

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 14 April 2025 at 6.30pm in New College Hall**

PRESENT: Cllrs E Taylor (in the Chair), P Argyle, J Benedicic, N Bettinson, N Graham, C Hale, A Kaldos, A Linton, D Millington & the Clerk

In attendance: Cllr G Minshaw, Ward Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: Ms Gina Goulding, Beach Road Bakehouse

61/25 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Gina Goulding, owner of the Beach Road Bakehouse, who would be explaining more about plans for an event at the beach in July.

62/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Gilmour, Mellor and Sim.

63/25 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Taylor & Hale declared an interest in agenda item 12 as members of the Village Hall Committee. Cllrs Benedicic & Millington declared an interest in discussion of drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane as owners of properties affected.

64/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was agreed that discussion of the proposed beach event would be taken under item 15a Community Events.

65/25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 17 MARCH 2025

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 17 March be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66/25 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw reported on a number of ongoing matters:.

- Highways had now provided a report on the issues discussed at the site meeting with Abbey Vale residents some months ago. The verge had been cut back and would be included in the programme for regular cutting and the owner of the private property had also cut back his hedge to the property boundary. The request for a 20mph would be considered as part of a wider speed limit review in 2026/7. The road markings between the entrance to Abbey Vale and the start of the national speed limit had now been repainted and the markings towards Whitehaven would be picked up later in summer 2025. More substantial traffic calming measures were not being considered as this would require a new Traffic Regulation Order with public consultation. The possibility of a speed indication device was being explored with the Cumbria Road Safety Partnership.
- A representative from Fibrus would be attending the next meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel meeting on 17 June at the Beacon Portal. Whilst this would be part of the business meeting at which the public were not allowed to speak, it was hoped to arrange for questions to be put to Fibrus.
- There had been no response from officers to the comments and questions raised by the Parish Council in respect of the consultant's report on coastal erosion. Cllr Minshaw had been told that replacement of the groynes at Allonby was considered necessary to protect properties but this was not the case in St Bees. Councillors noted that the groynes and promenade had been constructed as part of the same scheme and the Parish Council did not accept the view that the groynes were not needed. It was agreed to take up the matter with Mark Fryer.
- Cllr Minshaw was continuing to press for improved pedestrian access to the beach. It was suggested that funding might be available for disabled access from the tourism budget.

- Highways officers had confirmed that the deep cavities in the garden of a property on Sea Mill Lane would be filled when work took place to line the drain.

It was reported that there had been issues with litter at the main beach during the warmer weather. Cumberland Council had responded to requests to put back the extra bins on the promenade which had improved the situation and would liaise with the Clerk about arrangements for next year.

It was also noted that two street lights were still out on Main Street, making the area very dark. Both had been reported to Cumberland Council. Cllr Minshaw was following up the timescale for replacing the light at the bottom of the school lane which had been damaged by a vehicle. There was also no progress with repairing the street light at Abbey Corner which had been out of action for several months.

67/25 DEVOLUTION

Cllrs Graham & Benedicic reported on the briefing session with the Leaders of both Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Councils. Both councils were supportive of the proposal to create a joint mayoral authority and it was clear that the government intended to go ahead with the plan. The election of a Mayor would take place in May 2026. The Leader had stated that there was no proposal to transfer responsibilities to town & parish councils. The consultation documents suggested that a new joint authority could have a staff of 70-80 but the Leader of Cumberland Council suggested that the figure would be much lower. A precept might be needed to help finance the new authority. The basis of funding from central government was yet to be decided but both Leaders agreed that a per capita allocation would not be appropriate for a large rural county such as Cumbria which had a low resident population but which saw a vast increase from visitors over the summer months.

As part of the discussion Mark Fryer had agreed to meet St Bees Parish Council and had accepted an invitation to attend the June meeting.

68/25 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY – CONSULTATION

Cumberland Council was consulting on priorities to be included in its draft Housing Strategy. It was agreed that councillors would forward comments to the Clerk who would submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council to meet the deadline of 29 April.

69/25 COLLABORATION BETWEEN CUMBERLAND COUNCIL & PARISH COUNCILS

CALC had circulated a document 'Building Safe and Strong Communities' setting out the principles of collaboration between Cumberland Council, CALC and parish/town councils. An on-line session was planned in the next few weeks to discuss the document.

70/25 HYPERFAST GB PROJECT

Following the last meeting a representative of Fibrus had been invited to the meeting to explain the delay in providing a service to Rottington. No-one was available to attend but a written report had been provided. It was noted that landowner discussions were still taking place but work to install the cabling would begin as soon as these discussions were completed.

71/25 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Monthly Financial Report

- A summary of the accounts at 31 March was received and noted. Income in the year totalled £66992.25 with expenditure lower than expected at £54585.50, mainly due to delays with the car park project. The precept for 2025/26 was expected to be paid before the end of April. It was RESOLVED to authorise the transfer of £58000 to the Business Reserve account once the precept was received.
- It was noted that the Chairman had authorised additional expenditure of £500 to complete the clearing of the former boat park, as the work involved was much greater than initially foreseen.
- A quotation had been received for a new hand dryer for the beach toilets and for some other minor electrical work. As the price was higher than anticipated, the electrician had been asked to disconnect the hand dryer rather than replace it and to go ahead with the other work.
- Cumberland Council had provided a quotation for play area inspections for 2025/26. It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation.

- A second quotation had been received for repair of the potholes at Station car park but this was higher than the first quotation received. The first quotation had been accepted in line with the decision at the last meeting.
- The speed gun had been returned to Unipar for examination as it was found not to be working on its first use since recalibration.

(b) Lengthsman Scheme

The Clerk reported on a meeting with Egremont Town Council representatives and Works 4 You to discuss a continuation of the Lengthsman Scheme for 2025/26. The costs of the scheme would be 8% higher due to the increased costs of employer's NI contribution and the increase in the National Minimum Wage/National Living Wage. Last year the cost to the parish/town councils had been reduced due to funds in hand from a previous year. At this stage it was unclear whether this would be possible this year but the maximum contribution required from St Bees PC would be £2671.38. Cllr Minshaw agreed to make enquiries at Cumberland Council about the possible reallocation of the funds remaining in the West Copeland Partnership account to support the Lengthsman Scheme.

It was RESOLVED to continue to take part in the Lengthsman Scheme for the coming year at a maximum cost of £2671.38

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity March £30.51 + £1.53 VAT Total £32.04
- Village Hall Committee– room hire Total £70.00
- CALC – annual subscription Total £392.
- J Donaldson – Salary April Total £779.13
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT Total £11.99
- J Mellor – reimbursement for batteries Total £8.00
- Unblock Cumbria - clearing drain £140.00 + £28.00 VAT Total £168.00

The following payments made/direct debits due since the last meeting were noted:

- D Robinson – reimb for planters/barrow (VIB) £199.96 + £40.00 VAT Total £239.96 (2024/5)
- K Nesbitt – matting £46.00 + £9.20 VAT Total £55.20 (2024/5)
- Firpress Ltd – signs for toilets/car park £140.00 + £28.00 VAT Total £168.00
- Petty cash top-up (VIB) – Total £199.31
- The Property Doctor – lock replacement
- Water Plus – water/wastewater charges Total £189.30 (direct debit 18/04/25)
- Answer 4 U – answering service £15.99+ £3.20 VAT Total £19.19 (direct debit 17/04/25)
- S Kelly – toilet service charges £240.00 (SO payments 21/03, 28/03 ,04/04, 11/04)

72/25 VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Taylor explained that the position with the new sub lease remained unresolved but a decision would be made by the end of April on whether the new lease would go ahead. The Village Hall Committee had made a number of grant applications to help fund improvements to the building. It was noted that a suggestion had been made that the Prince of Wales could be invited to the village to mark the centenary of the visit in 1927 which was commemorated in the photograph in the upstairs room.

Cllr Benedicic was continuing to try to obtain details of possible links with Rosehill Theatre. The flower arranging event had gone very well and had attracted an audience from the village and beyond. The next event would be on 27 April when local singer/songwriter Anne-Marie Sanderson would be performing and there would be a magic show at the end of May. The Committee had decided to hold an event on 10 May to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

It was RESOLVED to contribute £50 to the VE event to cover the cost of the hall for the day.

73/25 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The report from Cllr Linton was received and noted. Councillors welcomed the news that two EV chargers were to be installed at the Adams Recreation Ground.

74/25 PLANNING**(a) Applications received for comment**

The Planning Advisory Group reported on two applications received for comment:-

- **Ref 4/25/2128/TPO Works to Various Trees – St Bees Priory**

It was RESOLVED that there was no objection to the application.

- **Ref 4/25/2124/0B1 Application under sec 73 to vary conditions 2,3,5,6,7 & 10 to reflect updated drainage & highway information of application 4/22/2042/0F1 – use of land for siting of four glamping pods – 5 Ellerbeck Barns, Egremont**

It was noted that the drainage arrangements were based on a maximum total occupancy of 8. It was unclear whether refuse vehicles would need to park on the highway. This might raise safety issues as the site was close to a bend on a road with national speed limit.

It was RESOLVED to pass the above comments to Cumberland Council.

(b) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/25/2014/0F1 Installation of solar panels on garage roof – 10 Seacroft Drive

4/25/2011/0F1 Removal of conservatory, construction of family room with raised roof area, covered yard area for porch ,utility, WC & wet room- Moorclose, Outrigg

75/25 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Community Events**

It was noted that a recent ultra marathon event starting at the beach area had attracted a large crowd of participants and supporters. The organisers had agreed to provide more advance information next year so the Parish Council and local businesses could be better prepared.

The Chairman invited Gina Goulding to outline her plans for an event at the beach area in July. She explained that plans were still at an early stage but it was proposed to hold a 2 day event in July with local crafts, food vendors, seating areas etc with the aim of encouraging visitors to St Bees. Some of the proceeds from the event would be donated to the Parish Council to help with the costs of providing the public toilets. A professional events organiser would be engaged with experience of managing such events. It was hoped to put together a group of local volunteers to help with the planning and representatives of the Parish Council would be welcome. Councillors agreed in principle to support the initiative and Cllrs Benedicic and Kaldos offered to liaise between the organisers and the Parish Council.

(b) Beach & Play Area

There had been problems with the gents toilets becoming blocked and having to be closed temporarily. There had been issues with a group of young people causing problems at the toilets and it had been necessary to close the toilets earlier than usual on at least one occasion.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

There had been no progress with the draft lease since the last meeting.

(d) Station Car Park/Transport Hub

Cllr Minshaw had sought a progress report from the Legal Dept at Cumberland Council and Heads of Terms for the lease of the Cumberland Council owned land had now been received for signature. The terms seemed to be in line with the draft received some time ago.

It was RESOLVED to seek advice from the Parish Council's solicitor before the document was signed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Cllr Taylor had attended a further meeting organised by Josh MacAlister MP to discuss the cycle track project. Sustrans was preparing a proposal to update the standards and route in the original study and a local organisation had offered help from a land agent.

(f) Priory Paddock

Cllr Bettinson reported that most of the annual maintenance had been completed. The QR code had been updated to provide information on what could be seen at the moment. The gate was now difficult to open/close and a quotation was being sought for a replacement gate and gate post.

(g) Interpretation Boards

The new interpretation board was now in place at Sea Mill.

76/25 FOOTPATHS

The report from Cllr Hale was received and noted.

77/25 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports on meetings attended.

78/25 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted.

79/25 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Correspondence had been received from the owner of a property being built adjacent to School House reporting that there had been a recurrence of the problem of dog waste bags being thrown onto the site. This appeared to be a deliberate and targeted campaign. Noted.

(b) Correspondence had been received from a Paediatric Nurse at WCH A&E requesting signs at the beach to warn visitors of the possibility of jelly fish stings and how to treat them. It was agreed that the Clerk would request information on the number of cases seen in A&E.

(c) CALC had passed on information about funding available from the Kick Start fund for projects which meet the criteria of improving health & wellbeing, employment/training opportunities, activities for young people. Details had been circulated to councillors.

(d) Cumberland Council had provided publicity materials for its new campaign against littering. Noted.

(e) Cumbria Police had provided an update on the results of Operation Enhance which was aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour in hot spots such as Cleator Moor and Whitehaven. Noted.

(f) Cumberland Council was reminding residents that it is possible to apply for an additional garden waste bin (collected fortnightly) at a cost of £40 per annum. Noted.

(g) NALC had published a new edition of the Practitioners' Guide effective from 1 April 2025. The model financial regulations and standing orders were also being revised to take account of the new procurement rules which came into effect last autumn. Noted.

(h) The Environment Agency would be holding its next Cumbria Engagement meeting on 12 May at 3.30pm via Teams. Noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

NALC Chief Executive's Bulletins

Rural Services Network Newsletter & April Funding Digest

Cumberland Council Newsletters

Cumbria Police newsletter March– Whitehaven & District

Cumbria Police newsletter March– Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural

Connecting Cumbria Newsletter March

Hyperfast GB Newsletter

CALC News Jan/February

Open Spaces Society update March

FLAG Newsletter

ACT update March

80/25 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/FUTURE AGENDA

It was noted that the damaged wall in Station car park alongside the platform had still not been repaired and there was a risk of further collapse. It was understood that Northern Trains were dealing with the repair but the Clerk would seek an update on the situation.

81/25 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 19 May 2025 at 6.30pm, immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting which would begin at 6pm

Signed.....

Date.....