

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 16 January 2023 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Cllr J Hailes, CBC Ward Councillor
Cllr G Minshaw, Shadow Cumberland Council
Cllr C Whiteside, County Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: 7 members of the public.

01/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

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

02/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Gilmour, Linton & Monaghan.

03/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

04/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public expressed an interest in the discussion on flooding & drainage issues as well as other CCC and CBC matters. It was agreed to take comments from the public during discussion of these items.

05/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 19 DECEMBER 2022

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 19 December be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

06/23 FLOODING & DRAINAGE ISSUES

The Chairman referred to the flooding and drainage problems experienced in several parts of the parish on New Year's Eve and invited Cllr Whiteside to outline the position from the Cumbria Highways perspective.

Cllr Whiteside explained that there had been flooding issues in many places in Copeland during the heavy rain. He had discussed the problems in St Bees with Highways officers and he explained that CCC was only responsible for drainage of water which fell on the roads. Landowners had a legal responsibility to ensure that water did not drain from their land on to the highway. He commented on each area in turn:

- High House Road – the detritus left behind suggested that the issue was not simply excess water falling on the highway but was due to run-off from neighbouring land. Officers were liaising with the Flood Team to look at the issue and talk to owners of adjoining land. The gullies were cleaned annually by CCC but road sweeping was a CBC responsibility and it was important that any build up of leaves etc was reported promptly to ensure that gullies were not blocked.
- Main Street – one property had again suffered flooding internally and externally. It was thought that this could be due to a problem with a United Utilities pipe becoming blocked. Highways would be carrying out a CCTV survey and would ask UU to look at their system.
- Outrigg Road – there remained a problem with flooding in the dip near Moorclose. Highways officers believed that this was the result of water draining from nearby fields. They would be talking to the landowners concerned and legal powers were available if a solution could not be agreed between the parties.
- B5345 – there had again been a significant amount of mud deposited on the road as water flowed down from Byersteds Rd. This had affected St Bees School and the entrance to the Priory. Highways officers believed that this was due to run-off from the fields and they would be talking to the landowner.

- Coronation Terrace – residents had reported a build up of water in November and this was now affecting the neighbouring properties. He had asked officers to investigate the problem and was awaiting further information.

Councillors and members of the public raised a number of issues:

- CCC had attended to carry out a CCTV survey in Main Street but the equipment had failed and the promised survey had not been completed. It was noted that the same property had suffered flooding twice since November but had never been flooded previously. It was important for the residents to know the cause of the problem and have some certainty that this was being addressed.
- St Bees School was being financially affected by the mud and water flowing down the B5345. The swimming pool had been closed as a result of the latest incident so local schools and members of the public were being inconvenienced and the School was losing revenue. The Headmaster pointed out that the problems had been much worse than in previous years, suggesting that there was a new factor at play.
- The flooded section on the Outrigg road was very poorly signed so drivers had little time to assess the situation or turn off before reaching that section. It was almost impossible to judge the depth of the water, particularly at night, and a number of vehicles had become stuck.
- The water flowing from Byersteds Rd was missing the gulley and it would help if the flow could be directed into the gulley.
- It was commented that the response to reports made online to Cumbria Highways was inadequate, giving no indication of the timescale for any action deemed necessary.
- Councillors noted the prompt action taken by Highways when deep holes had appeared in the verge alongside Abbey Vale.

Councillors expressed concern that the division of responsibility between the various agencies and landowners involved offered little prospect of a timely solution. It would be very difficult to show how much of the problem was due to run-off from fields and how much from the inadequacy of the drains to cope with heavy rain falling on the highway and verges. Despite a history of flooding events in recent years new housing developments continued to receive planning approval. The recent approval of three dwellings behind School House was likely to cause further problems with water flowing down on to the school grounds.

Cllr Whiteside agreed to take back these comments to CCC officers. He would press for improvements to the signage on the Outrigg to Egremont road and ask officers whether it was possible to find a temporary solution to the problem until discussions with landowners were concluded.

Cllr Hailes volunteered to speak to the owner of land on Byersteds Rd to see whether some remedial action could be taken.

Residents had also reported difficulty in obtaining sand bags to protect their property on 31 December and had been told that CBC could not help until offices re-opened on 3 January. Cllr Linton had suggested that the Parish Council might consider purchasing and maintaining a stock for emergencies. It was agreed that Cllr Hailes would check the position with CBC as a first step.

07/23 CCC & HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Cllr Whiteside reported on several on-going matters:.

- CCC officers had agreed plans for new signage at the top of Sea Mill Lane taking into account the priorities expressed by residents.
- The new road markings at the Fleatham Croft junction had still not been completed and he would be following this up with officers.
- Patching work on Beach Rd was now scheduled to take place in early March. The opening in the wall would be created at the same time.
- CCC officers had been asked to check whether the site of the former scout hut was owned by CCC.
- The change of age range at the Village School had now been approved.
- The plans for the rewilding of the Beach Road verge would be part of a package of schemes to be supported by the Wildlife Trust and the Local Committee's Environment Fund.

- Further information was awaited on the likely impact of the approval of the new mine on the cycle track scheme.

It was noted that nothing further had been heard from CCC officers or the Adams Recreation Ground Committee since the discussion at the last meeting. Cllr Whiteside agreed to follow this up.

Councillors drew attention to the poor state of the B5345, particularly at the south end of the village and noted that this had become much worse since the recent heavy rain.

A member of the public asked about progress with the proposed residents' parking scheme on Firth Drive. Cllr Whiteside explained that the proposal was included in the work stream but this was a lengthy process, requiring a formal legal order with public consultation.

08/23 COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Hailes agreed to follow up a number of issues raised by councillors and a member of the public:

- The light outside 5 Firth Drive was not working.
- The new larger bin promised to replace the one by the Beach café was still not in place.
- The lid on one of the new bins was rocking in the strong winds, loosening the screws.
- Repairs had still not been carried out to the potholes at the Beach car park.
- Cracks had appeared in the wall of the promenade to the left of the lifeboat ramp.
- Signage was needed to warn the public that removing stones from the beach was an offence.

A member of the public also raised the issue of the poor state of the groynes. The Chairman explained that a specialist report was being prepared on whether the groynes were effective in protecting the beach. Until that work was completed, CBC would only undertake work to address any safety issues.

09/23 SHADOW CUMBERLAND COUNCIL

Cllr Minshaw explained that a consultation was taking place on budget proposals and the harmonisation of council tax rates. The consultation would run until the end of January and the proposals could be seen via a link on the CBC website. Further details had been circulated to parish councillors of the initial proposals for eight Community Panels to work with local communities. A further meeting had now taken place with councillors and there were a number of areas across Cumberland where councillors had questioned the grouping of rural local councils with more urban areas. The Executive had agreed to look at this issue and the frequency of meetings. It was also proposed that there would be eight Neighbourhood & Community Meetings which would bring together councillors, local councils and other partners to develop local plans for service delivery. These would be more informal and members would be able to decide on the frequency of their meetings.

10/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Financial Report

The summary of the accounts at 31 December 2022 was received and noted, together with the notes of the meeting of the Finance & Risk Advisory Group on 10 January. The variance analysis at the end of Qtr 3 showed that income (excluding grants) was slightly higher than expected and expenditure was lower than budget, mainly due to timing issues with various projects.

FRAG had reviewed the Risk Register and had not identified any changes required. It was noted that Cllr Linton would be attending a course on the use of social media on 23 January to help with the drafting of guidelines on the use of social media.

The subscription to Cisco Webex was reviewed in light of the need for fewer virtual meetings.

It was RESOLVED to cancel the monthly subscription to Webex.

The contract for the supply of electricity through the County Council contract was due to end in March. CCC was negotiating a new contract and required confirmation that the Parish Council wished to continue to be part of the contract.

It was RESOLVED to continue to be part of the CCC contract for 2023- 2027.

(b) Annual Policy Reviews

The Health & Safety and Risk Management Policy were due for review.

It was RESOLVED to defer this until the next meeting.

(c) Online Banking

The current signing rules for the Nat West account required three signatories on cheques and had different categories of authorised signatories. In order to simplify the change to online banking, it was proposed to change the signing rules to allow any two of the authorised signatories to authorise transactions or future changes to the mandate.

It was RESOLVED to change the signing rules to allow any two of the authorised signatories to authorise transactions and changes to the mandate. It was further RESOLVED that the authorised signatories would be Cllrs Sim, Taylor, Argyle and Monaghan and that the Clerk would be a non-signing Treasurer.

(d) Grass Cutting Contract

The grass cutting contract would end on 31 March and it was proposed to invite bids for a new 3 year contract from 1 April. FRAG had reviewed the schedule of work and minor changes had been made to include small additional areas.

It was RESOLVED to advertise for bids via the Parish Council's Facebook page with a closing date of 20 February for receipts of bids.

(e) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Chq 002921 Network Rail – Station car park rent £400.00 + VAT Total £480.00
- Chq 002922 Works 4 You Ltd – materials for play area repair £35.00 + £7.00 VAT Total £42.00
- Chq 002923 CBC – play area inspections Qtr 4 £347.85 + £69.57 VAT Total £417.42
- Chq 002924 E Taylor –reimb for drainage channel cover £20.08 + £4.02 VAT Total £24.10
- Chq 002925 J Donaldson– salary Total £625.09
- Chq 002926 J Donaldson -Webex costs £12.50 + £2.50 VAT, printer ink £8.32 + £1.67 VAT, reimb for rock salt £12.00 +£2.40 VAT, defib battery £170.00 + £34.00 VAT, annual Broadband allowance £50.00 Total £293.39
- Chq 002927 D Sim –reimb for defib keypad £99.99 + £20.00 VAT Total £119.99
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (Jan) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00

It was RESOLVED not to renew the subscription to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England.

The payments made since last meeting were noted:

- Water Plus water/wastewater toilets Total £559.16 (direct debit 02/01/23)
- Answer 4-U -answering service £11.50 + £2.30 Total £13.80 (direct debit 17/01/23)
- Npower – electricity to beach toilets £2.71 (direct debit 19/12/22)
- Npower – electricity to beach toilets £35.09 +£ 1.75 VAT Total £36.84 (direct debit 23/12/22)

11/23 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

There had been no specific incidents of antisocial behaviour since the last meeting, although there were reports of an unusual number of punctures to vehicles parked on the Fairladies estate.

12/23 PROJECT REPORTS**(a)Community Events**

Cllr Kaldos reported that the Christmas tree had now been taken down and he thanked all those who had volunteered to help.

(b)Beach & Play Area

The new inspection rota had been drawn up and Cllr Ritson had joined the list of volunteer inspectors.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

CCC officers had suggested that a letter of permission from the Village School would be sufficient but it was pointed out that this was unlikely to meet the requirements of grant funders. However, the decision by the Village School to become part of the West Lakes MAT opened the possibility of negotiating a transfer of the land. FRAG had considered the project evaluation form and had suggested

that the next stage should be to draw up a written project proposal to form the basis of detailed discussions with the Village School and West Lakes Academy Trust. The possibility of also utilising the site of the former scout hut was being explored with the Scouts and CCC.

It was RESOLVED to write to the Village School and West Lakes Academy Trust to initiate further discussions.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

Cllr Taylor reported that an online meeting with Network Rail and the Community Rail Partnership had taken place on 13 January. The meeting had included a senior regeneration manager from Network Rail as well as a representative of Northern Rail. It had been a positive meeting and a letter of comfort would be provided as evidence of the constructive engagement by all parties. A representative from CBC would join the next meeting.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

There was no further progress to report.

(f) Priory Paddock

A site meeting had taken place with the lengthsmen to look at work required and volunteers had cleared the brambles. A meeting would take place on Tuesday 21 February to set up a support group for the Paddock.

(g) Interpretation Boards

There had been no progress since the last meeting.

13/23 PLANNING

(a) New Applications

There were no new applications since the last meeting.

(b) Other Planning Matters

(i) There had been no further information on the progress with the application for three dwellings adjacent to the B5435 behind School House which was already approved in principle. The Parish Council had previously expressed concerns about surface water drainage as the properties would be below road level. The attention of the Planning Officer had been drawn to the problems of flooding experienced over New Year.

(ii) The position with the latest application for Lonsdale Terrace was raised at the last meeting. The Planning Officer had confirmed that the plans for gates at the entrance were not part of the consultation on the latest application as the gates had been previously approved under an earlier application,

(c) Applications Approved by CBC

4/22/2389/OF1 Change of use of existing boarding house to apart-hotel -Grindal House

4/22/2387/OL1 Listed building consent for work associated with change of use -Grindal House

4/22/2265/DOC Discharge of condition 3 of approval 4/21/2241/OF1 – 1 -11 Lonsdale Terrace

4/22/2307/DOC Discharge of condition 3 of approval 4/21/2242/OL1 – 1 -11 Lonsdale Terrace

4/22/2415/0B1 Variation of condition 2 (plans) of approval 4/21/2241/OF1 internal & external alterations as part of renovation & refurbishment of existing buildings – 1 -11 Lonsdale Terrace

4/22/2450/OL1 Listed building consent for various renovation & associated works, including revisions to outrigger roofs, upgrade of concrete floors & miscellaneous ancillary work – 1 11 Lonsdale Terrace

4/22/2448/OF1 Demolition of existing conservatory & construction of single storey extension to south, new raised patio (resubmission of 4/22/2205/OF1)

14/23 FOOTPATHS

The report by Cllr Hale was received and noted.

15/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllrs Ritson and Mellor outlined plans being drawn up by the Governors of the Village School to make better use of the green space around the school.

These included involving the children in growing vegetables and fruit as well as making the grounds more secure. Councillors expressed some concern that this could affect access from The Crofts. It was RESOLVED that a representative of the school be invited to the next meeting to discuss the plans In more detail.

16/23 CLERK’S REPORT

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

17/23 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Letters of thanks had been received from the Over 60’s, GNAA and Citizens Advice Copeland for the recent donations. Noted
- (b) The Police & Crime Commissioner was seeking views on budget proposals with a deadline for comment of 20 January. Noted.
- (c) The Friends of the Lake District were preparing a Technical Advice Note to provide guidance to planners, developers. contractors etc with the aim of better conserving and enhancing the dark skies in Cumbria through planning decisions. Comments were invited by 17 February. Noted.
- (d) Correspondence had been received from St Bees Priory, St Bees School & residents of High House Road about the recent flooding and drainage issues. Noted.
- (e) Correspondence had been received from a resident of Coronation Terrace asking for the PC’s help in finding a solution to the drainage problems on the road in front of their properties. Noted.
- (f) Information had been received from CALC on Sustainable Warmth grants for eligible households. Details had been publicised through the PC’s Facebook page.
- (g) An update had been received from the Copeland Health & Wellbeing Forum including resources available to help deal with bereavement. Noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- NALC Chief Executive’s Weekly Bulletins
- Rural Services Network – weekly bulletin
- Cumbria Police update Dec (Egremont, Cleator Moor and Rural)
- CALC News Nov/Dec
- Police & Crime Commissioner’s Autumn Newsletter
- Local Authority Climate Update 23/12/22 to 6/01/23

18/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a)A Whist Drive would be taking place on 23 January in the Village Hall and a Beetle Drive was planned for 11 February.
- (b)West Cumbria Archaeological Society was organising a talk on St Bees Man to take place at 2pm on Sat 21 January in Egremont Market Hall.

19/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting take place on Monday 20 February 2023 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....