

# MINUTES



## Bi-monthly Parish Council Meeting

\*8.30PM on THURSDAY, 09 MAY 2024

Longhirst Village Hall



**Longhirst  
Parish Council**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Peter Coates (Chair), Cllr Bill Climson, Cllr Glen Fahy, Cllr Chris Marr, Cllr Richard Tordoff

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Helyn Douglas (Clerk), Andy Robson

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr Colleen Anderson, Cllr Janet Quinn, Cllr D Towns (NCC)

<b>A</b>	<b>PUBLIC FORUM</b> There were no members of the public present, and no questions had been sent in.
<b>B</b>	<b>Update from Northumbria Police</b> There was no update from the Police.
<b>C</b>	<b>NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE - CLLR DAVID TOWNS</b> County Cllr D Towns gave his apologies for this meeting and had no update.
<b>D</b>	<b>RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION / GROUPS</b>  Longhirst Colliery - Julie Murray Issues were covered during the earlier Annual Parish Meeting.  Longhirst Hall - Andy Robson A programme of tree maintenance work is currently being undertaken, with the most urgent items taking priority. The street lighting is also being reviewed due to some lighting failures, and some complaints that the lights are too bright and intrusive.  Micklewood There were no issues raised.

### 1 **APOLOGIES**

### 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Parish Councillors were asked to declare any interests for items on the agenda. Councillors were also reminded to keep their declaration forms up-to-date.

### 3 **TRAINING**

### 3.1 Code of Conduct and link to online quiz

Councillors took part in an online quiz covering some issues from the code around gifts / interests and general personal conduct.

## 4 PREVIOUS MINUTES - [07 March 2024](#)

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

## 5 MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere)

### 5.1 Ulgham Community Benefit Society Management Committee update

The owner rejected the society's recent purchase offer and is instead progressing a sale with a.n.other party. The management committee remains ready to step back in if this sale falls through. At this point the committee members do not think it appropriate to incur any additional costs (such as for surveys) therefore grant funding cannot be pursued at this time. However, the committee hopes that an application for a 'change of use' from a pub is unlikely to be granted by NCC.

### 5.2 Church repairs and residents' liability

The Clerk had forwarded information to Mr A Robson relating to relevant legislation. This suggests that Churches were required to register any intention to enforce any such clause, but the advice remains the same for any individual home-owners to check their deeds and seek legal advice.

### 5.3 T&PC Conf feedback - 14 Mar 24

Cllrs R Tordoff and B Climson attended this event. Cllr Climson found it useful to make contact with the Great Northumberland Forest Team - resulting in a speedy date being arranged for tree planting in the woodland at Longhirst Colliery (details covered under the Annual Public Meeting).

He also noted that the FixMyStreet app is becoming almost too popular a tool, creating a large backlog of issues to be dealt with. He urged people not to repeat reports on the system as this adds to the delays.

### 5.4 Local Transport Plan 2024/25

The Clerk confirmed that the raising of Ashington Road was not included in the latest LTP. The Chair was hopeful that the other two key issues would be addressed (clearing the ditch in good time before the end of September and improving the drainage on the east side), but this longer-term solution may need to be followed up with the County Council.

## 6 BUDGET

### 6.1 [Bank Statements](#) (inc overcharge by Netweaver)

Cllr C Marr had queried the duplicate payments but Netweaver's records appear not to show any overpayment. Whilst noting that the amount is minimal, the Clerk and Cllr Marr will pursue this.

**ACTION: CLLR C MARR / CLERK**

### 6.2 Insurance quotes for review

The Clerk has sought quotes from the two main companies dealing in Parish Council insurance:

- Clear Councils (BHIB previously) £658.22 (street furniture £42,728 and war memorial £24,000)
- Zurich £327 (all sums £28k and war memorial £28k)

Both policies give more than the required Public and Employer Liability. Councillors noted that the asset register has some unverified estimated values and felt that it would be unlikely to lose all of its assets in one year, therefore they agreed that a sum of £28k for street furniture was adequate. They also noted that the cover for the war memorial was higher with the Zurich policy.

The Clear Councils policy does come with free access to Parish Online; switching provider will mean the council has to pay c£100 annual fee for this software. However taken together that still offers an overall saving. On that basis, members agreed to take out the policy with Zurich.

**ACTION: CLERK**

## **7 BUSINESS**

### **7.1 Community Skips - update**

Cllr R Tordoff will arrange for a skip to be made available for community use during the second weekend in June. These dates are to be included in the next edition of the Longhirst Leader.

### **7.2 Improvements to area around the War Memorial - update**

Cllr R Tordoff had spoken recently to Lawrence Carey to thank him for the considerable work he gives free of charge to grow plants for the planters and sweep the paths around the war memorial. Cllr Tordoff estimated that the equivalent monetary value of this work is significant but Mr Carey has refused all offers of reimbursement.

Instead, Cllr R Tordoff suggested the parish council could make its own contribution by moving the two existing benches to the opposite side of the road and purchase two new benches for the site immediately next to the memorial. Councillors agreed this would be a good idea and discussed the merits of metal, wood or recycled plastic style seating. Members felt that good quality, hard-wood benches would be most in keeping with the surroundings, despite the additional maintenance that would be required. Cllr Tordoff will investigate options and present this at a future meeting.

**ACTION: CLLR R TORDOFF**

### **7.3 Donation request application form - for adoption**

The Clerk suggested that a formal application should be adopted for requests for larger amounts (including that for Paddock Wood and the Projector). The Clerk suggested the amount at which this form would be triggered should be £500 - £1000 but would require the Donation Policy to be amended. Councillors agreed to adopt the form.

### **7.4 Paddock Wood path improvements - formal request for funding**

The Chair reported that Groundwork NE can manage / oversee this work and will provide a costed plan, with three quotes. Further information will follow.

### **7.5 Projector and screen at Longhirst Village Hall - formal request for funding**

One of the trustees is taking the lead on this. A costed plan for this activity is also to be provided at a future meeting.

### **7.6 New Waste Disposal procedures - for discussion**

Cllr R Tordoff raised some concerns about the new procedures for DIY waste disposal. He felt the new process was cumbersome and that requiring people to book a slot days or weeks in advance might well lead to more fly tipping. Cllr G Fahy agreed and

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Councillors asked the Clerk to write to the County Council with these concerns, and also to ask NALC if it might bring this up at a future NCC/VCS Liaison meeting.

**ACTION: CLERK**

**8 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no issues raised.

**9 NEXT MEETING:**

**7pm on Thursday, 04 July 2024 at Longhirst Village Hall**

Close of meeting at 9pm.

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