Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council

Chairmans Report

2013/2014 has been quite a busy year for the council, and I would like to update you on some of the issues that have occupied the council members over the past year.

Up to the end of April 2014 we had a full council (7 in total) however Cllr Thompson recently stepped down and therefore there is now a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Thompson for all his hard work and his contribution to the council.

Meetings

During the past year the council has had 6 meetings and in addition to this we have met to discuss several planning applications submitted to us by Darlington Borough Council.

Finance

The precept for this financial year is £5,050.00 which is the same amount as last year, and the bulk of your money is spent on:

The Parish Clerk who prepares and records all of our meetings, deals with finances as our Responsible Financial Officer and deals with all of our correspondence from Darlington Borough Council, Tees Valley Rural Community Council and other bodies. Her pay rate reflects her hours of work and her experience in the role.

We now have a 'handyperson' who helps to keep the villages looking tidy and carries out work that is not covered by DBC. E.g. keeping weeds down, restoring and painting parish benches, cleaning out the bus shelters, strimming, planting and other work as requested by the Parish Council.

Other outgoings include Insurance, Village Hall Hire, Christmas Carols event, Parish Council Audit and miscellaneous expenses including printing, advertising postage etc.

Other purchases last year

The Parish Council purchased a gazebo and brazier which was used for the village Christmas Carols get together, this proved very successful. If anyone would like to make use of this for an occasion please contact the Parish Clerk.
We returfed 11 grass verges in Merrybent, and (with a few exceptions) have proved quite positive.

Other issues that have kept us busy during the year are;

Dog Fouling is still an issue particularly along the Teesdale Way at Low Coniscliffe. We have put signs up in the area and have had the dog bin placed in a more prominent position at the bottom of the lane near the car park, however despite these actions we feel this will be a continuing problem due to some irresponsible dog owners . We would encourage those who see this behaviour to report it to Darlington Borough Council via their web site or Tel 01325 388088

We are now working with the Highways Dept and Street Scene to help us to make the entrances to the villages more pleasing, and we will be planting summer bedding in the tubs and the entrance to Low Coniscliffe. We are doing our best to engage DBC in getting repairs carried out and potholes filled however this is still an ongoing issue, and we would urge people to report potholes etc to Darlington Borough Council

A67 Road Closure due to land slippage beginning June 2014

We understand that DBC are providing a Taxi shuttle service, number 67, which will run from Darlington town centre, Stand N, to the Duke of Wellington, High Coniscliffe, throughout the day, seven days a week providing a vital link to the villages affected by the diversion of the 75/76. The service will run every 30 minutes during peak times and every two hours during off peak times, from 07:45 until 6.30pm.
Timetables for the free Taxi shuttle service will be available from the Dolphin Centre, Crown Street Library and online at www.darlington.gov.uk/carlbury or by ringing Traveline on 0871 200 22 33. Taxi shuttle times will also be displayed at affected bus stops.

As always we would welcome people of the parish to attend Parish Council meetings thereby having the opportunity to express their views and ideas for the general improvement of the parish. The agenda is always published in the two notice boards located in Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent at least 3 days before the meeting.
We meet every 2 months in St Edwin's Parish Hall High Coniscliffe at 7.00pm, and our next meeting will be in July (usually second Wednesday in the month) however please check the notice boards for actual dates.

We continue to pressurise Darlington Borough Council in respect of the reduction in speed limit through Merrybent which has been passed but not yet implemented.

Finally I would like to thank Cllr Liz Steel (vice chair) and my other fellow councillors for their continued support.

Regards

Margaret Ellerton (Chair)

Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council