

**Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 19 May 2025 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllrs D Sim (in the Chair), P Argyle, N Bettinson, G Gilmour, C Hale, A Kaldos.
A Linton, D Millington, E Taylor & the Clerk

In attendance: Mr K Dowber, candidate for co-option

Also present: Ms Gina Goulding, Beach Road Bakehouse

82/25 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for the office of Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2025/26.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Sim be elected as Chairman (proposed by A Kaldos, seconded by N Bettinson) and that Cllr Taylor be elected as Vice Chairman (proposed by G Gilmour, seconded by N Bettinson).

Cllrs Sim & Taylor then signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

83/25 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that Jon Mellor had resigned from the Parish Council after serving as a councillor for 10 years. He had made a considerable contribution to the council over that period and had agreed to continue as co-ordinator of the Speedwatch project until the autumn.

84/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Benedicic and Graham. Cllr Minshaw had also sent his apologies as he was unable to attend because of work commitments.

85/25 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was agreed that interests in Village Hall matters (agenda item 12) would be declared when that item was discussed.

86/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no matters raised.

87/25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 14 APRIL 2025

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 14 April be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

88/25 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR

An expression of interest had been received from Keith Dowber who had previous experience of serving as a Parish Councillor with another local council and who had looked after the defibrillators in the village on a voluntary basis for some years.

It was RESOLVED that Keith Dowber be co-opted to fill one of the seats vacant since the last election. Mr Dowber then signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

89/25 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

(a)Ward Report

Cllr Minshaw had provided a written report for the meeting.

- He had reported the street lights discussed at the last meeting and believed that they had been repaired. The broken lamp post opposite the Abbey Rd junction was proving more of a challenge and Cllr Minshaw was continuing to follow this up. Councillors pointed out that the light close to the lane to the Village School, which was removed after being damaged by a vehicle, had not been replaced and this left that section of Main Street very dark.

- The next meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel would be on 17th June at the Beacon Portal, Whitehaven at 6pm with public participation at 5.30pm. The speaker would be a representative from Fibrus who would talk about the roll out of fibre broadband.
- Cllr Minshaw would be meeting Cumberland's Assistant Director, Josh MacAlister MP and senior Cumberland managers to look at what was required at the beach front for safe access. Cllr Taylor would attend on behalf of the Parish Council. Councillors commented that the recently installed sign was unsightly and was too close to the Wainwright wall.
- Cllr Minshaw had contacted Cumberland's waste department after correspondence from the Parish Council about rubbish being spread around by sea gulls attacking bin bags left out for collection. Bird proof bags were in the process of being reordered by Cumberland Council and it was hoped these would be of an improved design. A full review of collection services would take place in September and the issues of access, collection points and how to deal with terraced properties as well as bird proofing would be considered then.
Councillors suggested that bird proof bags could be made available from the Village Hall to help residents unable to get to the Market Hall in Whitehaven.
- The local heritage list was being reviewed. Suggestions could be put forward for listing of buildings and features of special architectural, cultural or historic merit that are not currently classed as listed buildings. Local Listing does not protect buildings from demolition and does not change which works require permission, but could be a material planning consideration for new development in some circumstances. Abbots Court had been included on the draft list for inclusion.

Councillors raised several matters which Cllr Minshaw would be asked to follow up:

- the road markings around the junction of Outrigg and Main Street were very worn and cars were parking on the yellow lines, forcing large vehicles to mount the pavement. Cllr Minshaw would be asked to request urgent repainting of the markings.
- further correspondence had been received about safety at the Abbey Vale junction. It was agreed to ask Cllr Minshaw to refer this to the Highways Manager.
- the pavement in front of "Bega Flats" near the Post Office had not been properly reinstated after recent work by Electricity North West, but which also included removal of a gas pipe. A manhole cover was partially protruding above the pavement level.

(b)Consultation -Eat Street Cumbria Event

Cumberland Council was formally consulting on an application to hold an event at the beach area on the weekend of 12/13 July. The event would comprise a number of food, drink and craft vendors, a public bar area, a stage for musicians and a bouncy castle area for children.

The Chairman invited Ms Goulding, one of the organisers, to provide information about the plans. As she had explained at the last PC meeting, proceeds from the event would be donated to community projects including the costs of providing the public toilets. A professional events manager would be used and the bar would be closed by mid evening to minimise noise and inconvenience to nearby residents. Ms Goulding explained that the charges quoted by Cumberland Council for use of the land were high.

It was RESOLVED to respond to Cumberland Council supporting the proposed event and asking that reduced charges be considered as the event would directly benefit the local community.

90/25 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a)Internal Audit

It was noted that the internal auditor had completed the audit for 2024/25 with no recommendations or issues raised. The Finance & Risk Advisory Group were happy with the work done by the auditor and recommended that she be invited to continue as Internal Auditor next year.

It was RESOLVED that Julie Hartley be appointed as Internal Auditor for 2025/26.

(b)Asset Register

The asset register at 31 March 2025 was received and noted.

(c)Annual Governance Statement

The assurances required in the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 were considered and it was agreed that affirmative answers could be given in all cases.

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman.

(d)Annual Accounting Statement

The Annual Accounting Statement for 2024/25 had been circulated with the agenda. The period for public inspection of accounts would begin on 3 June and the required notice would be published on the website and main noticeboard.

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Accounting Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman.

(e)Insurance

Last year it had been agreed to enter a 3 year long term agreement with Clear Councils. The premium for 2025/26 (year 2) would be £1489.22. It was agreed not to include the small wooden shed in the cover for property damage as the additional cost would be uneconomic.

It was RESOLVED to renew the insurance for 2025/26 at a cost of £1489.22.

(f)Bank Mandate

It was RESOLVED that Cllrs Sim, Argyle, Kaldos & the Clerk be the authorised signatories for 2025/26.

(g)Finance Report

A summary of the accounts at 30 April was received together with a breakdown of funds carried over from 2024/25. The precept for 2025/26 had been received before the end of April. The notes of the FRAG meeting on 12 May were also received and noted.

Cumberland Council had confirmed that the funds remaining in the West Copeland Partnership account could be transferred to Egremont Town Council to be used as a contribution to the lengthsman scheme.

(h) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity April £35.49 + £1.77 VAT Total £37.26
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting April £582.05 + £116.41 VAT Total £698.46
- Unipar Services LLP -speed gun repair £122.50 + £24.50 VAT Total £147.00
- Village Hall Committee – donation to VE Day event Total £50.00
- St Bees PCC -hire of New College Hall Total £23.00
- I McAndrew – reimbursement website costs Total £147.52
- J Hartley – internal audit fee Total £200.00
- Works 4 You Ltd – allotment work £80.00 + £ 16.00 VAT Total £96.00
- Village Hall Management Committee –monthly room hire Total £70.00
- J Donaldson -salary May Total £778.93
- J Donaldson – reimbursement of printer ink charges £9.99 + £2.00 VAT, stamps £6.96 Total £18.95

Payments/direct debits since the last meeting were noted:

- D Robinson – reimb for VIB plants £234.83 + £46.96 VAT Total £281.79 (chq 2949)
- Water Plus – water/wastewater £220.43 (direct debit 18/05/25)
- Answer 4 U – answering service £15.99 + £3.20 VAT Total £19.19 (direct debit 19/05/25)
- Water Plus -allotment water Total £19.07 (direct debit 29/05)
- S Kelly – toilet service charges £240.00 (SO payments 18/04, 25/04, 02/05, 09/05, 16/05)

91/25 APPOINTMENTS OF COMMITTEES & ADVISORY GROUPS & REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

It was RESOLVED that the membership of committees and advisory groups for the coming year would be as follows:

Play Area Working Group	All volunteer play area inspectors
Traffic Calming Committee	D Millington, D Sim & community reps
Village in Bloom	G Gilmour & community members
Planning Advisory Group	J Benedicic, G Gilmour, N Graham & K Dowber
Finance & Risk Advisory Group	D Sim, C Hale, E Taylor, A Kaldos (K Dowber independent reviewer of bank recs)
Valley Link Cycle Track Project	D Sim, E Taylor + additional representatives to be appointed
Station Car park Project Group	E Taylor, D Sim, J Benedicic
Data Protection Working Group	G Gilmour & C Hale
Outrigg Play Area Renovation Group	A Kaldos, G Gilmour, A Linton, D Sim

It was further RESOLVED that the following representatives be appointed to outside bodies:

Adams Recreation Ground Committee	A Linton
Shepherds & Whitehead Charity	N Bettinson, B Hewetson
Friends of the Priory	N Bettinson
Village Hall Committee	J Benedicic, C Hale
West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group	D Sim (deputies E Taylor & G Gilmour)
Friends of Priory Paddock	N Bettinson

92/25 LEAD RESPONSIBILITIES It was RESOLVED that lead responsibilities for 2025/26 would be as follows:

Nuclear Issues	G Gilmour & E Taylor
Commons	D Sim
Footpaths	C Hale
Web-site	D Sim
Priory Paddock	N Bettinson
Speedwatch co-ordinator	J Mellor – New co-ordinator required from autumn 2025
Play area inspection rota co-ordinator	S Burgess
Station car park extension/transport hub	E Taylor
Tree Planting	N Bettinson

93/25 VILLAGE HALL

Cllrs Sim & Bettinson declared non-pecuniary interests as Trustees of the Pagan Trust. Cllrs Taylor & Hale declared non-pecuniary interests as members of the Village Hall Management Committee. Cllr Argyle declared an interest as a close family member was a member of the Freemasons, one of the parties involved in the matter of the sub lease. Cllr Argyle withdrew during discussion of this item. Cllrs Sim, Bettinson, Taylor and Hale took no part in the discussion and decision on the request for financial support from the Parish Council.

It was now almost certain that the proposed sub lease to the Freemasons would not go ahead and the Freemasons would be vacating the property. However, there were still issues to be resolved at the end of the current lease.

The Pagan Trust, owners of the building, had very limited funds, and wanted to take legal advice on the outstanding issues. Also, it was likely that the VHMC would also incur legal costs. Jointly, both were requesting help from the Parish Council in meeting the cost of legal advice.

Councillors with no conflict of interest considered the issue and believed that it was important that the legal position was properly established, as the Village Hall was a valuable community asset. Councillors asked that the Village Hall Management Committee & Pagan Trust provide a forecast of any further funding which was likely to be needed over the coming year.

It was RESOLVED to provide funding up to a maximum of £2500 to enable the Pagan Trust and the VHMC to seek legal advice.

Cllr Hale reported for information that the Village Hall Management Committee had been successful in raising £30k in grant funding to pay for roof repairs to the toilets. Three new members had joined the committee. The event to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day had been very well attended and those attending had contributed towards the food. The Committee was requesting an additional contribution of £50 to cover the costs. Councillors were content to support the request on this occasion but suggested that the Village Hall Committee should set budgets for events in future.

It was RESOLVED to contribute £50 to the costs of the VE Day celebration.

94/25 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The report from Cllr Linton was received and noted.

95/25 PLANNING

(a) Applications received for comment

The Planning Advisory Group reported on one new application received for comment:-

Ref 4/25/2158/TPO Pruning of four sycamore trees within the conservation area – 3 Seacroft Drive

It was noted that no expert report had been submitted with the application.

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections in principle to the proposed work provided that Cumberland Council's expert had no objections.

It was noted that a response had been sent under delegated authority to meet the consultation deadline on the following application:

Ref 4/25/2143/TPO Cutting back sycamore trees at Seacroft House

It had been noted that no specialist report was provided and it had been suggested that specialist advice would be appropriate to agree the scope of work and how it could best be carried out, as these were mature trees with properties close by.

(b) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/24/2071/OR1 Reserved matters relating to appearance, layout & scale for detached dwelling & detached garage – Plot 5 Nethertown Rd

96/25 PROJECT REPORTS

(a) Beach & Play Area

Cllr Linton explained that further designs for a mural had been received from pupils at St Bees School but these did not meet the brief. A possible design had been created by a local young woman, Chloe Pennington which had been circulated to councillors. It was agreed that this was a more suitable design and that further discussions should take place with the artist.

The Chairman reported that a child had been injured in a fall from the galleon at the play area. The accident had apparently happened on 8 May but it had not been reported to the Parish Council until a report was posted on Facebook two days later. Cllr Sim had carried out an inspection the following morning and carried out a temporary repair and Cumberland Council staff had been asked to inspect the area as soon as possible. Cumberland Council had carried out an inspection and fitted some additional matting as a precautionary measure. It was suggested that it would be useful to have some matting and additional materials in stock.

It was RESOLVED to purchase additional materials at a cost of approximately £400.

It was noted that the spinner in the toddler area had been removed after the bearings failed. This seemed to be a recurrent problem and there were often delays in obtaining spare parts. It was proposed that an alternative piece of equipment be purchased. It was also noted that the lighthouse in the toddler area was in need of repainting and a quote had been obtained for materials required (£110 excl VAT). As much of the play equipment was over 10 years old and was heavily used, repairs were required more frequently. Cllr Kaldos agreed to lead work on drawing up a 5 year plan for play area maintenance. It was RESOLVED to write off the spinner, remove the base and source an alternative item of equipment and also to authorise expenditure on repairs to the lighthouse.

(b) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

Cumberland Council had indicated that the draft lease would be sent to the Parish Council very shortly. Until the lease was signed, some arrangement would need to be made to cut the grass in the play area. The Clerk would discuss this with Cumberland Council staff.

(d) Station Car Park/Transport Hub

Advice had been sought from the Parish Council's solicitor on the Heads of Terms received from Cumberland Council. The document had now been signed by the Chairman & Vice Chairman as agreed at the last meeting. There was no further progress on discussions with Network Rail.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Sustrans was preparing an estimate of costs to revise the original scheme. LLWR had offered assistance with discussions with landowners.

(f) Priory Paddock

Cllr Bettinson reported that he had met a contractor on site to look at the gate. The contractor believed that it would be possible to replace the fittings and retain the existing gate and stoop. A quotation was awaited.

The recent pond dipping event had gone well with a number of families attending.

(g) Interpretation Boards

The new interpretation board was now in place at Sea Mill and a second board would be designed to be mounted on the existing posts explaining ownership of the land and restrictions on overnight camping. New signs were in place at the toilets and at Fairladies car park. It was suggested that a 'Public Toilets' sign mounted in a prominent position on the building would be useful, together with a finger post indicating location of toilets, access to the beach etc.

97/25 FOOTPATHS

The report from Cllr Hale was received and noted.

98/25 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman gave a brief report on the recent meeting of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group which had been attended by representatives of a residents' group from Fukushima in Japan.

99/25 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. Further information had been received on the number of children attending A&E with jelly fish stings. In the summer months this was estimated at approx 10 per week. It was reported that the Beach Bakehouse now had kits available to treat jelly fish stings.

100/25 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Correspondence had been received from CALC on the implementation of Martyn's Law which will place a duty on the owners of venues to consider the risks of terrorism attacks and ensure that appropriate measures are in place. Noted

- (b) Correspondence had been received from a student at Keswick School seeking information on the effects of physical measures such as groynes. A reply was sent giving contact details for an officer at Cumberland Council who might be able to provide technical information.
- (c) Details had been received of the CALC AGM to take place on Sat 4 October at the Braithwaite Institute. Noted.
- (d) A request had been received for a memorial to be sited at St Bees Head. A reply was sent explaining that the land was not owned by the Parish Council but suggesting that a bench could be donated and sited elsewhere in the village.
- (e) An invitation had been received for members of the Parish Council to attend St Bees School Speech Day on 6 June. Noted.
- (f) Notice had been received of an emergency exercise at Sellafield site on 14 May. Noted
- (g) The first of the planned online meetings between Parish Councils and the Neighbourhood Policing Team would take place on Monday 21 July at 6pm. Noted
- (h) An email had been received about repairs required to the lighthouse at the beach play area. A reply had been sent by the Clerk explaining that discussions had already taken place with Cumberland Council about removing rust & repainting the lighthouse.
- (i) A letter had been received from the organisers of Egremont Farmers Market about the possibility of organising a bus service to the market from St Bees and seeking information on the likely demand. It was agreed to publicise this in the parish magazine.
- (j) Correspondence had been received from a local resident about traffic speeds on the B5345 near Abbey Vale where several cats had been killed in recent months. Noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

NALC Chief Executive's Bulletins
 Rural Services Network Newsletter
 Cumberland Council Newsletters
 Cumbria Police newsletter April– Whitehaven & District
 Cumbria Police newsletter April– Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
 Open Spaces Society update April
 CALC News March/April
 Cumbria LNRS May Newsletter
 Cumberland Council Environment & Climate Newsletter May

101/25 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/FUTURE AGENDA

It was reported that Kate Davis would be leaving as Headteacher of the Village School at the end of the summer term. It was agreed to send a letter of thanks to Mrs Davis and to invite the new Headteacher and the new Chief Executive of the Changing Lives Education Trust to meet the Parish Council. This would be an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest including access to the school field.

102/25 MEETING CALENDAR

The calendar of meetings for the coming year was received and noted.

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 16 June 2025 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....