

# LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2020

## Chairman's Comments

The last newsletter we produced came with the March edition of the Church's Parish magazine and little did we know... This newsletter is being distributed alongside an info sheet from Levens Good Neighbours who have also arranged distribution to the whole of the village.

As a Parish Council we take this opportunity to express our grateful thanks to both LGN and Vanessa, Dave and staff at our village shop for all the work they have done to help us villagers in so many ways during this Covid pandemic.

We all know the impact that Coronavirus has had on our day to day lives and actions and of course the Parish Council has been affected. An almost immediate effect was the cancellation of the Annual Parish Meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> March and how we satisfy this legal requirement is out of our hands at present. The Parish Council however, has continued to meet by way of Zoom, as have a lot of other organisations, with email discussions between Councillors when appropriate.

Despite all the above, behind the scenes progress is continuing with the Levens Community Project, as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. Other improvements have also taken place such as new road markings on Greengate; a 'no through road' sign at the entrance to The Green and a new notice board at Cotes. In the summer we reluctantly accepted the resignation of Councillor John Fitch. I thank him for all the work, help and advice he gave the Parish Council during his tenure. This of course leaves a vacancy on the Parish Council and further details will follow in the near future.

Finally, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us if you have any questions or suggestions. 'Seasons Greetings' to everyone and please take care and stay safe.

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

## Brigsteer Road Picnic Site

The Parish Council and Levens Charity much appreciated the W.I.'s gift of land at the junction of Whitegates and Brigsteer Road a couple of years ago and agreed that it should be vested in Levens Charity for the benefit of the village. Although somewhat overgrown at the time, the vision was that, with maintenance and landscaping, the site could be transformed into a small, but valuable recreational asset where people could relax and enjoy the expansive views towards Morecambe Bay. Since the turn of the year and working within Covid regulations, the entrance has been improved, dry-stone walls stabilised, stepped and ramped pathways laid with railings leading down to a flagged platform where a new picnic bench has been installed. Grounds maintenance will keep the site open and flower species planted that are appropriate for a recreational site.

Levens Charity has funded most of the work to develop this site, though thanks are due to local District Councillors for a significant contribution to the costs of the picnic bench as well as to a number of volunteers who have devoted their time to the project. A number of residents have already expressed their pleasure at seeing this site develop and we hope it will provide a pleasant new corner for all to enjoy.

## Levens Christmas 2020

Yes, we ARE having a Village Christmas Tree again this year! **The theme is “Rainbow of Hope”** to cheer us all along. Due to COVID restrictions, our activities to raise money for local causes and for next year’s event, cannot be as in 2019, so we have opened a Just Giving Page for people to donate online. Please go to:

**[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/levenschristmastree](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/levenschristmastree)**

The tree is the biggest expense. Last year it was donated, but we will still get it at wholesale price this year. David Burrow delivers it to the village for free. We make all the decorations for the tree, the bus shelter and the fence. The greenery is free from the hedges! The florists ribbon has cost about £30 for everything! We will use the lights we bought last year.

When the tree goes up, **there will be a box in the shop for donations too**. Please contribute if you are able to. We care very grateful for all contributions.

There are **tree decorations you can buy to personalise and hang on the tree yourselves** for people you cannot be with this Christmas. The wooden ones have been made & donated by Michael Medcalf, so special thanks to him. There are also **some children’s Rainbow Bead bracelets or shaker bells** to buy. All these are £1 each.

**Our “Rainbow Star in Your Garden” event is open to ALL**. Make a star as big as you like, out of whatever materials you want, lit or unlit - you choose. It can be an individual entry, a Primary School age children’s entry, a Secondary age category (11-18), an adult one (over 18 to 100!) or a family one. There is a prize for each category.

**Stars** need to be visible from the **front of your home, and in place by December 1<sup>st</sup> please.**

**Judging** will be the weekend of Dec 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>. All winners will be notified in person.

**Forms for entry, are in the rainbow box on the wall at The Green Plant Stall. Please leave your completed entries in the same box to be collected.**

Liz & Adam Hearnden have made, decorated & donated **a Christmas Cake to raffle**, again via The Green Plant Stall. Special thanks to them for their continued community spirit!

Thank you for all your lovely, appreciative comments about the tree and our Christmas efforts.

Levens is a very special place for all of us to live with a wonderful Community spirit.

## New Waste-Bins

Thanks primarily to Cllr. Helen Burrow and officers at SLDC new waste bins have now been installed at Whitegates and near to the Hare and Hounds noticeboard. These are available for dog-waste bags and it is hoped that they will help reduce the amount of dog-fouling and abandoned plastic poo-bags around these areas. On the subject of which, it is disappointing to note that signs, particularly on Lord’s Plain asking people to clear up after their dogs have been removed. The Parish Council sympathises with those residents who have complained to it about this ongoing problem and will continue to do whatever it can to reduce this problem.

## A Note on Parish Council Meetings:

Please note that as usual, there will be no Parish Council meeting in December – the next to be held on 12 January 2021. This, and subsequent meetings for the foreseeable future, will be audio-visual meetings held via Zoom. All Parishioners are welcome to attend and anyone wishing to do so should contact the Clerk in the period 3 days before the meeting for information on how to join.

## **Levens Community Project**

As a result of Coronavirus, it is many months since we have been able to use a Newsletter to update residents on progress with the Project, but it is good to report that, despite the pandemic, much has happened in the meantime. A Joint Venture Agreement between the Parish Council, Levens Charity and the Institute Charity confirming the roles each is to play has been concluded. On the new village hall site, most of the initial groundworks to prepare the site have now been completed. A significant quantity of good quality building stone was released from excavated bedrock, some of which has generated income to the Project through sale whilst the rest will be re-used onsite or at the Underhill development. We are now close to finalising tender-packs to go out to contractors as we move from pre-construction to the build phase – though it is to be emphasised that there is still much to do before actual construction work will begin.

At Underhill where four affordable houses will be built, we have now agreed the terms of a major funding agreement with SLDC who administer the Government's Community Led Housing Scheme. The Agreement will be signed by the time you read this and will enable pre-construction groundworks, including the diversion of a mains sewer (in collaboration with United Utilities) to commence. Actual work will commence as soon as a formal agreement with UU is signed. Tender packs for the build phase are also under preparation for this site.

At Cotes, site-preparation will have been completed by the time you read this. The three plots here have full planning consent and are to be sold on the open market. The current work is designed to open up the site and delineate the plots so prospective purchasers can get a clear impression of the ground available on which a house can be built. Although house designs have received planning consent, purchasers can revert to planning to secure variations to suit themselves. The proceeds of sale of these plots will be added to the funds available to the Project. At Church Hill, where plots will also be offered for sale on the same basis as at Cotes, we are awaiting final approval of detailed planning consent, after which ground preparation will also commence. We expect to go back to SLDC shortly to re-instate the previously awarded, but now lapsed, outline planning consent for eventual construction of three affordable units on the site of the Institute.

This work is overseen by a Project Management Committee and the Project Working Group (which has been working hard to confirm internal design elements of the new village hall). The Parish Council is grateful to all the individuals who are giving their time freely to deliver this major community initiative.

## **B4RN (Broadband for the Rural North)**

Despite Covid19 and 2 full Lockdowns our small team of Levens volunteers has continued to work with householders to connect Hyperfast 1000MBPS for 16 Levens homes close to the village cabinet. This covers the area of Beathwaite Gardens, around the Institute, Brigsteer Road, Hying Court and Beathwaite Close. A further 6 homes should be completed by December.

B4RN have just given the go ahead for a further two Levens Parish routes to get going straight away as a contractor can move equipment to stretch north along Hutton Lane and link to Cotes and Cinderbarrow as well as starting the route out to Gilpin Bridge across the Plain. Gilpin Bridge is at the edge of our parish and it will then be possible to link with the Witherslack B4RN group and subsequently with a new group at Crosthwaite.

We presently have 412 villagers registering an interest for the Levens B4RN Project and are delighted that 273 have applied for the FREE Government funding vouchers that will help pay for the network construction. Levens is being demonstrated as one of the first urban developments for B4RN Broadband with much of the central village needing roadworks to bury the network of conduit

to each property. After applying for vouchers and adding in a top up from the 'Borderlands Cumbria Fund' the Levens scheme has got to around 87% of its financial target.

B4RN HQ have offered to cover some of this financial shortfall from future customer income if we can match-fund with a further take up of shares from Levens Parish. This will bring in a civils construction team to start digging the network and connecting the village centre. Full details of shareholding are being issued and have a 5% dividend income and a free connection worth £150 on any £1500 or above share investment.

### Current Details for Levens Parish Council 2020/21

Councillor	Address	Tel.	Email
Roger Atfield (Chair)	The Old Court, Church Rd, Levens, LA8 8PU	015395-61574	<a href="mailto:rogeratfield@btinternet.com">rogeratfield@btinternet.com</a>
David Rogerson (Vice-Chair)	16, Nethercroft, Levens, LA8 8LU	015395-61628	<a href="mailto:davelouise@btinternet.com">davelouise@btinternet.com</a>
Susan Bagot	School House, Church Road, Levens, LA8 8PU	015395-60588	<a href="mailto:sbagot@schoolhse.co.uk">sbagot@schoolhse.co.uk</a>
Helen Burrow	Davlen Fold, Brigsteer Rd, Levens, LA8 8NT	015395-61082	<a href="mailto:helenburrow20@gmail.com">helenburrow20@gmail.com</a>
Kevin Holmes	Field Place, Levens, LA8 8EJ	015395-52063	<a href="mailto:kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com">kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com</a>
Rachael Johnston	Tudor Cottage, Main Street, Levens LA8 8NB	015395-60115	<a href="mailto:rachael79@yahoo.com">rachael79@yahoo.com</a>
Roger Mason	Heaves Farm, Levens, LA8 8DU	015395-60200	<a href="mailto:roger@heavesfarm.co.uk">roger@heavesfarm.co.uk</a>
Vacancy			
Clerk	Address	Tel.	Email
Martin Curry	18 Barn Holme, Kendal, LA9 5LP	07388-920410	<a href="mailto:levens.parish@gmail.com">levens.parish@gmail.com</a>

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

Tel: 015395 68576. Email: [James.Bland@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:James.Bland@cumbria.gov.uk)

**District Councillor:** Cllr. Kevin Holmes, Field Place, Levens LA8 8EJ.

Tel: 015395-52063. Email: [kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com](mailto:kevin.holmes6@btinternet.com)

**Police:** PCSO 5233 Jayne Park

Email: [jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk](mailto:jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk)

**Website:** [www.levens.org.uk](http://www.levens.org.uk)

### Levens Village Community Website

The Village Webteam works together to keep our website and Facebook pages up to date, current and relevant. The Team is always looking for news, events and pictures to post so please feel free to send items or post yourself (the Team will monitor contributions) or join in by commenting, liking and sharing some of our news. Contact details are:

Website.....[http://www.levens.org.uk/](http://www.levens.org.uk)

Facebook.....<https://www.facebook.com/levens.org.uk/>