

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12 August 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, County Cllr J.Bland, P.Davidson (clerk) + Paul Davies (Milne Moser) + 10 members of the public

118/14 Apologies for absence

Dist. Cllr A.Rawlinson

119/14 Declarations of interest: None

120/14 Public Participation

a) Presentation by Mr Paul Davies, Milne Moser

Cllr Mason introduced Mr Paul Davies, who had kindly agreed to make a short presentation to the council, on the subject of charities and Community Land Trusts (CLT's). Mr Davies gave an informative presentation, of which the key points were:

- A CLT is required when a community lacks land and/or money. This was not the case with Levens.
- The three existing Levens charities provide suitable vehicles.
- He did not therefore see a need for a CLT to be created.
- The three charities could be amalgamated, as they have very similar objectives.
- It would be worth approaching the Charity Commission soon, to outline the council's plans.
- It may be worth considering the setting up of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which is a relatively new form of charitable organisation, and is legally something between a limited company and a charity. This type of organisation has the advantage that it protects the trustees from liabilities.

b) Public Participation

The clerk advised that, prior to the meeting, correspondence had been received from a number of residents, expressing concerns over the New Village Hall project. The clerk summarised the key points from this correspondence as follows:

- i. The notes from the first Open Meeting are incomplete and there are unanswered questions from this meeting.
- ii. No costings have been published and no cash flow forecasts. Without these, it is not clear whether the plan is viable, why the PC is selling all of the plots of land proposed, or whether the running costs of the new village hall have been taken into account.
- iii. Concern that members of the public have not had visibility of the full details of the plan.
- iv. Concern that the views of the impacted residents have not been taken into consideration.
- v. Given the points noted above, concern that the plans are proceeding at too fast a pace.
- vi. Question whether the PC has a mandate to sell the plots of land and spend the money raised.

Following this report, the Chairman then invited members of the public to raise any additional points, over and above those summarised by the clerk.

- A resident pointed out that one piece of correspondence had suggested that a referendum should be carried out on whether a new village hall was wanted, once the full facts were available.

- A resident stressed the point that the question was not “do we want a new village hall?”. The question was far more about the means of achieving this aim.
- A resident asked whether there was a preferred order for the sale of parish assets, or whether developers would be allowed to “cherry pick” sites.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their valuable comments. He recommended that the Parish Council should meet with the New Village Hall Committee to review these comments in detail, so that the council could provide a considered response. Councillors fully endorsed this approach. The clerk was actioned to arrange a meeting between the Parish Council and the New Village Hall Committee as soon as possible.

121/14 New Village Hall

- Summary of the Open Meeting held on 30 July
Cllr Mason reported that the Open Meeting had been attended by approximately 120 members of the public, with 42 feedback sheets being completed. Of these, approximately half of the feedback was in favour of the plans. The feedback where concerns were expressed, centred largely around the allotments.
- Decision to go ahead with planning for all pieces of land
Councillors agreed that it was premature to seek planning permission for the plots of land. However, it would be useful to have the necessary topographical/environmental survey work completed. This work would be paid for through the Homes & Communities Agency grant funding. Cllr Mason confirmed that this grant funding had been agreed by the Homes & Community Agency. It was **resolved** to allow the survey work to proceed.
- Agreement of which agent to use for the sale of the land
Councillors agreed that discussion of choice of agents should be deferred.
- Allotments: agreement to amend notice given to allotment holders
Cllr Mason reminded council that letters had been sent to the allotment holders in April, giving them 12 months’ notice to vacate their allotments. In view of the probable timeline for any possible development of the allotment land, Cllr Mason proposed that this notice be extended by a further 12 months. It was **resolved** to write to the affected allotment holders accordingly. Clerk to action.
- New Village Hall Committee
The clerk asked for clarification of the status of the New Village Hall Committee, as it appeared to be operating as a working group. Cllr Burrow agreed that the title was a little confusing, but confirmed that the body was operating as a working group. The clerk recommended that terms of reference should be drawn up and agreed by the council. Councillors endorsed this recommendation.

122/14 Offer from Mr Bannister of purchase of land

Cllr Mason reminded council that an email had been received from Mr Bannister (on behalf of himself and Dr & Mrs Proctor), expressing an interest in purchasing a strip of land adjacent to their properties. It was agreed that, if the council choose to sell this land, then the National Trust would need to be involved as the sale would impact on their existing right of way. It was suggested that any sale may want to have the condition attached, that the purchasers pay the parish council’s legal costs. It was **resolved** that the clerk should write to Mr Bannister, to ascertain whether he and Dr Proctor would support this condition.

123/14 New Planning Applications

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

SL/2014/0705: Applegarth, Levens. Single storey extension.

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

124/14 Finance

Payments

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

- Mr S.Read: Land registry searches £35.24

The invoice for £4800 from Damson Consultancy was discussed. There was a lack of clarity as to whether this invoice was for work already carried out. Cllr Mason will clarify. Cllr Mason also confirmed that, once received, the Homes & Community Grant would fund this cost. The clerk advised that there was sufficient money in the council's current account to pay this invoice, pending the availability of grant funding. It was **resolved** to pay the invoice immediately, subject to confirmation that the work had already been carried out.

125/14 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the date of the next ordinary meeting will be Tuesday 9 September 2014 at the Methodist meeting room, 7.30pm.

Signed (Chairman)

Date

DRAFT