

# Levens Parish Council

## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 January 2020 in the Methodist Church Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, H. Burrow, J. Fitch, K. Holmes, D. Rogerson, R. Johnston, R. Mason, M. R. Curry (Clerk); County Cllr. J Bland; and 3 members of the public.

**76/19 Apologies for Absence:** PCSO J Park; Cllr B Rendell

**77/19 Declarations of interest:** None tendered.

**78/19 Minutes:** It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 12 November 2019 as a true record.

**79/19 Public Participation:** A member of the public raised the issue of flooding on Brigsteer Road. Cllr. Fitch confirmed that he had reported this.

### 80/19 Reports

**a) From Councillors attending meetings:** None.

**b) Police:** PCSO Park who was able to be present only briefly confirmed Cllr. Burrow's report that the security drop-in event on 22 November had gone well and would be worth repeating in the future. The idea to establish a Neighbourhood Watch scheme was well received and it was agreed to promote this in the next Parish Council newsletter.

**c) District Councillor:** Cllr. Holmes raised the Members' Grant of £500 offered by Cllr. Rendell and it was agreed in principle to apply this to improvements to the ex-W.I. site on Brigsteer Road. Cllr Rogerson undertook to investigate the costs of re-cycled seats and/or picnic benches and circulate options by email for consideration.

**d) County Councillor:** Cllr. Bland reported that officers were reviewing local issues and preparing a work programme to deal with these. Cllr Mason asked him to take a look at roadside trees between the A590 and the UU pumping station and consider thinning if on County Council land.

### 81/19 Finance

The Chairman opened this item by advising Members that the recent Christmas event had realised a net income of £323. Feedback had indicated, and all agreed, that it had been a considerable success and it was **Agreed** to repeat it in 2020. From the proceeds, it was **Resolved** to retain £203 to fund the 2020 event and to make donations of £40 each to Levens Good Neighbours, Levens Playing Fields and Levens Primary School. The Chairman thanked Cllrs Burrow, Johnston and Rogerson for their efforts (with further acknowledgements to be made at Item 9(d) of the Agenda).

**a) Receipts:** Councillors noted the following receipts for the period 01 November - 31 December:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| i. 20/11/19 – Due from Project account to the Parish Council: | £ 7,200.00 |
| ii. 04/12/19 – Receipts from Christmas event                  | 322.97     |

#### **b) Payments**

The following payments were **authorised**:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| i. M R Curry – RICS Rural Conference:  | £ 162.00  |
| ii. M R Curry: Salary November 2019 (PC: £292.35/LCP: £424.30/Charity £124.55 + mileage:                                   | 860.70    |
| iii. M R Curry: Salary December 2019 (PC: £89.15/LCP: £176.00/ Charity: £15.74/ Ann. Allowances: £141.62 + £32.50 mileage: | 455.01    |
| iv. HMRC – PAYE / NI Months 7-9:   | 601.51    |
| v. CALC Training Course – Managing Trees:  | 45.00     |
| vi. B4RN - Payment of grant for control cabinet:   | 15,000.00 |

#### **c) Financial Report**

**i. Bank Reconciliation - 31 December 2019:** The reconciled balance of £41,564.34p was noted.

**ii. Half-yearly Finance Review:** In relation to the December bank balance, Councillors noted the Clerk's report on ring-fenced funds, leaving the Parish Council with a net balance of £16,000.34p. Whilst showing a few minor or explainable variances, budget performance

appeared to be on track for a satisfactory end-of-year outturn. This projection was supported by estimates for the remaining three months of the financial year indicating a final income position of £15,626 against a budget of £15,606 and expenditure of £13,361 against £15,606. A line-by-line analysis of expenditure indicated a projected net underspend to March 2020 of £2,245, the bulk being on the Clerk's salary as the Community Project has absorbed costs through grants received. The Clerk projected a net bank balance of £12,977 at 31 March, well within the guidance for reserves of up to twice the annual precept. He indicated that the Parish Council was due a sum of £525.26p from the Levens Charity for payments to the B4RN Project which, it had been agreed, should be paid for by the Levens Charity. The Parish Council is holding a further sum of £330 ring-fenced for B4RN, which also has a balance of £451.78 due from the Charity. Councillors concurred with the Clerk's conclusion that the 2019-20 accounts indicated a satisfactory outcome.

- iii. **To Approve the 2020-21 Budget:** The Clerk presented a draft budget for the 2020-21 financial year which was subject to a line-by-line review. Several revisions were proposed and an amended draft budget was agreed in principle. It was further **Agreed**, however, that the Chairman and Clerk should meet to consider and recommend any further amendments for agreement of the final budget by email.
- iv. **To Approve the 2020-21 Precept claim:** The Clerk confirmed that the Precept claim needed to be with SLDC by 24 January. A proposed Precept claim based on draft budget figures had been prepared, but needs to be revised to take account of amendments to the proposed budget. It was **Resolved** that in addition to the finalised budget, the Precept claim would be circulated to all Members for agreement by email.

**82/19 Levens Community Project:** Cllr. Mason gave the following report:

- a) **Levens Community Project Committee:** The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 07 January 2020 had been circulated. The following key points were noted:
  - i. **Investment of proceeds from sale of Sizergh Fell Quarry:** Kevin Quinn had spoken to the Project Management Group to outline an investment opportunity called Flagstone which would deliver an increased rate of return through higher rates of interest. Our accountants had confirmed Flagstone as a reputable organisation and that individual deposits with a range of banks would be protected up to £85,000 under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Further details are being requested.
  - ii. **Progress with other properties:** Conditional full planning consent for Underhill had been confirmed on 16 December. Tony Hills and the Structural Engineer are using Capacity Grant to design the retaining wall, plans for moving the main sewer; fill required, services and access. The actual costs of the work will be funded from Infrastructure Grant. Consent for Cotes was imminent whilst Tony Hills continues liaison with planners over application for Church Hill. Ground works continue at the new village hall and stone is being graded for sale. Advice on VAT implications has been requested. Cllr Mason revealed a display panel to be placed on site with a graphic and floor plan of the new hall.
  - iii. **Financial Position:** A bank reconciliation showing a balance of £738,127.88 to 23 December was noted. The following payments were **Authorised:**
    - Cumbria County Council: Costs relating to footpath closure: £ 908.20
    - Thomson Hayton Winkley: Legal fees for Joint Venture Agreement 1,567.20
    - Damson Consultancy: Tender pack details: 3,600.00
    - SID Designs: Display panel for village hall site 102.00
  - iv. **SLDC Funding Agreement:** A draft Agreement had been received from SLDC on 18 December. Comments from the Project Management Committee had been received and Cllr Atfield, Mr J Wood and the Clerk had met on 16 January to finalise responses for consideration by our solicitor.
  - v. **External Funding:** Bids for Development Grant from the Lottery's Reaching Communities programme and Infrastructure Grant are under preparation; discussions with the Housing Agency continue. A full-bid to the Reaching Communities Programme will be prepared in due course.
- b) **Joint Venture Agreement:** Comments from our solicitor on the most recent version had been received. Cllr Atfield, Mr J Wood and the Clerk had met on 16 January to agree these and further amendments to be put back to the solicitor.

- c) **Meeting with Professional Advisers:** A brief prepared by the Clerk had been agreed and this is now to be sent to solicitors and accountants in advance of the meeting scheduled for 30 January. Lorraine Smyth from ACT and Tony Hills will also attend.
- d) **Project Working Group:** A meeting of the Project Working Group has been arranged for 21 January.

### 83/19 Planning Applications:

#### a) New Planning Applications:

Application No.	Address	Proposal	Recommendation & Comment
TR/2019/0173	Ringing Stones	Sycamores and beech – reduction and felling	<b>No objection.</b> Councillors noted the good job of roadside hedge management associated with this property.
SL/2019/0989	Cotes Corner	Variation of SL/2017/0977 2 storey extension & extension ground floor garage	<b>No objection</b>
	Land adjacent to the Langdales, LA8 8PJ	Erection of dwelling including access & design landscaping	Cllr Holmes reported that he had just learnt that this application had been reinstated for consideration at the planning committee on 30 January. It was <b>Resolved to Object and that Cllr Holmes would deliver a prepared statement to the Planning Committee on behalf of the Parish Council</b>

#### b) The following Planning Applications determined since last meeting were noted:

Application No.	Address	Proposal	Type & Status	Decision
TR/2019/0156	23 Nethercroft, Lowgate	Reduce sycamore	TPO	Approved with conditions 09/12/19
SL/2019/0765	50 Greengate	Single storey rear extension	Full planning	Approved with conditions
SL/2019/0732	31 Greengate	Single storey rear extension & dormer w'dow	Full planning	Approved with conditions
SL/2019/0344	Underhill	4 Affordables	Reserved matters	Approved with conditions

#### c) Planning applications still to be determined – Levens Project consents at Cotes, and Church Hill

### 84/19 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda:

- a) **B4RN:** Cllr Rogerson reported on progress and that Levens was being treated as a beacon project because of the large size of the village environment. The Project was looking to get 380 properties signed-up by the end of January to take advantage of a government funding scheme. It was suggested that information on this should go to Naomi Capstick for insertion in the Westmorland Gazette.
- b) **Highways Defect Report:** Cllr Fitch's Report was noted. The return of flooding on the Brigsteer Road was highlighted and Cllr Fitch confirmed that this had been reported.
- c) **Levens Traffic Management:** It was **Agreed** that Cllrs Fitch and Burrow would confirm a proposal for 'white-lining' a car exclusion zone south of the playing fields entrance and supply the Clerk with a letter for onward communication to the lining Team.
- d) **Christmas Event:** The success of the event has already been referred to (see 81/19 above). It was **Agreed** to give written thanks to a number of people who had been central to its success. Cllr Burrow to supply details to the Clerk.
- e) **Maintenance Plan and Woodland Management:** It was confirmed that Andy Banks is to be instructed to conduct a tree health and safety survey and report up to a maximum cost of £1,500 to include the cost of an indemnity policy as well as woodland work at the Crossings to be paid for by adjoining neighbours.
- f) **Noticeboard at Cotes:** Cllr. Mason's recommendation that this should be bolted to the wall was **Agreed** and he undertook to get this work done.
- g) **Waste bins:** Cllr Burrow reported that there had been no developments since the agreement on sites with SLDC in November and undertook to follow this up.
- h) **Parish Hedge:** Cllr Mason reported that the job could not be done before Christmas. Mr. Stainton will be given two weeks advance notice of the date when work would be done.

- i) **The Old Carpet Shop:** Cllr Burrow reported that there would be a 'drop-in' session at the Institute on 22 January to give Parishioners the opportunity to consider and comment on the development options. The results of this local consultation would be passed back to planners for them to take into account when considering the future of this property.
- j) **Clerk's Appraisal:** It was **Agreed** that Cllrs Atfield and Burrow would conduct this on a date to be arranged in February.

**85/19 Correspondence:** The Schedule of correspondence was considered. Items of note included:

- Parish Elections are scheduled to be held in 2020.
- An email from Mark Hodgkiss, CCC Bus Service Officer which informed that Kirkby Lonsdale Coaches were pleased with the take-up of the new bus service and were proposing to add services on Tuesdays and Thursdays to Morecambe and Kirkby Lonsdale respectively. This was welcomed and publicity via the Westmorland Gazette and Parish Newsletter was suggested.
- Buckingham Palace has called for nominations to attend a garden party selected from past-Chairs of Parish Councils. It was **Agreed** to nominate Cllr Mason.
- A recent incident of graffiti at the bus shelter had been reported and subsequently cleaned up.

**86/19 Future Agenda Items:**

- The Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 17 March.
- The Parish Council Newsletter – next edition due on 27 February

**87/19 Date of the Next Meeting:**

**The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is on Tuesday 11 February 2020.**

**The meeting closed at 9.46 p.m.**

Signed ..... (Chairman) Date:.....