

LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 March 2017 in the Methodist Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. R Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, H. Burrow, S. Hargraves, K. Holmes, R. Mason, J. Thacker, + County Cllr. J. Bland (part), M. R. Curry (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

122/16: Apologies for absence: Cllr. D. Rogerson, PCSO Jayne Park, Cllr. A. Rawlinson

123/16: Declarations of interest: Cllr. Holmes reminded fellow Councillors that he was a Committee Member for the B4RN initiative.

124/16: Minutes: Resolved that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 14 February, 2017 as a true record.

125/16: Public Participation: No issues were raised for consideration.

126/16: Reports:

a) Reports from Meetings:

- i. Cllr. Atfield reported his attendance at the District Association of Parish Councils on 9 March at the Gilpin Bridge Inn. Items included a presentation on the impacts of Storm Desmond from the Environment Agency and the proposed establishment of a Strategic Flood Partnership for Cumbria.

b) Police: PCSO Park's written report highlighted:

- i. Theft of tools and equipment from the Allotments on 15 February;
- ii. An incident of harassment on 27 February;
- iii. Theft from a van on 11 March;
- iv. Other matters including the entering of Bowker's Carpet Shop by local youths on 23 February and an incident of poaching reported by Cllr Mason leading to the arrest of two men from outside the area.

c) District Councillor: In Cllr Rawlinson's absence, the Clerk read notes taken from an earlier conversation with her confirming:

- i. That she would attend and report to the Annual Meeting on 21 March;
- ii. That in addition to congratulating those involved in the recent incident at the Carpet Shop (see b.iv above), discussions for possible use continue with SLDC's Empty Homes Officer; also that there has been some interest in a possible purchase;
- iii. Discussions continue about a Locally Important Project for a footpath on Levens Lane;
- iv. That £330 from her Member Budget was being processed following the Council's confirmation that this would be allocated to the B4RN Project.

d) County Councillor: Cllr. Bland confirmed that road lining work had been undertaken at the A590 junctions together with some traffic management works at Bridge End. It was **Resolved** to monitor the effectiveness of these and other works and keep requirements under review.

127/16: Finance:

a) Receipts: The Clerk reported that no receipts were received to the bank from 1 – 28 February.

b) Payments: Resolved: to authorise the following payments:

- i. M R Curry: Salary & expenses (February): £ 358.06
- ii. M R Curry: Contractual Allowance (Heat & Light): £ 100.00

In response to a proposal from the Clerk, it was **Resolved** that the Chairman would review and sign-off Clerk's salary payments for 2016-17 and future payments on a quarterly basis.

- iii. Milne Moser: Legal fees of £1692.00 (Sizergh Fell Quarry) and £3,138.00 (work in respect of the Tripartite Agreement): £4,830.00
- iv. Printing Plus: Spring Newsletter: £ 133.95
It was **Resolved** to meet the printers before the next edition
- v. M J Knipe: Grass cutting: £ 85.00
- vi. Levens Methodist Church: The Clerk referred to the as yet unpaid annual grant for use of the room for the Post Office and it was **Resolved** to authorise payment: £ 520.00

Councillors noted that Levens Charity was required to pay an allowance to the Clerk of £500 p.a. some of which has already been paid as salary through the Parish Current Account. **Resolved:** to authorise the payment of £500 from Levens Charity to the Parish Current Account as reimbursement of salary payments.

c) Financial Report:

- i. The bank reconciliation at February 28 shows a net balance of £13,387.20p.
- ii. Budget 2016-17: The Clerk reported that against the current balance, there were known, estimated and ring-fenced payments that would reduce the projected surplus in the Parish account to approximately £3,500. This includes a projection (based on agreed figures) that, after taking into account total income against expenditure, Levens Community Project remains in funds. Also that the forecast out-turn for March 2016 shows an overall underspend approximating to the projected overall surplus. Councillors were pleased to note that the underlying position is that Parish income and expenditure are in balance. In response to a recommendation by the Clerk however, it was **Resolved** that in the light of the high level of current activity, the projected underspend should be approved as a prudent amendment to the budget in order to carry forward a working operational surplus.
- iii. To consider payments not yet made: Councillors noted that projections in relation to the current financial position take account of known commitments and potential grant outlay. An application for grant from the Playing Fields Committee was anticipated and the Clerk was asked to confirm the basis of previous approvals and to ensure that, if an application is received, annual accounts will be available.
- iv. It was **Resolved** to request Mr Alan Hartley to conduct the necessary Internal Audit for the 2016-17 accounts.

- d) Revised Financial Regulations:** The Chairman reported that he, Cllr Rogerson and the Clerk had reviewed the new Financial Regulations and that having been circulated, he recommended adoption. **Resolved:** to adopt, with thanks to the Clerk for facilitating this work.

128/16: Levens Community Project: Cllr Mason reported:

- a) Sizergh Fell Quarry:** Paul Davies (Solicitor) does not believe that the Hornyold-Strickland ownership claim has any merit and recommends a robust response on which he seeks instruction. **Resolved:** To instruct Paul Davies to use his professional judgement to write as he feels appropriate to refute the claim and to indicate that the Parish Council will now seek financial compensation for costs incurred over this issue.
- b) Financial Position:** That Cllr Mason, Cllr Burrow and the Clerk had conducted a thorough review of Project finances confirming that it was in funds by approximately £450. Financial sustainability however was now dependent on the sale of plots for development, supported by additional grant funding, options for which were being investigated.
- c) Story Homes:** That SLDCs Development Management Committee had indicated that as the Story Homes development is not subject to CIL, due to the timing of the

application, the developer should acknowledge both an obligation to the local community and the innovative Community Project by direct engagement and an offer of a financial contribution. A meeting would be sought with Story Homes to discuss how it might provide financial support to Levens village.

Cllr Burrow confirmed that she was maintaining a register of expressions of interest for the affordable homes. She has stressed to Story Homes and SLDC that local applicants must be considered as priority over those from further afield.

- d) **Allotments:** That the Agreement with Levens Hall had been signed. **Resolved** to approve the Agreement between the Parish Council and the individual Allotment Holders. Cllrs Mason and Burrow will now convene a meeting with Allotment Holders for their signatures and to discuss future governance.
- e) **Any Other Updates:** The Levens Community Project Working Group intends to meet to review the overall position.

129/16: Levens and Savin Brow Charities

- a) **Allotments:** It was noted that an application for the balance of costs over and above grants received for establishing the new allotments would be made once the correct figure had been confirmed.
- b) **B4RN:** Councillors welcomed a report from Mr Doddrell explaining the notable progress made by the B4RN Project. Mr Doddrell outlined some of the associated costs and requested confirmation of the financial support that the Parish was considering. Councillors confirmed that in addition to paying for the costs of printing the leaflet for households (£227) they had also agreed to allocate Cllr Rawlinson's Member Budget grant of £300 to the Project. It was acknowledged that cost estimates were in excess of these figures and it was suggested to Mr Doddrell that the Project should consider preparing a detailed Business Case which could be formally considered for support either from the Parish Council or Levens Charity – though certain criteria, such as a bank account, would be required in respect of the latter.
- c) **Clerk's Allowance:** As discussed earlier, it was confirmed that the balance due to the Clerk would be paid as part of the March payroll, with a reimbursement from the Charity to the Parish as had been the case in previous years.

130/16: Planning Applications

- a) **New Planning Applications**
 - SL/2017/0091:** Story Homes publicity boards and flags - No objection, but response to point out that precise location was not clear and that flags should be kept at a distance from existing residential properties to minimise disturbance from flapping in windy conditions.
 - SL/2017/0133:** Farrer's View re-render – No objection subject to sympathetic colour match with existing properties.
 - SL/2017/0152:** 13, The Green: extensions – No objection
 - SL/2017/0183:** 21-24 Nethercroft re-render: application noted; papers awaited.
- b) **To note Planning Applications determined since last meeting:**
 - SL/2017/0026:** Wedgewood, Brigsteer Road – approved conditionally
 - SL/2017/0888:** Land off Greengate Crescent (Story Homes) – approved conditionally

131/16: Annual Parish Meeting: The Clerk reported that all arrangements were in hand with advance notice and posters distributed. The majority of village organisations had indicated that they would attend and report; Andy Knipe of the Environment Agency had

also confirmed his attendance. It was **Resolved** to approve the draft Agenda for the meeting.

132/16: Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda:

- a) **Greengate Development Street Names:** The Clerk reported that SLDC had turned down the preferred option of 'Hyning Meadow' on the basis that there were too many 'Hynings' in the village. This was not consistent as there are several other places where the root name is duplicated such as Beathwaite and Greengate. **Resolved** that the Clerk should challenge this decision and require greater justification for its rejection.
- b) **Village Maintenance and Woodland Management:** With the approach of Spring and lighter evenings it was agreed that the Village Maintenance Group would meet to discuss priorities and a forward plan. The Clerk reported that Parish woodland would require registering with the RPA and an SBI Number issued before grant funding could be applied for. The Clerk will liaise with Cllrs Mason and Holmes to clarify ownership details in advance of registration.
- c) **Levens Village Traffic Management:** Cllr Hargraves and Darren Wilson were proposing an open meeting on 2nd April to enlist village-wide interest in seeking solutions to the current issues. In addition to speeding in the village, the question of parking in the vicinity of Causeway End was raised as a significant concern that also needed to be tackled as a safety issue.
- d) **Parish Newsletter:** **Resolved** that that Clerk must instigate a conversation with Printing Plus before the publication of the next Newsletter to determine their requirements for the production of appropriate design and readability.
- e) **Heversham School:** Cllr Bagot reported that she had received a letter acknowledging her representations as part of the recent consultation and confirming that the school would close on 31 August 2017. At present it appeared that displaced children would be split roughly 50/50 between Milnthorpe and Levens.
- f) **Story Homes Development:** It was noted that the Council was not in possession of the final set of plans approved by SLDC and it was **Resolved** that the Clerk should request a set from SLDC Development Management Team in order to monitor the compliance of the developer.

133/16: Correspondence: Other than that discussed as part of the meeting, there was no additional correspondence of note to report.

134/16 Future agenda items:

- Village Traffic Management – to receive a report from the village meeting.

135/16 Date of next meetings:

- Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 21 March, 2017 in the Levens Village Institute
- The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is on Tuesday 11 April, 2017

The Meeting closed at 9.58 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date