

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11 April 2023 in Levens Methodist Church at 7.30 p.m.

Before the commencement of the formal meeting, Cllr. Atfield welcomed Cllr. Janet Battye to her first meeting as the Councillor representative of the new Westmorland and Furness Council (W&FC).

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, J. Battye (and as W&FC Councillor), H. Burrow, K. Holmes, R. Mason, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy.

In Attendance: M. R. Curry (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

135/22 Apologies for Absence: None.

136/22 Declarations of Interest: Cllrs Battye, Holmes and Atfield declared interests in any matters relating to the Playing Fields.

137/22 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 March 2023 as a true record.

138/22 Public Participation: Mr J Morris drew attention to the recent closure of Underhill to cars and pedestrians and the increase in activity around electricity poles adjacent to his house. Power cut notices have been received but it is not clear what work is being undertaken.

139/22 Reports:

- a) **Reports from Councillors attending meetings:** There were no reports submitted.
- b) **Police:** No report had been received from the Police. Cllr. Burrow reported that cold-callers had been in the village during the previous week. Other Councillors had also received reports from various locations. A call had been put in to 101 and PCSO Park had been contacted. It was **Agreed** to write to PCSO Park from the Parish Council to raise the matter formally.
- c) **Westmorland & Furness Council:** Cllr Battye reported that the new Council has published and circulated a Welcome leaflet outlining its Mission, role and functions. The Annual Council Meeting is to be held on 20 April. The aim is to continue with the delivery of services as seamlessly as possible but if there are any problems, Parishioners should let Cllr. Battye know. Cllr Battye is exploring the costs of footway lighting and will represent other Parish Council interests when requested to do so.

140/22 Finance

- a) **Receipts 01 March – 31 March 2023:** Cllrs noted the following receipts:

i) 14/03/23: D Rogerson – Xmas Event receipts paid in:	£ 561.76
ii) 17/03/23: D Wilson – Allotment Rents 2022-23 / 2023-24:	£ 70.00
iii) 17/03/23: J Watson – Donation to Xmas event:	£ 10.00
- b) **Payments Required:** The following payments were approved:

i) M R Curry: Salary - March 2023: (PC: £367.22; Project: £294.41; Expenses £34.00; Mileage: £16.20)	£ 711.83
An underpayment of £201.31 was noted to be carried forward.	
ii) HMRC: PAYE etc Q4 2022-23:	£ 472.81
iii) CALC: Annual Subscription (CALC £213.99 / NALC ££76.02):	£ 290.01
iv) Tom Hecht: Web hosting (already approved):	£ 37.28
v) Levens Methodist Church: Room Hire (October-March)	£ 125.00
- c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** Councillors noted the gross reconciled bank balance of £8,874.05 held by the Parish Council on 31 March 2023 (£8,754.05 net after taking account of an un-presented cheque). They also noted a statement of ring-fenced funds showing that the Cumbria County Council Project fund now stood at a nil balance, leaving a net balance of PC funds of £8,754.05 (of which there were ring fences in favour of woodland management of £2,500.00 and for the Christmas event of £1,559.50).
- d) **Management of PC Finances** (banking arrangements): The Chairman continues to get proposals from Lloyds. In the meantime, a parishioner who works for HSBC has provided contact details which may lead to fruitful discussion with the current bank.

141/22 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Group (PAG):** Cllr Mason presented a brief report from a meeting held on 04 April. Main items of report were:
- i. **Sale of Plots:** Offers on Plots 1 at Cotes (still on the open market) and 3 at Church Hill (withdrawn for the time being) remain under negotiation via Armitstead Barnett.
 - ii. **Works - New Village Hall:** The northern wall is now complete and blocking of the rear (eastern) wall has started. There is stone to sell and this will be advertised on Facebook.
 - iii. **Electricity Supply at the New Village Hall:** Cllr. Mason has had meaningful discussion with a local person who works for Electricity NW and they are looking constructively at the best and most cost-effective route to take. For the moment, work on taking the services under Church land is paused.
 - iv. **Tender Packs:** These remain on-hold pending confirmation of utility requirements. A revised plan for kitchen design is awaited from Steelplan.
 - v. **The Institute:** Cllr. Mason confirmed that Tony Hills is finalising the revised plans for the Institute for the renewal of planning consent.
 - vi. **Community Housing Fund:** The Project awaits proposed amendments to the Funding Agreement to account for the offer of an extra £46,000 for the Institute.
 - vii. **Accountancy Services:** Accountants Armstrong Watson have been requested to complete the overall VAT report. They are submitting quarterly VAT returns.
 - viii. **Investment of Cash Reserves:** Various avenues are still being pursued.

b) **Payments:** To **Approve** the following payment as recommended by PAG:

J. Thacker & Sons Ltd: Interim payment – perimeter walls £ 37,366.80

142/22 Planning Applications:

- a) **The Schedule of Planning Applications:** Updates to the Planning Schedule on 14 March had been circulated and were noted. The following updates were noted:

PC Ref	Application No.	Location	Proposal	Status
43	SL/2022/0074	Land to the NE of Levens Lane	Levens La Footpath	Not yet determined
14	SL/2022/0768	5-6 The Stables, Levens Hall	New interior glass door – no objection submitted	Not yet determined
18	SL/2022/0950	Bridge End Garage	Major alterations – no objection submitted	ACON 30/03/23
19	SL/2022/0995	Whinthwaite Hose	Building works – no objection submitted	ACON 30/03/23
22	SL/2022/1075	Levens Hall	Repairs to west elevation – no objection submitted	Not yet determined
25	SL/2023/0122	Levens Hall	Erection of open fronted gardener's store	No Objection submitted. Not yet determined
2	PN/2023/0042	Sampool Wood LA8 8EJ	To determine if pp req'd for a forester's hut	No decision - await outcome of application
3	SL/2023/0263	1 Ivy Cottage LA8 8PF	Reconstruct side-porch and infill extension	Further investigation. Comments by 19/04/23.
4	SL/2023/0247	Levens Hall LA8 0PD	Alterations re bakery	No Objection submitted Not yet determined

b) **Other Planning Matters:**

- i. **Shepherd's Mill:** Follow-up on the S.165 and with the Valuation Office remain in hand.

143/22 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Levens Traffic Management:** On the Levens Lane footpath, Cllr Battye felt that this would now be considered by the new Locality Board of W&FC which meets shortly. However, it is unlikely that Tim Thacker will be added to the list of Approved Contractors and due to the costs of using existing contractors from the list, it will probably be passed to the Strategic Highways Committee. Cllr Battye will press for progress and report back.
- b) **Parish Noticeboard:** The order has been confirmed and the artwork is near completion. Installation is expected after the Easter break.
- c) **Woodland Management:** Cllrs Holmes and Willacy have met with Scott Thwaites and discussed the work that he should do at Cotes and in the vicinity of Checkmate on Lowgate. He has submitted verbal quotes of £750 + VAT for the former and £400 + VAT for the latter. In the meantime, Russell Boow has contacted Cllr Mason and is available. It was **Agreed** to proceed with the work at Cotes via Scott Thwaites and for Cllr Mason to discuss the work on Lowgate with Russell Boow.

It was further Agreed to prompt Electricity NW about the need for thinning of branches close to power lines in several places.

d) Parish and Other Land:

- i. Maintenance Services: The job description had been agreed and a meeting with a potential handy-person, by Zoom, was **Agreed**. Cllrs Burrow, Holmes and Atfield will participate.
 - ii. Brigsteer Road Site: Cllr. Mason reported that he is waiting for a quote for the work on the northern boundary wall.
 - iii. HMLR: The registration of land at Cotes remains work in progress.
 - iv. The Jubilee Orchard: Cllr. Mason is getting a quote for the costs of work on the boundary wall and will look at possible funding pots for this work. Cllr Willacy proposed that in the meantime the site could be levelled as a start on ground preparation, and this was **Agreed**. Cllr Holmes reported that a Parishioner has trees to donate to the orchard initiative and Councillors were pleased to note this for action when the orchard is ready to take trees.
- e) Annual Parish Meeting:** The event had gone well and feedback had been positive. It was **Agreed** to put the draft Minutes and reports from local organisation on the website.
- f) Christmas Event:** Cllr. Burrow reported that it was intended to retain the bulk of the money raised from the 2022 event to add to the ring-fenced pot of money held by the Parish Council to ensure there was sufficient reserve for any outstanding and future costs. She proposed that the Parish Council should make three small donations of £50 each to The Brownies, the Levens Playgroup and to the Community Coffee shop. These proposals were **Approved**.
- g) Levens Greening Campaign:** Cllr Batty confirmed that The Clean River Kent Group will give a presentation in the Village on 24 April. Following that it will concentrate on arrangements for the Great Big Green Week to run from 10-18 June 2023.
- h) Parish Emergency Plan:** An initial meeting of Community members representing seven local organisations had been held on 31 March. All present had agreed that the initiative to create an Emergency Plan was worthwhile and committed themselves to meet again to take this forward in greater detail. The Clerk has prepared notes of the meeting and will coordinate a further meeting in a month or so.
- i) Coronation Events:** Cllrs Bagot and Burrow confirmed that they are going ahead with plans to decorate the area around the bus shelter. The Playing Fields are offering to host a Community Picnic on Sunday 7 May after the Church Services. It is anticipated that other areas of the village will also put on small events.

144/22 Correspondence: A relatively small number of items on the Schedule of Correspondence were noted. The following was mentioned in particular:

- i) A request from the Kendal Cycle Club for an update on the Parish Council position regarding its note on the incident in Levens. The Clerk has replied to the effect that the Parish Council is not intending to take this matter further but will not hesitate to draw attention to behaviour on the part of any cycling club that appears to be contrary to reasonable conduct.

145/22 Items for Local Media: Increasing the coverage of local items remains work in progress.

146/22 Future Agenda Items: Items on the current Agenda will be followed up. Cllrs Mason and Willacy submitted apologies as they are unable to attend the next meeting on 09 May.

147/22 Date of the Next Meeting:

The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be its Annual Parish Council Meeting and will be held on held on Tuesday, 09 May 2023 in the Levens Methodist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date.....