

LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2019

Chairman's Jottings

In the next few weeks we will hopefully have a clearer view of how our village hall will proceed and, as the Parish Council, we will keep you informed of developments.

Traffic management is, as we all know, a constant topic and appears on most of our agendas. We have recently obtained data from one of the 'smiley face' Speed Indicator Devices and the amount of information provided – even in abbreviated form – takes up several sheets of A4 paper. One immediately obvious statistic is that about one third of all vehicles going through this statutory 20mph Limit EXCEED this speed. With the playing fields entrance and a school entrance on this stretch of road, I will let you draw your own conclusions...

Cllr Burrow recently attended a multi-agency meeting where road safety in Levens was discussed. A sub group is being set up and we shall hear more in the future. As you may remember Levens and adjacent parishes have regular meetings with Highways England about the A590 and possible improvements to it either by signage or infrastructure. For several months a detailed examination has been underway and we, along with other parishes, are actively contributing to this study. Further updates on these meetings feature further in this Newsletter.

I am pleased to say that at our last Parish Council meeting it was resolved to increase our contribution to the Levens Playing Fields by a small amount.

Whilst it is a legal requirement to clear up after our dogs, can I please ask that we also properly dispose of the 'poo-bags'. Leaving them on hedges, walls or at the bottom of lamp posts, hoping they will magically disappear does not work! All SLDC litter bins can be used as can our own grey wheelie bins...

Finally, can I please remind you that the Annual Parish Meeting will be at 7.30pm in the Institute on Tuesday 19th March. I hope you will be able to come with any comments or suggestions you may have. Indeed you can come to any of our meetings, as I am sure you know, which are held at 7.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the Methodist Church Meeting Room.

Roger Atfield
Chair, Levens Parish Council

Winter Gritting

Whilst we hope that the worst of the winter weather is over (!?), this Newsletter is an opportunity to thank residents for using the grit bins to spread grit around the village. This is a very helpful task and appreciated - but do please remember not to spread it too thickly as this inhibits its effectiveness.

Traffic Management in Levens

On 12 February, Councillor Helen Burrow attended a collaborative meeting including the Highways Authority, the Highways Traffic Management Team, the Police, (Police Community Problem Solving Team and Police Casualty Reduction Office) and others, to discuss traffic issues in Levens.

Our Community Police officers have been out to watch and monitor the situation and its component factors. It was recognised that we have numerous problems, which at times, compound each other, including the physical nature of Levens Lane, parking, school traffic, no pavements, pedestrians (including small children) in the roadway, traffic congestion, speed and volume of traffic. Data from our recently installed Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) was most useful in confirming the extent of the problems.

In order to move forward Kevin Jackson of the Police has been charged with constituting a sub-group of all parties, to seek a sustainable, effective solution to all the collective issues and problems. It is intended the group will have a site meeting, look at evidence already gathered, investigate an appropriate package of improvements, which will then require funding.

On an associated matter, Cllr. Burrow also recently attended a meeting of the A590 working group. Highways England has contracted out a review of the A590 along our stretch from Brettargh Holt to Lindale. The aim is for a coherent and comprehensive package of deliverable solutions for the A590 issues. The review will consider a number of options for improvements and it is proposed to hold an open day for the public to view and discuss proposals at The Gilpin Bridge Inn on a date to be announced.

Woodland Management and Village Maintenance

You will recollect that we now have a Woodland Management Plan which will be posted on the village website and is available by request from the Clerk. The current priority is to complete a tree health and safety survey and costs for this work are being collated.

Through this Newsletter, **the Parish Council repeats its plea that no unauthorised work, including the removal of timber or the dumping of garden waste should take place on Parish Council land.** Please bring any issues to the attention of the Clerk.

As reported in the last Newsletter we now have a annual maintenance plan prepared by Parish Councillors which identifies priority and cyclical tasks with a view to improving the environment of the village. Andy Banks who is our maintenance contractor has started tackling some of the tasks identified and will shortly be starting on a project to renovate the various benches in and around the village. We continue to work with work with local authorities and agencies to address other matters, particularly road signage and unregulated advertising.

Whilst discussing village maintenance, it is an apt moment to thank District Councillor Holmes for the award of £350 towards the costs of a new noticeboard to replace the one at Cotes. This grant is much appreciated.

Levens Community Project

As mentioned in the Chairman's musings, much is happening with the Project at the present time. Proposals for the development of Sizergh Fell Quarry go to the Lake District National Park Planning Authority on 6 March (planning reference 7/2018/5610). If successful, this will lead to the sale of the site which is currently the subject of an Option to Purchase.

The receipts from this, coupled with the recent award of £350,000 from the Community Led Housing Fund takes the Project a long way to achieving the finance necessary for both the building of the new village hall and the 7 affordable housing units planned for the village. We have been working closely with Homes England on the latter and expect a further significant sum to be awarded as a result. As we write, we await the outcome of a bid to the Locally Important Projects Fund managed by SLDC. Detailed plans, building on the outline permissions already achieved for the affordable houses and market value properties at Cotes and Church Hill have been prepared and are being submitted to SLDC.

Dog Fouling

The Parish Council is sure that all residents are aware and sympathetic to its concerns and campaign about the amount of dog faeces around the Parish. Of course much of this probably comes from dogs being walked here whose owners live outside the Parish and so don't see the frequent requests in this Newsletter and elsewhere to clean up.

There should be no excuse now, however, as SLDC has altered its policy on dog fouling across the whole of the South Lakeland District. Owners can now be fined for not clearing up after their dogs anywhere where the public have access including private, public, open access and farm-land. Cleaning up does of course mean taking the poo-bag away – as the Chairman has confirmed, there is no local “poo-bag fairy” who removed plastic bags from bushes, walls or gates!

The Council has requested new signs from SLDC to reinforce this message at key points in the Parish.

Miscellany

The allotments at Levens Kitchen Garden continue to thrive and tenants are currently renewing for the 2019-20 year. The Chairman has referred to the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting on 19 March to which all are invited. Various village organisations will give updates on their activities. The guest speaker will be Tony Hills, Architect to the Levens Community Project, who will give a detailed presentation of progress to date and how it will continue to develop. The B4RN scheme continues to make progress and a report on this initiative will also feature at the Annual Meeting.

Refreshments are provided!

Current Details for Levens Parish Council 2018/19

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District Councillor: Cllr. Kevin Holmes, Field Place, Levens LA8 8EJ.
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Police: PCSO 5233 Jayne Park
Email: jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk

Website: www.levens.org.uk

Levens Village Community Website

The Village Webteam works together to keep our website and Facebook pages up to date, current and relevant. The Team is always looking for news, events and pictures to post so please feel free to send items or post yourself (the Team will monitor contributions) or join in by commenting, liking and sharing some of our news. Contact details are:

Website.....<http://www.levens.org.uk/>

Facebook.....<https://www.facebook.com/levens.org.uk/>