

# *Longhirst Parish Council*

## **Bi-monthly Parish Council Meeting**

**6PM on THURSDAY, 03 SEPTEMBER 2020**  
(online)

### **MINUTES**

[Minutes can also be found online](#)

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Cllr Peter Coates, Cllr Mark Davis, Cllr Glen Fahy, Cllr Catherine Farrell, Cllr Chris Marr, Cllr Richard Tordoff

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Helyn Douglas (Clerk)  
Cllr David Towns (NCC)  
Janet Quinn (Mickelwood Residents' Association),  
Andy Robson (Longhirst Hall Residents' Association)

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr Maureen Lowes  
Maureen Carrick (Longhirst Colliery Residents' Association)

<b>A</b>	<p><b>PUBLIC FORUM (10 minutes)</b> No members of the public were in attendance.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE - CLLR DAVID TOWNS</b></p> <p><b>Resignation of Council Leader</b> Cllr D Towns confirmed that the Leader of the County Council, Peter Jackson, resigned at yesterday's Full Council meeting. A new leader is to be chosen and in the meantime Cllr Glen Sanderson will take over. Cllr Towns is looking forward to the Council returning to stability and getting on with the business of delivering services.</p> <p><b>Road Signage Scheme</b> Cllr Towns noted that the relevant Traffic Regulation Order is now in place and therefore the new speed limits in the village are legal. He was impressed with the new village 'gateway' signs and he has received some positive informal feedback from residents about them. He noted however that the interactive signs are not in place.</p> <p>Cllr P Coates confirmed that these are still due to be fitted but this is expected soon. He plans to check on the location for the signs, in particular the one at the north end of the village to ensure it will not be shaded by trees.</p> <p>Cllr Towns stated that these signs have proved to be very useful in nearby Ulgham, and that Pegswood is also considering one.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p><b>RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION / GROUPS:</b> Longhirst Colliery - Maureen Carrick</p>

Micklewood - Janet Quinn  
Longhirst Hall - Andy Robson

Maureen Carrick was unable to attend tonight but does plan to be at the next meeting. Janet Quinn noted that another representative is likely to attend in her place at future meetings. Andy Robson reported that there are still eight apartments to sell at Longhirst Hall. Although prospective builders have apparently visited the Dairy Lane site, Janet Quinn understands no-one has as yet been appointed.

## 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies are listed above. During this Covid-19 lockdown the Chair has given permission for absence to any Councillors not able to join these online meetings.

## 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

Please note that if a councillor has a change to make to their form, they do not need to complete a brand new form, but have to advise of the change in writing to:

[democraticservices@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@northumberland.gov.uk)

New template if required - [Updated Northumberland DOI register form - January 2020](#)

## 3 PREVIOUS MINUTES - [02 July 2020](#)

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record; these will be signed at a future meeting.

## 4 MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere)

### 4.1 Longhirst Colliery Signage

Cllr D Towns (NCC) is unable to use his capital allocation to pay for the sign. A larger, new 'gateway' style sign like those in the main part of the village could be funded, but the cost for that is around £2,000. That is higher than expected, and the original request was for something more modest and in keeping with the location. Councillors agreed to look into the cost of a standard style of sign (though this would have to be paid for by the Parish Council). The Clerk is to get costs and report back.

**ACTION: CLERK**

### 4.2 Other Highways Issues

#### Ashington Road Flooding

Cllr P Coates recently met with Martin King (Highways Maintenance) and was informed that NCC may not now raise up the road level at the dip in Ashington Road that has been subject to flooding. Both Cllr G Fahy and Cllr P Coates recollect that the undertaking had been definite, but Martin King now says this is not the case. Further, Mr King says that work cannot even be considered until Advance Northumberland has laid the necessary pipes underneath the road.

Whilst Councillors appreciate the remedial work done to clear out the ditches earlier this year, they were all concerned that the flooding problem will return again this Winter, and effectively cut off access via that road.

Cllr R Tordoff had recently seen a mini-digger carrying out further ditch cleaning along that area of road. Cllr G Fahy believed this was done partly to give a better view of the holes discovered recently - he noted these have not been filled or repaired. He considers that there may be an old mine pump in that area that is

causing some of the flooding. He offered to check on this with the digger company, Johnson's.

**ACTION: CLLR G FAHY**

Cllr D Towns (NCC) understands and shares the Parish Council's frustration around finding a long-term resolution to this problem. He agreed to raise the issue with both Cllr Richard Wearmouth (Economic Development Portfolio Holder) and with Ken Dunbar, the Managing Director of Advance Northumberland.

**ACTION: CLLR D TOWNS (NCC)**

#### Kerbstones

The damaged kerbs at the cross-roads have been repaired, but not those nearby on the bend just West of the level crossing. Cllr P Coates may need to follow this up.

#### Longhirst Colliery - NE Grains Footpath Clearance / Widening

NCC Highways have widened a section of footway between the railway crossing and NE Grains using £2000 from Cllr Towns Small Schemes Fund. A length just west of the crossing could not be widened as no tarmac exists in the first place and the work comes to an abrupt end just west of NE Grains entrance. Cllr Towns agreed to speak to Martin King and request that a reasonable transition to the width of the existing footway is created.

**ACTION: CLLR D TOWNS (NCC)**

## **5 PLANNING** (*search the [NCC Planning Portal](#)*)

### **5.1 Anaerobic Digester - 18/04533/FUL - [conditions](#)**

Whilst the Parish Council was disappointed that the Anaerobic Digester application was approved, it was pleased with the conditions set regarding the number and type of vehicles able to use the site, and in particular with the stipulation for regular joint meetings to take place with the Parish Council.

The Managing Director of NE Grains (Matthew Curry) had offered a tour of the facility, but as this was to take place on the same day as the Strategic Planning meeting it was not possible to take it up. Cllr D Towns plans to take up this offer at a future date and would encourage a Parish Council representative to also attend. Councillors are hopeful of developing a constructive relationship with the facility in the future.

### **5.2 Heat Pump, Brocks Hill Longhirst - [20/01352/FUL](#)**

After a consultation via email the Clerk had submitted a very general comment confirming that the Parish Council has no objections to this application.

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

The Chair raised an issue regarding the red outline on the revised plans, as it appears her property is within that boundary and is marked up as a potential parking area. Cllr Towns (NCC) clarified that a red line indicates a site boundary. He continued that it is legal to apply for planning permission on someone else's land although development cannot go ahead without the landowner's permission. Also, those other landowners should have been informed of the application.

Cllr C Farrell will contact the County Council Planning Department as a private individual to query this. Although the objection deadline has passed the Parish Council will also send in some general comments summarising those previously given: that the area is clearly within the green belt; that is not part of the earlier opencast site, and has only ever been used as a field for grazing cattle; and that it is not infill but would represent an extension of the village boundary.

**ACTION: C FARRELL / CLERK**

#### **5.4 Communications Mast [20/01265/MAST](#)**

The Clerk has been in touch with the company installing the mast, apologising for the late response and asking for clarification on why that specific location was chosen. Feedback was received explaining the location related to access issues.

#### **5.5 Stobswood Haul Road [20/00465/PREAPP](#)**

The Parish Council feels generally supportive of the idea in principle but is still awaiting further information.

## **6 BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Support for village groups during Covid-19 crisis**

Cllr P Coates has contacted the Parish Association and can confirm that it has submitted a bid to the County Council for loss of income support funding as a Church Hall. If this is successful it is unlikely that further support from the Parish Council will be necessary.

### **6.2 [LTP for 2021/22, inc feedback](#)**

Councillors were disappointed that the Butcher's Lane proposal was considered too expensive. It remains a key priority for the Parish Council with both Longhirst and Pegswood Parish Councils being supportive of the project. Andy Robson suggested linking the proposed cycle track to that on the by-pass as this may attract wider support (such as from Sustrans). Cllr P Coates suggested that a site meeting be arranged between both Parish Councils and the County Council to investigate if there is a more cost effective option.

Also to be included as a second priority is the footpath between Longhirst Village and the Colliery (already discussed under item 4.2).

**ACTION: CLERK**

### **6.3 [Complaints Procedure](#)**

This procedure - based on a model provided by NALC - was adopted.

### **6.4 [Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure](#)**

This too is based on a NALC model and was also adopted.

### **6.5 [Personal Data Information Asset Register](#)**

The final item is based on a model provided by the Information Commissioner's Office, and this too was adopted.

## **7 BUDGET**

### **7.1 [Bank Statements 20/21](#) & [Budget Forecast 20/21](#)**

There were no issues raised.

## **8 CONSULTATIONS**

### **8.1 Local Plan additional evidence - closes 07 Sep 20**

This was noted.

**9 REPORTS from Councillors****9.1 NCC Road Signs & Speed Reduction Measures**

This item has been covered by earlier discussions.

**10 CORRESPONDENCE**

No items were raised.

**11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS****11.1 Future Meetings**

Cllr R Tordoff asked about future plans for holding meetings online or in person. Whilst the Village Hall is open for bookings there are currently none coming forward, and the advice from NALC is for Parish Councils to continue with online meetings. Cllr C Marr suggested that residents are encouraged to put in written questions if they are not able to join online. The Chair is keen to encourage residents to keep in contact with the Parish Council. Cllr P Coates will include this request in the Longhirst Leader.

**ACTION: CLLR P COATES**

The Clerk reported that Cllr M Lowes is keen to take part in face-to-face meetings but is not able, nor comfortable, to take part in online meetings. As the current situation is likely to continue well into next year there is a need to discuss a way forward with Cllr Lowes.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 6pm on Thursday, 05 November 2020

Close of meeting at 7.20pm