

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 10 May 2022 in Levens Methodist Church at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, J. Battye, H. Burrow, K. Holmes (and as District Cllr.), D. Rogerson, M. Willacy, M. R. Curry (Clerk), County Cllr. J Bland and 1 member of the public.

01/22 Election of Chairman for the Council Year 2022/23: Vice-Chairman 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. Bagot and seconded by Cllr. Burrow. He was elected unanimously and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

02/22 Election of Vice-Chairman for the Council Year 2021/22: Cllr. Atfield took the Chair and asked for nominations. Cllr. Rogerson said that he was happy to stand-down and Cllr. Burrow said that if that were the case, Cllr. Roger Mason had expressed a willingness to stand. There being no other nominations, Cllr. Mason was proposed as Vice-Chairman by Cllr. Bagot and seconded by Cllr. Burrow. He was elected unanimously and a Declaration of Acceptance of Office was issued for him to sign.

03/22 Apologies for Absence: Written apologies and reason for absence had been submitted by Cllr. Mason.

04/22 Declarations of interest:

Interests were declared in respect of the following Agenda items:

- a) 11(b): Cllr. Willacy – declared an interest in the sale of Plot 2 at Cotes
- b) 13(b): Application for grant by St John's Church: Cllrs Atfield and Bagot
- c) 18(f): Cllrs. Atfield and Holmes declared their Trusteeship of the Levens Playing Fields Charity and Cllr. Battye declared that she was Secretary to the Levens Playing Fields Committee.

05/22 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 12 April 2022 as a true record.

06/22 Public Participation: Mr J. Morris made the following observations:

- a) The footbridge at Gilpin Bridge is rotted and in need of repair. It was **Agreed** to report this to County Highways.
- b) B4RN cables are showing at Underhill. Cllr Rogerson undertook to check this. Mr. Morris offered to cut the footpath at Underhill once again and this offer was gratefully accepted.

07/22 Appointment of Representatives

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

- a) **Highwayman:** Cllr. M. Willacy.
- b) **Village Institute:** Cllr. S. Bagot
- c) **Levens Playing Fields:** Cllr. J. Battye
- 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, R. Mason
- 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) **B4RN:** Cllrs K. Holmes, D. Rogerson
- p) **Greening Campaign Coordinator:** Cllr. J. Battye
- q) **Website Working Group:** Cllrs. Atfield, Burrow and Rogerson

08/22 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- a) **To note the outcomes of the local elections held on 05 May:** The Chairman congratulated Cllr. J. Battye on her election to Westmorland and Furness Council.
- b) **To consider the implications of LGR for the Parish Council:** It was noted that Westmorland and Furness Council would be formally created on 01 April 2023 (Vesting Day). Cllr. Battye said that the first meeting of the 'shadow' cabinet would take place in the week following this PC meeting. As a result, Parish Councillors felt that it was still relatively early to try to assess the implications of LGR. It was **Agreed** to include it as an item on the July Agenda and as a standing Agenda item thereafter. Cllr. Burrow asked fellow Councillors to remember that Levens Parish Council is an apolitical body and this position was confirmed. It was **Agreed** that schemes and projects initiated by the Parish Council should not be used to promote the agenda of any political party.

09/22 Reports:

- a) **Reports from Councillors attending meetings:** No Reports.
- b) **Police:** No report had been submitted by the Police. Cllr. Holmes advised that a motorbike had been stolen in the Lyth Valley and Cllr Bagot that a white van had been stolen in Greengate. The question of CCTV was raised, but felt that this was not appropriate for the village. It was noted that there had once been a Crime Prevention Officer and it was agreed to ask the local PCSO if an updated talk to villagers might now be appropriate.
- c) **District Councillor:**
 - i. Cllr. Holmes reported that SLDC were continuing to develop a local Resilience Plan which would be ready for Vesting Day
 - ii. Planning application SL/2022/0067 - The Langdales: Cllr. Holmes reported that he had received a request from Development Management to retract the calling-in of the application. This was made on the basis that the proposal relating to permitted development would be refused, but that the application for alteration of the hedge would be retained. Cllr Holmes had not felt able to accede to this request as it was his understanding that there were significant issues with the hedge. The Parish Council agreed that in its view this was the case and that given the initial condition in the approval of planning permission there was no reason to alter the status quo to the detriment of neighbouring properties. It was **Agreed** that a draft statement for use by Cllr Holmes would be prepared by the Clerk and circulated for approval. Cllr. Rogerson agreed to take some photos of the current position for use in the response.
 - iii. Planning application SL/2022/0382 – Shepherd's Mill (The Old Carpet Shop) – Cllr Holmes confirmed that an application for prior approval for permitted development had been turned down despite earlier written advice from planners to the contrary. An application for full planning consent was now required and had been submitted. It was **Agreed** to respond to the consultation on the plans with a note of strong support for the proposals.
- d) **County Councillor:**

Cllr. Bland had no significant Highways matters to report. On Levens Lane footpath he confirmed that he is endeavouring to get Messrs Thackers (who had submitted an acceptable quote for the work) onto the list of approved contractors – without which their tender could not be accepted. Other quotes were too high and alternative proposals including a permissive path through the adjoining field had not yet been agreed. He confirmed that he will continue to try to get J. Thacker & Sons onto the approved list.

10/22 Finance

- a) **Receipts 01 April-30 April:** The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation for the period showing receipts totalling £18,400.30 made up of:
 - i. CCC - Refund of costs of Levens Lane footpath: 3,077.37
 - ii. Cllr. Mason - Receipt of payment for the sale of thorns 226.20
 - iii. Levens Charity - Refund of salary paid to Clerk by the PC 568.43
 - iv. SLDC – Precept & Co. Tax Grant 14,338.39
 - v. A number of other payments received in relation to land rentals, parking tenancies and allotment rents amounting in total to: 190.00

- b) Payments:** The following payments were **Approved**:
- i. M R Curry – Salary April 2022 (PC £250.01; Project £123.25; Charity £138.47; Mileage £26.00; Expenses (Stamps £21.01; Printer ink £25.99 = £47.00): £ 584.73
 - ii. Levens Hall – Allotment Rent 2022-23: £ 378.00
 - iii. Spatial Data – Topo Survey, Levens La. F'path (to be refunded by CCC): £ 720.00
 - iv. mtp media: print costs for B4RN letter (agreed previously as a PC grant): £ 158.40
It was noted that the ring-fenced balance of £12.39 would be included in this payment
 - v. B E Nelson: deer fence at the allotments (via Cllr Mason) £ 450.00
It was **Agreed** that this item should be paid for by the Charity
 - vi. Kate Jackson – A contribution to the costs of a talk as part of the Greening Campaign £ 75.00
 - vii. It was **Agreed to ratify** the following payment (previously approved but not minuted):
Andy Banks – 07/12/2021: Strimming etc £ 280.00
- c) Clerk's Allowances:** It was **Agreed** to increase the Clerk's annual allowances for broadband and heat and light to £90.00 and £150 respectively.
- d) Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled bank balance of £30,046.84 at 30 April 2022 was noted, as were unrepresented cheques totalling £1,410.47, leaving a net balance of £28,636.37. Councillors also noted a summary of ring-fenced funds held for others and a statement of Cumbria County Council funds held amounting to £4,534.97.
- e) Annual Governance and Accounting Report (AGAR):** The Clerk reported that the process of 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 14 June.
- f) Management of PC Finances** (banking arrangements): This remains work in progress.

11/22 Levens Community Project

- a) Levens Community Project Advisory Group:** In the absence of Cllr Mason the Clerk presented a brief report from the meeting held on 03 May. Main items of report were:
- i. **Plot 1 Cotes:** Solicitors are still awaiting the return of pre-contract documents from the purchasers before the legal process can begin;
 - ii. **Plot 2 Cotes:** This is ready to move to completion but the Parish Council has been asked to consider paying for, or at least contributing to, the cost of an indemnity insurance policy required by the purchasers' mortgagors due to a perceived weakness in title. Our solicitor has advised the purchaser that this is not recognised as a significant issue and no contributions have been made in respect of previous sales. However, and without prejudice to the Council's position, it was **Agreed** to offer £100 towards the cost of the indemnity as a gesture of goodwill in order to allow this sale to move to completion.
 - iii. **Plot 3, Church Road:** This is progressing - enquiries before contract have been received and the Clerk is submitting responses.
 - iv. **Underhill:** Infrastructure work is progressing well; on 14 April and based on feedback from the Project, Tony Hills was instructed to appoint Nick Irlam to provide the M&E specifications for inclusion in the tender packs. The latter will be issued once the M&E work is done.
 - v. **New Village Hall site:** Wilsons have returned to site to complete the excavation work required. Tender packs will be issued once the sale of Plots 1 and 2 at Cotes are legally binding. The sale of 20t of stone from site to a local purchased at £80 per ton was **Agreed**.
 - vi. **Finance:** Funds-in-hand at HSBC on 23 April 2022 were: £1,205,394.81.
- b) To approve payments:** Following recommendation from the Project Advisory Group, invoices **Approved** for payment were:
- i) Anna Williams Associates: Revision of Party Wall Agreement: £1,710.00

12/22 Planning Applications:

- a) The Schedule of Planning Applications:** The updated Schedule was reviewed. Number referencing has re-started at 1 for 2022-23. Applications noted were:

PC Ref	Application No.	Location	Proposal	PC View	Decision
2	SL/2022/0375	Land N of Levens View, High Sampool	3 camping pods and associated infrastructure	No Objection	
3	SL/2022/1206	Plot 1, Church Rd	Resubmission of application for dwelling house	No Objection	
4	SL/2021/0382	Shepherd's Mill, Levens	Conversion & change of use	It was Agreed to submit a strong letter of support	

b) **Other Planning Matters:** There were no other planning matters considered.

13/22 Levens Charities:

- a) **End of Year Financial Report 2021-22:** The Clerk presented the EoY Report for 2021-22 which showed a cumulative value total of £157,379 (including investment funds; deposit funds; bank accounts and Savin Brow Quarry). He warned, however, that the value of investments could fall significantly in the face of negative economic factors. Current disposable income stands at £20,586.
- b) **St John's Church:** As a result of additional information received following a request from the Appointed Trustees, they recommended to the Parish Council (as Sole Trustee of Levens Charity) that the Charity should offer a grant of £2,500 for the renovation of the Lych-gate. It was **Agreed** to confirm a grant of £2,500 to be paid on completion of the work.
- c) **Levens Methodist Church:** As a result of additional information received following a request from the Appointed Trustees, they recommended to the Parish Council (as Sole Trustee of Levens Charity) that the Charity should offer a grant of £1,000 towards the creation of a Community Garden in the grounds of the Church. It was **Agreed** to confirm a grant of £1,000 to be paid on completion of the work.

14/22 Village Traffic Management

- a) **Liaison with Arnside Parish Council:** It was **Agreed** to invite Cllr. Pete McSweeney to address the Parish Council at the start of its meeting on 12 July. Start time will be 7.00 p.m.
- b) **Consultation Process:** It was **Agreed** to hold-over this initiative until after Cllr. McSweeney has spoken to the Parish Council.
- c) **Moss Lane Bridge, Lyth Valley:** It was **Agreed** to co-sign a letter from Crosthwaite Parish Council to Highways about progress with repair of the bridge, subject to having sight of the proposed letter.
- d) **SIDs:** Cllr. Rogerson reported that the 'travelling' SID will be available in early June. He will contact Pandora about a fault with the one facing Bell Hill.

15/22 Planning for Adverse Weather Conditions: This was considered under the following item.

16/22 Parish Emergency Plan: It was **Agreed** that planning for adverse weather conditions should be considered as part of the process of creating a Parish Emergency Plan. It was **Agreed** to form an Emergency Planning Group which will include within its role the work of the existing Traffic Management Group. The Emergency Planning Group will consist of Cllrs. Burrow, Holmes, and Willacy and will be led by Cllr. D Rogerson.

17/22 Parish Noticeboard: It was **Agreed** to look at the condition of the existing main PC Noticeboard as part of the informal village tour on June 14.

18/22 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Levens Lane Footpath:** Dealt with at Item 09/22(d)
- b) **Levens Bridge Cycle Path:** No new developments were reported
- c) **Parish Land:**
- i) Registration of land at Cotes: No response yet from HM Land Registry
 - ii) Brigsteer Road site: It was **Agreed** to confirm the specifications and costs on the June Tour for submission to FoLD in a revised application for grant support.

- d) **Woodland Management:** Cllr. Holmes reported that matters were currently in abeyance until completion of the bird-nesting season. It was **Agreed** to review woodland matters at the Crossings on the tour.
- e) **Website Review:** A meeting of the Website Group had not been possible and it was **Agreed** to re-arrange this for June.
- f) **Jubilee Celebrations:** The Parish Council confirmed that its contribution will be the Beacon and the development of the Jubilee Orchard at Underhill. It noted that other local initiatives were being planned. Cllr Bagot **Agreed** to ask Cllr Mason if he needed any assistance with the Beacon. It was noted that posters would be required to promote the Beacon and that the Fire Brigade must be advised of the event.
- g) **Playing Fields:** Cllr Battye confirmed that the development of a pump track had been shelved in favour of plans for improvements to the MUGA. The Playing Fields AGM is on May 23.
- h) **SLDC Greening Campaign:** Cllr Battye confirmed the details of a series of 3 talks to be held monthly in the Institute to promote the Greening initiative.
- i) **B4RN:** Cllr Rogerson confirmed that the project was winding up after a successful conclusion. 304 properties were currently live, but the final number of connections will be confirmed.

19/22 Correspondence: A schedule of correspondence received had been circulated. Thanks from the Kings Food Bank for a donation received from the Levens Christmas event were noted.

20/22 Future Agenda Items: Items confirmed future Agendas were:

- i. External Audit and approval of the 2021-22 AGAR (June)
- ii. Strengthening links with the Westmorland Gazette
- iii. Dates and content of next Parish Council Newsletter
- iv. Local Government Reorganisation

21/22 Date of the Next Meeting: The informal June Meeting (Village Tour) will be held on 14 June to be preceded by a brief formal meeting commencing at 7.00 p.m. to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Tuesday 12 July to be held in the Methodist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.59 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....