

# **LEVENS PARISH NEWSLETTER**

**APRIL 2016**

**SPRING EDITION**

## **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

I am writing this just after the Annual Parish Meeting in the Institute and the number of people attending was less than last year. What I wonder does this say? I would like to think that the village has no complaints about what the Parish Council does, but.....

South Lakeland District Council has finally sent through a draft Section 106 Agreement and this should now enable us to proceed with the next stage of the Village Community Project; offering for sale the Sizergh Fell Quarry and the plots at Cotes.

We are currently one councillor short and will shortly be two councillors short because Councillor Chris Hammond is about to move out of the parish. If you would like to become a councillor please contact any of us or the Parish Clerk – see details on the back of this newsletter.

Another change to the Parish Council is the arrival of our new Parish Clerk, Martin Curry and I take this chance to welcome him.

Finally, I wish to thank Sylvia Roberts for her stint as Parish Clerk. It enabled the Council to continue and ensured that the Levens Community Project would progress. I also want to thank Chris Hammond for all his work, a lot of it not obvious, for the Council over the years. We will miss his softly spoken views. 'Thank you' Chris.

**Roger Atfield, Chairman, Levens Parish Council**

## **THE LEVENS COMMUNITY PROJECT - Update**

We are pleased to report that Levens Community Project continues to progress. Guy Huxtable from Wingspan has completed a business plan (soon to appear on the Village Website) which provides confidence in the scheme. As mentioned by the Chairman, we have now also received a draft Section 106 Agreement from SLDC, the terms of which are currently being reviewed by Milne Moser Solicitors (representing Levens Community Project). The Agreement contains various conditions associated with the planning consent and requires the Parish Council to apply funds realised from the sale of its properties to the development of a new village hall. The recent sale of a small piece of land adjacent to Wayside Cottage has realised some funds to allow us to obtain a more accurate costing for the new hall and our architects from Damson Design are coordinating work to obtain this.

Once the S106 is signed, a tripartite agreement between the Parish Council, Levens Charity and The Levens Institute will also be signed, binding all three parties to the project.

The completed S106 will enable the Parish Council to market and sell its land and it has engaged Colin Tomlinson from Michael C L Hodgson to sell Sizergh Fell Quarry and Cotes by formal tender. Some work is still to be done to remove a number trees and scrub to make these sites more saleable. The money raised from the two sites will be used initially to build two houses on Church Hill and start the new hall. When completed, these two houses will be sold to generate more funds to complete the project, including the new hall, the three affordable flats in the Institute and up to four houses at Underhill Allotments.

The plan is to build the new hall and houses by a limited company purposefully set up to protect the Trustees liability. This will be dissolved when the project is completed and the buildings are allocated to their rightful management structures. The new hall will move to the Institute Charity and the redeveloped Institute site will be moved into Levens Charity. The houses at Underhill Allotments will remain in Levens Charity as the Allotments are already in the Charity which was set up so that any income into the charity can be used for the benefit of the parish - it is ideally placed therefore to receive the rents from these houses.

The Charity Commission has been informed of all the proposed dealings of the project and has given its approval. Initial meetings have been held with accountancy firms (Armstrong Watson and Dodd & Co) who are confident that all tax issues can be managed to the benefit of the project. Parish Councils do not pay capital gains tax; VAT is paid on professional fees but can be reclaimed; there is no VAT to pay on the building of new houses and as long as the new hall is built by a charity, no VAT is charged. Quotes have been received from each of these firms for the management of accountancy matters.

And finally, new allotments are well underway alongside the old Kitchen Gardens at Levens Hall. Grants have been secured towards establishing the new allotments including from Cllr. Annie Rawlinson's Locality Budget. If you are interested in a new allotment please contact the Parish Clerk (details overleaf).

## **THE QUEEN'S 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY BEACON**

There is a long tradition in our country of celebrating Royal jubilees, weddings, coronations and special birthdays with the lighting of beacons - on top of mountains, churches and castle battlements, on town and village greens, farms, country parks and estates, and along the beaches surrounding our shores.

The last major beacon celebration was for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June 2012 and one is now planned to celebrate Her Majesty's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Thursday 21st April 2016, when beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom. Levens Parish Council has accepted an invitation to join 255 local communities signed-up so far to mark this important milestone in the Queen's life.

The Levens Beacon will be lit in the early evening (exact time to be confirmed by the Royal Pageant Team and posted on the website and village noticeboard nearer the date) on Hyning Hill at Heaves Farm on April 21<sup>st</sup>. All welcome to join the event – please park on the lane and walk up the lane to Hyning House.

## **NEW CLERK**

The Parish Council is pleased to welcome Martin Curry as its new Clerk. Martin took up his appointment on February 9<sup>th</sup> and has been busy ever since getting to grips with the extensive Parish Council agenda, including the recent Annual Meeting, arrangements for the upcoming elections and the complexities of the Levens Community Project. A Chartered Surveyor, currently working as Property Services Manager for the Lake District National Park Authority, Martin has an extensive career working for various organisations in the public, private and 3<sup>rd</sup> sectors. Originally trained in law, Martin has spent most of his career managing land for environmental benefit in a variety of places including the fenland of Lincolnshire, on the North York Moors and for eight years on the Isle of Rum in the Inner Hebrides. Since settling in Kendal seven years ago with his wife, Gill, and two young daughters, Martin has earned an M.A. in Lake District Studies from Lancaster University and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Martin believes, however, that true understanding of people and place comes from direct engagement and is looking forward to working with Levens Councillors and residents in the future.

Martin's details are:

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Email: [levens.parish@gmail.com](mailto:levens.parish@gmail.com)

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

As you will have read in the Chairman's opening message, the Parish Council is keen to encourage any interested residents to consider supporting the local community by becoming a Parish Councillor. Levens is entitled to eight Parish Councillors and currently has one vacancy and, with the departure of Cllr Chris Hammond, will shortly have two.

This is an opportune time for anyone with an interest in becoming a Councillor to step forward, as elections to the Council, which come round every four years, are due to be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016. In fact, an election will only be necessary if there are more than eight candidates so up to two people could apply without the need for an election. Completion of Nomination Papers would be necessary, however, and these may be obtained from the Clerk. The Chairman, the Clerk or any other Councillor will be happy to have an informal discussion with anyone considering becoming a Councillor.

### Current Details for Levens Parish Council 2015/16

Councillor	Address	Tel.	Email
Roger Atfield (Chairman)	The Old Court, Church Rd Levens, LA8 8PU	015395 61574	rogeratfield@btinternet.com
David Martin (Vice Chair)	Lords Plain, Levens	015395 52263	lordsplain@gmail.com
Roger Mason	Heaves Farm, Levens, LA8 8DU	015395 60200	roger@heavesfarm.co.uk
Susan Bagot	School House, Levens, LA8 8PU	015395 60588	sbagot@schoolhse.co.uk
Helen Burrow	Davlen Fold, Brigsteer Road, Levens, LA8 8NT	015395 61082	dhj@burrow3.wanadoo.co.uk
John Thacker	Over Plain, Levens, LA8 8DU	015395 60136	overplain@yahoo.com
Vacant			
Vacant			

**County Councillor:** Jim Bland, Oakridge, Underbarrow LA8 8BL

Tel: 015395 68576 Email: james.bland@cumbriacc.gov.uk

**District Councillor:** Annie Rawlinson, Littlegarth, Lowgate, Levens LA8 8NJ

Tel: 015395 61531 Email: [annie.rawlinson@hotmail.com](mailto:annie.rawlinson@hotmail.com)

Clerk	Address	Tel.	Email
Martin Curry	18 Barn Holme, Kendal, LA9 5LP	07753-671382	<a href="mailto:Levens.parish@gmail.com">Levens.parish@gmail.com</a>

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