

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 October 2014 in the Methodist Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs R.Atfield (Chairman), S.Bagot, H.Burrow, C.Hammond, D.Martin, R.Mason, J.Thacker, and P.Davidson (clerk) + 9 members of the public

145/14 Apologies for absence

Dist. Cllr A.Rawlinson + PCSO Park

146/14 Declarations of interest

Cllrs Bagot and Mason declared an interest in planning application SL/2014/0822.

147/14 Minutes

It was **resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the council held on 9 September 2014, as a true record.

148/14 Levens Community Project

Chairman advised that the Parish Council had received a request for further information from Mr A.Taylor on behalf of a number of residents. It had also received a Freedom of Information request from Mr C.Turner on behalf of a number of residents, and a query from Mr G.Bramwell. The Parish Council was working to provide full responses to all of these requests. It was the Council's intention that the PC meeting in November would be focussed on matters concerning the Levens Community Project. In view of this, the Levens Community Project was not an agenda item for the current meeting

149/14 Public Participation

- State of the road at the top of Hutton Lane next to crossroads: the road is in a very poor state and has gone beyond the filling of some potholes. The clerk will ask County Cllr J.Bland if he can put pressure on Highways.
- Invoices for survey reports: a resident asked whether the Council had seen and read the two survey reports. Councillors advised that these were technical reports and that they would rely on the architect to confirm that the survey work had been completed satisfactorily (see also **159 d**) below).

It was requested that these reports be made available to the public. The Chairman agreed that the reports would be made available, but could not advise on timescales.

150/14 Reports

a) Police

Not present. PCSO Park had submitted a report, the summary of which was that there had been no crimes reported in the Levens area since the last meeting.

b) Relevant matters from District and County Councillors

Councillors not present.

151/14 Councillor Vacancy for co-option

The clerk reported that two applications had been received, from Mr K.Holmes and Mrs S.Berry. The next stage will be for councillors to review these applications.

152/14 Planning Applications

a) **New Planning Applications**

SL/2014/0822: Greengate, Levens. Outline planning application for residential development of up to 50 dwellings. Cllrs Bagot and Mason left the room for this agenda item.

It was **resolved** to support this application, although councillors wished the following points to be made to SLDC Planning:

- The PC supports the comments made to SLDC Planning by Mr A.Steward on behalf of the "R51M Neighbours" group.
- the proposed plan has already had significant village-wide consultation to get to planning and should therefore be adhered to.

- the proposed number of dwellings on the plan should represent the absolute maximum for the site and that should be stipulated if planning were to be granted.

It was **resolved** that the council had no objections to the following planning applications:

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

SL/2014/0881: Greengate Cottage, Levens. Alterations and extension to attached garage.

b) To note Planning Applications determined since last meeting

SL/2014/0706: Newholme, Levens. Two storey side extension. *Approved.*

SL/2014/0788: Wideways, Church Road, Levens. Minor material amendment to vary condition 2 (approved plans) attached to planning permission SL/2013/0909. *Approved.*

c) To note Planning Applications still outstanding

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 was asked to contact SLDC, to enquire the status of this application.

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

SL/2014/0812: Hare & Hounds Inn, Lowgate, Levens. Variation of Condition 2 attached to planning application SL/2014/0136

153/14 Levens Charity + grant application from Levens Playing Fields

The clerk reported on the outcome of the recent meeting of the Levens Charity trustees. In summary:

- The charity finances are healthy, with total assets (as of 31 March 2014) of £109,623, and an accrued income of £21,420.
- Trustees agreed that no changes were necessary to the investment policy.
- The Secretary recommended against removing capital from the charity in order to provide funding for the proposed new village hall, as this would reduce the income and potentially render the charity ineffective. Trustees endorsed this recommendation.
- To make it easier to apply for grants, the grant application form and criteria have now been put onto the Parish Council page of the village website.

Only one grant application had been received, from Levens Playing Fields (LPF), for £5000 towards the purchase of new play equipment. Trustees had reviewed the application and had supported it in principle, but had asked for a more targeted proposal from LPF. An amended application had since been received which the trustees had approved. The Parish Council therefore **resolved** to endorse the grant of £5000 to LPF.

154/14 Offer from Mr.Bannister of purchase of land

Councillors agreed that the next step was to appoint an agent to act on their behalf. Cllr Mason is seeking two quotations from estate agents, with a view to the Council choosing the agent it regards as best able to represent the Council.

155/14 Twinning with Levens, France

Councillors supported the idea of closer links with the French Levens. The clerk advised that he had received a second email from his French equivalent, indicating that their village is keen to establish closer ties. The clerk was asked to seek support from residents in the village who would be keen to coordinate activities, through use of the parish newsletter etc.

156/14 Possible closure of the village shop

Councillors noted the uncertain future of the village shop and thanked the Chairman for his candid appraisal of the situation.

157/14 Traffic management

- Improved traffic management on A590:** Cllr Burrow reminded the meeting that she and Cllr Atfield are the Levens representatives on a consortium group which includes County Cllr Bland, Highways and Amy Mouchel. This group was due to meet again on 22 October, so Cllr Burrow will be able to provide feedback at the next PC meeting in November.

- b) Offer of use of a Speed Indication Device (SID): County Cllr Bland has purchased a SID for use by the Lyth valley communities. It was agreed that the Council should take advantage of the offer to use this SID.

158/14 Woodland management

Councillors agreed that the large tracts of woodland owned by the Council needed to be actively managed, and that a specialist should be asked to make an assessment. Cllr Mason will ask Luke Steer of Treescapes Consultancy to visit Levens to make an assessment of the current state of the Council's woodland areas and the possible options for conservation, re-generation etc, with associated cost estimates.

159/14 Finance

- a) Status of Accounts
The clerk reported that he had circulated to councillors a mid-year bank reconciliation, a year-end forecast and a first draft of a budget for 2015/16. After discussion of funding priorities, it was agreed that the clerk would update the year-end forecast and 2015/16 budget, in preparation for the next PC meeting, where the aim would be to agree the budget.
- b) Levens Playing Fields
The Council had received a request from Levens Playing Fields for an increase in the annual grant from the Parish Council, from £600 to £3000. Whilst sympathetic to the needs of LPF, the Council considered that it could not support this request. Such a large increase would require an increase in the precept. Given that the Council had needed to increase the precept significantly in the recent past, the Council could not support another large increase in such a short space of time. Nevertheless, Council agreed to consider whether a small increase was possible, as part of the current review of the budget.
- c) Receipts
The clerk advised that the Homes and Communities Agency had approved the first tranche of the grant funding (for £26000) in support of the Levens Community Project, but he had not yet confirmed whether this had been paid into the parish council's account.
- d) Payments
It was **resolved** to authorise the following payments, subject to the clerk confirming that the funds referred to in c) above had been paid into the account, and also subject to confirmation from the architect that he was satisfied with the quality of the reports:
- | | |
|--|----------|
| • Spatial Data Ltd: Levens Community Project survey work | £1596.00 |
| • E3P: Levens Community Project environmental surveys | £1920.00 |

160/14 Correspondence

The clerk reported that he had received a letter advising that there is a meeting to take place on 21 October, 10.30am at the Gilpin Bridge Hotel, to discuss the proposed Internal Drainage Board for the Lyth Valley. Cllrs Martin and Mason agreed to attend this meeting.

161/14 Future Agenda Items

Clerk to summarise ongoing actions for the next meeting.

162/14 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting was currently scheduled for Tuesday 11 November. As the Methodist meeting room has only a limited capacity, the clerk was asked to consider use of the Institute and to find a suitable date.

Signed (Chairman)

Date