

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 15 January 2024 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

Also present: 13 members of the public.

01/24 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

02/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr G Minshaw (Cumberland Council) who was unable to attend due to work commitments.

03/24 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that the dispensation given to Cllr Millington had been extended as there was still no resolution to the drainage issue affecting properties on Sea Mill Lane.

04/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 18 DECEMBER 2023

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 18 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

05/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public wished to raise objections to the planning application for 5 holiday pods on a site on Nethertown Road. One member of the public was interested in the drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane which was to be discussed as part of the Cumberland Council agenda item.

The Chairman invited comments on the Nethertown Rd planning application and explained that any objections needed to be based on material considerations which could be taken into consideration by the Planning Officer. The Parish Council had strenuously objected to previous housing developments on this site but these had been approved, as the Local Plan was still being developed and greater reliance had been placed on the National Planning Framework's presumption in favour of development. The new Local Plan was still not fully approved, although the public examination had been held, and its current status was still uncertain.

Residents raised a number of objections based on the suitability of the site for this type of development, including noise and impact on neighbours, environmental damage to the wildlife habitat, fire risk to the adjacent woodland and the impact of additional traffic on this narrow single track road. It was unclear what the occupancy of the pods would be but a car park for 12 vehicles suggested that there would be a significant increase in vehicle movements. Although the application referred to the public transport links, it was noted that there was no public transport to Egremont or towns such as Keswick or Cockermouth. Residents questioned whether additional tourist accommodation was needed in the village when St Bees already had a large caravan park, a hotel, several B&Bs, an apart-hotel under construction and numerous properties in the village rented out for self catering holidays. It was also noted that it was proposed to utilise the drainage system for the planned residential properties but it was not clear that this would be sufficient to cope with the additional demand.

The Chairman encouraged those who wished to raise objections to put their concerns in writing to Cumberland Council. The Parish Council would be considering how to respond to the consultation later in the meeting and would ensure that its response was submitted before the end of the consultation period.

06/24 PLANNING

(a) New Applications

- Ref 4/23/2394/0F1 Change of use of land for siting of 5 holiday pods including play area, landscaping, solar panels, plunge pool, parking area & proposed paving/decking
Land at Nethertown Rd, St Bees

Councillors echoed the concerns expressed by local residents about this application. The site was outside the established settlement boundaries and would further extend development beyond the residential properties already approved. The current status of the new Local Plan and settlement boundaries was a matter on which it was felt that specialist advice was needed. It was considered that this was an important application which could have an impact on future applications and expenditure on professional advice was justified.

It was RESOLVED that specialist advice be sought to guide the council's response to the application within a maximum budget of £5000.

- Ref 4/23/2381/0F1 Siting of one static caravan to provide accommodation for greenkeeper
St Bees Golf Course, Peck Mill Lane, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections providing that a condition was attached requiring the caravan to be removed if the golf club were to close or accommodation was no longer required for the greenkeeper.

- Ref 4/24/2002/TPO Various works to trees in conservation area
The Priory, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections if Cumberland Council's arboricultural consultant was satisfied that the work was necessary.

(b) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/23/2339/TPO Various works to trees in conservation area – The Priory, St Bees

4/23/2338/TPO Felling of beech tree in conservation area – Khandella House, High House Rd

07/24 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw had provided a written report covering the following matters:

(a) Flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont Road

Survey work had taken place on site as the first stage of work to construct a new drain. Contractors would be undertaking a site visit shortly. Cllr Minshaw had drawn officers' attention to the need for better signage.

(b) Blocked drain Nethertown Rd/Sea Mill Lane

Cllr Minshaw reported that there was no progress with this issue.

It was noted that the planned survey of the drain had not taken place over the Christmas/New Year period, as had been promised. Several of the residents affected were now making formal complaints to Cumberland Council about the delays and were pressing for a swift resolution to the problem.

It was noted that the problem had first been reported In April 2023 and one resident still had deep holes in his garden which were a safety concern.

It was RESOLVED to send a letter of complaint to Cumberland Council expressing concerns that the matter remained unresolved after nine months and requesting urgent action to resolve the problem.

(c) Gritting/road closures

There had been a number of recent road closures in the area which had coincided with a period of very cold weather. Diversion signs had caused a lot of confusion and drivers had been forced to use minor roads which were not routinely gritted. Cllr Minshaw had taken the matter up with Highways officers and suggested that the gritting schedule should be more responsive to road closures and diversion routes.

(d) Drainage & flooding problem – entrance to Station car park

Cllr Minshaw confirmed that work was being scheduled on this drain but he still had no specific date.

(e) Community Panel

The next meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel would take place on 14 March at Mirehouse Community Centre, Seathwaite Avenue, Mirehouse, preceded by an open public meeting from 5pm. The date for the next Network meeting was yet to be announced. The deadline for applications for the next round of awards was 12 February. Application forms were available on the Cumberland Council website or from Cllr Minshaw.

08/24 TRAFFIC SAFETY – B5345 BARONY HOUSE – WOOD LANE

Cllr Gilmour raised the issue of traffic safety on this section of the B5345. The road was narrow and the tight bends made it impossible to see oncoming vehicles. With increasing volumes of traffic and vehicles tending to be larger, collisions were almost inevitable. It was suggested that a mirror would help drivers to see approaching vehicles.

It was RESOLVED to contact Highways with the suggestion of a mirror to improve traffic safety.

09/24 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**(a) Financial Report**

The summary of accounts at 31 December was received and noted.

(b) Budget & Precept

A draft budget covering the three years from April 2024 had been circulated. The budget reflected the increasing costs of maintaining assets such as the play areas and made provision for new projects such as the extension of station car park. A small increase in the precept would be required to balance the budget. It was estimated that this would represent an increase of approximately 8p per week for a Band D property.

It was RESOLVED that the budget be approved and allotment rents remain unchanged for 2024/25.

It was further RESOLVED that the precept for 2024/25 be set at £57,000.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower -toilet electricity December £41.08 + £2.05 VAT Total £43.13
- YNH Ltd– registration of new domain name Total £12.00
- J Donaldson -salary January Total £680.85
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £8.32 + £1.67, antivirus software renewal £41.65 + £8.33 VAT, annual Broadband allowance £50.00 Total £109.97
- Hospice at Home West Cumbria – donation in lieu of Christmas lights electricity Total £35.00
- Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd –annual car park rent £400.00 +£80.00 VAT Total £480.00
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (Jan) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

The following payments made since the last meeting were noted:

- Water Plus- water/wastewater charges Total £206.22 (direct debit 19/01/24)
- Answer 4 U -answering service £21.75 + £4.35 VAT Total £26.10 (direct debit 17/01/24)
- Water Plus – water/wastewater Oct/Nov plus adjustment for estimated bills Total £658.14 (direct debits 14/12 & 19/12/23)

10/24 LITTER BINS

The request for new litter bins at Rottington and by the Golf Club had been passed to the Street Cleansing Dept at Cumberland Council which was responsible for providing and emptying litter bins. They had responded that it was not their policy to provide or empty bins on private land but they were willing to carry out an assessment of whether a bin was needed alongside the road at Rottington and would respond when the assessment was complete.

11/24 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The group had not met since the last meeting.

12/24 PROJECT REPORTS

(a) Community Events – The Christmas tree had now been taken down and lights stored away for next year.

(b) Beach & Play Area

A quotation was still awaited for repairing and reinstating the roundabout

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

The Clerk had contacted officers at Cumberland Council to open discussions about a transfer of ownership of the land. No response had yet been received.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

Cllr Taylor had circulated a written report. The design would now be finalised in light of the test results. A meeting had been held earlier in the day with representatives of Cumberland Council and Network Rail. The legal work required to correct the erroneous land registration was now under way and it was hoped that this would be complete in 2 to 3 months.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

There was no further progress to report.

(f) Priory Paddock

Cllr Bettinson reported that he would be meeting the lengthsman later in the week.

(g) Interpretation Boards

The lengthsman had been asked to instal the new interpretation board by the Priory as soon as convenient.

13/24 FOOTPATHS

Cllr Hale's written report was received and noted. It was noted that a new spring had been fitted to the gate at the railway crossing.

14/24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports on meetings attended.

15/24 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. The upper part of station car park would be taken out of use from 12 February to 19 April as it was needed as a compound for the contractors who would be working on raising the height of the platforms.

16/24 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) An update had been received on the first grants to be awarded by the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel. Noted.

(b) CALC had forwarded information on the work currently being done by Healthwatch Cumbria. Noted.

(c) Correspondence had been received from a local resident complaining that the speed bumps on Beach Road had not been repainted since repair and resurfacing work took place a year ago, making them difficult to see and causing potential damage to vehicles. This had been reported to Highways.

(d) Information had been received on the events planned to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6 June. There was a suggestion that communities who are unable to light a beacon could consider lighting a Lamp Light of Peace (which could be used in the future for Remembrance Sunday). Noted.

(e) Notification had been received of work to take place on the station platforms from 12 February to 19 April. The height of the platforms would be raised to meet DDA requirements. The station would remain open throughout the period but part of the station car park would be required to provide a compound and give access for the contractors. Noted.

(f) A letter had been received from a visitor to St Bees, thanking the PC for having the toilets open on Christmas Day for those enjoying a walk along the beach. Noted.

(g) Correspondence had been received from two residents on issues outside the remit of the Parish Council (metal detecting at the beach and air pollution). The correspondents had been given contact details for the appropriate departments at Cumberland Council.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter
- CALC News Nov/Dec
- Cumberland Council newsletters
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- NALC Civility & Respect Newsletter
- Police Newsletters (Egremont & Rural and Whitehaven & District) Dec 2023

17/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a) There would be a Burns Night supper and concert at the Village Hall on Friday 26 January at 7pm and on 17 February there would be a concert by The Pocket Choral Society.
- (b) The Village Hall Committee had been awarded a grant of £4500 from the Robin Rigg Community Fund to improve accessibility at the Village Hall.
- (c) It was suggested that the area around the rimming stone would be improved if the hedge was trimmed and the missing metal plate which had been over the stone could be reinstated. Cllr Argyle agreed to make some enquiries.
- (d) Several members of the Village Hall Committee were stepping down and new members were needed. Anyone interested should contact Jon Mellor.

18/24 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 19 February 2024 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....