

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held remotely by the use of audio-visual technology on 13 April 2021.

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, J. Battye, K. Holmes (and as District Cllr.), D. Rogerson, R. Mason, M. Willacy, M. R. Curry (Clerk), District Cllr. B. Rendell, County Cllr. J Bland and 6 members of the public.

Following the Annual Parish Meeting held immediately beforehand, the meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m. The Chairman advised of his understanding that the meeting was not being recorded.

103/20 Apologies for Absence: Cllr. H. Burrow.

104/20 Declarations of interest: None

105/20 Minutes: Subject to an agreed amendment to Minute 99/20(b) whereby Cllr. Bagot's name was removed from the draft as not having been at the meeting in question, it was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 09 March 2021 as a true record.

106/20 Public Participation: No matters were raised under this item.

107/20 Reports:

a) Reports from Councillors attending meetings:

- i. Cllr. Atfield reported that he had attended a virtual meeting on the subject of local government re-organisation hosted by CALC with presentations from Leaders of the principal authorities on options and recommendations. Discussion on this was deferred to Item 7(d) of the Agenda.
- ii. Cllr. Battye reported on further improvements to facilities on the Playing Fields and that she would be attending a meeting of the Committee to discuss initiatives for 'older' youngsters of the village.

b) Police: No new update had been received since the March meeting.

c) District Councillor: Cllrs Rendell and Holmes jointly reported on progress with Covid-19 initiatives including the availability of vaccinations locally and a briefing from SLDC on relief schemes. This included information on new financial support for individuals or organisations suffering negative impacts from the disease. It was **Agreed** that information on these schemes might usefully be posted on Facebook. As a matter of general interest, Cllr Rendell reported that SLDC was supporting an initiative to see a replica of the first successful seaplane take-off from Windermere in the summer of 2021. This would mark 110 years since the first flight of 'Waterbird' from the Lake.

d) County Councillor: Cllr. Bland reported that improvements to the A590 and the proposed cycle track from Kendal to Levens Bridge continued to be worked up. Discussion on the Levens Lane footpath was deferred to agenda Item 12(b). Cllr. Atfield complimented Highways for the good job done re-surfacing Church Road. Cllr Bland undertook to look into a couple of minor issues including the loss of a bund which had directed water off the road near the grass triangle opposite the Church and an exposed kerb end on the exit of the private road.

108/20 Finance

a) Receipts: The following receipts were noted for the period 01 March – 31 March:

03/03/21	SLDC Member Budget Grant	250.00
18/03/21	Levens Community Project – VAT refund received due to PC	320.00

b) Payments: The following payments were **Approved**:

i.	M R Curry – Salary: March 2021: (PC&Allwces: £437.19; Project £122.74 Charity £194.42; Mileage £6.50; Stationery £14.56)	775.41
ii.	HMRC: PAYE Mths 10-12:	600.96
iii.	Mitchinsons: Payroll Services 2020-21 Tax Year	72.00
iv.	PrintingPlus – Spring Newsletter, print costs	144.88
v.	Friends of Crosthwaite School: Grant from Cllr. Bland CCC Funds	276.23
vi.	CALC – Annual Subscription 2021-22	250.85

- c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled bank balance of £18,956.45 at 31/03/21 was noted as were unrepresented cheques totalling £2,600.00, leaving a net balance of £16,356.45. Councillors also noted the Clerk's report that after deduction of ring-fenced funds held for others (Cumbria CC & B4RN) the underlying balance available to the Parish Council is £7,322.45. This includes £3,041.88 ring-fenced for specific Parish Council purposes (£2,000 for woodland management and £1,041.88 for the Christmas event). Cllr. Bland offered to contribute to the costs of Christmas lights.
- d) **2020/21 Audit Arrangements:** On the Clerk's recommendation, the appointment of Jean Airey as Internal Auditor was confirmed. External Audit will be conducted by PKF Littlejohn. The completed AGAR requires to be approved and submitted by 02 July.
- e) **Banking Arrangements:** The Safeguarding Review requiring details of mandate holders remains work in progress.

109/20 Governance Matters

- a) **Update and Review of Standing Orders:** Revised Standing Orders, Risk Register and Asset Register will be submitted to the May meeting for approval.
It was Agreed to amend the running order of Agenda items as follows:
- b) **Local Elections:** The Clerk confirmed that as there were only 8 nominations for the 8 places on Levens Parish Council, the election was uncontested and the composition of the Council remains the same.
- c) **Annual Parish Council Meeting:** The Clerk reported that the Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM) was required to be held no later than 21 days after the date of an election – set for 06 May 2021. Consequently Levens APCM must be held between 07 and 28 May, but current Coronavirus regulations prevent remote meetings from being held after 06 May. However, face-to-face meetings cannot be held until after 17 May meaning the APCM must be held between 18 and 28 May and as the Parish Council usually meet on a Tuesday this would mean either 18 or 25 May. John Wood confirmed that the Institute was to re-open on 17 May under social distancing rules, but whilst that meant that Councillors could meet in a Covid-secure environment, questions remain about how to enable safe public participation in a physical meeting under the current rules. Cllr Bland reported that a legal judgement was due on this matter and it was **Resolved** to await further guidance before confirming the date of the next meeting.
- d) **Local Government Reorganisation:** 4 proposals from a number of local authorities had been circulated and there is currently an on-line consultation on preferences which expires on 19 April. Following discussion, it was **Resolved** that in line with many other Parishes, responses to the consultation would be left to individuals rather than as a submission from the Parish Council.

110/20 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Working Group:** Cllr Mason gave the following report from a meeting of the Group held on 06 April:
 - i) Cotes – Further work on water-flow and drainage has been completed.
 - ii) Church Hill – Purchase of Plot 1 is underway via respective solicitors.
 - iii) Underhill - The rectification of title and registration of the Legal Charge have been completed. United Utilities have agreed clauses for the S185 Agreement and it is expected that this will be signed soon to enable work to commence.
 - iv) New Village Hall: Work continues with accountants to confirm a mechanism to ensure Zero VAT rating on the build costs.
- b) **To approve payments:** The bank balance as at 23 February had been reconciled at £727,913.27p. Following recommendation from the Project Advisory Working Group, invoices **Approved** for payment were:
 - i) Milne Moser: Rectification and Registrations of Titles: £1,496.46

111/20 Levens Charity:

- a) **Applications for Grant:** Representatives of St John's Church and the Methodist Church had been advised that additional information was required by the Trustees.

- b) **Next Meeting:** A proposal for the Trustees to meet immediately before the next meeting of the Parish Council to consider a Report for the 2020-21 Financial Year and updated information from applicants was **Agreed**.
- c) **Transfer of Funds:** It was **Resolved** to transfer of £500 from the Charity to the Parish Council to cover salary payments to the Charity Secretary paid through the Parish Council payroll.

112/20 Planning Applications: The Schedule of Planning Applications updated to the date of the meeting (annexed to these Minutes) was reviewed. Updates noted were:

PC Ref	Application No.	Location	Proposal	PC View	Decision
8	SL/2021/0006	12, The Green, Levens	Single storey rear extension	No Objection submitted	ACON 26/02/21
11	SL/21/0026	Lyth View	2-storey side extension	No Objection submitted	ACON 10/03/21
12	SL/2021/0053	Pinfold, Levens	Replace existing dwelling with new 2-storey dwelling	Objection submitted	
16	7/2021/5225	Lord's Plain Farm	Erection of Agricultural Storage Building	No Objection	
18	SL/2021/0323	Low Levens Farm	Steel framed roof over part of farmyard	Provisionally No Objection.	

113/20 SLDC Greening Campaign: Following an update from Cllr. Batty, it was **Resolved** to sign-up for Phase 1 of SLDC's Greening Campaign. The payment of £25 for Phase 1 was **Approved**. There is no obligation to go beyond Phase 1 and Cllr. Batty will coordinate Parish Council involvement.

114/20 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Traffic Management:** Cllr Bland confirmed that Highways will re-do the speed survey on Greengate after B4RN have completed their works on that stretch of road which is likely to be in about 4 weeks' time. The Clerk reported that following the circulation of a Parish Council leaflet urging road-users to slow down in the Greengate area, a number of responses had been received, all of which said that the road markings need to be amended to alter traffic priority at entrances to Greengate. Other initiatives including 20s Plenty and signage are still to be worked-up in consultation with Highways.
- b) **Levens Lane Footpath:** Cllr. Bagot reported that a meeting between representatives from Levens Hall, County Highways and the Parish Council had been held on 23rd March. A path on the inside of the hedge had not gained support, but the removal of some sections of the hedge to facilitate a path down the verge had not been ruled out. Cllr Bland confirmed that finance is a key issue and that Highways are looking at funding possibilities. The priority now was to draw-up a plan which could be costed. The use of local contractors would significantly reduce the funding requirement and it was **Agreed** to ask Tim Thacker for an estimate of costs. It was suggested that an approach might be made to SLDC for LIPs grant or possibly Infrastructure Grant if the plan could be linked to the additional requirements of affordable housing.
- c) **B4RN:** Cllr. Rogerson reported on continued good progress with recent work and 152 connections will be live shortly.
- d) **Woodland Management:** Cllr Holmes confirmed that he had looked at the Tree Report and understood the recommendations made. Practical work on priority recommendations would have to wait until July.
- e) **Parish Land**
- i. Brigsteer Road site: Cllr Mason and the Clerk are to meet to discuss requirements for a risk assessment and access.
 - ii. Land at Cotes – Work continues to answer the HM Land Registry requisitions.
 - iii. Parish Hedge, Hutton Lane – The Clerk reported on 2 emails received complaining about the removal of up to 15 metres of the hedge, but also inferring that as a result the Parish Council was responsible for a number of other issues that had occurred by coincidence in the vicinity. The Clerk had replied making it clear that the Parish Council was not responsible for these matters and particularly not for the damage to walls caused by a private contractor working for another party. It was noted that several comments had been received that the removal of the hedge was an improvement to the local area. The Clerk confirmed that he would be

issuing an Agreement for Mr Stainton to rent the land on which the hedge stands on terms agreed with him.

iv. Land, Parking and Allotments – All allotments are now let; the renewal of annual agreements and invoicing for land and parking will take place in late April. A tenant of a plot of land off Church Road has agreed to relinquish occupation. There are no plans to re-let this as it is earmarked for the Community Project.

f) **Post-box:** Cllr. Rogerson will continue to press for a return of the post box following repair.

g) **Spring Edition of the Newsletter:** Councillors noted the successful print and distribution of the Newsletter as previously agreed.

115/20 Correspondence: A schedule of correspondence had been circulated. Cllr. Mason confirmed that he had referred the observation from Mr Edmondson about a faulty drain on the roadside at Cotes to Cllr. Bland for attention.

116/20 Future Agenda Items: Items confirmed for the next Agenda were:

- i. External Audit and approval of the 2020-21 AGAR including Standing Orders, Risk Register and Asset Register
- ii. SLDC Greening Campaign

117/20 Date of the Next Meeting: The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Tuesday 11 May, but the date and place of the next meeting will be confirmed in the light of Coronavirus Regulations.

The meeting closed at 9.52 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....