

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 09 May 2023 in Levens Methodist Church at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, J. Battye (and as W&FC Councillor), H. Burrow, K. Holmes, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy, M. R. Curry (Clerk), and 2 members of the public.

01/23 Election of Chairman for the Council Year 2023-24: Cllr. David Rogerson took the Chair and asked for nominations. In response to an enquiry, Councillor Roger Atfield expressed a willingness to stand. There were no other nominations and Cllr. Atfield was proposed as Chairman by Cllr. Holmes and seconded by Cllr. Bagot. He was elected unanimously and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

02/23 Election of Vice-Chairman for the Council Year 2023-24: Cllr. Atfield took the Chair and advised Councillors that Cllr. Roger Mason (apologies submitted) had indicated a willingness to continue in the role and asked for any other nominations. There being none, Cllr. Mason was proposed as Vice-Chairman by Cllr. Burrow and seconded by Cllr. Willacy. He was elected unanimously, and the Clerk confirmed that he would arrange for a Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed.

03/23 Apologies for Absence: Written apologies and a reason for absence had been submitted by Cllr. Mason (attending a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace).

04/23 Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest other than as might be required in relation to Levens Playing Fields from Trustees / Office Bearers.

05/23 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 11 April 2023 as a true record.

06/23 Public Participation: Mr J. Morris advised that contractors for Electricity NorthWest (ENW) had made 11 visits to the area around his house, but it was unlikely that any of these were to do with the proximity of trees to overhead wires. The Clerk confirmed that he had had no response to on-line submissions, and it was **Agreed** that he should contact Customer Services direct. Mr Morris also reported that he had received direct contact regarding the Emergency Plan and it was agreed that the Working Group would review the process for wider contact.

07/23 Appointment of Representatives

It was **Resolved** that the following representatives be confirmed:

- a) **Highwayman:** Cllr. M. Willacy.
- b) **Village Institute:** Cllr. S. Bagot
- c) **Levens Playing Fields:** As W&F Councillor and thereby a Trustee, as well as Secretary, Cllr. Battye agreed that it would be appropriate for an alternative Councillor to be nominated to represent the Parish Council and Cllr. Holmes agreed to take the role. It was noted that the Playing Fields Committee AGM was soon to be held when the proposed new constitution was to be considered. It was **Agreed** that the Parish Council should be a consultee on this before adoption and Cllr. Battye will arrange for a copy to be circulated.
- d) **Woodlands Officer:** Cllr. K. Holmes
- e) **Levens Charity Appointed Trustees:** Cllrs. S. Bagot, H. Burrow, R. Mason
- f) **Footpath Officer:** Cllr. J. Battye
- g) **Land Registry:** Cllr. R. Mason
- h) **CALC:** Cllrs. R. Atfield, D. Rogerson
- i) **Local Area Partnership:** Cllr. R. Atfield (if LAP remains active)
- j) **Allotments:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
- k) **Maintenance Working Group:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, K. Holmes (Cllr. Mason's position to be confirmed).
- l) **A590 Working Group:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, K. Holmes
- m) **Levens Community Project:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
- n) **Levens Traffic Management Working Group:** Cllrs H. Burrow, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy
- o) **Greening Campaign Coordinator:** Cllr. J. Battye
- p) **Website Working Group:** Cllrs. R. Atfield, H. Burrow, D. Rogerson

q) Community Led Emergency Plan: Cllrs: D. Rogerson, H. Burrow, K. Holmes

Meeting Dates: As part of this item, Cllr. Atfield drew attention to the timetable of meeting dates for 2023-24 previously circulated and the following dates were **Agreed** and would be publicised:
2023: June 13 (brief formal meeting to sign off the accounts before the Village Tour), July 11, August – no meeting, September 12, October 10, November 14, December – no meeting
2024: January 09, February 13, March 12, April 09, May 14.

08/23 Reports:

- a) **Reports from Councillors attending meetings:** No Reports.
- b) **Westmorland and Furness Councillor:** Cllr. Battye reported that she has been appointed to several Committees, including the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and as Chair of the Health and Adult Scrutiny Committee. She is also a Reserve Member on the Strategic Planning Committee and reported that if Parish Councils take a view against Officer recommendations in delegated cases then the application will automatically go to the Planning Committee. There is to be a first meeting of the new Locality Board on 10 May at which budget allocations would be confirmed.
- c) **Police:** The South Lakes Focus Newsletter for April had been circulated but contained nothing of direct relevance for Levens. Cllr. Holmes reported that there had been a serious road accident at Gilpin Bridge recently which might feed into the pressure for local road improvements. Cllr. Burrow reported that there had been more instances of cold calling locally. Residents are urged to report incidents on 101 (including indicators such as car registration numbers if possible) from where PCSO Park should pick up the issue.

09/23 Finance

- a) **Receipts 01 April-30 April:** The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation for the period showing receipts totalling £15,033.62p made up of:
 - i. Allotment Rents: 175.00
 - ii. Car Park Rents: 60.00
 - iii. Land Rent: 25.00
 - iv. W&FC – Precept (£14,421) & Co. Tax Grant £352.62) 14,773.62
- b) **Payments:** The following payments were **Approved:**
 - i. M R Curry – Salary April 2023 (PC £385.66; Project £30.99; Charity £149.74; Mileage £32.40; Expenses (£3.84): £ 602.63
 - ii. Levens Hall – Allotment Rent 2022-23: £ 378.00
 - iii. Thwaites Tree Care Ltd - Tree felling, Cotes: £ 900.00
 - iv. Mitchinsons Accountants – Payroll Services 2022-23: £ 144.00
 - v. Cllr. S Bagot – Expenses, Annual Parish Meeting: in the region of: £ 25.00
 - vi. Noticeboards Online - Balance due for new noticeboard when installed: £1,000.00
- c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled bank balance of £22,430.15 at 30 April 2023 was noted, as was an unpresented cheque for £290.01, leaving a net balance of £22,140.14. Councillors also noted a summary of ring-fenced funds amounting to £4,059.50.
- d) **Annual Governance and Accounting Report (AGAR):** The Clerk reported that the annual audit was underway, once again to be conducted on an income and expenditure basis. He has a meeting with the Internal Auditor on 18 May and a formal meeting to sign-off the AGAR will be required on 13 June. Councillors **Agreed** to allocate a figure commensurate with that paid last year for the costs of external support (if required) to complete this work. Governance and policy documents (having been previously circulated) were approved as in Schedule 1 of these Minutes.
- e) **Management of PC Finances** (banking arrangements): The Clerk reminded Councillors that on-line banking with HSBC had been ruled-out because of their requirement for only one signatory as opposed to the Parish Council's requirement for two. Otherwise this remains work in progress with other banking providers.

10/23 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Group:** In the absence of Cllr. Mason the Clerk had circulated the draft Minutes from the Advisory Group meeting held on 02 May. Main items of report were:

- i. **Sale of Plots:** Plot 1 Cotes - Councillors **Agreed** the recommendation from the Advisory Group that an offer of £175,001 should be accepted. Plot 3, Church Road is back on the market with an asking price of £150,000.
 - ii. **Underhill:** A quote for a report on energy supply from Alasdair Muir is awaited.
 - iii. **New Village Hall site:**
 - Design for the eastern (back) boundary wall has been agreed by Paul Snape (consulting engineer) and Tim Thacker is continuing this work.
 - There is much liaison with ENW to establish the most cost-effective route via which to lead power to site and this work is ongoing.
 - Plans for the kitchen design have been worked up and there is probably enough detail now to include in tender packs, though refinements are likely.
 - Tenders will go out once the walls are completed and surplus stone removed from site.
 - iv. **The Institute:** An arboricultural impact assessment has been received as part of the new application for planning consent and has not thrown up any new or negative implications.
 - v. **Finance:** Funds-in-hand reconciled to the bank balance at 23 April were £1,373,077.32 The Clerk is in touch with a representative of HSBC to open a new, interest-bearing deposit account. The VAT Report is still awaited from the accountants. A Zoom meeting is to be held with Lorriane Smyth on 10 May to discuss current grant opportunities.
 - vi. **Use of Charity Funds for the Project:** Use of Charity assets in relation to the affordable housing elements of the Project had been discussed at a meeting of the Appointed Charity Trustees at a meeting on 25 April. They had received an end-of-year report identifying total Charity assets of £158,312 as at 31 March. As the affordable houses are to be vested in the Levens Charity (including the land the Institute sits on) together with the rents accruing from the houses, Charity assets will rise by a potential factor of 6 and there is therefore a compelling case to consider the use of Charity assets in furtherance of the Project. Professional advice is to be procured on this, together with costs identified in tenders, before any recommendation is made.
- b) **To approve payments:** Project invoices **Approved** for payment were:
- i) Tim Thacker: outstanding invoice for the clearance of Plot 3, Church Hill: £1,161.00
 - ii) Yew Tree and Gardens - Arboricultural Impact Assessment at the Institute: £ 278.00

11/23 Planning Applications:

- a) **The Schedule of Planning Applications:** The updated Schedule (previously circulated) was reviewed. Applications noted were:

PC Ref	Location of Development	Planning Ref.	Proposal	Type & Status	Comments by	PC Comment	Result
(22/23) 14	5-6 The Stables Levens Hall LA8 OPB	SL/2022/0768	New interior glass door		N/A	No objection submitted. 21/09/2022	See (b)iii below
(22/23) 22	Levens Hall LA8 OPB	SL/2022/1075	Repairs to west elevation	Listed building consent	N/A	No objection submitted. 06/12/2022	See (b)iii below
1	Levens Hall LA8 OPB	SL/2023/0122	Storage building for gardeners		N/A	No objection submitted. 15/03/2023	See (b)iii below
2	Sampool Wood LA8 8EJ	PN/2023/0042	To determine if consent required for a forester's hut		N/A		Criteria Not Met
3	1 Ivy Cottage LA8 8PF	SL/2023/0263	Various works		19/04/2023	Comments submitted as agreed	Not yet determined
5	Old Barn, Underhill LA8 8PH	SL/2023/0296	Detached garage		02/05/2023	No objection by email – submitted 19/05/23	Not yet determined
6	Plot 3 Cotes	SL/2023/0351	Single dwelling		Invalid	N/A	Invalid

b) **Other Planning Matters:**

- i) It was noted that the application relating to Levens Lane footpath would remain live until September.
- ii) It was noted that the rateable status of Shepherd's Mill remains in question with the Valuation Office.

- iii) Concern was expressed about the time being taken to determine applications at Levens Hall. Cllr. Battye agreed to investigate.

12/23 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

a) Levens Traffic Management:

- i) Cllr. Atfield has reported that the flashing school lights at the Bell Hill side were not working.
- ii) Levens Lane Footpath: Although the planning application will remain live until September the question of funding remains. Cllr. Battye undertook to promote this scheme at W&FC.
- iii) Cllr. Burrow highlighted that many of the road markings at road junctions need repainting and that a 'Road Closed' sign was still in situ several weeks after the stated date even though the road had not in fact been closed.
- iv) Cllr. Battye mentioned that Cllr. Peter Thornton (W&FC Cabinet Member for Highways and Assets) is seeking to meet Parish Councils either in a slot at an Ordinary Meeting or perhaps at the Annual Parish Meeting to target and discuss particular issues. The Chairman responded that this was an offer that should be considered.

b) New Noticeboard: The Clerk reported that he had enquired about an installation date and been advised that this should be within the next fortnight.

c) Woodland Management: Cllr. Holmes confirmed that the agreed felling work at Cotes had been completed. The Clerk reported that the work adjacent to the Capstick property had been agreed and was now awaiting the contractor to deal with it. Mrs Capstick had written to thank the Parish Council for its attention to this issue.

d) Parish and Other Land

- i) Maintenance – The Zoom meeting with Mr Booth is yet to be set up
- ii) Brigsteer road site – in Cllr. Mason's absence this matter was deferred.
- iii) HMLR: The issue relating to Cotes remains work in progress.
- iv) Jubilee Orchard: This remains with Cllr. Mason to propose arrangements for the boundary wall and levelling the site.

e) Levens Greening Campaign: Cllr. Battye reported that following an interesting presentation from the Clean River Kent Campaign, the next meeting on 22 May will consider a proposed constitution for the Group and continue planning for the Great Big Green Week (10-18 June).

f) Parish Emergency Plan: The Clerk reported that the notes from the initial meeting had been well received and a second meeting is now to be set-up.

g) Coronation Event: It was agreed that the weekend had gone well, and congratulations were due to all involved. Cllr. Rogerson suggested that a page should be put on to the village Facebook page to record the event and he will put out a call for photographs.

h) Arrangements for the informal June Meeting: It was **Agreed** that an itinerary for the informal June Meeting (Village Tour - to be held on 13 June) should be confirmed by email in advance of the meeting.

13/23 Correspondence: In addition to the correspondences from local organisations already circulated (e.g. CALC etc.) the following communications were noted:

- a) 12/04/2023: Mr Colin Sandy – concern about PC trees adjacent to his property and potential damage. To be considered when planning the next round of woodland management.
- b) 27/04/2023: Mr Neil Munro – advising of the Lake District Challenge 100km run / walk weekend over the 10/11 June to pass through Levens.
- c) Councillors noted the presence of mirrors to enhance visibility and erected on Parish land opposite driveways on Underhill. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should draft a letter to householders explaining that as the mirrors had been erected on Parish land permission should have been obtained prior to erection.

14/23 Future Agenda Items: None other than those that follow-on from this Agenda.

15/23 Date of the Next Meeting: A brief formal meeting will be held at 7.00p.m. on 13 June to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The meeting closed at 9.22 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....

Schedule 1 – Governance Documents and Policies Reviewed and Approved

The following documents were reviewed and approved as part of Item 09/23(d)

Standing Orders	Based on Model Standing Orders provided by NALC and reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Financial Regulations	Based on Model Financial Regs provided by NALC and reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Asset Register	Updates have been made to the version approved in 2022	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Risk Register	Minor amendments have been made to the version approved in 2022	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Code of Conduct for Members	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
GDPR Policy	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Complaints Procedure	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Publications Scheme	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Documents Retention and Destruction Policy	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Equalities Policy	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
Safeguarding Policy	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website
High Consequence Infectious Diseases Policy	Based on the version reviewed and approved in 2022 and not in need of update.	Reviewed version 2023-24 on the website