

# Levens Parish Council

## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9 September 2014 in the Methodist Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs R.Atfield (Chairman), C.Hammond, J.Thacker, Dist. Cllr A.Rawlinson, County Cllr J.Bland, P.Davidson (clerk) + 22 members of the public

### 126/14 Apologies for absence

Cllrs S.Bagot, H.Burrow, D.Martin and R.Mason

### 127/14 Declarations of interest

None

### 128/14 Minutes

It was **resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the council held on 8 July 2014 and the extraordinary meeting held on 12 August, as a true record.

### 129/14 Chairman's Announcement

The Chairman noted with great sadness the tragic loss of Averil Mason in a recent road accident and extended the sincerest condolences of all councillors to the family.

The Chairman also noted that, due to personal circumstances, a number of councillors were unable to attend the meeting. As a result, it was agreed by those councillors present to defer a number of agenda items.

### 130/14 Public Participation

- Gate linking the Green with Church Road  
A resident remarked that a number of people were dismayed by the closure of the gate, as it was used as a safer alternative to walking on the road. The Chairman advised that this item was covered later in the meeting (138/14).
- Closure of village shop  
A resident asked that the council give consideration to the possible closure in the future of the village shop.
- Levens Community Project  
Members of the public made the following points:
  - Mrs Mallinson of Wayside Cottage, noted that the allotment holders had been given an extension to their tenancies. She asked why the Parish Council could not give back the garden to herself until it is clear whether the land is to be sold.
  - Mr Turner made a number of points:
    - He pointed out that the second email sent by him to the Council was not a repetition of the first, but was more detailed in nature.
    - He stressed that the question of cost was a key concern to residents, both in terms of capital outlay and running costs for the village hall. Given the scale of the project, he was concerned that the council did not appear to have a robust and properly budgeted business plan in place.
    - He welcomed the imminent issue of the Council's "Q&A" paper, but asked that this be up-issued as soon as possible, to take account of the latest comments received and questions asked.
    - He disagreed with the Council's assessment that the potential sale values of the plots of land were commercially sensitive. He asked for the Council to release more detail of these valuations. If this was not forthcoming, then he would resort to an FOI request.

- He expressed concern that the Parish Council appeared to be moving the project forwards regardless. He asked for the Council's commitment to not pursue the project further until answers to the open questions had been given, including the latest questions.
- It was noted that the Parish Council's former policy was not to sell parish assets, and therefore that the Council needed to formally rescind this policy.
- A resident expressed his objection to the use of the capital from the Levens Charity to fund the village hall development, as this would mean less money available for charitable purposes.
- A resident commented that answers had not been forthcoming from the first open meeting.

The Chairman thanked residents for their comments and questions, and stressed that the Council would issue its Q&A paper forthwith, in order to provide as much clarity as possible. This would hopefully answer a number of questions, but may also trigger additional questions, in which case residents were invited to put these to the Council.

### 131/14 Reports

- a) Police  
Not present. PCSO Hutchinson had submitted a report, which the clerk will distribute to councillors.
- b) Relevant matters from District and County Councillors  
No matters raised.

### 132/14 Planning Applications

- a) **New Planning Applications**  
It was **resolved** that the council had no objections to the following planning applications:  
**SL/2014/0788:** Wideways, Church Road, Levens. Minor material amendment to vary condition 2 (approved plans) attached to planning permission SL/2013/0909.  
**SL/2014/0812:** Hare & Hounds Inn, Levens. Variation of Condition 2 attached to planning permission SL/2014/0136.
- b) **To note Planning Applications determined since last meeting**  
**SL/2014/0494:** Land opposite Low Levens Farm. Approved.  
**SL/2014/0574:** Brettargh Holt. 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.  
**SL/2014/0705:** Applegarth, Levens. Single storey extension and 1st floor extension.  
**SL/2014/0706:** Newholme, Levens. Two storey side extension.

### 133/14 Levens Community Project

The draft "Q&A" paper was reviewed. It was **resolved** that, with the addition of the "cost neutral" wording proposed by the clerk, the paper should be issued as soon possible. The clerk will post the paper onto the parish page of the village website, place a copy onto the notice board and send a copy directly to those residents who had written to the Council with questions.

It was also **resolved** that no further irrevocable actions would be taken until the Council had responded to the latest set of questions from members of the public.

### 134/14 Casual Vacancy

It was noted that SLDC have given the go-ahead to co-opt to fill the vacancy. It was agreed that the vacancy should be advertised in the next parish newsletter.

### 135/14 Levens Charity: grant application from Levens Playing Fields

Due to non-attendance of trustees, this item was deferred.

**136/14 Offer from Mr.Bannister of purchase of land**

Deferred.

**137/14 Twinning with Levens, France**

Deferred.

**138/14 Closure of the gate linking the Green with Church Road**

The gate closure was discussed. Councillors agreed that it would be worth asking the residents of the private road if it would be acceptable for a gate (or stile?) to be placed in the fence. Clerk to draft a letter.

**139/14 Village maintenance tasks**

Cllr Thacker reported that a contractor had been contacted to undertake village maintenance tasks, but had not yet undertaken any work.

**140/14 Trees overhanging Beathwaite Gardens**

It was noted that trees from Beathwaite Gardens are overhanging the path. The clerk was asked to write to the Letting Agents, to ask for the trees to be cut back.

**141/14 Finance**

a) Payments

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

- Methodist Church: room hire £120.00
- Clerk's salary & expenses: July + Aug £613.76
- Came & Company: insurance renewal £874.90

**142/14 Items for Parish News**

- Levens Community Project
- Summary from Chairman
- Vacancy for councillor

**143/14 Future Agenda Items**

- Closure of the village shop.

**144/14 Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next ordinary meeting will be Tuesday 14 October 2014, 7.30pm.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date