

Longhirst Parish Council

Bi-monthly Parish Council Meeting

6.30PM on THURSDAY, 07 JANUARY 2021

(online)

[Minutes are also available online](#)

MINUTES (draft)

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllr Catherine Farrell (Chair), Cllr Peter Coates, Cllr Glen Fahy, Cllr Chris Marr

IN ATTENDANCE: Helyn Douglas (Clerk), Cllr David Towns (NCC), Jon Mills (Micklewood Residents' Association), Andy Robson (Longhirst Hall Residents' Association)

APOLOGIES: Cllr Mark Davis, Cllr Maureen Lowes, Cllr Richard Tordoff, Norah Dryden (Longhirst Colliery Residents' Association)

Due to technical issues with the broadband signal Cllr P Coates will chair this meeting on behalf of Cllr C Farrell.

A	<p>PUBLIC FORUM (10 minutes)</p> <p>There were no members of the public present and no issues had been sent in.</p>
B	<p>Update from Northumbria Police</p> <p>There was no information to report.</p>
C	<p>NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE - CLLR DAVID TOWNS</p> <p>i) Road Safety</p> <p>Cllr D Towns noted that some progress has been made with the flooding issue on Ashington Road, and is pleased with the progress of the speed reduction measures in the village.</p> <p>Cllr P Coates thanked Cllr Towns for funding the speed warning signs and his support in getting those installed. Cllr Coates is very happy with the location of the one at the south end of the village, but fears the one at the north end will be obscured by trees and other vegetation (affecting the solar panel). He is trying to arrange a site visit with NCC Highways to discuss this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: CLLR P COATES</p> <p>Regarding the flooding at Ashington Road, Cllr P Coates and Cllr G Fahy met with representatives from the County Council and Advance Northumberland. Advance is currently working to clear out the roadside ditches. A broken drain remains to be fixed though responsibility for that is still being discussed. Water is also coming on to the road from the southern end but the source of that is unclear. For now the road is still flooded but remains passable; further rain or icy conditions are likely to make the road more dangerous.</p>

	The Parish Council still believes that raising the level of the road is the only long-term solution. NCC has agreed to look at this option, with Advance potentially contributing to the costs. Further updates will be made available as this progresses.
ii)	<p>Support during Covid-19 lockdown</p> <p>Cllr Towns advised any residents requiring support during this latest lockdown to contact NCC Communities Together or the Morpeth Matters Facebook group. Any parents whose children need computer equipment for home study should contact their local school in the first instance. Cllr Towns believes that schools should have an adequate supply of equipment, but if anyone has a problem they can contact him direct. Cllr C Marr suggested this information, particularly regarding the home study computers, is included in the Longhirst Leader.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: CLLR P COATES</p> <p>Links to support service information can be found on the ‘News’ section of the Parish Council website.</p>
D	RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION / GROUPS
i)	<p>Longhirst Hall - Andy Robson</p> <p>One of the two plots on the Dairy Lane site has been sold. The developer had stated that once one was sold then the path from Micklewood to the village would be built. However Mr Robson does not think it is practical to start work on the path whilst construction work for the properties is going on. The damaged fence at Dairy Lane does now have a notice on it stating that repairs will be carried out by the developers once the construction work is done.</p>
ii)	<p>Mickelwood - Jon Mills</p> <p>Mr J Mills stated that residents are pleased with the road safety improvements, in particular the speed warning signs. He also reported that management responsibility has not yet been passed from the developers to the Residents’ Association as there are some outstanding legal issues to resolve.</p>
iii)	<p>Longhirst Colliery - Norah Dryden</p> <p>Ms N Dryden was not present but had passed on a request from the Association for a dog waste bin - this will be covered under item 6.2.</p>

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](#)

There were no interests declared.

3 PREVIOUS MINUTES - [05 NOVEMBER 2020](#)

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. These will be signed at a later date.

4 MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere)

4.1 Butchers Lane site meeting

The Clerk has not received any reply yet to the requests for a meeting. The time of year and the impact of Covid are likely factors in this. The Clerk will try again, citing that the Parish Council may be able to offer a small contribution to the costs.

ACTION: CLERK

4.2 Longhirst Colliery Signage

The new road sign is now in place and residents are happy with it. The Parish Council expressed its thanks to Mick Brown and the Sign Services Dept at the County Council for their help with this.

4.3 Donation St John's Church

The Clerk confirmed that the donation has been processed.

4.4 Parking at the North end of Longhirst Village

A notice regarding the parking issue was included in the recent Longhirst Leader edition. It turned out that the information provided by Cllr M Lowes was not fully accurate in that the property is not in fact a holiday let. However the new owners are using the garage for storage whilst they upgrade the property and this is the reason they are parking on the road.

Cllr P Coates has visited the owners to apologise for the confusion, and (following discussions with the Parish Association) to offer them a temporary parking space at the Village Hall. He noted however that sadly the owners have not taken up this offer and continue to park on the bend in the road. This does cause some danger for drivers going in both directions by obstructing their view.

Cllr C Farrell asked if the Parish Association could be approached to allow parking at the Village Hall on a temporary basis for other residents and in that way alleviate the problem. The Hall is not being used for usual activities due to the Covid-19 crisis and more residents are working from home presently and so adding to the number of cars parked during the day. Cllr Coates will ask though he is aware that the Parish Association has expressed concerns about allowing this as it may encourage parking there on a regular basis and at present access will be required during the working day for contractors carrying out repairs and improvements to the Hall.

ACTION: CLLR P COATES

4.5 Overgrown grass nr Longhirst Hall old entrance

This has been reported again, but any remedial action is unlikely until the Spring.

4.6 Public Right of Way map

The Clerk has passed a link to the online map to Mr J Mills. He is keen to document any unregistered routes around the village in order to have these formally adopted and added to the Public Right of Way map. Mr Mills would be very happy to hear from anyone with knowledge of any walking routes around the Parish. It was suggested Mr Mills could also contact the Ramblers' Association for support.

In particular, Mr Mills asked if anyone was aware of a path north out of the village towards Broomhaugh. Councillors felt it was likely there had once been a route but no-one had any written information. Mr Mills hoped that a tarmac path could be laid to augment that route. Councillors were generally supportive of this - it mirrors the request for repairs to Butcher's Lane, though progress on

that is proving slow. Councillors suggested he contact Sustrans and investigate any opportunities for a cycle route as that may possibly attract funding.

Cllr P Coates asked if Mr J Mills would be prepared to take a lead in Rights of Way issues on behalf of the Parish Council. Mr Mills agreed; this was voted on by the other Councillors and agreed. The Clerk will confirm this in writing.

ACTION: CLERK

4.7 **Thank you to Martin King, Highways NCC**

This has been sent in for the work done on the installation of a new gully on the Pegswood Road.

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

5.1 **Illegal build nr Station Cottages - [18/00817/AGTRES](#)**

Cllr G Fahy gave some clarification on the status of the work at the site, pointing out that there are potentially two illegal buildings on the site. The structure currently being erected is on the allocated footprint but the materials used are not correct. Specifically, permission was given for a metal framed building but a more standard brick house has been put in place instead. There is also a second concrete pad installed for a building that does not have any planning permission.

A resident has asked if the Parish Council could write in again to NCC as progress is being made and the building is still being advertised for sale despite the dispute. After the last meeting the Clerk had sent a letter to the County Council Planning Enforcement stating opposition to work going on at the site. Before taking any action NCC was giving the applicant an opportunity to submit a retrospective planning application.

Cllr Fahy understood an application had been put in but the Clerk had not been informed of that by NCC. Further information on any such application is required. The Clerk will write to NCC again asking for an update on any enforcement action to be taken, or for information on any planning application that has been submitted.

ACTION: CLERK

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

Northumberland County Council has rejected this application. The Parish Council very much welcomes this outcome.

5.3 **Diary Lane [19/04265/REM](#)**

The County Council admitted it had omitted to specify that construction traffic was not to use Dairy Lane. However an Enforcement Officer has now written to the developers asking them to refrain from using the lane. Traffic should now stick to using the route through the wall.

6 **BUSINESS**

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

Mr A Robson noted that the shopping service offered by residents for their neighbours is likely to start again during this lockdown phase. Information on this will go in the Longhirst Leader.

ACTION: CLLR P COATES

6.2 **Bin at Longhirst Colliery**

Longhirst Colliery Residents' Association had requested a bin for dog waste to be located at the Colliery Association Hall, preferably a wheelie bin style. NCC has confirmed it is happy to collect from this location. Councillors noted that the route is well-used by dog walkers and that a bin would be useful and therefore agreed to the request.

The Clerk is to investigate the possibility of purchasing a wheelie bin (with a locking arm to deter fly tippers) from the County Council. If this is not possible then a bin can be purchased from another supplier and a fitter found. The cost is anticipated to be c£350.

6.3 [Three Year Rolling Strategic Plan](#)

The plan should have been reviewed last May with input from residents but this could not happen due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The Clerk included a review at this meeting to help inform the budget and precept discussion that is to follow. Cllr D Towns (NCC) agreed it was useful to have a framework for actions and that it helped to demonstrate the Parish Council's longer-term aims.

Councillors reviewed the key priorities and agreed these were still valid. Completed actions are to be collated and archived. Future actions were added (in particular one for the possibility of extending Paddock Wood). Councillors were asked to add any more for the next meeting. As required activities will continue to be added to the business section of each agenda; and with a view to the Action Plan being reviewed at each meeting.

ACTION: ALL CLLRS

6.4 [Social Media Guidance](#)

This policy, kindly provided by Northumberland County Council, was reviewed and adopted.

7 BUDGET

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

The bank statements were presented (available online). The spend to date was reviewed; the two main items of expenditure since the last meeting were:

- NCC - road sign - £619.20
- Donation to St John's churchyard - £600

Councillors also agreed in principle to purchase a maintenance agreement for the speed warning signs, though Cllr P Coates suggested waiting until the problem with the location of the sign at the north end of the village is sorted.

7.2 [Budget estimate for 21/22](#) and [Precept papers](#)

The Clerk presented a draft budget for 2021/22 and asked for comments or additional items. Maintenance charges for the speed warning signs are to be added, along with an increase in scheduled election costs (NCC has indicated there may be an increase in costs but this is currently being negotiated with Northumberland ALC).

Using current estimates the Parish Council is likely to require c£6.7k for the year 2021/22. It should have c£8.5k available from reserves (but intends to set aside a contingency of £4k). Taking into account that the Parish Council would like to have the ability to contribute to activities such as path improvements around the village the Councillors agreed to set the precept at £7,200 (roughly a 2.5%

increase on last year). Councillors also agreed that due to the lockdown situation the Parish Clerk can sign the Precept paperwork.

ACTION: CLERK

8 CONSULTATIONS

There were no items raised.

9 REPORTS from Councillors

9.1 North East Grains quarterly meeting (Cllr P Coates)

The quarterly meeting (online) is due to take place next week on Fri, 15 Jan at 2pm. Cllr C Farrell, Cllr P Coates, Cllr C Marr, and NCC Cllr D Towns are due to attend. Cllr Towns has a clash with another meeting and the other attendees agreed he could ask for the meeting to be re-arranged for 2.30pm.

9.2 Road repairs outside the Old Vicarage (Cllr G Fahy)

The Linton road eastward from outside the Old Vicarage is in need of repair. Councillors agreed this stretch of road is in a similar poor state to others that have since been repaired and hope this one also can be looked at soon. The Clerk will report these potholed areas in the first instance.

Recognising that heavy goods vehicles can affect the road surfaces, Cllr Marr asked if the volume of traffic from North East Grains was considered higher or lower at present. Cllr Fahy thought it was lower but that was usual at this time of year. Cllr P Coates is aware of some hauliers who do not use the agreed routes when leaving the NEG site and will bring this up at the quarterly meeting next week.

ACTION: CLLR P COATES

9.3 Village Planters (Cllr P Coates)

Two residents, Lawrence and Anne Carey, have generously taken on the responsibility of maintaining the planters at the crossroads in the village. They have done this largely at their own cost, but have received a certain amount of gardening materials free of charge from the Red Row Garden Hut. Councillors agreed to write a thank you letter to the Garden Hut.

ACTION: CLERK

10 CORRESPONDENCE (highlights)

There were no items raised.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- **6.30pm on Thursday, 04 March 2021**

Close of meeting at 8.30pm