

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12 July 2022 in Levens Methodist Church at 7.15pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, J. Battye, H. Burrow, K. Holmes (and as District Cllr.), R. Mason, D. Rogerson, M. R. Curry (Clerk), County Cllr. J Bland and 1 member of the public.

Before commencement of the formal meeting, Councillors welcomed Cllr. Pete McSweeney (supported by Cllr Rupert Audland) from Arnside and Milnithorpe who described how Arnside had secured a 20 mph speed limit. The process had been long and expensive involving a range of issues including liaison with Cumbria County Council Highways, public consultation and costs (which at Arnside was in the region of £20,000). Ultimately though the initiative had been successful and had resulted in an overall lowering of speed throughout the village. Cllr. McSweeney also referred to other methods including the use of hand-held speed guns and traffic calming measures. He concluded with the recommendation that further engagement with the County Council should be considered. The Chairman thanked Cllrs McSweeney and Audland and confirmed that the matter would be discussed further at Item 13(a) of the Agenda.

29/22 Apologies for Absence: Written apologies and reason for absence had been submitted by Cllr. Willacy.

30/22 Declarations of interest: No declarations of interest in items on the Agenda were made.

31/22 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 June 2022 as a true record.

32/22 Public Participation: No matters were raised under this item.

33/22 Reports:

- a) **Reports from Councillors attending meetings:** Cllr. Rogerson reported that he had attended the AGM of CALC's South Lakes and Barrow District Association held on 30 June. AGM business had followed a presentation from SLDC Officers on matters including climate change and the revision of the Local Plan.
- b) **Police:** No report had been submitted by the Police and no newsletter had been received recently.
- c) **District Councillor:** Cllr. Holmes reported as follows:
 - i. The Licensing Regulation Committee at SLDC has agreed new standards in line with European emission standards which will be applicable to all taxis operating in the area.
 - ii. SLDC has announced that applications are now open for a new Housing Energy Grant Scheme designed to support the installation of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating into local homes. The Clerk has enquired as to whether funding is available for new-build affordable housing schemes.
 - iii. Cllr Holmes confirmed that he has been re-elected as Chair of the Lake (Windermere) Administrative Committee.
- d) **County Councillor:**

Cllr. Bland reported that many miles of local roads have been surface dressed. He expects work on Moss Lane Bridge to start towards the end of the month. Levens Lane footpath will be discussed as an item later on the Agenda.
- e) **Shadow Councillor, Westmorland & Furness Council** (to be a standing item on future agendas):

Cllr. Battye reported that the first full meeting of the Shadow Council had taken place on 17 June when the Leader, Deputy Leader and other Members were elected. The Council is considering transition arrangements. Cllr. Battye is on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee currently considering service provision under the new Council under the mantra: 'Safe, Legal and Local where possible.' She has attended a number of training sessions and is working with Giles Archibald (Portfolio Holder for Climate and Biodiversity) on supporting Parish Councils with climate change initiatives.

34/22 Finance

- a) **Receipts:** The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation for the period 01 May - 30 June showing receipts totalling £815.00 made up primarily of rents, plus a refund of £600 from CCC relating to a topographical survey of Levens Lane paid for by the Parish Council.
- b) **Payments:** The following payments were **Approved**:
- M R Curry – Salary June 2022 (PC £277.53; Project £276.47; Charity £8.51; Mileage £27.95; Expenses (Stationery £14.04, Printer ink £21.53 = £35.57): £ 626.03
 - HMRC: PAYE Mths 1-3: £ 554.57
- c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled bank balance of £25,919.94 at 30 June 2022 was noted, as was one un-presented cheque totalling £40.00, leaving a net balance of £25,879.94. Councillors also noted an updated summary of ring-fenced funds.
- d) **2021-22 Audit:** The Clerk reported that the Annual Governance and Accountability Report had been submitted to the external auditors after sign-off by Councillors on 14 June. The Notice of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights had been posted to the noticeboard and website.
- e) **Management of PC Finances** (banking arrangements): The Chairman reported that this remains work in progress.

35/22 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Group:** Cllr Mason presented a brief report from the meeting held on 05 June. Main items of report were:
- Sale of Plots:** The sale of Plot 2 at Cotes had completed on 30 June, realising net proceeds of £165,455. Prospective purchasers of Plot 1, Cotes, have withdrawn and Agents are pursuing other expressions of interest prior to re-marketing. The sale of Plot 3, Church Road is progressing slowly.
 - Boundary Walls, new Village Hall:** Following a tender process and a recommendation from the Project Advisory Group (PAG) the appointment of Tim Thacker as contractor for construction of the boundary walls was **Approved**. A site meeting with Tony Hills and the structural engineer to finalise specifications for boundary wall treatments had been held on 07 July. It is possible that this work may not start until early October.
 - The Supply of Accountancy Services:** Following an extensive procurement exercise, Armstrong Watson had presented a competitively costed case in which they confirmed support for Zero Rate VAT treatment for the Village Hall. On the basis of a recommendation from PAG, it was agreed to **Approve** the appointment of Armstrong Watson as new accountants to the Project with negotiation on the charges for the submission of VAT Returns to be confirmed.
 - To approve payments as recommended by PAG:** Following a report from the Clerk confirming a projected bank balance of £1,391,650.01 (after known receipts to come), payment of the following invoices was **Approved**:
 - Damson Consultancy: M&E Services - Village Hall (via M&E consultants): £5,880.00
 - Damson Consultancy: M&E Services - Underhill (via M&E consultants): £1,410.00

36/22 Planning Applications:

- a) **The Schedule of Planning Applications:** Updates to the Schedule at 11 July were noted including a review of those not yet determined. Applications discussed were:

PC Ref	Application No.	Location	Proposal	PC View	Decision
42	SL/2022/0067	The Langdales, Levens	Variation of conditions	The applicants have lodged an appeal based on non-determination. The PC will be notified when the process begins.	
5	TR/2019/0116	1 Whitbarrow Grove	Enforcement review		Case closed with no further action.

Members expressed frustration about the planning process relating to SL/2022/0382 (Shepherd's Mill) and SL/2021/1206 (Plot 1 Church Rd) where applications appear to be attracting excessive scrutiny.

b) **Other Planning Matters:** There were no other planning matters considered.

37/22 Informal Tour: Notes from the Informal Tour had been circulated. The following items were reviewed:

- a) **Parish Council Noticeboard:** To be considered at Item 13(c).
- b) **Brigsteer Road site:** Strimming will be required soon. It was confirmed that Andy Banks had resigned his post as Maintenance Officer, but Cllr Mason reported that he did have a replacement for strimming in mind, though insurance will need to be explored.
- c) **Parish Council equipment:** As discussed on the tour, the Clerk confirmed that the PC printer had failed. The redundant B4RN printer was also in error state and deemed uneconomical to repair by KTD Computers, Kendal. PC printing was currently running through the Helsington printer with costs being apportioned at the Clerk's judgement. The Clerk also has concerns about the laptop bought in 2014 and running an unsupported Windows programme. The position was noted for further review.
- d) **Basket-ball net on Parish Land:** Cllr. Battye agreed to post a notice on the equipment requesting that it be removed within 14 days otherwise the Parish Council will arrange for its removal.

38/22 Public Profile

- a) **Parish Newsletter:** Cllr Atfield confirmed that the printed newsletter will be required for 29 July and the next edition on 28 October. In addition to Chairman's Notes, an update on the Community Project and Councillor details, suggested items for inclusion included updates on the Greening Campaign; grants from Levens Charity, local government reorganisation and the refreshed website. The Clerk was tasked with gathering and writing content.
- b) **Website:** The Clerk reported that a Zoom meeting of the Website Review Group had been held on 29 June. It had reviewed the entire Parish Council site and confirmed how pleased it was with the outcome. Several areas where updates are required were noted which the Clerk will undertake. That said, the Clerk expressed concern about the resources necessary to determine and provide the content necessary for the News and Notices section and further consideration will be given to this. Tom Hecht has undertaken to consider the design of the Website logo and the Parish Council **Resolved** to pass a note of appreciation to him for re-designing the site.
- c) **Westmorland Gazette:** The Parish Council confirmed that it would like to see greater promotion of its initiatives in the local paper. It was **Agreed** to add a standing item at the end of future agendas to consider appropriate items for submission.

39/22 Parish Emergency Plan: The Clerk reported that he had gathered and circulated a suite of advisory documents, including several templates, provided by CALC to the Emergency Planning Group. The Group has not yet met and it was **Agreed** to hold a Zoom meeting on 19 July at 7.00pm.

40/22 Local Government Re-organisation: Update had already been provided (see 33/22[e] above). Cllr. Battye added that she will promote adoption of the Parish Pledge (currently adopted by SLDC) by the new Westmorland and Furness Council and will circulate the Pledge to the Parish Council.

41/22 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Levens Traffic Management:** Following the presentation from Cllr. McSweeney it was **Resolved** to request a further meeting with officers from Cumbria County Council. Cllr Bland undertook to contact them and facilitate this.
- b) **Levens Lane Footpath:** Cllr. Mason reported that viability of the scheme rested on affordability. In an attempt to find a way forward, Carol Last (Cumbria County Council Community Development Officer) had proposed a permissive path through the adjoining field. It was clear however that there were significant difficulties with this proposal. Cllr. Bland reported that he had been having discussions with senior Highways officers in CCC and expected information on options within the next few days. It was **Agreed** to leave the matter with Cllr Bland and await feedback from him. Cllr Bland also confirmed that maintenance of the path would not fall to the Parish Council if it was constructed adjacent to the road.
- c) **Parish Noticeboard:** The Clerk had circulated information on a range of suppliers and products including one local firm advertising an appropriate board. It was **Agreed** to ask them

for further information and if the existing posts were compatible with a new board. The Clerk undertook to make further investigation with them. Should they not prove cost effective, several other local contacts were mentioned.

- d) **Woodland Management:** Cllr. Holmes reported that there had been no progress during the bird nesting season which would finish at the end of July.
- e) **Parish Land:**
 - i) Brigsteer Road site: The Clerk requested details of stone-wallers to enable quotes to be secured for the building of the northern boundary wall.
 - ii) Registration of land at Cotes: The Clerk reported that he had contacted HMLR to chase progress with the application for first registration. They had confirmed that the application was on their records, but had advised that as a result of a considerable backlog it was unlikely that the application would be dealt with before December.
- f) **SLDC Greening Campaign:** Cllr Battye reported that a meeting of the local Greening Group had been held the previous evening which had reviewed various local initiatives organised to date. It also considered future events including the 'Great Big Green Week' at the end of September. Cllr. Battye will bring a plan for this event to the next meeting. The Group was looking forward to working with the new Community Climate Champion currently being recruited by Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS).
- g) **B4RN:** Cllr Rogerson reported that the total of connections at the end of the Project was 314 with the possibility of a handful of others. Further donations to Levens Charity in lieu of payment to B4RN volunteers is expected to be over £5,800, making the total in the region of £10,000.

42/22 Correspondence: The only items of correspondence noted were:

- A letter from Laura Moss of Wrigleys Solicitors suggesting a personal visit to view progress with the Project
- A note from Tim Farron MP to all Parish Councils in his constituency regarding the Levelling Up Bill which had attracted an anonymous counter-note which was passed to the Chairman.

43/22 Future Agenda Items: Items on the current Agenda will be followed up; otherwise, there were no other items proposed.

44/22 Date of the Next Meeting: The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday, 13 September 2022 to be held in the Levens Methodist Church.

The meeting closed at 10.06 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....