

Levens Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 18 May 2021 at the Institute, Levens at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. R. Atfield (Chairman), S. Bagot, J. Battye, H. Burrow, K. Holmes (and as District Cllr.), D. Rogerson, R. Mason, M. Willacy, M. R. Curry (Clerk), County Cllr. J Bland. No members of the public were present.

Councillor Atfield welcomed all present to the first face-to-face meeting of the Parish Council since Coronavirus restrictions had eased. He confirmed that it was a legal requirement to hold the Annual Parish Council Meeting within 21 days of an election and that Coronavirus Regulations no longer enabled the Parish Council to hold formal meetings remotely (by Zoom). Coronavirus risk assessments had been undertaken and the meeting was being held with social distancing and other measures in place.

01/21 Result of Local Elections on 06 May 2021: The Clerk confirmed that Councillors present had been validly nominated and that there being no more nominations than places available they had been elected without contest. Outcome Notices had been posted on the noticeboard and webpage.

02/21 Election of Chairman for the Council Year 2021/22: Councillor Roger Atfield who, having expressed a willingness to stand and there being no other nominations, was proposed as Chairman by Cllr. Bagot and seconded by Cllr. Burrow. He was elected unanimously and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

03/21 Election of Vice-Chairman for the Council Year 2021/22: Councillor David Rogerson who, having expressed a willingness to stand and there being no other nominations, was proposed as Vice-Chairman by Cllr. Atfield and seconded by Cllr. Holmes. He was elected unanimously and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

04/21 Apologies for Absence: Cllr. B Rendell

05/21 Declarations of Acceptance of Office: Declarations were signed by the remaining Councillors and returned to the Clerk to be retained on the record.

06/21 Declarations of interest: None

07/21 Minutes: It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held remotely on 13 April 2021 as a true record.

08/21 Appointment of Representatives

It was **Resolved** that the following representatives be appointed:

- a) **Highwayman:** Cllr. M. Willacy.
- b) **Village Institute:** Cllr. S. Bagot
- c) **Levens Playing Fields:** Cllr. J. Battye
- d) **Woodlands Officer:** Cllr. K. Holmes
- e) **Levens Charity Appointed Trustees:** Cllrs. S. Bagot, H. Burrow, R. Mason
- f) **Footpath Officer:** Cllr. J. Battye
- g) **Land Registry:** Cllr. R. Mason
- h) **CALC:** Cllrs. R. Atfield, D. Rogerson
- i) **Local Area Partnership:** Cllr. R. Atfield (if LAP remains active)
- 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:** Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
- n) **Levens Traffic Management Working Group:** Cllrs H. Burrow, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy
- o) **B4RN:** Cllrs K. Holmes, D. Rogerson
- p) **Greening Campaign Coordinator:** Cllr. J. Battye

09/21 Public Participation: No matters were raised under this item.

10/21 Reports:

a) Reports from Councillors attending meetings:

- i. Cllr. Battye reported that the Playing Fields AGM would be held by Zoom on 19 May when older children of the village would give a presentation on their aspirations for a bike-riding facility. Given the Parish Council's interest in this matter, she hoped some Councillors would log-in to hear the presentation
- ii. Cllr. Rogerson reported on continued good progress with linking subscribers to the B4RN network. The number of properties signed up is now 331 or 51% of the village with 42 connections currently live and a significant increase in connections to follow soon. Responding to questions he undertook to check on when detailed Terms and Conditions will be available and when the route is likely to get to Heaves.

b) **Police:** No new update had been received since the March meeting.

c) **District Councillor:** Cllr. Holmes reported that he had had a response from Davis Sykes at SLDC on three outstanding planning issues:

- i) Cotes plots: SLDC had received a telephone enquiry from Mr Thacker and had had a positive discussion with him, but were now awaiting a formal pre-planning enquiry.
- ii) Carpet Shop: There is no record of any discussion on this since an email exchange with Cllr. Burrow in March and there is no record of a request for pre-planning advice having been received.
- iii) No. 5, The Green: Mr Sykes is awaiting feedback from officers on the legal situation regarding this property.

Cllr. Holmes also reported that SLDC's AGM would be held on 19 May with 27 Councillors selected for attendance.

d) **County Councillor:** Cllr. Bland reported on an item in the Queen's Speech that indicated amendments to the 1991 Drainage Act signalling the possibility of moving forward with plans for an Internal Drainage Board for the Lyth Valley. He confirmed that he will speak to Helen Karaaslan to arrange a meeting for further discussion on village traffic management.

11/21 Finance

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

19/04/21: Levens Charity - Reimbursement of Clerk's salary 2020-21:	500.00
30/04/21: SLDC – Precept & Co. Tax Grant	13,996.02
The Clerk reported on a number of other payments received in relation to land rentals, parking tenancies and allotment rents amounting in total to:	187.50

b) **Payments:** The following payments were **Approved:**

- i. M R Curry – Salary: April 2021: (PC&Allwces: £445.80; Project £227.31 Charity £30.91; Mileage £6.50;) 710.52
- ii. Jan Mason – accountancy services, Annual Audit (see (d) below): 72.00

c) **Bank Reconciliation and report on Ring-Fenced Funds:** The reconciled bank balance of £32,618.71 at 30/04/21 was noted as were unrepresented cheques totalling £3,719.07, leaving a net balance of £27,873.38. Councillors also noted that after deduction of ring-fenced funds held for others (Cumbria CC - £6,957.77 & B4RN - £1,800.00) the underlying balance available to the Parish Council is £20,141.37.

d) **Annual Audit:** The Clerk reported that as in the previous year, the annual audit is now required to be on an income and expenditure basis, and is a complex task as a result. He had requested support on this from Jan Mason, a financial professional who had offered services without a commitment for payment. On the Clerk's recommendation, Councillors agreed to pay her £72.00 in recognition of this service and that she should submit an invoice accordingly.

e) **Banking Arrangements:** The Clerk reported that the temporary suspension of banking services via HSBC had now been resolved with the help of the local branch. A new Safeguarding Review has been completed and submitted. A follow-up note to the local branch highlighting several issues has been referred to HSBC complaints department and a response is awaited. It was **Agreed** that investigations into securing a financial management package such as Xero should be explored.

12/21 Governance Matters

- a) **Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 April 2021:** The draft Minutes were **Approved**.
- b) **Update and Review of Standing Orders:** The Revised Standing Orders having been circulated, were **Approved**.
- c) **Financial Regulations:** The Financial Regulations, having been circulated, were **Approved**.
- d) **Asset Register:** The Asset Register, having been circulated was **Approved** (noting the deletion of Lamp No. 224 not owned by the Parish Council).
- e) **Risk Register:** The Risk Register having been circulated was **Approved**.
- f) **General Power of Competence:** It was **Agreed** that arrangements should be put in hand to enable the Council to exercise the General Power of Competence should it wish to do so in the future.

13/21 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Group:** Cllr Mason reported that progress with the sale of Plot 1 at Church Hill continues; there has been some interest in Plot 2 and Plot 3 is now back under the control of the Parish Council, the tenancy having been relinquished. At Underhill, site clearance is imminent and completion of the S185 Agreement with UU awaits remittance of fees, which are in turn awaiting approval of a Capacity Grant bid. Discussions continue with a VAT consultant to secure Zero Rate VAT on the build of the hall. The Clerk had reported that the bank reconciliation stood at £728,509.60 with a VAT refund and Capacity Grant due. He confirmed that after an issue with HSBC where payments had been suspended on the basis of an alleged failure to complete a Safeguarding Review, banking services were back in place.
- b) **To approve payments:** Following recommendation from the Project Advisory Group, invoices **Approved** for payment were:
 - i) Milne Moser: Completion of the S185 Agreement including UU fees: £4,450.55

14/21 Planning Applications: The Schedule of Planning Applications updated to the date of the meeting (annexed to these Minutes) was reviewed. Updates noted were:

PC Ref	Application No.	Location	Proposal	PC View	Decision
1	SL/2020/0863	19, The Green, Levens	Porch, side and rear extension	Objection submitted	Approved 16/04/21
15	SL/2021/0184	Whinthwaite Hse	Discharge of Conditions	No Objection	Approved 15/04/21
16	7/2021/5225	Lord's Plain Farm	Erection of Agricultural Storage Building	No Objection	Approved 05/05/21
19	Sizergh Fell Quarry		Waiver of Condition 11	No Objection	Awaited
20	SL/2021/0459	High Barns, Levens	Covered manure store. Query – in Levens Parish?	No Objection	
12	SL/2021/0053	Pinfold, Levens	Replace existing dwelling with new 2-storey dwelling	Objection submitted	Awaited

15/21 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Greening Campaign:** Cllr. Battye confirmed sign-up to Phase 1. Posters had been displayed to publicise the initiative and she was looking to set-up a Steering Group. There have been some expressions of interest locally and it was intended to have a public meeting to launch the initiative in due course.
- b) **Traffic Management:** Cllr. Willacy will collect the SIDs posts from Cllr Holmes and he and Cllr Rogerson will put them up. It was agreed that the Clerk will check permissions with Cumbria County Council (via Helen Karaasian) beforehand, based on photos to be supplied by Cllr Rogerson.
- c) **Website Review:** Following previous consideration of the Parish webpages when it was agreed that improvements were required, the Chairman reported that a meeting had been held with Tom Hecht (a local web designer) attended by himself, Cllrs Burrow and Rogerson and the Clerk. It had been very positive with Mr Hecht volunteering clear and professional guidance on

what could be done to improve the pages. Advice from NALC, examples of other Parish websites and the need for compliance had all been taken into account and Mr Hecht had agreed to work up more detailed proposals and costs for consideration.

d) Charity Update: The Clerk reported that St John's Church has withdrawn its application which will be re-submitted when their project develops towards more concrete requirements. The Methodist Church has submitted additional detail as requested. This application and a Report to be prepared by the Clerk on the 2020-21 financial year will be considered by the Appointed Trustees via a Zoom meeting with recommendations to be put to the Parish Council as sole Trustee.

16/21 Correspondence: A schedule of correspondence received had been circulated. The Carbon Literacy Drop-in events offered by SLDC were noted as was the notification of the large-scale Lake District Challenge Event to pass through the village over the weekend of 12-13 June. A letter from Levens School requesting guidance as to where they might gain support for a growing issue with school capacity had been received just prior to the meeting. Cllr Bland said that he had supported Crosthwaite School with a similar issue and it was agreed to refer Levens School to him. Cllr. Rogerson mentioned that a grant of up to £5,000 was available from a wholesaler via the Village Shop. It was **Agreed** that approaches should be made to secure funding for further improvements to the Brigsteer Road Picnic Area.

17/21 Future Agenda Items: Items confirmed for the next Agenda were:

- i. External Audit and approval of the 2020-21 AGAR
- ii. Tree planting for the Queen's Jubilee
- iii. Consideration of a possible pump track for the village

117/20 Date of the Next Meeting: The informal June Meeting (Village Tour) is to be held on 15 June, but it is likely that a short formal meeting will be required beforehand to approve the Annual Governance and Accounting Reports (AGAR). The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council is scheduled for Tuesday 20 July to be held in the Institute.

The meeting closed at 9.18 p.m.

Signed (Chairman) Date:.....