

# LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – Autumn 2019

## Chairman's Reflections

I write this contribution to our Autumn Newsletter the day after the Parish Council had its usual monthly meeting on the second Tuesday in October. The prompt to mention this is the fact that the meeting ended at 10.45pm and at the end I wondered 'why?!' As Chairman I have 'control' of the proceedings and when I look at the Agenda I try to work out what I think will be a straight-forward discussion or decision, or something a little more complicated – I then try to plan accordingly. On occasion I 'get it wrong'! October 8th was such a night. As I am sure you know we try to keep and improve our village to make it an even better place to live. Some topics come up regularly and sometimes we can help and other times we have to rely on other people/organisations to assist us. The repeated lack of replies to our requests and the next steps we should take took up a lot of our time at the meeting and is something which we have all probably increasingly faced. One such item concerns traffic in the village and progress following a site visit by various agencies back in March/April. Despite several reminders to several people any progress has not been forthcoming. I feel increasingly annoyed at the time it takes to get anything done and even more annoyed that we, as a Parish Council, seem unable to break the cycle of inaction.

On a more promising note, several on-going projects are now visibly progressing. Work has started on the Village Hall site; B4RN has reached a stage where ducts for the main fibres are clearly visible on Lowgate by the Institute; road makings on Greengate to reflect the extra traffic from Meadow Wood are about to be confirmed and we have had discussions with SLDC about possible additional Litter Bins and their locations.

As usual Parish Councillors' details are on the back of this Newsletter and please contact one of us with any queries, thoughts or suggestions you might have.

Roger Atfield, Chair, Levens Parish Council.

## Security Advice

Regular readers will remember that we highlighted the increase in cold-calling around the Village in the last edition of the Newsletter. Regrettably, there have also been a number of burglaries recently - usually when residents have been on holiday or away from home for other reasons. The Parish Council keeps in regular touch with the police to monitor these incidents and tries to provide what help it can, such as promoting the 'No Cold Calling Zone' initiative or the free 'Do Not Knock' stickers which are available from the village shop.

In this issue we have included a single sheet insert entitled 'Advice on Security.' It is intended to be a simple reminder, or checklist, of some of the actions you may wish to consider to help protect your home.

In a further initiative, and in conjunction with the Police, the Parish Council has arranged a free **Security and Safety Drop-in Session in Levens Institute between 10 a.m. and 12 noon on the 22 November.** In addition to the Police, it is hoped that a representatives from a local alarm system company and also from a bank (to give advice on avoiding scams and fraudsters) will be present.

Everyone welcome - refreshments will be provided!

### **\*Exciting News\***

This year the Parish Council has decided to bring something special to our village, for the community to share in over the Christmas period - and that is our very own village Christmas Tree! The children of Levens will be making decorations for the tree and we will be erecting and decorating it on 29/30th November. There will be a '**Big Christmas Switch On**' next to the village shop on **Sunday 1st December at 7pm!** This community event will include mulled wine, food and carol singing - so save the date as this is going to be especially festive!

### **Levens Community Project**

We are delighted to report that the Option to Purchase Sizergh Fell Quarry has been exercised, amounting to a legally binding contract for sale. We are anticipating completion of sale in early November and this will result in a major injection of funds into the Project. A Funding Agreement for a further significant sum as grant from the Community Led Housing Fund is currently being prepared by SLDC and we are also exploring funding options with Homes England to support of the planned affordable housing developments. Groundworks on the new village hall site, supported by SLDCs Locally Important Projects Fund will recommence very soon after a pause to enable party-wall agreements to be concluded.

### **Traffic Management, Highways and Public Transport**

The Levens Traffic Management Group did not meet over the summer, but we will be pressing for it to re-convene soon to continue this positive, joint-working initiative to bring traffic management and safety improvements to the village. On a recent development, there will be revised road markings in the Greengate area to accommodate the increased traffic flow to and from the new Meadow Wood development. The Parish Council continues to monitor and report defects in road surface condition and reminds Parishioners that anyone can report a defect on the on-line system at [www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads) (search for reporting-problem-on-highway).

Improving the A590 between Brettargh Holt and Meathop remains a priority for Highways England which is reported to be very pleased with the interest shown in their public information event at the Gilpin Inn in late June. Further updates are awaited with anticipation.

As we write, there is considerable anxiety about the planned closure of the 530 bus service from Cartmel to Kendal, via Levens village. This is a well-used service which is relied on by local people, the loss of which will require a long walk down (or up) Levens Lane to catch alternative services. For much of its length, Levens Lane is unlit and does not have a pavement and this, in the view of the Parish Council, is a very unsatisfactory position. The Parish Council has registered its strong concerns to Transport Services at Cumbria County Council and to Stagecoach – the service operator. It will continue to do what it can to lobby for retention of this service or for the provision of an acceptable alternative.

### **The Village Defibrillator**

Many people will be aware that the village defibrillator, which is located on the external wall of Levens Institute, was called into action recently and was not found wanting. The Parish Council extends its gratitude to all who keep it maintained and to those who were involved in its recent operation, including the Great North Air Ambulance Service. Its thoughts and best wishes for a full recovery are with Stephen Read. Anyone interested in volunteering as a first responder should contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance and if interest is sufficient we will arrange for appropriate training.

## **B4RN**

1000mbps fibre internet will be arriving very soon in Levens, thanks to our team of volunteers at Levens B4RN Project. After a very busy summer they have now completed the main Core Route 1 from the link with Hincaster, through Levens Bridge, under the A590 and around the eastern edge of our village to cross both Brigsteer Road and Hutton Lane.

The end of the fibre conduit presently comes out of the ground on the road-verge next to Beathwaite Gardens This will be the site of a cabinet (or exchange) to be the centre of operations as fibre is fed back around the village and beyond. All 64 Levens postcodes are now loaded onto a B4RN data system to manage the latest Government Voucher Scheme to pay for much of the project. This is due to be opened for us to each apply very soon.

Built by the Village for the Village, please join in and sign up Now

## **Miscellany**

BT has launched another consultation on whether it should continue to provide the payphone by the main village bus stop. Their own analysis of use shows that, of a number of payphones up for consideration across south Cumbria, the one in Levens has by far and away the highest level of use. The Parish Council has advised SLDC, who are coordinating responses to the consultation, that the facility must not be decommissioned.

The Council was pleased recently to arrange direct discussion with Mike Welch, the local United Utilities Water Customer Manager. Variable water pressure in the village was highlighted and UU has installed pressure-loggers at several locations in the system to monitor pressure. The frequent and often prolonged use of three-way traffic lights at Levens Bridge was also questioned and Mike acknowledged that this should also be looked into. We look forward to follow-up discussion in due course.

A new noticeboard to replace the dilapidated one at Cotes has been received and will be installed as soon as possible.

Councillors have continued to work with officers from SLDC to provide advice and facilities for the management of dog waste in the village and its surrounds. As emphasised before, many of the problems may be brought to the Parish by people from further afield, but everyone needs to be aware of SLDC's 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 has access including not only public footpaths, roads and verges, but also open country and farmland. Incidents where dogs are let out of vehicles at one end of a road to run along the verge as the car is driven to the other end are not uncommon – no effort is made to remove dog waste in these cases. We have now procured advisory signs from SLDC which have been put up along the Lord's Plain Road and will be placed at other key locations.

A recent success is SLDC's agreement to provide an extra two bins for the village for a trial period. This followed a meeting with SLDC officers attended by the Chairman and Councillor Burrow in response to complaints from Parishioners. Although SLDC no longer provides 'dog-bins', poo bags can be put into ordinary rubbish bins emptied by the Council. These bins contain in-built sensors which feed-back data on how full the bin is and when it requires emptying. This technology will be used to monitor use and determine the viability of providing additional bins. Initial locations will be at the bottom of Whitegate Hill and by the Hare and Hounds noticeboard, though these locations can be varied if more appropriate sites are identified.

## Current Details for Levens Parish Council 2019/20

| Councillor                     | Address                                     | Tel.         | Email  |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| Roger Atfield<br>(Chair)       | The Old Court, Church Rd, Levens, LA8 8PU   | 015395-61574 | rogeratfield@btinternet.com  |
| David Rogerson<br>(Vice-Chair) | 10, Beathwaite Gardens, Levens, LA8 8NG     | 015395-61628 | <a href="mailto:davelouise@btinternet.com">davelouise@btinternet.com</a>       |
| Susan Bagot                    | School House, Church Road, Levens, LA8 8PU  | 015395-60588 | <a href="mailto:sbagot@schoolhse.co.uk">sbagot@schoolhse.co.uk</a>             |
| Helen Burrow                   | Davlen Fold, Brigsteer Rd, Levens, LA8 8NT  | 015395-61082 | <a href="mailto:helenburrow20@gmail.com">helenburrow20@gmail.com</a>           |
| John Fitch                     | Woodpeckers, Brigsteer Road, Levens LA8 8NU | 015395-61361 | <a href="mailto:johnfitch@aol.com">johnfitch@aol.com</a>                       |
| Kevin Holmes                   | Field Place, Levens, LA8 8EJ                | 015395-52063 | <a href="mailto:kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com">kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com</a> |
| Rachael Johnston               | Tudor Cottage, Main Street, Levens LA8 8NB  | 015395-60115 | <a href="mailto:rachael79@yahoo.com">rachael79@yahoo.com</a>                   |
| Roger Mason                    | Heaves Farm, Levens, LA8 8DU                | 015395-60200 | <a href="mailto:roger@heavesfarm.co.uk">roger@heavesfarm.co.uk</a>             |
| Clerk                          | Address                                     | Tel.         | Email  |
| Martin Curry                   | 18 Barn Holme, Kendal, LA9 5LP              | 07388-920410 | <a href="mailto:levens.parish@gmail.com">levens.parish@gmail.com</a>           |

**County Councillor:** Jim Bland, Oakridge, Underbarrow LA8 8BL.  
Tel: 015395 68576. Email: [James.Bland@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:James.Bland@cumbria.gov.uk)

**District Councillor:** Cllr. Kevin Holmes, Field Place, Levens LA8 8EJ.  
Tel: 015395-52063. Email: [kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com](mailto:kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com)

**Police:** PCSO 5233 Jayne Park  
Email: [jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk](mailto:jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk)

**Website:** [www.levens.org.uk](http://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/>

## **LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ADVICE ON SECURITY**

#### **1. LEAVING THE HOUSE OR GOING ON HOLIDAY**

**LOCK** doors & windows – **REMOVE** keys from locks and keep out of reach of windows & doors – **ENSURE** side gates & sheds are locked – Keep gifts, cash & valuables safe & well **HIDDEN** so they cannot be seen or reached through windows – **CONSIDER** fitting a burglar alarm & low energy dusk to dawn lighting (check regularly to see they work) – **ENSURE** your house is secure if you are busy elsewhere in the house or garden.

When away **LEAVE** a light or two on timer switches upstairs or in rooms with the curtains drawn – **LOOK OUT** for neighbours' property – **CANCEL** newspapers, milk etc. but remember **NOT** to talk in front of anyone in the shops/pub about your holiday in case you are overheard. **DO NOT** post photos or chat on social media showing that you are on holiday. **DO NOT** leave Post visible and ensure no Parcels are due when you are away.

- 2. COLD CALLERS** – **LOCK** front and back doors – Post a 'Do Not Knock' sign near your door (Stickers available free in the Village Shop) – When someone calls **USE THE CHAIN** on your door and try to see who it is - **ALWAYS** ask for Proof of Identity (genuine tradesmen will carry an identification card with a photo) – **ONLY** use trusted and recommended tradesmen – **Do NOT** allow anyone you don't know into your home & if they ask you to go outside – **DON'T!** If caller wants to sell you something or wants to do jobs for you say 'No Thanks' and close the door straight away – **NEVER** tell callers that you are on your own and if unsure ask caller to come back later and arrange for someone to be with you when they return. **BEWARE** of callers who attempt to distract you - they may have an accomplice. Collect Car Registration number if possible.

- 3. TO REPORT COLD CALLING:** **TRADING STANDARDS** on 01539 713594. [trading.standards@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@cumbria.gov.uk)

- 4. SHEDS** – **REMEMBER** to lock up your Garden Shed! Contents are valuable – chain them to a fixed object. Use shackle padlocks, coach bolts & non-return screws to secure door hinges.