

# LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2022

## Chairman's Jottings

It is just three months since our last Newsletter - but what a three months it has proved to be. Our meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September began with a one minute silence in recognition of Queen Elizabeth II; the only monarch most of us have ever known. Since then the Government line-up has changed - and as I write this seems to be changing at an ever increasing speed! As you know Cumbria County Council will cease on 1<sup>st</sup> April next year and as a Parish Council we are monitoring the progress of the change to the new Unitary Council and what the possible effects to us could be.

The other day someone said to me that whenever they passed the new Village Hall Site nothing seems to have changed and the piles of stone are still there. From their point of view this is a valid comment, but please be assured that progress is being made; some small bits of work have recently taken place on the site but against the large piles of stone it is barely noticeable. Other parts of the Community Project are also moving and whilst the work is not immediately obvious the article a little further on describes that progress.

As far as our village is concerned the falling through of the sale of the old carpet shop in the middle of the village in mid-August was a complete shock. Councillor Helen Burrow has spent years trying to get this matter resolved. You will recall that the purchasers had even held an open meeting where their plans had been displayed and the response from villagers was extremely positive. Planning Permission had been sought and given and the Parish Council had given its support. To the utter dismay and astonishment of the Parish Council, the seller pulled out of the sale the day before the exchange of contracts was due to take place leaving the purchasers seriously out of pocket. At its September meeting the Parish Council resolved to action certain procedures in the light of these changed circumstances and we await the results.

As this is our last Newsletter this year may I take this opportunity to say an early "Seasons Greetings" and please take care.

**Roger Atfield – Chair, Levens Parish Council**

## Community Emergency Plan

As reported in the previous Newsletter, the Parish Council has started the process of creating a community-based plan to ensure that there are facilities in place to support people in the event of emergencies in the wider environment. Councillors have looked at the guidance provided by Action for Communities in Cumbria (ACT) and the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) and with the templates provided feel that the preparation of a plan will be relatively straightforward. It must, however, be a plan that is owned by the Community itself – one which makes provision for those organisations or individuals who can provide facilities and assistance to be able to do so in a coordinated way. To that end, the Parish Council has invited a range of local organisations to work with it to finalise the Emergency Plan which it hopes to have in place by the end of the year.

The cost of living crisis is a further pressure on local communities and in response to a countywide call, the Methodist Church has registered itself as a 'Warm Spot' – being a space that is open for at least 2 hours each week. On the three afternoons that its coffee shop is open the Church can offer a warm, heated space; company - "a warm welcome" from at least one member of staff or volunteer and a warm drink.

## Greening Levens Campaign

Great Big Green Week is a national celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. Here in Levens over the weekend of 23/25 September, over 50 people attended a variety of events including a Frock Exchange and New Clothes from Old; a litter pick; Climate Café, Green Raffle, Plants on the Green, more recycling, a Q and A with Tim Farron MP,

Gardenorganics information on composting, Kingsharp, and work on the community gardens in the Playing Fields and Methodist Church. Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) came to promote the Solar Made Easy scheme in the village.

Thanks to everyone who helped - more events are being planned to promote this important issue. For more information contact [janetmbattye@gmail.com](mailto:janetmbattye@gmail.com).

## **Levens Community Project**

As reported previously it was always anticipated that work at the new Village Hall site was unlikely to progress until the Autumn, so it is good to report that work has indeed recommenced. Now the site has been levelled and cut-back to its perimeter, and following a competitive tendering exercise to identify and appoint a contractor, this next phase of physical work is the construction of the perimeter walls. These will be built to very technical specifications (particularly for the eastern boundary) drawn up in part by Cllr Mark Willacy in consultation with an external engineering consultant. The foundations for the eastern wall are under construction. There has also been a considerable amount of work devoted to securing the most cost-effective solution to bringing in the electricity supply to the site. Costs for this have risen over recent months and the Project has been concentrating on exploring alternative options to secure the supply and this remains work-in-progress. On completion of this work, the Project can go out to tender for the construction phase. Down at Underhill, infrastructure work is all but completed with some final stone-walling to finish. As a result, and subject to some final work on renewable energy supply, tenders for the construction phase are about to go out in order to start the process of appointing a contractor.

Whilst the housing market is currently in a state of flux, we are fortunate to have sold all but two of the six plots for self-build houses. Our Agents remain confident that the market for building plots in Levens will remain strong and that we can expect to sell the final two in the not too distant future.

## **Highways and Traffic Management**

At the beginning of October, Cumbria County Council (Highways) advised that the roads servicing the Meadow Wood development had been formally adopted as highway, to be maintained at the public expense by the Council. Unfortunately County Highways have still not yet come back to the Parish Council with any proposals for road safety management in and around the centre of the village and particularly around the school. Wishing to move this forward, the Parish Council had a very constructive discussion with Cllr Pete McSweeney in July who described how Arnside had secured a 20 mph speed limit. The process had been long, involving a range of issues including liaison with Cumbria County Council Highways, public consultation and costs. Ultimately, however, the initiative was successful, leading to an overall lowering of speed throughout the village. As a result of advice from Cllr McSweeney, the Parish Council is renewing contact with the County Council, to try, in advance of the Unitary Council, to embed a project with it that can in time be implemented.

Efforts to agree a plan and build a footpath along Levens Lane also continue. This has met with a number of obstacles, but the Parish Council has been liaising with County Councillor Bland and appreciates the efforts he is making to try to make this happen.

## **Levens Christmas Event**

The Parish Council is delighted to confirm that it will once again be supporting the celebration of Christmas in the village. Although detailed plans have yet to be fully agreed, a large tree has been offered as a donation by local residents Steve and Sylvia Roberts which will go up as usual on the Green next to the Village Shop. Vanessa and Dave have once again kindly agreed to provide the power for the lights from the Shop and the Christmas Fund, which is managed by the Parish Council will ensure that they are not out of pocket in these worrying times of increasing energy costs. It is poignant that as recently as June, many in the village came together to celebrate Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, but that only 3 months later the Nation

mourned her passing. The Parish Council marked this sad milestone at its meeting in September and, in further recognition of Her service, the Christmas tree will be decorated with red, white and blue striped ribbons. As a further tribute, the Parish Council has already agreed to create and manage a small Jubilee Orchard on its land to the south of the new houses at Underhill and this has been registered under the Jubilee Green Canopy initiative. At its meeting in October, and whilst on the subject of sad losses, the Parish Council also marked the passing of Stephen Read and Ted Capstick, both of whom had given so much to the village in different ways.

## Miscellany

**Are you / do you know a handy-person?** Maintenance of the public spaces around the village that are owned by the Parish Council has always been of great importance to it and in recent years it has been fortunate to have had the services of Andy Banks who has attended to grass cutting, hedge trimming and other maintenance tasks. Unfortunately, Andy is no longer available to provide this service to the Parish Council so it is actively looking for a replacement who can tackle a wide range of general maintenance work. This is a paid position and ideally the person appointed should be trained in the use of strimmers and other powered equipment. If you, or anyone you know are interested in taking on this role, please contact the Clerk at [levens.parish@gmail.com](mailto:levens.parish@gmail.com) or phone 07388 920410.

**The Parish Council Noticeboard:** Anyone who has visited the Parish Council noticeboard outside the Methodist Church recently may have noticed that after several refurbishments the wooden framework has now deteriorated to a point which is beyond repair. This is the main board for the display of Parish Council information and the Council is looking at options for a replacement which it hopes will last for many years to come.

There are, of course, other sources of local information so do please check out the following:

[Levens Parish Council webpages](#)

[Our Facebook Page](#)

[Our Facebook Group](#)

**B4RN in Levens** – while many of the village team have retired after 6 years of hard voluntary work to get over 316 homes live on 1000mbps B4RN Internet, the service is still available to nearly all homes in Levens Parish. Ducting has been left at your house boundary or in a Toby Box in the roadside.

At £60 connection fee and £33 per month for service B4RN remains outstanding value for Symmetrical fibre internet.

To enquire, go to: Get B4RN at <https://b4rn.org.uk/postcode-checker/> or contact the remaining volunteer team in Levens with any questions at [levensb4rnproject@gmail.com](mailto:levensb4rnproject@gmail.com)

## Levens Parish Council 2022-23

Councillor	Address	Tel.	Email
Roger Atfield (Chair)	The Old Court, Church Rd, Levens, LA8 8PU	015395 61574	<a href="mailto:rogeratfield@btinternet.com">rogeratfield@btinternet.com</a>
Roger Mason (Vice-Chair)	Heaves Farm, Levens, LA8 8DU	015395 60200	<a href="mailto:roger@heavesfarm.co.uk">roger@heavesfarm.co.uk</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>

Janet Battye	Inglewood, Cinderbarrow, Levens	0 7 7 1 1 583013	<a href="mailto:janetmbattye@gmail.com">janetmbattye@gmail.com</a>
Kevin Holmes	Field Place, Levens, LA8 8EJ	015395 52063	<a href="mailto:kevinrhomes0@gmail.com">kevinrhomes0@gmail.com</a>
David Rogerson	16, Nethercroft, Levens, LA8 8LU	015395 61628	<a href="mailto:daveirogerson@btinternet.com">daveirogerson@btinternet.com</a>
Mark Willacy	Hundred Acre View Church Rd LA8 8PS	07786 080893	<a href="mailto:mark@dhwillacy.com">mark@dhwillacy.com</a>
<b>Clerk</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Tel.</b>	<b>Email</b>
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. Mob: 0777 345 3548. Email: [kevinrhomes0@gmail.com](mailto:kevinrhomes0@gmail.com)

**Shadow Councillor, Westmorland and Furness Council:** Cllr. Janet Battye, Inglewood, Cinderbarrow, Levens LA8 8NX. Mob: 07711 583013. Email: [janetmbattye@gmail.com](mailto:janetmbattye@gmail.com)

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

### **Parish Council Meetings 2022-23**

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month in the Methodist Church Meeting Room commencing at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated / notified. Matters relating to Parish Council meetings will be posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard and on its [webpage](#).

Meetings for the rest of the Council year are:

<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
	10 January
08 November	14 February
December – no meeting	14 March
	11 April
	09 May