

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 08 October 2019 in the Methodist Church Meeting Room, Levens at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), H. Burrow, J. Fitch, K. Holmes, D. Rogerson, R. Johnston, R. Mason, M. R. Curry (Clerk); County Cllr. J Bland; District Cllr. B. Rendell; Mr M. Welch of United Utilities (UU) and 1 member of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting with reference to Mr. S. Read who had suffered a suspected heart attack, but, as it was understood, is now leaving intensive care and being transferred to Lancaster. Cllrs joined the Chairman in wishing him well for a speedy recovery.

44/19 Apologies for Absence: Cllr. S. Bagot.

45/19 Declarations of interest: None tendered.

46/19 Minutes: Following amendment of two minor typographical amendments and the addition of wage analysis by month at Item 37/19(b)(i) it was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 10 September 2019 as a true record.

47/19 Water Supply Plan: The Chairman welcomed Mr Mike Welch (UU Water Customer Manager, Cumbria) attending in response to a Parish Council letter on local water issues. These included low pressure and prolonged use of 3-way traffic lights at Levens Bridge when tankers are filling from the system. In a positive discussion Mr Welch confirmed that several pressure loggers had been installed in the Levens system to provide pressure data and he agreed to consider inserting one between Beathwaite Crescent and Greengate. He will look into the traffic light issue and also water supply issues at Heaves Farm. The Chairman thanked Mr Welch for his attendance.

48/19 Public Participation: Mr Bavin referred to the 530 bus service and acknowledged that the matter was on the agenda.

49/19 Reports

- a) From Councillors attending meetings:** Cllr. Burrow reported that she and Cllr Atfield had attended a meeting with SLDC representatives on 7 October and had secured two additional waste bins for the Parish. It was **Agreed** that installation would be near popular dog-walking routes at the bottom of the No Through Road near the Hare and Hounds and at the bottom of Whitegate Hill near the old W.I. site. It was further **Agreed** that Cllrs. Burrow and Holmes would place dog-waste signs at several locations on the Lords Plain road.
- b) Police:** PCSO Jayne Park was not present but Cllr. Burrow reported that she had expressed enthusiastic support for a proposed drop-in event to be held on 22 November between 10.30a.m. and 12 noon in the Institute. This was to raise awareness of security measures that might be taken by residents to reduce the risk of local crime and Cllr. Burrow was awaiting confirmation from PCSO Park before publicising the event.
- c) District Councillor:** Cllr. Rendell reported that he and Cllr Holmes had been unable to attend Flood Expo 2019 on 11 September as a result of motorway closure. He confirmed the offer of up to £500 from his Members Budget and requested the Parish Council to consider an appropriate initiative to which it might be applied.

50/19 Finance

a) Receipts: The Clerk was unable to confirm receipts for the period 01 September-30 September as the bank statement had not yet been received.

b) Payments

Before authorisation of payments, the following points were noted and **Agreed**:

- i. The Chairman reminded Members that the Clerk's salary includes payment for time on administering the Community Project. This element is not part of core Parish Clerk salary, has no impact on the Precept and is reclaimed through Capacity Grant from SLDC. The Chairman requested that the split between Project and PC work be shown in future.
- ii. The commitment to Direct365 had been made between PC meetings as an emergency payment sanctioned by Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The two documents

however are inconsistent on the upper threshold for such payments and it was **Resolved** to amend this in both documents at £300. It was noted that an article on the defibrillator and a request for voluntary first responders would feature in the next edition of the Newsletter.

The following payments were **authorised**:

i. M R Curry - Salary & expenses September 2019:	£ 772.02
ii. HMRC - PAYE Months 4-6:	476.25
iii. Zurich Insurance - Annual Premium:	396.22
iv. Direct365: Defibrillator equipment - Emergency Payment:	263.38
v. It was also Agreed to pay one-quarter of the costs of repairs to the shared SID (the full costs of which had already been paid by Crook Parish Council) amounting to:	£ 33.75

c) Financial Report

- i. Bank Reconciliation 30 September 2019: In the absence of a bank statement a formal reconciliation could not be presented. An estimated reconciliation indicated a bank balance of £21,909.91 with funds at PC disposal after adjustments standing at £17,875.91.
- ii. Half-yearly Finance Review: In the absence of the September bank statement, it was **Agreed** to postpone the formal half-yearly finance review until the November meeting. The Clerk reported that income and expenditure appeared on target with the approved budget.
- iii. Audit: The Clerk reported that external auditors have raised a query on the 17/18 accounts. For the current year (18/19) we have elected for a limited assurance review as either one of income or expenditure exceeded £25,000. For the 17/18, we had claimed exemption from such a review on the basis that neither income nor expenditure exceeded £25,000. In fact, income was in excess when a £4,000 receipt (repayment of a 'loan' to Levens Charity) is taken into account. A full explanatory statement was prepared and discussed at internal audit, and the advice was that this was a *contra* receipt to the initial payment of the loan and therefore not a figure of substantive income. This advice now appears erroneous and External Audit is checking audit protocols as a result.
- iv. Request for Grant - The Great Northern Air Ambulance Service: It was **Resolved** to award £100 from the Parish grant budget to the Stockton-on-Tees service.

51/19 Levens Community Project: Cllr. Mason gave the following report:

- a) **Levens Community Project Committee:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 01 October had been circulated. The following key points were noted:
 - i. Mr Mark Willacy had attended his first meeting as a new Committee member;
 - ii. It was **Resolved** that the Terms of Reference be amended to enable recommendations to be approved by email if time was of the essence to secure Parish Council approval;
 - iii. The Parish Council noted the tender exercise for structural engineering design work and **Approved** the recommendation that R G Parkins be appointed.
 - iv. The updated version of the Business Plan (01 October 2019) was **Approved**;
 - v. Progress towards securing an acceptable version of the Joint Venture Agreement was noted.
 - vi. A meeting with SLDC to discuss issues relating to the Scheme Grant Funding Agreement was due to take place on 10 October.
- b) **Progress with properties:** Completion of the sale of Sizergh Fell Quarry is on track for the 08 November. Planning permissions for Cotes and Underhill are understood to be recommended but Tony Hills is liaising with the Planning Officer over concerns at Church Hill. Enabling works at the new Village Hall site will start again once Party Wall agreements are finalised which is expected soon.
- c) **Joint Venture Agreement:** As reported above
- d) **Financial Position:**
 - i. Funds at 23 September 2019 were £25,522.62p and the bank reconciliation was noted.
 - ii. The following payment was authorised:
 - Milne Moser (Solicitors) – Legal advice Sizergh and JVA £1,980.00
 - iii. External Funding: The Clerk reported that progress to secure Community Led Housing Scheme Grant, Infrastructure Grant and funding from Homes England continues. LIPs grant (new village hall site) and Capacity Grant have been secured
- e) **Project Working Group:** The Working Group continues to consider options for the new village hall kitchen.

52/19 Planning Applications:

a) New Planning Applications:

Application No.	Address	Proposal	Recommendation
SL/2019/0732	31 Greengate	Single storey ext & dormer. Pitch roof to garage	No objection
SL/2019/0735	Land adjacent to The Langdales	Erection of dwelling – revised scheme	Object: It was Resolved to object on the basis of adverse impact on a neighbouring property. It was noted that a previous application had been refused for the same reason and that there were no material changes ameliorating this in the revised application. Clerk to draft a letter for approval.
SL/2019/0753	Lowgate, Levens	Erection of 3-bay broadband cabinet	No objection
SL/2019/0465	50, Greengate	Single storey rear ext	No objection
TR/2019/0116	5 Whitbarrow Grove	Fell horse chestnut; plant monkey puzzle	No objection to the felling of the horse chestnut, but submit a recommendation that a native species be used to replace it as more relevant to the local environment and with greater biodiversity benefit.

b) Planning Applications determined since last meeting: None reported.

c) Planning Applications still to be determined: None reported.

53/19 B4RN

a) The LIPs Funding Agreement for a £15,000 grant was signed

b) The Wayleave Agreement for ducting across Levens Institute ground was **Approved** and signed by the Chairman and vice-Chairman representing the Trustees of Levens Institute.

54/19 Proposal to remove the 530 bus service: A number of complaints made about this proposal were noted and the matter was discussed in depth. Mr. Bavin reported that a survey of passenger numbers indicated that the service was running at near capacity with up to 10 users alighting directly in the village. A well-subscribed petition was also circulating. The alternatives of the 555 or the X6 services require a long walk up or down Levens Lane where there is neither pavement nor street lighting and are not considered appropriate. It was **Resolved** that the Parish Clerk should express these serious concerns both to Cumbria County Council and Stagecoach and request urgent feedback. It was also **Agreed** to request information on the current position regarding the S106 commitment by Story Homes to contribute around £49,000 towards support for local public transport services.

55/19 BT Consultation on the removal of payphones: It was **Resolved** to advise SLDC that in view of the relatively high use of the Levens facility it should remain as an operational payphone.

56/19 Levens Charity: The half-yearly report will be presented to the November meeting of the Parish Council. Under this item Cllr Bland confirmed that a further grant payment to Levens Playing Fields Association should be made from his ring-fenced fund which was **Authorised** as follows:

- Levens Playing Fields Association from Cllr Bland funds £ 1,000.00

57/19 Open Items Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda:

a) **Water Supply Plan** – previously considered (47/19 above)

b) **Highways Defect Report:** Cllr. Fitch had circulated his report and confirmed that there were no matters for particular consideration.

c) **Levens Traffic Management:**

- Levens Traffic Management Group:** Cllr Burrow reported that there was still no response from the Police on the progress of this initiative. It was **Agreed** to write to the CRASH Team Leader to elicit some response.
- Road markings (Greengate):** The Clerk had circulated a plan from County Highways for proposed road markings on Greengate. All but one of the proposals were agreed. It was **Resolved** that the Clerk should respond positively, but pointing out the amendment required.
- Story Homes:** It was noted that the Clerk had requested updated information on the obligations on Story Homes in the S106 Agreement which had been passed to Cumbria County Council for a response.

- iv. **Working Together:** Under this County Council initiative, Cllr Bland reported on proposals to support the employment of lengthsman for County Council Division areas. An estimated cost for Levens was likely to be in the region of £4,000 with 50% supported by the County Council. It was noted that this was to be discussed at the CALC South Lakeland District Association meeting on 28 November and it was agreed to await the outcome of this discussion.
- d) **October Newsletter:** A number of contributions were confirmed. The Clerk will liaise with the printers as to the format of a security advice guidance sheet to be inserted in this edition.
- e) **Christmas Decorations:** Cllrs. Rogerson, Burrow and Johnson confirmed that plans for the event and associated decorations are on track.
- f) **Maintenance Plan:** Local strimming and weed clearance continues via Andy Banks.
- g) **Woodland Management:** Andy Banks has provided a price for work at the Crossings. The Clerk will put this to neighbours to gain agreement for the work to be commissioned. The matter of tree health and safety inspections is to be pursued with Andy. Cllr Bland undertook to check responsibility for roadside sapling growth off the A590 below the Hare and Hounds.
- h) **Website Repair Costs:** It was **Agreed** to advise the Webteam that urgent repairs / maintenance work costing no more than £100 including VAT could be commissioned direct from Treble3, with the Clerk to be advised as soon as possible thereafter. Costs greater than this will require prior approval.
- i) **Other Matters:** It was noted that a structural engineer's report on the Old Carpet Shop had been received and would be forwarded on to the Planning Officer for consideration. The noticeboard at Cotes is due for delivery very shortly.
- j) **Parish Hedge, Hutton Lane:** Specialist advice to the Parish Council indicates that the leylandii hedge is in poor health and will probably not stand a hard cut back. It was proposed that it should be cut and removed and that the Parish Council will plant a thorn hedge on its land in its place. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk will draft a letter for approval by Councillors advising Mr Stainton of the decision and reasons for it.

58/19 Correspondence

The Schedule of Correspondence circulated by the Clerk was noted. Other than items dealt with in the meeting, there was no additional comment.

59/19 Future Agenda Items: To include:

- Quarter 2 financial review;
- Half-year Charity Report
- SLDC Member Budget – application of funds.

60/19 Date of the Next Meeting:

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is on Tuesday 12 November, 2019.

The meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....