

Longhirst Parish Council



Bi-monthly Parish Council Meeting

7PM on THURSDAY, 01 JULY 2021

In the main hall at Longhirst Village Hall

[Agendas are also available online](#)

MINUTES

PRESENT: Cllr Peter Coates, Cllr Peter Lovering, Cllr Chris Marr, Richard Tordoff

APOLOGIES: Cllr Jon Mills, Cllr Janet Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE:

County Council: Cllr David Towns, NCC

Clerk: Helyn Douglas

Public: None

A	PUBLIC FORUM (10 minutes) There were no members of the public present, and no issues to raise.
B	Update from Northumbria Police There was no update from Northumbria Police, though PC Amy Smith has requested again the dates of the meetings.
C	NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE - CLLR DAVID TOWNS
	i) Northumberland County Council The first meeting of the new administration has taken place. Cllr Towns has been appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee. An independent person will be co-opted as Chair (that is, not an elected member).
	ii) Local Transport Plan (LTP) Projects for this year are due to start soon and include the Pegswood Bypass from Whorral Bank to the 'Robin of Pegswood' roundabout; Longhirst Colliery Road and the road in the middle of Pegswood village. Requests for next year will be issued shortly.
	iii) Requests for support <u>Cricket Club</u> New nets are up at Longhirst Cricket Club; Cllr Towns provided a letter of support to the club and it managed to raise c£20k through its efforts. <u>Tennis Club</u> The Tennis Club now wants to do some fundraising and Cllr Towns has also written a letter of support for them. The Chair confirmed that he also has written on behalf of the Parish Council in support.
D	RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION / GROUPS:

i)	<p>Longhirst Colliery (N Dryden) Norah Dryden was not able to attend the meeting tonight, and had not sent in any issues for discussion.</p>
ii)	<p>Micklewood (Cllr J Mills / Cllr J Quinn) Neither Cllr J Mills nor Cllr J Quinn are not at the meeting tonight, and no issues have been sent in.</p>
iii)	<p>Longhirst Hall <u>Drainage issues at Dairy Lane</u> Andy Robson reported that the visitor parking bays that had been dug up for drainage works have not been reinstated very well. Kingston Management Services has promised to look at this, and has also undertaken to do the re-planting.</p> <p>Residents had contacted the Citizens' Advice Bureau regarding their concerns over the drainage (partly the quality of the work but also that the residents had not been consulted). They were advised that ultimately they may need to approach the relevant ombudsman. The bore of the existing drainage pipes is too small to accommodate the volume of water from the new houses.</p> <p>Residents understand the paperwork indicates that the developers have permission for two more houses, in addition to the two now being constructed.</p> <p>The Chair reported that he had visited some residents after the last Parish Council meeting and had noted a number of issues raised. Problems related to the maintenance agreement is a private matter for residents, but on other matters the Parish Council may be able to provide some support.</p> <p><u>Drainage</u> The Chair noted that when Castle Morpeth Borough Council was the Planning Authority it took an active interest in these matters. It is unclear what role Northumberland County Council has in relation to the adequacy of the proposed drainage works.</p> <p><u>Access for construction traffic</u> The access route through the hole in the wall at Longhirst Hall was given for only two years, and that will expire in March next year. The two existing properties are taking longer than expected to build, and the possible second set of two houses has not even started. If access through the wall is not extended (and that in itself would be contentious) then access down Dairy Lane might be required. Unfortunately banning access was omitted from the planning conditions.</p> <p>Members agreed that it is better to address these problems now rather than later, and the Chair would like to speak to the relevant Officers to clarify NCC's legal position on both of the above issues.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: CLERK / CHAIR</p>

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies are listed above, and Cllr G Fahy is also absent.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made.

3 PREVIOUS MINUTES - 18 MAY 2021

- 3.1 [Draft minutes - Annual Parish public - 18 May 21](#)
- 3.2 [Draft minutes - Annual Parish Council - 18 May 21](#)
- 3.3 [Draft minutes - Bi-monthly - 18 May 21](#)

Each set of minutes was agreed to be an accurate record and was signed by the Chair. The Chair also signed the minutes from the zoom meetings held from 30 April 2020 to 18 May 2021.

4 MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere)

4.1 Thanks to retiring Councillors

The thank you letters have been sent.

4.2 [Schedule of dates for 2021/22](#)

The schedule has been put together and circulated, and is on the Parish Council website.

4.3 [Structure diagram](#) and contact list

The structure diagram has been updated and published on the website. The private contact list for Councillors to share has been amended and circulated.

4.4 Wheelie bin in place

A small bin is now in place at Longhirst Colliery and the Parish Council expressed its thanks to Northumberland County Council for providing that. The level of waste being collected will be monitored by Local Services and the size of bin can be reviewed if necessary.

4.5 NE Grains meeting schedule

The next meeting was due to take place on 01 October, but Cllr C Marr cannot attend on that date. He will advise the Chair of some alternatives. Cllr Towns, NCC is to be copied in on this also. (2 plus another 2)

ACTION: CLLR C MARR

5 [Three Year Rolling Strategy & Action Plan](#)

Councillors reviewed and agreed the list of key objectives. The action plan will be updated following tonight's discussions, including archiving completed actions.

5.1 Communications

Cllr R Tordoff asked if we have a process for measuring our success in improving communications (partly noting the lack of residents present tonight).

Other members felt that the lack of people present was not unduly worrying, as residents are likely to attend only if there is an issue where they want to voice their opinions. The Chair noted that the Longhirst Leader is a very effective mechanism for communicating with all residents (and noted that the editorial board is made up of representatives from across the village).

NCC Cllr D Towns noted that he uses social media but is aware this only reaches a small percentage of people and does require careful management. He has tried surgeries but found they did not work very well and has opted instead to make

sure people know how to contact him. He also has a section in the Pegswood newsletter.

Councillors agreed that communications are important in fostering a sense of community across the village, and that this will be improved once social events begin again. If other options are required in the future this could include: a residents' survey, calendars or similar produced by the Parish Council, or greater use of social media.

5.2 Access to green spaces

5.2.1 Longhirst Wildlife Project

Plans are still being developed and will be presented at an upcoming public meeting (when restrictions are lifted). A significant number of residents have expressed an interest

ACTION: CLLR C MARR

5.2.2 Rights of Way survey report

This survey identified all of the public rights of way walks in the Parish and noted any issues such as items needing repair. The survey work is complete (this was carried out by Cllr J Mills and two other residents). However the information has not yet been collated and written up into a formal report. This item will be picked up at the next meeting.

ACTION: CLLR J MILLS

5.2.3 Potland Park update

Cllr G Fahy was not at the meeting but the Clerk reported that Rob Murfin (Director of Planning at NCC) has offered a video call with Cllr Fahy to give him a verbal update on the plans for the park. The Chair would like to be involved in that, and perhaps raise the issues around Dairy Lane if possible.

ACTION: CLERK

5.3 Planning (*search the [NCC Planning Portal](#)*)

5.3.1 Station Cottages - [18/00817/AGTRES](#); [20/04065/VARYCO](#); [21/00069/CLEXIS](#) - and [Parish Council objection](#)

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

5.3.3 Dairy Lane [19/04265/REM](#)

There was nothing new to report on any of the above. Councillors did note that the appeal deadline for Domino's Field expires in the next few days.

5.4 Policing & Safety

5.4.1 Speed Warning Signs and damage to Lychgate

The Chair shared some photographs of the recent damage to the lychgate at St. John's Church. A car collided with the gate on 19 June, and sadly demolished the lychgate. The driver has been identified from the Church's CCTV and Northumbria Police are investigating. The Church's insurance is handling the repairs. Due to the severity of the damage the gate access to the Church is not possible so parishioners are unable to attend services.

Just prior to that Northumbria Police had contacted the Clerk asking for the overgrown foliage that is blocking the speed warning sign to be cut back. The Police were aware of incidents of speeding and were keen to see the sign back in working order. The Chair has since contacted Northumberland County Council again, and asked for this work to be brought forward in light of the recent

accident. He was assured that this was in hand but the work has not yet been done.

Grass cutting of verges

The Chair also reported that the grass on the verge has grown very long and is obscuring the name plates at the northern and southern ends of the village and on Station Road . He has been out to cut back some of it, but more needs to be done.

The Chair suggested that the Parish Council employ a contractor to carry out additional cutting of the verge, possibly three times a year. He asked if there was any other work that might also need to be included.

This issue was discussed some years ago and the view at that time was that this was the responsibility of the County Council and members were not keen to spend Parish Council resources on it.

However the current view is that additional work is required and Councillors are happy to pay for this. The Chair will approach a local contractor with a view to having the grass on the verge cut up to three times a year. Cllr R Tordoff also offered to carry out any additional strimming if required for special events. Any hedge cutting is the responsibility of the landowner.

ACTION: CHAIR

5.5 Sense of community

5.5.1 Morpeth Tennis Club letter of support

As noted above under item xxx the Chair has provided a letter of support to the Tennis Club.

5.6 Key village infrastructure

5.6.1 Ashington Road Flooding and Old Manhole Covers

5.6.2 Longhirst Colliery Road (C125) Major Repairs

5.6.3 Drainage

All of the above remain as unresolved and are of concern to Councillors. NCC Cllr D Towns has not yet been able with Martin King from Highways to review these sites.

ACTION: NCC CLLR D TOWNS

Cllr R Tordoff will try to make contact with Ali Johnson from Local Services to discuss the gully clearing (despite assurances from Martin King this does not appear to have been done).

ACTION: CLLR R TORDOFF

5.7 Governance

5.7.1 NALC Training

The Chair encouraged all Councillors, particularly those new in post, to undertake the training on offer from Northumberland Association of Local Councils in particular the introduction to local councils on the 21st of July. Places can be booked direct with NALC, or via the Clerk. The Chair feels these are informative events; the costs are minimal and the time involved is reasonable.

ACTION: ALL CLLRS

5.7.2 Parish Councillor duties

The following list of duties was agreed for the Parish Councillors:

Cllr C Marr - village website, Strategic Action Plan, Woodland Trust contact
 Cllr P Lovering - strategic planning issues
 Cllr R Tordoff - social media monitoring and localised road maintenance issues.
 Cllr G Fahy - all issues for the east of the Parish (inc Portland Park, Ashington Road, Station Cottages and Badgers Burn)
 Cllr J Mills - Public rights of way
 Cllr J Quinn - tbc

6 BUDGET

6.1 [Bank Statements 21/22 & Budget Monitoring 21/22](#)

Bank statements for 2021/22 are now available on the Parish website, and a new budget monitoring sheet has been produced. Recent transactions include: receipt of the first tranche of Precept at £3600, NALC fees at £204.88 and village website domain name renewal at £37.50, as well as the usual payments for salary, PAYE and website hosting.

6.2 AGAR submitted and [audit info available online](#)

The Exemption Certificate has been submitted to the auditors, PKF Littlejohn; and the audit information is available for review on the Parish Council website.

6.3 Insurance - update to include speed warning signs

The insurance will need to be updated to include the speed warning signs - a revised price is awaited.

6.4 Bank Mandate

The bank mandate forms were signed to remove Catherine Farrell and add on Chris Marr. Cllr Marr may be required to provide identity documents at the bank.

ACTION: CLERK

7 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 [Northumberland Local Plan](#) - runs 09 Jun - 04 August

The revised Local Plan is out for consultation and can be accessed on the Northumberland County Council website. Cllr P Lovering is taking a lead on this and will review the documents (he was handed a paper copy of the plan along with a copy on a USB stick).

8 REPORTS from Councillors

All items have been covered above.

9 CORRESPONDENCE (highlights)

9.1 [Free adult cycling training](#)

The Chair will put a copy in the notice board outside the Village Hall.

ACTION: CLLR P COATES

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7pm on Thursday, 02 September 2021 (at Longhirst Village Hall)

Close of meeting at 8.20pm