

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13 January 2015 in the Methodist Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs R.Atfield (Chairman), S.Bagot, H.Burrow, C.Hammond, R.Mason, J.Thacker, S.Roberts and P.Davidson (clerk) + County Cllr J.Bland + PCSO M.Hutchinson + 12 members of the public

194/14 Apologies for absence

Cllr D.Martin

195/14 Declarations of interest

Cllr Bagot declared an interest in planning application SL/2014/1154.

196/14 Minutes

It was **resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 11 November and the extraordinary meetings held on 25 November and 9 December 2014, as a true record.

197/14 Public Participation

- Levens Playing Fields: a member of the public gave the view that the Levens playing fields were a valuable village asset and should be funded as a priority. This was reinforced by a representative of Levens Playing Fields Association, who emphasised the difficulty in raising enough funding to maintain the facilities. It was requested that the Council increase the budget allocated to supporting the playing fields from £1000 to £1600 next year. Councillors agreed to take this into consideration in their budget discussion (see **199/14** below).
- Church Road Allotment: in relation to item **201/14d** (see below) a member of the public asked whether an alternative site had been found for the allotments. Cllr Mason reiterated that sale of the Church Road allotments was not a part of the current phase of the project, and that all that was proposed was outline planning, as a safeguard for the future.

198/14 Reports

a) Police

Summary of PCSO Hutchinson's report:

- Crime within the area remains low and continues to be opportunistic.
- One reported crime in this period: criminal damage to a vehicle on an A590 lay-by.
- Cllr Hammond raised the issue of youths knocking on doors in the evening on Main St.

b) Relevant matters from District and County Councillors

Cllr Bland advised that the A590 Safety Group was due to meet this week. He continues to press for a roundabout at Gilpin Bridge.

199/14 Finance

a) Budget

Councillors endorsed the draft budget presented by the clerk, with the following changes:

- Increase the budget allocated to Levens Playing Fields, from £1000 to £1600.
- In the light of impending streetlight replacement work (see **204/14** below), the allowance allocated to streetlighting to be increased by £500.

On the basis of these anticipated cost increases, it was **resolved** to increase the level of precept from £10500 to £11500.

b) Receipts

- Electricity North West: wayleave £114.56

c) Payments

It was **resolved** to authorise the following payments:

- Clerk's salary & expenses: Nov + Dec £847.71

- Mr S.Read: Land Registry search £5.00
- Mrs H.Burrow: refreshments for LCP Open Meeting £8.25
- Mr M.J.Knipe: grass cutting £100.00
- Damson Consultancy: progression of LCP design work £4800.00

200/14 Planning Applications

a) New Planning Applications

SL/2014/1154: Levens Brow, Levens. Conversion and alterations of existing dwelling to create two dwellings. (NB: Cllr Bagot was not present for the discussion on this application).

SL/2014/1234: Land to south of Cragg Foot, Levens. Single dwelling.

SL/2014/1186: Garden of Green Hollow, Levens. Erection of dwelling.

Council **resolved** that it had no objections to these applications.

b) To note Planning Applications determined since last meeting

SL/2014/0797: 29 Greengate, Levens. Extension and addition of dormers. Refused.

SL/2014/0705: Applegarth, Levens. Single storey and 1st floor extension. Approved.

SL/2014/0822: Greengate, Levens. Outline planning application for residential development of up to 50 dwellings. Approved.

SL/2014/1117: Deerholme, Levens. Removal of occupancy restriction on planning permission

SL/2009/0188. Approved.

c) To note Planning Applications still outstanding

SL/2014/1112: Brettargh Holt, Levens. Removal of existing bay on south elevation to rebuild on west elevation

SL/2014/0370: Change of use, extension, refurbishment and partial demolition of former carpet showroom and site to form nine self-contained apartments.

The clerk reported that he had contacted SLDC Planning to enquire the status of this application. They had advised that the current application was unacceptable but had not been refused straight away, because SLDC were working with Mr Bowker to request him to either alter the scheme or dispose of the property so that someone else could take on the responsibility of re-development.

201/14 Levens Community Project (LCP)

a) Village hall design and plans

Cllr Mason reported that the Parish Council, the LCP Working Group and the Institute Committee had held a meeting to agree the final specification for the village hall. The intention was to bring the finalised plans to the next PC meeting in February.

b) Sizergh Fell Quarry

Cllr Mason reported that advice had been sought from the Forestry Commission on the allowable extent of thinning of the trees/shrubs in the quarry. Work had now been undertaken to clear a significant portion of the trees and shrubs, to allow the topographical survey to be undertaken.

In the course of this clearance work, an oil drum had been uncovered. The clerk had sought advice from SLDC Environmental Health, who had recommended that the Council register the quarry as containing hazardous waste (this has been done). They also stated that an approved contractor must be used to dispose of this drum. The clerk has now engaged an approved contractor to remove the oil drum.

There are also some quantities of low grade asbestos roofing material in the quarry. Cllr Mason will arrange for a contractor to remove and dispose of this using the approved methods.

Looking forwards to the possible sale of the quarry, the council **resolved** to serve 6 months' notice on the tenants. The clerk was asked to ensure that the letter to the tenants emphasised that they would be kept informed of progress on the LCP and of the potential sale of the quarry. If the project did not come to fruition and the proposed sale of the quarry was taken off the table, then the tenants would obviously not be required to give up their plots. The clerk was asked to write to the tenants accordingly.

c) Site of new village hall

Councillors discussed the three mature trees in the churchyard that encroach on the proposed site of the village hall. Cllr Mason advised that he had had an informal discussion with Revd Crossley, who suggested that the church would be amenable to this proposal. It was **resolved** to ask the clerk to write formally to Levens church, requesting that the trees be removed.

d) Outline planning for Church Road allotment site

Cllr Mason reminded councillors that the allotment plot under discussion was the single garden on its own, currently rented by Faye Morgan. There was no intention to use this land as part of the Master Plan. Nevertheless, there was an opportunity at the moment to seek outline planning permission, as part of the overall submission. Any outline planning permission granted would not expire, provided that work commenced on one of the other submissions. There was no intention of closing Faye Morgan's tenancy agreement.

Councillors **resolved** to support this proposal, as a sensible provision for the future. The clerk was asked to draft a letter to Faye Morgan accordingly.

e) Institute conversion

It was agreed that councillors should assist the Institute Committee in their considerations of whether the Institute conversion should be rebuild or new build. Councillors will attend the next Institute Committee meeting on 29 January.

In support of this meeting, the clerk will request the architect to document the pros and cons of either approach.

f) Amalgamation of charities

It was agreed that discussions are required as a priority between the Parish Council and the Institute, on the proposed amalgamation of the various charities. Len Hayton and Stephen Read had also kindly volunteered to lend support. It was agreed that these discussions should aim to establish the desired approach, and this would then be followed up by engaging with Paul Davies of Milne Moser.

202/14 Offer from Mr.Bannister of purchase of land

The clerk reported that the representative from Michael Hodgson had held a first meeting with Mr Bannister and Mrs Proctor. Negotiations were still ongoing. It was noted that the land had not yet been registered, although Cllr Mason stated that it should be straightforward to gain possessory title. Councillors agreed that the land should be registered at the earliest opportunity.

203/14 Wayside Cottage

The clerk reported that he had heard from Mrs Mallinson, who had advised that she had received confirmation from the Land Registry, that the strip of land adjacent to Wayside, consisting of two parking spaces and a garage, was owned by the Parish Council. Mrs Mallinson had expressed her desire to purchase this strip of land from the Council.

Councillors **resolved** to use the services of Colin Tomlinson of Michael Hodgson, to engage with Mrs Mallinson to discuss the potential sale of the land.

204/14 Streetlights on telegraph poles

The clerk advised that there is an issue with streetlights on electricity supply telegraph poles, driven by a fatal accident. As a result, Electricity North West (ENW) have advised that, over the coming years, all streetlights will ultimately be removed from telegraph poles. To replace each light with a freestanding lighting column normally costs £2000 - £3000, although ENW have made available a limited amount of funding in the short term to help mitigate costs to councils.

There are a number of streetlights in Levens on telegraph poles, and Cllr Mason and the clerk recently held a meeting with SLDC to review these. SLDC advised that they had targeted one of their lights in the centre of the village (next to Hollygate) for replacement with a new freestanding column.

Streetlight no.224, on the junction of Lowgate and Hutton Lane, had also been discussed. SLDC believe that the Parish Council owns this light although the Parish Council disputes this. Notwithstanding the question of ownership, SLDC propose that this light is removed from the telegraph pole and replaced with a new freestanding column. Thanks to the funding available from ENW, the cost for this new column would be approximately £600. SLDC also propose that the two nearby lights on telegraph poles – adjacent to the entrance to Beathwaite Gardens and opposite the Methodist church – would not be replaced.

Councillors considered that it was sensible to take advantage of the current funding available from ENW. It was therefore **resolved** to support the SLDC proposal.

205/14 Open actions not covered elsewhere on the agenda

a) Closure of gate on the Green

In response to requests from villagers for a gate to be introduced, the clerk had written to the residents of the private road, to ascertain whether they were in favour of a gate. Some of these residents had made it clear that they did not support this suggestion. Councillors concluded that, as this is private land, there was no more that the Parish Council could do.

b) Twinning

Nothing to report.

c) Woodland management

Cllr Mason advised that grant funding was available up to £1000 for areas greater than 3 hectares. He would be discussing this with Luke Steer of Treescapes. The clerk also suggested that Cumbria Woodlands, who had recently carried out a woodland survey for Staveley Parish Council, might be considered as an option, as the quality of their work appeared good.

206/14 Correspondence

- Letter from Bill Ridings giving notice on his allotment plot.
- Invite for Buckingham Palace Garden Parties: councillors agreed that Cllr Mason's name should be put forward.

207/14 Future agenda items

- Annual Parish Meeting.
- Items for newsletter

208/14 Date of next meetings

- next ordinary meeting of the parish council is on 10 February 2015.

Meeting closed at 9.21pm.

Signed (Chairman)

Date