

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Levens Methodist Church on the 09 November 2021.

Present: Cllrs R. Atfield, S. Bagot, J. Battye, H. Burrow, K. Holmes, R. Mason, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy; County Cllr. J. Bland, M. R. Curry (Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

76/21 Apologies for Absence: None

77/21 Declarations of interest: In relation to Item 9(i) of the Agenda, Cllrs. Atfield and Holmes declared that they were Trustees of the Levens Playing Fields Charity. In relation to the same item, Cllr. Battye declared that she was Secretary to the Levens Playing Fields Committee.

78/21 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 12 October 2021 as a true record.

79/21 Public Participation: No matters were raised by members of the public.

80/21 Reports:

a) Reports from Councillors attending meetings:

- i. Cllr. Atfield had attended the CALC AGM on 26 September (by Zoom). Greening updates included Workington's Nature Partnership, a shift from a motorised to a pedestrian parade at Kendal Torchlight and a proposed Repair Shop for the town. The AGM had also passed a resolution to increase the CALC annual subscription.
- ii. Cllrs. Burrow and Battye had attended SLDCs Local Development Framework 'drop-in' events in Milnthorpe (15 October) and Kendal (18 October). Cllr Burrow had engaged the SLDC lead officer and stressed Parish Council concerns about local infrastructure if further large-scale development was approved.

b) Police: Cllrs. were pleased to welcome PCSO Jayne Park to the meeting. She confirmed that the Police Focus Newsletter was now the primary means of communication, though she will try to come to meetings as often as possible. The Clerk confirmed that Levens is signed up to and in receipt of the Newsletter. Jayne then confirmed that beyond general items including the theft of agricultural equipment she had little to report from Levens. Cllr Mason reported that two youths had recently visited his farmyard and he was encouraged to email the details to Jayne. There had been damage caused as a result of a gate-crashing incident at a party at the Institute the previous weekend but this was being dealt with by the parties concerned. Cllr Burrow raised concerns around parking and road safety, particularly around the school at drop-off and pick-up times. Jayne confirmed that she was aware of poor parking and had engaged with it. She said she would try to get round more frequently at busy school times.

c) District Councillor: Cllr. Holmes reported as follows:

- i. He had reported a discharge from a septic tank in Lowgate which had been dealt with within 2 hours. The blockage appeared to have been caused by plastic wipes;
- ii. Local government reorganisation was progressing and SLDC was considering the Structural Changes Order;
- iii. There were current consultations on cycleway and walking routes;
- iv. The SLDC Local Plan Development Review was progressing and now included a focus on brownfield sites for inclusion on the development Register.

d) County Councillor: Cllr. Bland reported as follows:

- i. Progress continues with plans for the footpath on Levens Lane. Cllr Bagot reiterated the point that HMRC approval would be required which may take some considerable time.
- ii. The raised carriageway and improved drainage on the road at Levens Bridge had prevented flooding on the road during the recent period of heavy rain;
- iii. A further meeting with Highways England will be held on 22 November to progress improvements to the A590;

81/21 Finance

- a) **Receipts:** The following receipts for the period 01 October to 31 October were noted:
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|---|----------|
| i. 15/10/21 - Refund to PC from the Project for Clerk's salary: | 1,678.75 |
| ii. 15/10/21 - Refund to PC from the Project for VAT due: | 119.66 |
| iii. 15/10/21 - SLDC Creditors: Cllr Holmes Members' Grant (for ash die-back) | 500.00 |
- b) **Payments:** The following payments were **Approved:**
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|---|----------|
| i) M R Curry - Salary: Oct. '21: (PC: £300.67; Project: £237.26; Charity £72.67; Miles £6.50.
Also expenses for annual Zoom subscription (£113.70) | 730.80 |
| ii) S. Doddrell - B4RN expenses from ring-fenced funds | 1,787.61 |
| iii) Cllr. H Burrow - Expenses for Xmas event from ring-fenced funds | 25.36 |
| iv) Cllr. R Atfield - Expenses for Remembrance Day wreath | 35.00 |
- The following payment previously agreed in principle was **Ratified:**
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| v) Levens Estate - Annual Allotment fee: | 378.00 |
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- c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled net bank balance of £22,337.95 (after deduction of unpresented cheques) was noted. Councillors also noted that after deduction of ring-fenced funds the underlying balance available to the Parish Council is £14,330.62.
- d) **Draft Budget and Indicative Precept 2022-23:** The Clerk presented a draft budget for 2022-23 based on projections of income and expenditure to the end of the 2021-22 financial year. The indicative precept was shown as £13,960. The Precept bid does not have to be submitted until the end of January, some 2 weeks after the next meeting of the Parish Council. It was **Agreed** that Councillors would review the figures presented prior to the next meeting on 11 January 2022 when the final budget and Precept bid would be approved.
- e) **Management of PC Finances:** The Clerk reported that he had drafted the necessary forms to enable telephone banking and internet banking with HSBC. It was **Resolved** to proceed with the application for Telephone Banking and to proceed in principle with the application for internet banking subject to additional information of how the latter will work in practice.

82/21 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Working Group:** Cllr. Mason reported on the meeting of the Group held on 02 November as follows:
- b) **Sale of Plots:**
- Church Hill:** The sale of Plots 1 and 2 are proceeding and following agreement to a shared sewerage arrangement, the latter is expected to complete within the week, with the former following shortly after. Plot 3 is being marketed and some interest has been received.
 - Cotes:** The sales of Plots 2 and 3 are progressing satisfactorily. Plot 1 remains on the market.
- c) **Underhill:** Tim Thacker is to return to the site to continue ground and infrastructure works on 15 November. The tender packs for the four houses have been completed and it was **Agreed** that selected contractors should be invited to tender.
- d) **New Village Hall:**
- Zero Rate VAT:** Three accountants have been invited to tender for the provision of accountancy services on the basis of detailed information relating to the VAT situation.
 - Boundary Walls:** Final excavations have been agreed with Wilsons, but an updated Party Wall Agreement is required with adjoining owners. Councillors **Approved** the recommendation from the Project Advisory Group that Anna Williams Associates be requested to conclude the required work. It was **Agreed** that Messrs Thackers, Wilsons and Stuart Lambert be invited to tender for the construction of the walls to Paul Snape's specifications.
- e) **To Approve Payments:** No payments were required for approval.

83/21 Planning Applications: Councillors noted updates on the Schedule of Planning Applications updated to 09 November (annexed to these Minutes). The following new applications were considered:

PC Ref	Location	Proposal	Application No.	PC View
32	Levens Moss LA8 8LJ	O ₂ - Replacement of Telecomms cabinet	PN for telecoms. 28 day notice under Statutory Powers	No Objection
33	31 Greengate LA8 8NF	Single storey extension + dormer windows to NE & pitched roof to garage	SL/2021/0999 resubmission of SL/2019/0732	Not yet notified but unlikely to object

84/21 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Traffic Management:** Cllr. Burrow had written a follow-up note to Councillors on 20s Plenty and associated initiatives. It was noted that Arnside had implemented a 20 mph speed limit and it was **Agreed** that the Clerk should write to their Parish Council to ask for their advice on how this had been achieved.
- b) **Levens Lane Footpath:** There was further discussion on this initiative. Cllr. Mason reported that Levens Estate Office had commented that HMRC approval might not be too difficult to achieve in the time-frame.
- c) **Woodland Management:** The Clerk has now spoken with Andy Banks and dates for a meeting with Cllr Holmes are being discussed.
- d) **Parish and Other Land**
 - i. **Brigsteer Road site:** The Clerk reported that the grant application to Friends of the Lake District had been considered, but that they would prefer to see funding applied towards the stabilisation of boundary walls or on work to improve the floristic quality of the ground. It was **Agreed** to re-cast the application to address these comments.
 - ii. **Registration of Land at Cotes:** The Clerk confirmed that the application for First Registration had been sent to HM Land Registry.
 - iii. **Parish Hedge, Hutton Lane:** Cllr. Mason said that work to remove the hedge would be in the New Year. It was **Agreed** to advise Mr. Stainton of this timescale. The tenancy agreement is being prepared.
- e) **Parish Council Website:** Cllr. Rogerson reported on a Zoom meeting with Tom Hecht held the day before. Of three options proposed by him the Website Group favoured a re-design of the Parish Webpage within and as part of a re-build of the entire Village Website. Tom had offered to lead this for a fee of £750 which would include a significant amount of voluntary input. It was **Resolved** to request Tom (working with the PC sub-group) to develop and submit proposals.
- f) **Platinum Jubilee:** Cllr. Bagot opened the discussion by confirming that there were two strands to the celebrations - one being the Green Canopy Initiative to plant a tree or trees to mark the event and secondly a celebratory beacon on 02 June. In relation to the Green Canopy it was noted that the inclusion of schoolchildren was recommended. It was **Agreed** to pursue the idea of a village orchard using Parish land at Underhill and that it would be named The Platinum Jubilee Orchard. It was further **Agreed** to have a bonfire on Hyning Hill and Cllr. Bagot will register this with the national Jubilee organisers. Cllr. Mason will make the necessary practical arrangements for the bonfire.
- g) **Levens Christmas Event:** Cllr. Burrow reported that she had ordered a tree which would be set up on the Green as soon as it arrived. She had made 250 decorative bows and that the Village Shop had once again offered electricity supply to power the newly acquired lights. Costs would be met from the existing ring-fenced Christmas Fund within the Parish accounts. There would be a switch-on event to be advertised on Facebook and the Website but public celebrations would once again be restricted due to the continued prevalence of Covid-19.
- h) **Electric Car Charging Points:** Cllr. Batty reported that she had enquired about the possibility of using SLDC land on the Green with its Greening Officer and particularly any options for funding. The proposal would be to have up to two charging points. Cllr Holmes confirmed that SLDC is looking at the request and considering what is required, including liaison with CCC Highways who will need to be involved. He confirmed that whilst such initiatives are a priority for SLDC progress might be relatively slow as a result of Local Government Reorganisation. Jemma Fells will keep him advised of progress.

- i) **Playing Fields Pump Track:** Cllr. Battye reported that the Playing Fields Committee (PFC) is considering more flexible use of the existing tennis court for other activities thus perhaps freeing-up the MUGA for development as a pump track. Cllr. Bagot expressed the hope that tennis players were being fully consulted in this process. There was further discussion about the respective roles of the PFC and the Trustees and the need to clarify the current status of the Constitution. A meeting, to include the Trustees, was being organised with Lorraine Smyth of ACT for her advice on this.
- j) **SLDC Greening Campaign:** Cllr. Battye reported that a coffee morning and workshop had been held on 30 October when scarecrows had been made to highlight the ‘Small Actions Challenge’ initiative. She thanked the Chairman for judging the efforts and reported that scarecrows were now visible at various locations in the village. Challenge cards are also displayed in many windows. A long list of greening actions had been submitted by residents and Sheila Watson had written to the Parish Council to promote the switching off of street lights between certain hours to save energy and support the Dark Skies movement. Cllr. Battye would take these proposals forward. She also reported that SLDC may provide support for Phase 2 of the Greening Campaign and she would report further on this.
- k) **B4RN:** Cllr. Rogerson reported that 218 properties were now connected and roll-out continued. DCMS has now re-opened the voucher scheme and Levens currently stands at within 10% of its target - the achievement of which will enable further connections to be made. He confirmed that over £3,000 has now been received by Levens Charity as a result of the call for donations.

85/21 Correspondence: A schedule of correspondence had been circulated. A request for verge trimming was noted along with Sheila Watson’s request to consider street lighting discussed earlier. It was agreed to contact the Ambleside Green Group for information on how it had addressed this idea.

86/21 Future Agenda Items: Items confirmed for the next Agenda were:

- i. Platinum Jubilee Tree Planting
- ii. Budget 2022-23

87/21 Date of the Next Meeting: The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Tuesday 11 January 2022 in the Methodist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....