

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11 February 2020 in the Methodist Church Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, H. Burrow, J. Fitch, D. Rogerson, R. Johnston, R. Mason, M. R. Curry (Clerk); County Cllr. J Bland; District Cllr. B. Rendell and 8 members of the public.

88/19 Apologies for Absence: PCSO J Park; Cllr K. Holmes

89/19 Declarations of interest: Cllr. S. Bagot referred to planning applications SL/2020/0068/69 (Levens Hall) at item 8a and it was **Agreed** to take this into account if necessary when the matter was discussed.

90/19 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 January 2020 as a true record.

91/19 Public Participation:

- a) A resident requested consideration of the increasing frequency of dog-fouling on village streets, which prompted observations that the same is true on the Playing Fields. The Chairman sympathised and confirmed that the Council regularly refers to the issue in its Parish Newsletter. There was consensus that the problem is getting worse despite the fact that failure to clean-up in any place where the public has access contravenes SLDC policy and could attract a fine of up to £1,000. Cllr. Burrow **Agreed** to seek further advice from Jon Barwise of SLDC and to request permanent signs to replace laminated ones that do not last.
- b) Two residents raised concerns about road safety around the school and Playing Fields entrance and also the possibility of creating a footpath down Levens Lane. The latter was noted for discussion later in the meeting. On general matters of road safety, Cllr. Burrow reminded all of several steps taken, including the purchase and installation of speed indicator devices. It was however disappointing that engagement with the CRASH Team in 2019 appears to have stalled along with a request for a short stretch of white lining near the Playing Fields entrance. Cllrs. Burrow and Fitch **Agreed** to seek a meeting with Helen Karaasian of Cumbria County Council to try to kick-start this initiative.
- c) On behalf of Levens Local History Group, Mr Allan Steward presented a new book: Levens in the Shadow of the Great War. He thanked the Parish Council for its support which had helped towards its publication and offered Members a complimentary copy. He confirmed that sales to date had raised over £200 which had been donated to SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity.

92/19 Reports

- a) **From Councillors attending meetings:** Cllr. Burrow reported that she had attended a briefing session held by SLDC on its recently launched review of the Local Plan. It was **Agreed** to put the associated PowerPoint presentation on the village website.
- b) **Police:** The Clerk read a written report from PCSO Park as follows: "I have received numerous complaints about inconsiderate parking on the main road at the junction of Nethercroft. I have put polite warning notices on the windscreens which have been ignored so I will be escalating the issue to get it resolved as there is a real risk to road users, especially cyclists." Councillors were pleased to note this action and commented that there were several other places where similar action might be taken.
- c) **District Councillor:** Cllr. Rendell thanked the Parish Council for acknowledging his grant of £500 to be put towards improvements to the public amenity space on Brigsteer Road. He was pleased that the Local Plan had already been discussed and referred to a further 'Stakeholder Launch' on 6 March. Cllr. Rendell undertook to advise who in SLDC was responsible for public footpath signs as attention to several was required
- d) **County Councillor:** Cllr. Bland reported that work to raise the road level at Levens Bridge continues and that he would enquire about progress with plans for a roundabout on the A590 at Gilpin Bridge.

93/19 Finance

- a) **Receipts:** Councillors noted the following receipts for the period 01 January - 31 January:
- i. 08/01/20 – VAT refund 2018-19: £ 2,325.83
 - ii. 13/01/20 – Wayleave payment Electricity NorthWest: 119.61

b) **Payments**

The following payments were **authorised**:

- i. M R Curry: Salary January 2020 (PC: £291.70/LCP: £452.44/Charity £2.62 + mileage): 766.26
- ii. CALC Training Course – Planning Event: 45.00
- iii. Transfer to Project for VAT incurred and reclaimed by the Parish Council: 800.00
- iv. Transfer to Charity for VAT incurred (SIDs) and reclaimed by the Parish Council: 1,185.60
- v. Levens Playing Fields Annual Maintenance Grant – following a presentation by Alice Sharples to support a written request it was **Resolved** to award a grant of: 1,600.00
Alice thanked the Parish Council for the recent award of £5,000 from Levens Charity towards the Playing Fields Re-development Project. Cllrs. praised the Committee for the work and effort it had put into raising funds for the Project.
- vi. Methodist Church: Annual grant for hosting the post office - The Chairman reported that he had discussed this with Richard Jones and proposed that, as the sum had remained static for a number of years, there should be an increase. It was unanimously Agreed to award a grant in the sum of: 600.00

c) **Financial Report**

- i. **Bank Reconciliation – 31 January 2020:** The reconciled balance of £27,908.26 was noted. Councillors noted the Clerk's report on ring-fenced funds, leaving the Parish Council with an underlying balance of £15,501.82. A further £3,541.70 is held as ring-fenced funds for specific Parish Council purposes.
- ii. **2020-21 Precept:** The budget and Precept bid were approved in principle at the January meeting, subject to minor amendments to be agreed between Chairman and Clerk. These amendments were circulated to Members by email on 20 January (together with a note on the calculation of the Precept and the Precept bid itself) and agreed. The Precept bid was submitted by email before the due date and confirmed as received by SLDC. The Precept is for £13,165.86 plus an SLDC Council Tax grant of £363.14.
- iii. **Internal Audit:** Councillors approved the appointment of Jean Airey to conduct the internal audit of the 2019-20 accounts.

94/19 Levens Community Project: Cllr. Mason gave the following report:

- a) **Levens Community Project Committee:** The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 04 February 2020 had been circulated. Progress with individual properties was noted. Councillors noted a successful meeting with professional advisers on 30 January and the following recommendations were **Agreed**:
- i. The Parish Council will retain management of the Project – a company limited by guarantee or other delivery mechanism will not be created at this stage subject to further work to confirm the liability of individual parish councillors.
 - ii. The draft Funding Agreement from SLDC, the question of liability and any other questions specific to the Project will reviewed by a solicitor specialising in community-led housing. The appointment will be made as a result of competitive tender and approved by the Parish Council.
 - iii. A meeting of Levens Charity Trustees will be called to appraise them of the current position, management implications for the Charity and the desirability of it becoming a Charitably Incorporated Organisation (CIO).
 - iv. The reconciled bank balance of £741,238.68p was noted. Consideration had been given to investing the sum across a range of banks, but professional advice suggested that the bank balance should remain with HSBC for the time being, pending investigations into other HSBC accounts that might bear interest.
 - v. The following payment was authorised:
Milne Moser (Solicitors): Legal fees JVA and attendance at meeting: £1,794.00
 - vi. External Funding: The preparation of tender packs continues which should open the way for a bid for Infrastructure Grant. A bid for Development Grant for village hall costs up to

£50,000 from the Lottery's Reaching Communities programme is under preparation; a full-bid to the Reaching Communities Programme will be prepared in due course. Discussions with Homes England continue.

- b) **Joint Venture Agreement:** The latest version has been submitted to the solicitor for the Institute for what is hoped to be final agreement. It was **Agreed** to ask the Institute whether it would be open to making a contribution towards legal costs of this long-running initiative.
- c) **Project Working Group:** The PWG has continued to work on matters of internal design for the village hall. It was **Agreed** to accept an offer of a day's work from the YFC on site clearance and tidying.

95/19 Planning Applications:

a) New Planning Applications:

Application No.	Address	Proposal	Applicant	Type & Status	Comments
SL/2020/0068	Levens Hall	Alts to yard, fence & gates at café & courtyard	Mr & Mrs R Bagot	Full Planning	No Objection
SL/2020/0069	Levens Hall	Alts to yard, fence & gates at café & courtyard	Mr & Mrs R Bagot	Listed Building consent	No Objection

b) To note Planning Applications determined since last meeting

Application No.	Address	Proposal	Type & Status	Decision
TR/2019/0173	Ringing Stones	Sycamores and beech – reduction and felling	Mr G Beard	Grant with conditions – Noted. It was Agreed to write to the homeowner with a note of appreciation for the standard of work in cutting back the roadside hedge.

c) To note planning applications still to be determined –

Application No.	Address	Proposal	Type & Status	Comments
SL/2019/0735	Land at Langdales LA8 8PJ	Erection of detached dwelling house	Deferred	The Parish Council had presented its formal objection to SLDCs Planning Committee. A decision had been deferred pending further discussion between Members and Officers to address issues. Deferral noted

Also pending: Levens Project consents at Cotes, and Church Hill.

Following representations to the Parish Council, it was **Agreed** to write to Development Management about a new structure in a field to the north west of Parish Council property on Brigsteer Road.

96/19 Allotments and Other Parish Land: Letters to allotment holders have been sent out asking them to confirm for 2020-21 by 21 February. There are names on a waiting list. Invoices will be sent out during March. It was agreed to put an item in the upcoming Newsletter about the allotments for the benefit of new residents. Councillors were pleased to hear that work had been done to modify the car-parking plot let out to Mr Nigel Edmundson.

97/19 Annual Parish Meeting - 17 March 2020: The Clerk reported that he had emailed Emma Loveridge, who will do the 'guest speaker' slot on "Friends Against Scams" covering the main types of scams (doorstep, online, postal & telephone). The Institute is booked and a poster and Agenda prepared for circulation. An item will be included in the upcoming Newsletter and an article sent to Naomi Capstick for inclusion in the Gazette. The Clerk will write to village organisations to invite them to give a short presentation on their activities. Cllr Bagot undertook to organise refreshments.

98/19 February Newsletter: A number of items were agreed for inclusion including: B4RN, the Annual Meeting; Neighbourhood Watch; dog waste and waste-bins; the new noticeboard at Cotes and other general updates. Delivery from the printers was agreed for no later than 26 February.

99/19 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda:

- a) **Highways Defect Report:** Cllr Fitch's Report was noted. He reminded all present that anyone could submit a defect report on the County Council website.
- b) **Levens Traffic Management:** The Chairman reminded Members of the considerable efforts made by the Parish Council in bringing improvements to road safety and traffic management to the village as discussed earlier in the meeting. On the possibility of installing a footpath along Levens Lane to Levens Bridge, it was confirmed that agreement from one or other of the adjoining land-owners across whose land any path will need to run will be required. Despite requests, this has not been forthcoming in the past, but it was **Resolved** to write again to the respective owners to explore possibilities.
- c) **Maintenance Plan and Woodland Management:** Cllr Mason reported that Andy Banks was to commence work on the strip of land at the Crossings and will undertake the previously agreed tree health and safety survey as soon as he is able.
- d) **Registration of Land at Cotes:** Following Stephen Read's illness, this has been passed back to the Clerk to progress and will now require a re-application for registration.
- e) **Noticeboard at Cotes:** Councillors were pleased to note that this is now installed and thanked Cllr Mason for facilitating this.
- f) **B4RN:** Cllr Rogerson reported on efforts to secure sign-up to the government voucher funding scheme which was progressing steadily. There is a deadline however and he urged all to sign-up and promote the scheme. Cllr Bland reminded the B4RN Project that Highways approval will be needed for any work to be undertaken on the carriageway.
- g) **Waste bins:** Installation is awaited.
- h) **Parish Hedge, Hutton Lane:** Cllr Mason is awaiting confirmation of a date from Andy Banks. As soon as this is received, the Clerk will give appropriate notice to Mr Stainton.
- i) **The Old Carpet Shop:** Following the 'drop-in' session Cllr Burrow had relayed feedback to planning officers and was to meet with Mr Bowker to discuss options and determine how he wishes to proceed.
- j) **Clerk's Appraisal:** This had been agreed for 12 February to be conducted by Cllrs Burrow and Atfield.

100/19 Correspondence: The Schedule of correspondence was considered. Items of note not otherwise dealt with in the meeting included:

- A request from Lakes Medic First Aid Team for a contribution to its work – in view of existing support to first aid and paramedic services by the Parish Council, this was not approved.
- CALC requesting all Parish Councils to check compliance with the Transparency Code.
- Cumbria County Council inviting Parish Councils to engage with its 'Working Together' initiative.
- Ian Brodie requesting Parish representations on proposals for the England Coastal Path. It was **Agreed** to support his view that this should route around the head of the Kent Estuary on the existing path network.

101/19 Future Agenda Items:

- The Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 17 March.
- Risk and Asset Registers. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Options for outside furniture at Brigsteer Road site.

102/19 Date of the Next Meeting:

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is on Tuesday 10 March 2020.

The Annual Parish Meeting is on Tuesday 17 March 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.52 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....