

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Levens Methodist Church on the 11 January 2022.

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

88/21 Apologies for Absence: PCSO Jayne Park (but written report received).

89/21 Declarations of interest: In relation to Item 9(i) of the Agenda, Cllrs. Atfield and Holmes declared that they were Trustees of the Levens Playing Fields Charity and Cllr. Battye declared that she was Secretary to the Levens Playing Fields Committee.

90/21 Minutes: Before the Minutes were signed the Chairman pointed out that whilst the November Minutes were not in need of amendment, it should be noted he and Cllr. Holmes were Trustees of the Levens Playing Fields by virtue of the offices they respectively held and not in their own right. It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 09 November 2021 as a true record.

91/21 Public Participation: No matters were raised by members of the public.

92/21 Reports:

a) Reports from Councillors attending meetings:

i. Cllr. Atfield had attended a remote meeting on Local Government Reorganisation hosted by CALC on 02 December. Costs of the initiative were estimated at between £15 and £17million pounds. Elections will be held on 05 May to elect 'shadow' Councillors for the new Authority.

b) Police: The Chairman summarised a written report submitted by PCSO Park as follows:

i. The police had apprehended a flatbed truck and occupants ostensibly touting for scrap and confirmed through checks that their intentions were potentially dubious. PCSO Park had stressed the advice to phone 101 if there are suspicious activities in the village. It was **Agreed** to reinforce this via the village Facebook page.

ii. Cllr. Rogerson referred to a burglary and other incidents following the recent spate of cold calling. It was noted that the No Cold Calling signs had either disappeared or were tired and Cllr. Burrow **Agreed** to source replacements.

c) District Councillor: Cllr. Holmes reported as follows:

i. Local Government Reorganisation was progressing and the Structural Changes Order will be put before Parliament in February;

ii. Cllr Holmes had referred a deteriorating wall at Nos 1/2/3 Hying Court to Locality Officers

iii. There had been a meeting of the A590 Group on 24 November as plans for improvements continue to evolve, though there is unlikely to be any start made before 2024. There had been a bad accident at Force Lane on Christmas Eve. Highways England is aware of the poor visibility to the right when exiting Force Lane onto the A590 which may have been the possible cause.

d) County Councillor: Cllr. Bland reported as follows:

i. Progress continues with plans for the footpath on Levens Lane and for a footpath / cycleway at Levens Bridge. Costs of the latter are under review and there was mention of a possible contribution from the Parish Council.

ii. Cllr. Bland confirmed that costs relating to planning fees, design consultancy and tree surveys for the Levens Lane work would be addressed to the Parish Council but reimbursed by way of grant from his CCC ring-fenced Project fund.

93/21 Finance

a) Receipts: There were no receipts for the period 01 November – 31 December 2021.

b) Payments: The following payments were **Approved**:

i. M R Curry: Salary Nov/Dec combined: **£1,039.36**
Details as follows: Nov: (PC: £320.10; Project: £233.65; Charity: £5.62; Mileage: £6.50; Exes: (Postage £15.91 / Stationery £4.99). **Sub-Total: £586.77**

Dec: (PC: £150.74; Project: £193.94; Charity: £94.91; Mileage: £13.00).

Sub-Total: £452.59

- ii. HMRC: PAYE / NI Months 7-9 **£ 413.55**
- iii. It was **Agreed in principle** to pay the meeting costs of the recent A590 Group held at J36 Meeting Rooms on the 24 November subject to email confirmation that they are reasonable when the invoice is received.
- c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled net bank balance of £19,479.18 was noted. Councillors also noted that after deduction of ring-fenced funds the underlying balance available to the Parish Council is £13,759.02.
- d) **To Approve the Budget for 2022-23:** The Clerk presented a budget for 2022-23 (previously circulated) based on projections of income and expenditure to the end of the 2021-22 financial year. Having reviewed the figures, Councillors **Approved** the budget.
- e) **To Approve the Precept Bid for 2022-23:** Based on the approved budget for 2022-23, Councillors noted the figure of £13,960.05 required as Precept. This represented roughly a 2.5% increase in the Parish bid on the previous year. The figure was **Agreed**. In reaching agreement a possible request for a contribution towards the cycle/footpath initiative between Kendal and Levens Bridge was discussed and whether this would have implications for the Precept. On the basis that this was a potential and not an actual request and that no indication of the level of contribution was available, a figure could not be included in the 2022-23 budget and therefore the Precept would remain as proposed. Should an approach be made in the future, it was noted that the Parish Council only had limited reserves and that there may have to be recourse to increasing the Precept or other sources of funding such as the Charity or through borrowing. It was felt that any impact on the Precept should be after work was commenced so that the target for any increase in Precept could be seen. However, a contribution had not been anticipated and it was felt that Sustrans was the correct source to bridge any funding gap.
- f) **Management of PC Finances:** The Clerk reported that he had received a letter from HSBC stating that the application for Telephone Banking had been rejected as the primary user was not a mandate holder. It was **Agreed** that the Chairman would pursue this direct with HSBC.

94/21 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Group:** No meeting of the PAG had been held in January, however Cllr. Mason reported as follows:
- b) **Sale of Plots:**
 - i. **Church Hill:** The sale of Plots 1 and 2 were completed during December with net receipts amounting to £316,677.00. Plot 3 remains on the market.
 - ii. **Cotes:** The sales of Plots 2 and 3 are progressing. In respect of Plot 2 a recommendation from the PAG to cover the drain with a heavy duty grid at a cost of £750 was **Agreed**. Other enquiries were being dealt with. Plot 1 remains on the market.
- c) **Underhill:** Tim Thacker is making good progress on infrastructure works.
- d) **New Village Hall:**
 - i. **Zero Rate VAT:** The Clerk is to have a meeting with accountants on 01 February.
 - ii. **Boundary Walls:** The owner of a neighbouring property has objected to the renewal of the Party Wall Agreement which needs to be in place before the final excavations can be completed. Our Party Wall consultant is leading on negotiations on this.
- e) **To Approve Payments:** Payment of the following invoice was **Approved:**
Tony Hills: For management of infrastructure work at Underhill: **£2,400.00**

95/21 Schedule of Planning Applications:

- a) Councillors noted updates and the following new applications

PC Ref	Location	Proposal	Application No.	PC View
37	Levens Moss LA8 8LJ	Demolition of remnant b'ldg & erect single dwelling	SL/2021/1200	No Objection
38	Plot 1, Church Road	New dwelling & associated works	SL/2021/1206	No Objection
39	Lords Plain Farm LA8 8EN	Re-concrete agricultural yard	7/2021/6032 (LDNPA)	No Objection

b) Reporting Planning Matters at Parish Council Meetings

- i. It was **Agreed** to add "Other Planning Issues" as a standing item to the Agenda in order to give the opportunity raise or follow-up on planning matters. Members were asked to submit any items for discussion to the Clerk before the next meeting.

96/21 Woodland Management: Following a site meeting on 04 December, attended by Cllr. Holmes, Andy Banks and the Clerk, the latter had circulated a Report of outcomes. Commenting on this, he stressed the importance of attending to a number of trees identified as being in need of felling – mainly as a result of ash die-back. It is not possible to address all the recommendations, but high priorities had been identified and should be attended to in the first quarter of 2021. This will demonstrate a serious and responsible approach to advice received. Councillors **Agreed** his Report and that recommended that work should begin with marked trees on Heaves Quarry and at the northern end of the Crossing site. The sycamore on Garnett should be assessed and felled if practicable. Beyond that, further works for following seasons should be identified and a phased plan prepared. Publicity should be given to woodland work on the website and via the PC Newsletter.

Cllr. Mason confirmed that he had a contact who was willing to undertake the first tranche of work at no cost in consideration of receiving the felled timber. He will follow this up.

97/21 South Westmorland Village Maintenance Association

Amidst current doubt that the SWVMA can continue to facilitate winter gritting services it was noted that District Cllr. John Holmes is still negotiating with contractors (who must be approved by County Highways in order to secure the provision of free grit). If that fails, the village may have to revert to providing its own service as in the past but for the moment it was **Agreed** to 'wait and see'.

98/21 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Traffic Management:** The Clerk reported that despite having written twice to Arnside, he had not yet received a reply on how they had secured a 20 mph zone. There was further discussion about the merits of a 20s Plenty initiative or a formal 20mph restriction. It was **Agreed** to press Arnside for a reply on how they had proceeded. In relation to SIDS, Cllrs Willacy and Rogerson confirmed that they would site the poles before the next meeting.
- b) **Levens Lane Footpath:** This had been reported on by Cllr. Bland at item 92/21(d).
- c) **Parish and Other Land**
 - i. **Brigsteer Road site:** The Clerk reported that the grant application to Friends of the Lake District was still to be re-submitted.
 - ii. **Registration of Land at Cotes:** The Clerk confirmed that the application for First Registration had been sent to HM Land Registry and that they had cashed the fee cheque.
 - iii. **Parish Hedge, Hutton Lane:** Cllr. Mason confirmed that work to remove the hedge would be undertaken in February and the Clerk had informed Mr Stainton of this in a letter on 14 December which also referred to the tenancy agreement previously agreed.
- d) **Parish Council Website:** Further to the request to ask Tom Hecht to work up new content frameworks and designs, the Clerk reported that Tom was continuing with this work and new content was being uploaded onto the draft site.
- e) **Platinum Jubilee:** A Beacon had been agreed as had the development of the Platinum Jubilee Orchard at Underhill. Councillors would look at detailed plans for this. Other initiatives were suggested including Jubilee mugs and details, including costs, would be explored further. In the meantime it was **Agreed** to put these plans on Facebook and ask for any other ideas for activities that the Parish Council might develop in conjunction with others.
- f) **Levens Christmas Event:** It was unanimously agreed that it had, once again, been a beautifully decorated tree. Cllrs. Burrow and Rogerson reported that £355 had been raised from general donations and a further £126.27 from the collection in the Village Shop making a total of £481.27 which would be paid into the PC account to add to the existing ring-fenced fund. Expenses of £25.36 had already been reimbursed to Cllr Burrow so the net funds in hand are £1,497.79. Receipts from the cake raffle have gone into the Plants on the Green Fund which donates to a foodbank. The £481.27 collected was discussed as the Parish Council

understands one of the two nominated foodbanks does not require money; just goods. Cllr Burrow will have further discussion with Liz Hearn (Plants on the Green) on this.

- g) Electric Car Charging Points:** Cllr. Holmes reported that he had been in contact with Jemma Fells at SLDC but there was no further progress to report.
- h) Playing Fields Pump Track:** Cllr. Battye reported that the Playing Fields Committee (PFC) had met with young people the previous week and that a Committee meeting to consider next steps was planned for the week following. A meeting with Dallam Tower is to be arranged. Cllr. Battye will report on further progress.
- i) SLDC Greening Campaign:** Cllr. Battye reported that Phase 2 of the Greening Campaign would include initiatives on retro-fitting and re-wilding initiatives. She also reported on support to be provided by SLDC for those signing up for Phase 2 amounting to a 50% contribution to the sign-up fee (being £75). It was **Agreed in principle** to sign up for Phase 2 of the initiative with the final decision to be made at the February meeting. Cllr. Holmes wished to be assured that environmental initiatives would take a holistic approach to the local environment.
- j) B4RN:** Cllr. Rogerson reported that the Scheme had now had sufficient take-up to enable release of the maximum Government funding available allowing 23 properties to be connected before Christmas and a further 15 imminently. There were 46 properties left to connect and it was expected that the Project would be completed by Easter.

99/21 Correspondence: A schedule of correspondence had been circulated. Councillors noted the Levens 10k Event scheduled for 25 May and it was agreed that the PC would not respond to SLDCs street naming consultation - otherwise there were no other observations

100/21 Future Agenda Items: Items confirmed for the next Agenda were:

- i. Annual Parish Meeting – March 2022
- ii. Next Newsletter

101/21 Date of the Next Meeting: The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Tuesday 08 February 2022 in the Methodist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.59 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....