

## LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 08 January 2019 in the Methodist Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs. R Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, H. Burrow, J. Fitch, K. Holmes (also attending as District Councillor), R. Johnston, R. Mason, D. Rogerson, + County Cllr. J. Bland, M. R. Curry (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

**79/18 Apologies for absence:** No apologies were received

**80/18 Declarations of interest:** None

**81/18 Minutes:** It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13 November 2018 as a true record.

**82/18 Public Participation:** No items were raised by members of the public.

#### **83/18 Reports:**

##### **a) Reports from Councillors on Meetings Attended:**

- i. Cllr. Atfield reported on a meeting of the South Lakeland District Association of CALC held on 29 November 2018. Issues discussed included raising awareness of health and wellbeing in local communities; a report from Highways on their efforts to address road defects and work in progress on a new initiative to be called "Working Together" which will define how County Highways will support local communities in dealing with highway maintenance.
- ii. Councillors noted that the Parish Council had responded to the recent consultation on the Cumbria Coastal strategy and Cllr. Holmes reported that he was attending meetings connected with this initiative.
- iii. Cllr. Bagot reported that she was to attend a meeting of the Management Committee of the Village Institute the following evening, 9 January.

**b) Police:** No report had been received from the Police.

**c) District Councillor:** Cllr Holmes (KH): KH reported on District Council discussions on planning for general and specific emergencies - for example care for vulnerable people in the event of utility failures.

**d) County Councillor:** Cllr. Bland reported that County Highways had been allocated an additional £2.25 million on top of the existing budget to address highway defects. They will do as much as they possibly can, weather permitting, to address priority matters between now and the end of March. Re-surfacing work will be a priority and the forthcoming closure of slip-roads on the A590 was noted in this context. Cllr. Atfield asked if the south side of Duke Hill has been put forward – Cllr. Bland acknowledged that it might be included in the new programme.

#### **84/18 Finance:**

**a) Receipts for the period 01/11/18 – 31/12/18:** None

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

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| i. M R Curry: Salary and expenses November 2018:<br>(Cllrs. noted that the Clerks expenses claim had been reduced by £15.49 to account for an erroneous duplicate payment previously reported - 70/18(b)i.) | £581.22 |
| ii. M R Curry: Salary December 2018:<br>Cllrs noted the inclusion of 59.75 hours - balance due for Project work (repayable from Levens Community Project)   | £400.94 |
| iii. HMRC – PAYE for Quarter 3:   | £332.80 |
| iv. CALC: Good Councillor and other guides  | £ 10.00 |

**Resolved:** That the clerk will forward an on-line link to CALC good-practice publications to Councillors.

- v. South Westmorland Village Maintenance Association (gritting Feb '18) £266.27  
**Resolved:** That Cllr. Holmes will replace the late Cllr. Thacker as Highwayman for the Parish. KH will liaise with Cllrs Mason and Atfield regarding the need for gritting in adverse conditions. Cllr. Holmes reminded Members of the liabilities associated with snow-ploughing on public roads.
- vi. Levens Playing Fields Association: Cllrs. considered an approach received from the LPFA for an increased contribution, suggested at £5,000, towards a redevelopment project. Cllrs. agreed that the £1,500 normally contributed was a grant for annual maintenance costs whilst the request for a larger grant for a re-development project should be addressed to Levens Charity. **Resolved:** that the Clerk should write to the LPFA to clarify this point and to advise them that if they wished to claim annual maintenance grant they should do so by way of application with supporting documents and attendance at the February meeting. Further, if they wished to apply to Levens Charity for a grant towards re-development work, then this should be by way of application through the prescribed procedures.

**c) Financial Report:**

- i. **Bank Reconciliation at 31 December:** The reconciled balance of £29,304.37p was noted. Within this are £17,293.00 of ring-fenced funds, leaving a core budget of £12,011.37
- ii. **Budget Out-turn and Review 31 December + Forecast Out-turn 31 March 2019:** The Clerk circulated a budget review and reported that the outcome was anticipated to be satisfactory. The March out-turn forecasts an income of £17,472 against a budget of £15,557. This was largely attributable to an unbudgeted salary refund from the Community Project. The expenditure forecast anticipates an overall spend of £14,895 against a budget of £16,557. This reflects a likely underspend of £500 on grants and the removal of £1,000 for village benches to ring-fenced funds.
- iii. **To approve the 2019-20 Budget:** Cllrs. considered the draft budget circulated by the Clerk. On income it was agreed that Allotment Rent should be split from income from land and parking. The Clerk confirmed his proposal that the figure for VAT refund was a reasonable estimate. On expenditure, a number of items were **Agreed:**
- Increase the Clerk's salary estimate to £5,700;
  - Double-check room hire rates for the forthcoming year;
  - Ask the Methodist Church to confirm that it was content with the current level of grant made for hosting the Post Office facility;
  - The costs of defibrillator pads should be paid from the Parish Council rather than from Levens Charity and that £90 should be added;
  - The amount available for 'Other Grants' be reduced from £1,000 to £500
  - £125 should be added for anticipated land registration costs;
  - The audit figure might be inflated due to the receipt of CCC Project funds taking income over the audit thresh-hold (to be confirmed at internal audit);
- Resolved:** That the Clerk incorporate the agreed amendments into the 2019/20 Budget.
- iv. **To approve the 2019-20 Precept:** **Resolved:** The 2019-20 Precept was approved in principle, subject to amendment of the draft budget as agreed. The final figure to be circulated and confirmed by email before the deadline date of 25 January.
- v. **To agree purpose for 2019-20 District Cllr Members' Budget:** Cllr. Holmes confirmed that the figure available is £350. **Resolved:** To request a grant of £350 for the purposes of replacing the village noticeboard at Cinderbarrow.

**85/18 Levens Community Project:** Cllr Mason reported as follows:

- a) **Sale of Sizergh Fell Quarry:** It was anticipated that the planning application submitted by PARTI will be heard at the February meeting of the LDNPA planning committee. This may require the duration of the Option Agreement to be extended.
- b) **Sale of Plots at Cotes:** There is no additional progress to report, though Tony Hills is preparing detailed plans for the developments at Cotes, Church Hill and Underhill.
- c) **Report on Financial Position:** The Clerk reported that on 5 December Tony Whittaker of SLDC had confirmed that a Capacity Grant payment of £4,026.40 was to be paid. Together with the existing balance of £8,313.00 (bank statement at 23 December) the gross balance is £12,339.40. Payments of £3,674.97 are currently required, leaving a balance of £8,664.43. Further payments are anticipated against this and a new Capacity Building Grant is in preparation. A bid for LIPs grant is in preparation for groundworks to the new Village Hall site. In addition to the £350,000 confirmed from the Community Led Housing Fund, work continues to secure a major grant from Homes England. In view of these significant developments, a meeting has been arranged with the Project Accountants Dodd & Co to review the present and future requirements of the Project. The Clerk has requested an audit of the current financial position to be completed by them.  
Members noted an invoice for £1,800.00 from Michael C L Hodgson for estate agency costs and requested the Clerk to ask for further details on this before considering payment.
- d) **Project Working Group:** A meeting to discuss the requirements for the kitchen in the new Village Hall is being arranged.

**86/18 Levens and Savin Brow Charities:** The Clerk confirmed that there was no update of note to report other than giving notice that Blackrock requires detailed information from mandate holders for the purposes of confirming their records. The Clerk will make arrangements for this required action to be completed.

**87/18 Planning Applications: the following planning applications were discussed:**

- a) **New Planning Applications:** It was noted that no new planning applications had been received.
- b) **To note Planning Applications determined since last meeting:** Members noted conditional approval for 7/2018/5580 - Storage Building at Fellside Ranger Base, Sizergh (LDNPA) and SL/2018/0833 - Single storey extension and alterations at Benson Hall, Levens.
- c) **To note planning applications still to be determined:** Members noted that there were no decisions in respect of SL/2018/2018: Land adjacent to the Langdales, Underhill and SL/2018/0592 / 0619 Lakesway Holiday Home & Lodge Park. In respect of the latter, Members were reminded that the Parish Council had submitted Objections, but it remained unclear when this matter would be heard by SLDC Planning Committee, requiring repetitive scrutiny of Committee Agendas. In response to Cllr. Burrow's proposal, it was **Resolved** to write to SLDC to request direct notification when matters subject to Objections are to go to Planning Committee.

**88/18 Open Actions not covered elsewhere on the Agenda:**

- a) **B4RN:** Cllr Rogerson gave a detailed review of progress and plans and reported that matters were progressing positively. He produced maps to show proposed use of BT ducts and other routes. It was anticipated that mole-ploughing would commence in late January / early February with the cabinet installed in March. A view was expressed that it was regrettable that, whilst the cabinet does not require planning permission, plans for its proposed location had not been formally advised to the Parish Council.

