

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

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

**In attendance:** Cllr G Minshaw, Cumberland Council

Also present: 1 member of the public.

**167/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

Cllr Taylor welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting and explained that he would be chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chairman.

**168/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr D Sim.

**169/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Millington declared an interest in discussions of drainage problems in the Nethertown Rd/Sea Mill Lane area as the owner of a property on Sea Mill Lane.

**170/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2023**

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

**171/23 153/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The member of the public indicated that he was interested in the issue of the blocked drain between Nethertown Rd and Sea Mill Lane and also the flooding on the Outrigg road, both of which would be discussed under Cumberland Council matters.

**172/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS**

Following the last meeting, Mr Johnson of the Changing Lives Learning Trust had confirmed that the area to be leased to the Trust would not include the land on which the play equipment stands, opening the way for the Parish Council to negotiate directly with Cumberland Council. However, officers at Cumberland Council had suggested that this was not their understanding. The Clerk was seeking urgent confirmation of the position from Cumberland Council, as the right of vehicle access to the play area would need to be included in the lease if the play area land was not to be leased to the Trust. If this was not done, there would be no access to the play area for grass cutting or repair work.

Mr Johnson had offered to bring the newly appointed Headteacher, Kate Davis, to meet the Parish Council and this was being arranged for the meeting on 20 November.

In answer to questions Cllr Taylor confirmed that any further problems of antisocial behaviour in school grounds should be reported to the police.

**173/23 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS**

**(a) Flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont Road**

Cllr Minshaw passed on a progress report from Highways officers who were contacting the agent for the owner of the adjacent land to gain access to the land. Cllr Minshaw had visited the site himself and fully understood councillors' concerns. Signage was poor, this was an unlit road and there was debris in the water which could damage vehicles. It was noted that in another part of the country a temporary solution had been found to a similar problem which had allowed single file traffic to use the road. Cllr Taylor agreed to pass on details to Cllr Minshaw.

Councillors asked Cllr Minshaw to seek an assurance that enforcement action would be taken to resolve the flooding problem if a third party was found to be responsible. In the meantime Cllr Minshaw would request better signage to warn drivers and cyclists of the flood and would also request that action was taken to clear the debris. He would also ask Highways officers to consider a temporary solution as had been done elsewhere.

**(b) Blocked drain Nethertown Rd/Sea Mill Lane**

The Highways Engineer had contacted one of the residents affected to explain that staff absences had delayed progress but the intention was to carry out an investigation of the whole length of the drain. Cllr Minshaw confirmed that this was also the information which he had received and he would seek details of the likely timescale. Councillors pointed out that other residents on Sea Mill Lane had noticed that two drain covers further down towards the railway line regularly surcharged during wet weather. Cllr Millington would forward details to Cllr Minshaw.

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

Cllr Minshaw confirmed that the gully team had attended and had reported that the drain was obstructed by tree roots and further work would be required. Councillors pointed out that there had been problems in this location for many years and local knowledge suggested that there were other problems with the drain. Cllr Bettinson would be happy to meet Highways staff on site to explain the issues.

**(d) Parking around junction of Seacroft Drive/Main Street**

Cllr Minshaw had received complaints of dangerous parking around the junction and on the double yellow lines at school times. He had passed the information to the PCSO and to the Cumberland Council Enforcement Team.

**(e) Groynes**

There was no further progress to report as Cumberland Council staff were awaiting the specialist report which would advise on the effectiveness of the groynes. Councillors were keen to arrange a meeting as soon as possible as the remaining groynes were rapidly deteriorating and therefore could not be re-used as part of any replacement scheme, if the report subsequently recommended new groynes. Cllr Minshaw agreed to contact the officer concerned to try to set up a meeting.

**(f) Other issues**

- It was noted that Cumberland Council officers were chasing up the removal of the redundant light on the wall of 97 Main Street. ENW had been asked to do the work 12 months ago but it had still not been removed.
- The recent repair on the B5345 by the Byersteds Road junction was breaking up again. Cllr Minshaw would take this up with Highways officers.
- Dog fouling stencils had been painted at the beach and along part of Main Street. Cllr Minshaw would follow up the request for stencils on Nethertown Rd and Sea Mill Lane.
- The street light on the B5345 opposite Abbey House had been removed some months ago with just the stump remaining. Cllr Minshaw was asked to find out when this would be replaced.
- The street light on the footpath between the Beach Estate and Beach Rd had not been replaced. This was a former CBC footway light. The Clerk would check the position with Cumberland Council officers.

**174/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT****(a) Financial Report**

The summary of accounts at 30 September was received and noted together with the notes of the FRAG meeting on 11 October. FRAG members had looked in detail at the variance figures at the half year point. Income was slightly ahead of the expected figure with expenditure slightly below expectations. It was also noted that the costs of the answering service would be increasing from November but this would not have a significant effect on the budget.

**(b) Payments**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower -toilet electricity Sept £34.81 + £1.74 VAT Total £36.55
- I McAndrew– reimbursement for website expenses Total £56.64
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting Sept £517.22 + £103.44 VAT Total £620.66
- J Donaldson -salary October Total £633.49
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £8.32 + £1.67 VAT, new donation boxes £59.98+£12.00 VAT Total £81.97

- A Linton – reimbursement for protective gloves Total £19.90
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (Oct) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

The following payments made since the last meeting were noted:

- Water Plus- water/wastewater to toilets Total £169.75 (direct debit 05/10/23)
- Answer 4 U -answering service £11.50+ £2.30 VAT Total £13.80 (direct debit 17/10/23)
- J M Carr– wall repair Total £800.00

### **175/23 WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS**

It was suggested that a ‘sandpit’ would be useful to allow changes to the website to be tested before being implemented on the live site. There were no plans to make significant changes but new features could be trialled over the coming months to freshen up the site for 2024.

It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of approx. £60.

### **176/23 LITTER BINS**

Two requests had been received for new litter bins. One request was for a bin in Rottington, the other was for a bin close to the golf course path. Both were popular locations for dog walkers and there were no bins within easy reach. It was not known what the policy of the new Cumberland Council was on provision of additional bins but Cllr Minshaw agreed to contact officers to check whether the new bins could be provided.

### **177/23 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Linton had provided a written report which was received and noted. Following the planting session on Beach Road, Cumbria Wildlife Trust had advised that they would have additional funding and were looking for more sites. The Working Group had identified two areas at the seafront which could be planted with wildflower seeds/plug plants suited to a marine environment, subject to landowner agreement.

The Working Group was keen to devise a questionnaire to find out which project areas related to climate change and sustainability residents see as a priority and would like to get involved in. The plan was that the questionnaire could be completed online with paper copies available at key locations for those who preferred a hard copy. A draft questionnaire, based on the one recommended within the Parish Council Climate Change Toolkit, would be put to a future PC meeting for approval.

It was RESOLVED to support both the planting of areas at the sea front and the plan for a questionnaire.

### **178/23 PROJECT REPORTS**

#### **(a) Community Events**

- The poppy wreaths had been ordered and would be displayed in the window of 22 Main Street in the week before Remembrance Sunday. The parade would assemble at the entrance to Station car park and process to the two war memorials. The parade would then disband so that those who wished could attend the service in the Priory.
- The Christmas tree would be delivered on 13 November. There was general agreement that the Santa Parade should follow the pattern of recent years with elves accompanying the sleigh on bicycles. Cllr Kaldos would circulate possible dates for putting up the tree and for the Parade.

#### **(b) Beach & Play Area**

The donation boxes at the toilets had been broken into and damaged beyond repair. Replacement boxes had been purchased.

The Chairman and Clerk had met staff from Cumberland Council Open Spaces Dept to review the situation with repairs to the play equipment. There had been delays in getting replacement parts from Wicksteed but it was hoped to have the basket swing and zip wire back in service shortly. A quote had been requested for replacement of the rope section of the trail. The roundabout was currently in Cumberland Council’s store awaiting a decision on whether it should be repaired or replaced.

**(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area**

There was nothing further to report.

**(d) Station car park extension/transport hub**

Cllr Taylor had circulated a written report which explained progress and the next stages proposed.

Cllr Graham explained that a survey was being carried out to look at usage of the current car park to provide evidence of the need for off-street parking. Cllr Sim was looking at yellow lines around the village. Informal conversations with car park users indicated that the car park was a valued asset. The survey had identified at least one abandoned vehicle which had now been reported to Cumberland Council's Enforcement Team.

The desktop survey undertaken as part of the CBR testing had shown electricity cables and drains beneath the field. It was proposed to commission a ground penetrating radar survey of the site to check the depth and exact position of the utilities. It was essential to establish the situation at this stage as it would have a bearing on the surfacing required and the construction costs. The survey was expected to cost £1550 + VAT. It was also proposed to obtain project planning software at an approximate cost of £8 + VAT per month.

Discussions were continuing with Cumberland Council about the asset transfer of the land. Two possible options were available to secure the asset transfer -one would involve no cost to the Parish Council but would require the decision to be approved by the full Cumberland Council. This could take some time and there would be no right of appeal, if the council turned down the proposal. The alternative option was for the Parish Council to compensate Cumberland Council for loss of income from grazing rent. This would be a simpler and quicker process. The sum of £2500 would only be payable when the lease was signed.

It was RESOLVED to proceed with the ground penetrating radar survey at a cost of £1550 + VAT and the purchase of project planning software.

It was further RESOLVED to proceed with the option of compensating Cumberland Council for the loss of income (£2500) in order to secure the asset transfer.

**(e) Valley Link Cycle Track**

There was no further progress to report.

**(f) Priory Paddock**

Cllr Bettinson reported that the Friends of Priory Paddock had received a RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' award for their work in maintaining the Paddock as a wildlife garden. He had attended a presentation at the Beacon to receive the certificate. Councillors congratulated Cllr Bettinson on the award, well deserved recognition of the work of the volunteers.

**(g) Interpretation Boards**

There was no further progress to report.

**179/23 PLANNING****(a) New applications**

The Planning Advisory Group reported on the following applications:

- Ref 4/23/2268/0F1 Alterations & improvements to rear of building including replacement of flat roof with new pitched roof, renewal/alteration/renovation of windows, installation of solar panels to rear wing roof, alterations to entrance doors from carpark level, internal reconfiguration to rear wing including insulating and general upgrading of timber framed structure

Grindal House, Main Street, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to the application.

- Ref 4/23/2267/0L1 Listed building application for above works  
Grindal House, Main Street, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there no objections to this application.

It was noted that no objection had been made to the following application received since the last meeting: - Ref 4/23/2261/TPO Pruning of sycamore tree – 7 Seacroft Drive

**(b) Applications approved by Cumberland Council**

4/23/2224/TPO Felling & Removal of various trees within the conservation area – Highcroft House, High House Rd

**180/23 FOOTPATHS**

Cllr Hale's written report was received and noted. It was noted that instances had been reported of e-scooters being used on public footpaths. It was agreed to include text in the parish magazine and on Facebook pointing out that e-scooters were not permitted on public footpaths.

**181/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Taylor reported on the first meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Network Panel. The meeting had offered lots of opportunities for networking. An introduction had been provided to a group which provides youth services who would be interested in looking at the need for some provision in St Bees and organising a youth group, if there was demand. Cllr Linton agreed to follow this up.

A company which installs EV charging points had explained that they had held discussions with the Adams Recreation Ground Committee but were waiting to see whether Cumberland Council was proposing to install charging points at the main beach. Cllr Minshaw agreed to check whether there were any plans for this.

Copeland Community Fund would shortly be inviting applications for grants up to £10K from local sports groups. There would be a short window in which to apply and further details were available from the Clerk.

Cllr Emma Williamson, Deputy Leader (non-statutory) of Cumberland Council had expressed an interest in attending a parish council meeting. It was agreed to extend an invitation to Cllr Williamson.

**182/23 CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. Local groups would be invited to apply for small grants from the Donations budget to be agreed at the next meeting. The deadline for applications would be 12 November.

**183/23 CORRESPONDENCE**

(a)Details had been received of a planned road closure at Abbey Vale from 17 October for one week. The information had been shared via Facebook.

(b)The Environment Agency would be holding the next in the series of Meet the Regulator meetings on 19 October. Noted.

(c)CALC had circulated its Annual Review highlighting the work of local councils across the county. Copies had been circulated to all councillors.

(d)A local resident had copied the PC into an email sent to Cllr Minshaw about the ongoing flooding problems on the Outrigg to Egremont road. Noted

(e)A request had been received from the Golf Club for a litter bin to be provided near the coastal path. This had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

(f)A request had been received from a resident of Rottington for a litter bin to be provided in Rottington. This had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

(g)A local resident had reiterated his complaints about the frequency of verge cutting. A response had been sent explaining the verges were cut by Cumberland Council.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive's Bulletins

Rural Services Network & Funding Digest

CALC News

Cumbria Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Autumn Newsletter

Open Spaces update Sept

Police Newsletters Whitehaven & District/Egremont & Rural Sept

Cumberland Council newsletter

Hyperfast GB newsletter

**184/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA**

(a)Cllr Gilmour explained that the PCC was proposing to provide a Welcome Pack of information to help new residents moving into the village. Plans were still at an early stage but there was an opportunity for the Parish Council to contribute. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be interested in collaborating with the PCC on this project.

(b)Cllr Hale reported that the Village Hall Committee had been awarded a grant of £32k from the National Lottery to carry out work on the building. It was expected that work would commence shortly.

(c)Cllr Bettinson had recently reported both a sewer problem and a water leak to United Utilities and the response by United Utilities had been excellent with prompt investigation and repair of both issues.

**185/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 20 November 2023 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....