk is to prepare the relevant paperwork; and the Chair will arrange a meeting with Mr Jordon.

ACTION: CLERK / CHAIR

6.5 Donation requests

Morpeth Cricket Club

The full information was received too late to be presented at the last meeting. The proposed activities for new nets at the Club are more comprehensive than was at first understood, and therefore the donation request from the Club is also much higher than had been expected - at £5,000. The Councillors discussed the proposal and agreed that as the facilities are open to all residents (even non-members) that it would be appropriate to give a donation. However the amount requested is not feasible, and a figure of £300 was finally agreed upon.

St John's Church Grand Raffle

St John's Church has requested £50 to buy a Gardening Centre voucher as a prize in the annual raffle. This is an activity the Parish Council supports each year and agreed to do so again this year.

ACTION: CLERK

7 BUSINESS

7.1 NCC Road Signs & Speed Reduction Measures

The speed reduction measures (starting with the new signs) were due to start this week but that has been put back and should commence next week. The 40mph sign near the Hebron Road end will now be placed a little further south, and for the two speed warning signs the northern one will be located just before the first house in the Village and the other near the entrance to Longhirst Hall. (Cllr Coates noted that these will be covered over initially until the legal orders are in place for them to be used.)

At the southern end the new village name plate will be erected opposite the entrance to Longhirst Hall. The new 30mph sign will be placed at the east end of the entrance to the South Lodge.

Cllr P Coates believes that once completed, the new signing scheme will provide a noticeable improvement to the look of the village, as well as providing more effective traffic calming measures.

Issue to take up with Martin King

There were a number of issues to raise with Martin King that Councillors had hoped to discuss tonight:

- Confirmation that the flooded section of Ashington Road road would be raised and drainage pipes installed, and also that the ditches will be maintained. Cllr Coates had also noted a large uncovered manhole in the east side verge.
- The gullies by the level crossing as well as those previously reported on the main street require attention.
- Footpath clearance has begun but it is not clear when this will be completed, and much of the soil / plant material had not been cleared away.

- Damaged kerbs near the Colliery and at the War Memorial.

Cllr Coates showed a cutting from that day's edition of the Morpeth Herald apparently listing Longhirst as having one of the nine most complained about roads in the County. There was a picture of a stretch of road labelled as being in Longhirst but none of the Councillors recognised it.

7.2 [Local Transport Plan feedback](#)

Unfortunately the request to improve the footpath and create a cycle route along Butcher's Lane between Longhirst and Pegswood has not made it in to LTP for next year. However, Councillors agreed to continue to keep this as a priority request, along with the support of Pegswood Parish Council.

7.3 [Annual Parish \(public\) & Annual Parish Council meetings in May](#)

The agendas for the May meeting were discussed. The main item on the Annual Parish (public) meeting will be getting residents' views on the Strategic Plan and gathering information on activities that they would like to see the Parish Council undertake. The three larger Residents' Associations will specifically be invited (for Micklewood, Longhirst Hall and The Colliery). The Annual Parish agenda is largely fixed and focuses on procedural issues, including the annual audit.

As Longhirst Village Hall is in use as a Polling Station that night members agreed to move the meeting to another venue - and Longhirst Colliery Residents' Association will be approached.

ACTION: CLERK

7.4 [Donations Policy](#)

The draft Donations Policy was discussed, noting that it is not a legal obligation to have such a policy but it is good practice. Councillors discussed whether to have set limits on types of donations but agreed instead to suggest indicative levels of funding and consider each request on its own merits. The policy was therefore agreed and adopted.

7.5 [Casual Vacancy Procedure](#)

The Clerk provided a summary of the procedure when a vacancy occurs on the Parish Council. Initially this must be notified to the County Council and time is allowed for voters to request a formal election. If there is no interest in an election then the Parish Council can co-opt someone to join. It is up to the Parish Council to decide on the process for co-option but best practice suggests that the position is advertised and that candidates are interviewed. The procedure as presented by the Clerk was agreed.

7.6 [Asset Register](#)

A revised asset register was presented and it was noted that this will be used when looking for quotes for the Parish Council insurance. The Clerk queried a bird hide on the Linton Lane Nature Reserve that technically sits on the Longhirst side of the border. The Vice Chair confirmed that this is definitely not owned by the Parish Council and should therefore not be on the asset list.

ACTION: CLERK

8 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 [Anti-Social Behaviour and Petty Crime Survey \(NALC\)](#)

Councillors are happy for the Clerk to fill this in, noting that fly tipping is the key concern at present.

ACTION: CLERK

9 COUNCILLOR UPDATES & REQUESTS

9.1 Colliery Residents' Association / Bus Stop meeting

The Chair reported back that this was a productive meeting with a number of positive outcomes:

- Once the bus shelter is cleaned / repainted the residents will plant flowers around it
- Representatives from the three larger Residents' Associations will specifically be invited are now formally invited to these meetings (for Micklewood, Longhirst Hall and The Colliery)
- The Residents' Association will put a column in the Longhirst Leader

9.2 Fly Tipping on Ashington Road

Cllr Fahy gave an update on the fly tipping situation noting that some progress has been made, primarily with Strutt & Parker (agents for Advance Northumberland) who have cleared away the rubbish in the field and are considering options for blocking the entrances to the field to prevent unauthorised vehicular access.

The rubbish in the hedgerows is more problematic as the volume of it is large and would require transport to carry it all away and fly tipping continues on an almost daily basis. Cllr Fahy is reporting these to the County Council regularly and all residents are urged to also report any instances they see. This can be done easily and quickly using a link the NCC homepage (there is a copy of that link on the Parish Council website, and a reminder will go in the Longhirst Leader).

ACTION: CLERK / VICE CHAIR

9.3 Right of Way / Country Park

Cllr Fahy gave a positive update on the work planned for the country park. The fences are now in and new woodland is due to be planted soon. The work is due for completion by Summer this year.

9.4 Gate in need of repair

Cllr Marr noted that the gate to the farm track off the B1337 just north of the Village is broken and could lead to fly tipping in future. The land is private so it would be the landowner's responsibility to have this fixed. The Clerk is to find contact details for the owners in the first instance.

ACTION: CLERK

10 CORRESPONDENCE (highlights)

10.1 [Public Spaces Protection Order \(NCC\)](#)

This information was noted.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no issues raised.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - THURSDAY, 05 March 2020 (venue tbc)

- 6.30pm - Annual Parish Meeting (Public)
- circa 7.30pm - Annual Parish Council Meeting
- circa 8pm - Bi-monthly Parish Council Meeting