

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 14 May 2019 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 M. R. Curry (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

- 01/19 Election of Chairman for Council Year 2019-20:** Cllr. Bagot proposed Cllr. Atfield (seconded by Cllr. Holmes) who was elected unanimously. On election, Cllr. Atfield signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 02/19 Appointment of Vice Chairman for Council Year 2019-20:** Cllr. Burrow proposed Cllr. Rogerson (seconded by Cllr. Fitch) who was elected unanimously. On election, Cllr. Rogerson signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 03/19 Apologies for absence:** Cllr. R. Mason.
- 04/19 Declarations of interest:** None tendered.
- 05/19 Minutes:** Following amendments to the draft Minutes being: (a) elimination of a duplicate £ sign at item 127/18c(i); (b) addition of planning application SL/2019/072 (Beathwaite Gardens) at 130/18b and (c) addition of Cllr. Rogerson at item 123/18, it was **resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 09 April 2019 as a true record.
- 06/19 Appointment of representatives**
It was **resolved** that the following representatives be appointed:
- a) **Highwayman:** Cllr. J. Fitch.
 - b) **Village Institute:** Cllr. S. Bagot
 - c) **Levens Playing Fields:** Cllr. S. Bagot
 - d) **Woodlands Officer:** Cllr. K. Holmes
 - e) **Levens Charity Sub-committee:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, S. Bagot, R. Mason
 - f) **Footpath Officer:** Cllr. R. Johnston
 - g) **Land Registry:** Cllr. R. Mason
 - h) **CALC:** Cllrs. R. Atfield, D. Rogerson
 - i) **LAP:** Cllr. R. Atfield
 - j) **Allotments:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
 - k) **Maintenance Working Group:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, K. Holmes, R. Mason
 - l) **A590 Working Group:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, K. Holmes
 - m) **Levens Community Project Working Group:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
 - n) **Affordable Housing Coordinator:** Not required
 - o) **Levens Traffic Management Working Group:** Cllrs H. Burrow, J. Fitch, D. Rogerson
 - p) **B4RN:** Cllrs K. Holmes, D. Rogerson
- 07/19 Public Participation:** None
- 08/19 Reports**
- a) From Councillors attending meetings:
 - i. Cllr. Burrow reported that the next meeting of the A590 Working Group had been re-scheduled for 29 May. There is to be a public drop-in session on 27 June between 1.00pm and 7.00pm at the Gilpin Bridge Inn where proposals for improvements to the eastern section of the A590 will be displayed.
 - ii. Cllr. Burrow also reported on continuing good progress on the future of the Old Carpet Shop. Three proposals for conversion to residential units have been submitted for pre-planning advice.
 - iii. Cllr. Atfield reported his attendance at a recent meeting of the Levens Playing Fields Association. They have computer plans and some quotes for the proposed redevelopment and are planning an open day in early June. Levens Charity has not confirmed the amount of

grant it might wish to offer and is still considering governance issues, which might be raised at the AGM to be held on 22 May.

- b) Police: There was no report from the police. Cllrs. Burrow and Fitch confirmed that they had both had recent visits from 'cold-callers'. Another resident had been concerned enough to make a call to the police on 101 which had taken 35 minutes to be answered. Whilst a police van had toured the village shortly afterwards the concern remains that the recent incidence of break-ins might be linked to cold-calling.
- c) District Councillor:
 - i. Cllr Holmes confirmed that SLDC Planning Enforcement team had acted on the advertising trailer at Levens Bridge which has now been removed. An apparently abandoned camper-van has been on the grass verge at the A590 end of the Bridlecroft bridleway. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should give the registration number to the police to see if the owner could be traced.
 - ii. It is SLDC's Annual Meeting on 21 May.
 - iii. The Clerk reported on investigations into a new noticeboard for Cotes to be purchased with the aid of a grant received from Cllr. Holmes's Member Budget. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should get more details of the re-cycled plastic signs from Greenbarnes (a company name supplied by Helsington Parish Council).
- d) County Councillor: Cllr. Bland was not present and no report had been received.

09/19 Finance

a) **Receipts:** The following receipts for the period 01-30 April were noted:

i. D. Farquhar: Allotment Rent	£	35.00
ii. H. Bannister: Land rent		5.00
iii. SLDC: Precept and Council Tax support Grant:		13,661.36

b) Payments

The following payments were **authorised**:

i. A. Banks: Maintenance of village benches	£	816.00
ii. M R Curry: (Salary and Expenses April inc. recent expenses incurred (£18.98)		570.71
iii. Levens Village Institute: Room hire, Annual Parish Meeting		15.00
iv. Levens Estate: Allotment Rent 06/04/19 – 05/04/20		378.00
v. Cllr D Rogerson: reimbursement stationery costs (laminating pouches)		24.24

- c) **Annual Audit:** The Clerk reported that all financial documents required had been lodged with the Internal Auditor who had indicated informally that all was in order. Her report was not available however and it would therefore be necessary to have a formal meeting to approve the Governance and Accounting Statements before the deadline of 1 July. As expenses in 2018-19 had gone above the threshold for exemption the external auditors are required to conduct a limited assurance review (fee £200). It was **resolved** that the first part of the Village Tour meeting on 11 June would be a short, formal meeting to approve the required documents.
- d) **Rents:** The Clerk reported that all rents for allotments had been received and that all invoices for land and parking had been sent to tenants. He confirmed that land at Fiddlers Cotes previously rented to Mrs Proctor had been rented to the new owners of Inglewood. Mrs Battye of Inglewood, who was present, confirmed her interest in buying this land.

10/19 Levens Community Project (Cllr. Burrow and the Clerk reporting in the absence of Cllr. Mason):

- a) **Sizergh Fell Quarry:** The Clerk confirmed that a revised Section 106 Agreement was required in order to acknowledge the involvement of the Lake District National Park Authority and PARTI (prospective purchasers). Members had received copies of the revised document and a number of minor amendments to it proposed by the Clerk and the solicitor acting for the Parish Council. After discussion, it was **resolved** to instruct the solicitor approve the revised Agreement subject to the incorporation of the proposed amendments.
- b) **Land at Cotes and other plots:** Members noted that Tony Hills had submitted detailed plans to SLDC for the development of plots at Cotes, Church Hill and Underhill in order to secure full planning consent and thereby enable the commencement of work. It was **agreed** to request Andy Banks to clear ground vegetation at Church Hill and Cotes and to ask the Levens History

Group if it remained prepared to contribute an equal share of the costs for ground clearance at Church Hill in preparation for their archaeological survey.

- c) **Overall Financial Position and External Funding:** The Clerk reported that there was £9,098.33p in the Project account at 31 April. Members **approved** the payments of £5,040 to Tony Hills as fees (part) for preparing detailed plans and £2,370 planning fees paid by him to the Planning Portal. These sums have been included as part of a claim for Capacity Grant for April. In the absence of a formal meeting in June, **approval** was given for an anticipated invoice of £1,980 from Dodd & Co for tax and VAT advice received. Money pledged from the Community Led Housing Fund and the LIPs funds remain in place. Investigations into grant from Homes England continue.
- d) **Tripartite Agreement:** The Clerk reported that at a recent meeting with the Project solicitor the reasons for the Village Institute's reluctance to sign as drafted had been discussed. It had been agreed to request John Cooke, acting for the LVI, to submit his proposed amendments.
- e) **Project Working Group:** There had been an informative visit to Brigsteer Village Hall on the 7 May.

The Clerk, supported by Cllr. Burrow, then reported on a proposal to develop project management through a more formalised approach. This is in response to the increasing complexity of the process and the greater degree of decision-making and accountability required as substantial sums of money are allocated to the initiative. If approved, the existing Project Working Group would remain in place, meeting periodically to provide a steer on matters relating primarily to the new Village Hall. The proposed sub-Committee would focus on detailed management of all aspects of the Project and would be composed of some members of the Working Group and others with relevant project management skills including Tony Hills. It would meet regularly, most likely on a monthly basis, working to a prepared agenda, producing Minutes and operating as a non-executive sub-Committee, reporting to and seeking appropriate approvals from the Parish Council. It was **resolved** to support this proposal and that Cllrs. Burrow and Mason, supported by the Clerk, would finalise plans.

11/19 Planning Applications

a) New Planning Applications

- i. **SL/2019/0280 – Birks, Levens:** It was **resolved** that there should be **No Objection** to this application.

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

- i. **BE/2019/0005:** Pasture View, Nelson Square – large rear extension. Consent not required.
- ii. **TR/2019/003:** 1, Greengate Gardens – remove dominant stem from yew – conditional approval

c) To note applications still to be determined: None notified.

d) Lakesway Holiday Homes and Lodgepark:

- i. It was noted that landowners had erected gates at points on the Bridlecroft bridleway which would be locked once the minimum access for horse drawn vehicles had been provided.
- ii. There was discussion about the further response from SLDC (previously circulated) on the Parish Council's concerns about the decision to delegate authority to a planning officer in this case. It was agreed that SLDC's response had still failed to fully address the points raised and remained unsatisfactory in several respects. It was **resolved** that in reiterating the concerns of the Parish Council a Freedom of Information request is submitted for the release of all internal correspondence between SLDC planning officers relating to this case.

12/19 Christmas Decorations in the Village: Cllr. Rogerson reported on a constructive meeting between Cllrs. Johnston, Burrow and himself. Items discussed included providing a Christmas tree with decorations and an afternoon or evening event with carol singing, possibly a band and hot refreshments. Councillors welcomed these initial proposals and agreed to underwrite costs up to a maximum of £500.

13/19 Open Items Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Highways Matters:** Cllr. Fitch had circulated an update of his Highway Defect spreadsheet on which several tasks were noted as completed. Others however had been scheduled "to be included in a future programme of work" and it was noted that these might be the less critical or perhaps more complex issues. It was agreed that the spreadsheet should continue to run to allow for the ongoing monitoring of these tasks to ensure completion. Flooding on Brigsteer

Road was a particular concern as it was not deemed to be the result of a highway defect, but as a result of actions taken by private individuals. It was **resolved** to write to the landowner to ask if he was aware that possibly a previous tenant had created a deliberate blockage preventing water from running off the road.

- b) **Levens Traffic Management:** Cllr. Burrow reported on a positive meeting held at the school on 3rd May which had been attended by representatives of the school, County Highways, Cllr. Bland and herself – although the police had been unavailable. It was agreed that Cllr. Rogerson’s data from the SID units in the village should be provided for evaluation to Helen Karaaslan of County Highways. Police concern about the apparent loss of the on-loan bollards provided as a trial in traffic management, though it was felt that these might yet be located. The bollards had proved effective whilst in place and as a result hatching to prevent parking at that location was under consideration. The Chairman raised concerns about the lack of signage and road markings indicating traffic priority on Greengate where there was increased traffic flow from the Greengate Meadow development. Cllr. Burrow had asked Highways to check if there was a planning condition in place to require new road markings – if not, further consideration was needed and Cllr Bland is aware of the issue.
- c) **Maintenance Plan:** Cllr. Burrow reported that Andy Banks had done a really good job on the village benches within the allocated budget, though there was a little more paint yet to pay for. It was suggested that the Coronation plaque on the bench at the Methodist Church might be picked out in a contrasting colour for example in gold, to highlight it. This was agreed in principle, though there was no decision on who might do this or when.
- d) **Woodland Management:** The Clerk reported that there was no progress on the health and safety inspection of Parish owned trees and undertook to liaise with Cllr. Holmes on this matter.
- e) **Property matters:** With some minor amendments a draft letter previously circulated concerning the hedge on Hutton Lane was **approved**.
- f) **B4RN:** Councillors discussed the Funding Agreement from SLDC in respect of the LIPs grant of £15,000. Concerns had been raised about Parish Council liability in the event of circumstances highlighted in Clause 6 of the Agreement which might lead to repayment of the grant. It was acknowledged that such circumstances were unlikely, but that the Parish Council had a duty to ensure that it did not leave itself open to a significant financial penalty. After considerable debate, it was **resolved** that the Clerk should have further discussion with B4RN and possibly SLDC to see if some safeguarding of the Parish Council position could be secured.

14/19 Correspondence

The Schedule of Correspondence was noted.

15/19 Future Agenda Items

- Approval of Governance and Accounting Statements at a formal session in advance of the Village Tour on 11 June.
- It was noted that the next edition of the Parish Council Newsletter will be required for distribution by 26 June. Items for consideration to include cold-calling, dog fouling, Levens traffic management. Other content will be agreed by email and, where appropriate, Members will provide articles for the Clerk to coordinate.

16/19 Meeting Dates

Council **resolved** that meetings for 2019/20 would be held as follows:

2019	2020
11 June (Village Tour)	14 January
09 July	11 February
10 September	10 March (17 March for Annual Parish Meeting)
08 October	14 April
12 November	12 May (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

The meeting closed at 10.14 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....