

Message from the Chairman

At the Parish Council Meeting in May I was re-elected as Chairman and thank my fellow councillors for their continued support. Thanks to the efforts of Helen Burrow and Roger Mason the Levens Community Project proceeds steadily – please see Roger’s update elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our Parish Clerk is about to leave us to take up a new job in Somerset. We wish him and his wife well and I thank Peter for his help and advice since he joined us. Sylvia Roberts has volunteered to become our new Parish Clerk so as to ensure that ongoing community projects can continue. Rules dictate that she has to resign from the Parish Council, which she has done, in order to take up the position of unpaid Parish Clerk. We are grateful to her for accepting this challenge.

As usual, if you have any thoughts or comments re Levens, please contact any of the councillors or clerk.

Roger Atfield.

Levens Community Project Update

IMAGE OF PROPOSED NEW VILLAGE HALL



The Parish Council (PC) has now obtained planning permission on all the sites to move on with the Community Project (CP)

The next step of Phase 1 is to put everything in place to sell Sizergh Fell Quarry and the Cotes plots. SFQ has outline planning permission for 8 full value houses and Cotes 3 individual plots also with outline planning permission. Once SFQ and up to 3 of the plots at Cotes are hopefully sold this will provide the finances to build the new hall. The Institute can then be rebuilt into 3 flats for our older village residents to rent at an affordable rate with the income coming back to benefit the village.

The PC has received a grant from SLDC to enable a business plan to be commissioned. This is to be done by Wingspan who specialise in such things and is now underway.

The PC has decided, after putting the project details out to tender, to use Milne Moser as solicitors to do all necessary legal and charity work for the CP.

The PC has also decided to use Colin Tomlinson from Michael CL Hodgson to sell the necessary plots after receiving valuations and fees from a number of Estate Agents.

There are still a number of steps to be taken before the sales can take place.

The Charity Commission needs to agree to the proposals of the CP.

We aim to set up a Community Land Trust or a similar body to take control of the Project. This body can have any number of Trustees made up of people from any of the involved village organisations and/ or any number of villagers. It can also claim grants or borrow money if required.

Before selling any plots a legal agreement needs to be in place that all the organisations involved, the PC, the Institute Charity and Levens Charity are all committed to the Project and will also commit their required assets to make the project work. A technical design and detailed cost for the New Hall and Institute flats needs to be in place therefore giving a more accurate cost to proceedings.

A meeting has been held with the Homes and Community Agency who give grants for the affordable home element of the project. This includes grants towards the 3 flats at the Institute and if the PC decide to go ahead with Phase 2 of the CP this money will be useful to help build the 4 affordable homes at Underhill. Some monies are also available from SLDC towards the affordables. The H&CA have already given the grant which enabled all the planning permissions to be obtained including payments for surveys and Architects fees therefore not costing the Village any monies to date. It is still believed that the project with all the information we have at present, including valuations and estimated costs will be cost neutral.

If Phase 2 does go ahead it would be necessary to move the allotments. Mr Richard Bagot at Levens Hall has kindly offered the Kitchen Gardens for the new allotments. It is situated opposite Ninzergh farm road on the left of the A6 towards Milnthorpe. It is currently a grass field but could be soon made into a number of quality allotments being free draining and flat with plenty of soil.

Separate meetings have been held with the SLDC allotment officer and also with Mr Richard Bagot onsite and a meeting was also held in the Methodist Room with current and potential allotment users. The next step is an onsite meeting with the potential users and to obtain quotes to cultivate and fence the required area. Agreement needs to be achieved with Mr Richard Bagot, the allotment holders, the allotment association and the PC and approval needs to be obtained from the relevant Government Minister. This is all at an early stage but looks very promising and if you wish to have a new allotment please contact Helen Burrow at dhj@burrow3.wanadoo.co.uk

The PC are taking the project one step at a time basing decisions on information gained by both themselves and the Project Group.

As each step is achieved the New Village Hall becomes nearer to reality.

Roger Mason
Chairman Project Group

Twining with Levens

If I was to summarise our visit to French Levens I would say that it was over and above our expectations. We were so warmly welcomed by the lovely people of Levens that we were half tempted to up sticks and move there. Even though our command of the French language was limited they rose to the challenge and made every effort to talk to us in English relishing the opportunity to practice their English. We were taken into the heart of their community for a day and treated as VIP,s with lunch cooked by a famous chef from Nice in a marquee on their beautiful village meadow which was host to a vintage and super cars charity event. In the evening we were invited to Patrice,s home for a meal with his friends. my husband, Mike who is a fire fighter was shown around the local fire station and the fire men were just as welcoming. It was all such a privilege. We have made a great connection with them all for sharing the same village namesake. I look forward to keeping the friendships going and hope to visit again and to be able to repay their kindness here in the lakes

Thank you again for the opportunity you gave to us.
Bridget

Introduction of the new Parish Council Clerk

July 2015 Sylvia Roberts will commence the duties of Parish Clerk. If you don't already know me I would like to use this opportunity to introduce myself.

My Husband and I have lived in the Village for several years; we reside near the Hare & Hounds Pub. Last November I was co-opted as Levens Parish Councillor, where I began to understand how the council worked to meet the demands of Levens Village. I must admit I have been honoured to work alongside such a dedicated team. At this present time the Councillors are engaged a variety of village issues including 'The Village Project', which I am proud to be part of the team in supporting its success.

My predecessor Peter performed an excellent job in this post and I wish him well on his move to Somerset. I do intend to carry on in his footsteps; I know I am extremely fortunate to have the support of the Parish Councillors and residents of Levens Village.

Summary of Grant Applications & Awards

There have two Levens Charity grant applications this year. The first was for the work to restore the church wall, where the council awarded a grant of £6400. The second was to the WI for their centenary scrap book, and they were awarded a grant of £200.

Sylvia Roberts

Clerk to the Council

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