

LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2023

Chairman's Comments

Since our last Newsletter in November, Christmas has come and gone and 2023 has arrived. I would like to thank the small dedicated team responsible for erecting, decorating and lighting the Tree on The Green. It was really good to see. Thanks also to all who contributed to the Christmas Fund by donating on line or in the Village Shop.

In my introduction to our last Newsletter, I made reference to the withdrawal at the last moment of the sale of the old carpet shop and the Parish Council's resolution to action certain procedures. One step we undertook was to contact SLDC and request they took action under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to instruct the owner to take remedial steps. Whilst some visible changes have been made we were very disappointed, but unfortunately not surprised, that this is apparently all SLDC felt able to do and have advised us that they now no longer consider the building to be an eyesore. Please be assured that as a Parish Council we wanted a lot more but other powers over which we have no control were of a different mind.

On a different subject, but a perennial concern to Villagers (well most of us) is that of dog fouling. As we have said many times before there is a fine of £1,000 for failing to pick up your dog's poo. If we own a dog, we also have responsibilities and clearing up after your dog comes at the top of that list. SLDC have provided extra litter bins in recent years and used poo bags can be put in all the litter bins as well as in our grey wheelie bins. So can we please ensure that we do pick up after our dog and make our village a better place. On a similar line please remember that on all roads with a speed limit of 30mph dogs must be kept on a lead. There are notices around the village explaining this legal requirement.

Finally, the Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st March and I hope you can come. More details are elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Roger Atfield – Chair, Levens Parish Council

Levens Annual Parish Meeting – 21 March 2023: 7.30 p.m. at the Institute

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 it is a legal requirement for parishes to hold an annual meeting between 1st March and 1st June. The annual parish meeting is not a meeting of the Parish Council; indeed the Parish Council itself is not legally bound to organise the meeting, though most Parish Councils, including Levens, traditionally accept the responsibility for doing so. Where there is a Parish Council, the Chair of the Council will preside and the agenda must include reports on parish council business over the previous 12 months, including finance. Significantly, however, the meeting also provides a chance for parishioners to catch-up on local matters and to hear about the activities of voluntary or local community groups. It often invites a guest speaker to give a short presentation on a topic of local interest. Although a 'cut-down' version was held in 2022, the impact of Coronavirus meant that the last 'usual style' parish meeting was held in 2019 so it is with pleasure that the Parish Council is planning a return to the traditional format in 2023. It will invite all active clubs and societies to the meeting and provide the opportunity for them to give a (short) summary of their activities. The annual parish meeting is a great event that helps to display and reinforce the vibrancy of the village. Further details of the 2023 evening will be publicised - wine and nibbles are offered!

Westmorland & Furness Council (W&FC)

On 1st April 2023, there will be a fundamental change in the way in which local government is delivered in Cumbria. In July 2021, Government announced its decision to replace the six current district councils and Cumbria County Council with two new unitary councils. In the area currently

covered by South Lakeland District, Barrow Borough and Eden District Councils a new authority, Westmorland and Furness Council, has been created (the remainder of Cumbria will be administered by the new Cumberland Council). From the day it comes into force ('vesting day') W&FC will be responsible for providing all the services currently delivered by the three existing District and Borough Councils and the County Council. That means everything from your waste and recycling collections to highways, planning and many other matters will all be looked after by the new Council. This will inevitably mean some changes and new ways of working for the Parish Council, but W&FC has been in place as a 'shadow' council for the past 12 months and has been working hard to ensure that the transition will be as seamless as possible. The main HQ of the new W&FC will be in Kendal. The most immediate sign of change will be the loss of a separate County Councillor – Cllr. Jim Bland has served this area as County Councillor for over 30 years and provided considerable support for the parishes in his area; likewise, successive District Councillors from SLDC have represented parishes at a more local level and Levens Parish Council acknowledges their support with thanks, including that of the present incumbent Cllr. Kevin Holmes – who will remain closely connected as an existing Parish Councillor. Cllr. Holmes has recently made a grant of £1,000 to support the provision of new computer equipment for the Parishes within his remit. Levens Parish Council now looks forward to working closely with its new W&FC Councillor, Janet Battye - who is also a Parish Councillor.

The Coronation of King Charles III

The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May, 2023. Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be further opportunities for people to come together in celebration of this historic occasion. On Sunday, 7th May, The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country and a special Coronation Concert will be broadcast live from Windsor Castle. On Monday, 8th May, members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. Whilst Levens Parish Council is planning some decorations (flags, bunting etc.) on the Green by the Christmas-tree site, it is not organising any specific events itself for the occasion. It is, however, encouraging the Community to come together to discuss and coordinate any ideas for activities. By the time this Newsletter is circulated it will have invited anyone to come along to a first meeting and give ideas for ways of marking the occasion. Local publicity will keep parishioners informed of any organised events.

Miscellany

Road Safety: Cumbria Highways have agreed to install flashing lights at three locations around the School. A meeting to discuss these and other traffic management measures is to be held in early March. Due to technical difficulties however, the plans for a footpath down Levens Lane have been shelved for this financial year and will be picked up by Westmorland & Furness Council.

Community Emergency Plan: This remains work in progress and a meeting with key players in the Village is being arranged to take the concept forward.

New Noticeboard: Nearly here! Thanks to Cllr. Bland for a grant of £1,000 towards the new board.

Greening Levens Campaign

The local Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss Group (supported by the Parish Council) is meeting monthly with speakers on topics of interest. In January there was a talk on composting by Garden Organics whilst Cllr Giles Archibald will give a presentation on Westmorland and Furness Council's plans for tackling climate change and enhancing biodiversity on Monday 13th March at 7.30pm in the Institute. The Group is planning ahead for future events and activities, possibly to include a talk on the Clean River Kent Campaign which was established in Autumn 2021 as a voluntary coalition of communities living along the river. Its aim is to keep the River Kent clean for

water-based recreation and to protect wildlife and ecology. Plans are also being put together for the Great Big Green Week (10 to 18th June this year). The future governance arrangements for the group are being considered and it may adopt a small charity constitution similar to that used by Levens Good Neighbours.

All are welcome to its meetings! Contact: Cllr Janet Battye janetmbattye@gmail.com.

Levens Community Project

Groundworks and initial infrastructure work on the four affordable houses at Underhill have now been completed. This has been funded primarily from the Community Led Housing Fund (a Government fund administered by SLDC) which awarded £249,235 to the Underhill work. Of that award, £52,041 remains and will be allocated to the costs of further infrastructure works associated with utilities connections (electricity and water). A further element of Infrastructure Grant was awarded for groundworks at the Institute. Clearly, these cannot be commenced until the new Village Hall has been built. The Project is immensely grateful to SLDC and the Community Led Housing Fund for acknowledging the extra-ordinary cost pressures that have come about as a result of global economic conditions including Covid19, the war in Ukraine, the associated hike in the costs of energy and raw materials and resultant inflation. As a result of our representations on this, the Fund has awarded, in principle, an exceptional increase in Infrastructure Grant towards planned work at the Institute. Work on the new boundary walls at the new Village Hall site continues. The key task at the moment remains to confirm the most cost-effective solution to bringing in the electricity supply to the site and the most sustainable installations for heating and lighting. Considerable work continues on exploring alternative options, on completion of which the Project will go out to tender for the construction phase which could be as soon as March/April. This remains the case at Underhill.

The Project is working closely with its estate agents on offers received for the two plots of land that remain on the market for sale to private individuals for self-build.

Levens Christmas Event

Our Village Christmas Tree was quite spectacular again this year. The LED lights are both economical and highly visible (probably from space too!).

Sincere thanks are due to all who supplied, helped to get the tree here, put up, decorated, then take it all down again!. It is quite a feat but we feel it is so worth it. It seems to lift people's spirits when the tree goes up!

Thanks as always to Vanessa and Dave at the shop for allowing the electricity connection. We'd be lost without that! And thanks to everyone who contributed to support the tree for this year and hopefully next! The total sum raised was just over £600 before expenses. There will be more news when we get to the end of the process

This is one of those things that makes our lovely village a special place, so thanks again everyone.

Levens Parish Council 2022-23

Councillor	Address	Tel.	Email
Roger Atfield (Chair)	The Old Court, Church Rd, Levens, LA8 8PU	015395 61574	rogeratfield@btinternet.com
Roger Mason (Vice-Chair)	Heaves Farm, Levens, LA8 8DU	015395 60200	roger@heavesfarm.co.uk
Susan Bagot	School House, Church Road, Levens, LA8 8PU	015395 60588	sbagot@schoollhse.co.uk

Helen Burrow	Davlen Fold, Brigsteer Rd, Levens, LA8 8NT	015395 61082	helenburrow20@gmail.com
Janet Battye	Inglewood, Cinderbarrow, Levens	07711 583013	janetmbattye@gmail.com
Kevin Holmes	Field Place, Levens, LA8 8EJ	07773 452548	kevinrhholmes0@gmail.com
David Rogerson	16, Nethercroft, Levens, LA8 8LU	015395 61628	davidrogerson@btinternet.com
Mark Willacy	Hundred Acre View Church Rd LA8 8PS	07786 080893	mark@dhwillacy.com
Clerk	Address	Tel.	Email
Martin Curry	18 Barn Holme, Kendal, LA9 5LP	07388 920410	levens.parish@gmail.com

County Councillor (until 31 March 2023): Jim Bland, Oakridge, Underbarrow LA8 8BL.

Tel: 015395 68576. Email: James.Bland@cumbria.gov.uk

District Councillor (until 31 March 2023): Cllr. Kevin Holmes, Field Place, Levens LA8 8EJ.

Tel: 015395-52063. Mob: 0777 345 3548. Email: kevinrhholmes0@gmail.com

Councillor, Westmorland and Furness Council (From 01 April 2023): Cllr. Janet Battye, Inglewood, Cinderbarrow, Levens LA8 8NX. Mob: 07711 583013. Email: janetmbattye@gmail.com

Police: PCSO 5233 Jayne Park. Email: jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk

Parish Council Meetings 2022-23

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month in the Methodist Church Meeting Room commencing at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated / notified. Matters relating to Parish Council meetings including Agendas and Minutes are posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard and on [its webpage](#): All are welcome to attend.

The remaining meetings for the 2022-23 Parish Council year are:

- 14 March
- 11 April
- 09 May

There are, of course, other sources of local information so do please check out our official website at: www.levens.org.uk or join the discussion in our Facebook Group - just search for '**Levens Village Community**'