

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 17 February 2025 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Cllr G Minshaw, Ward Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees
Ms L Graffin, Caseworker for Josh MacAlister MP

Also present: 1 member of the public

19/25 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Cllr Taylor explained that he would take the chair for the meeting in the absence of the Chairman. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Lesley Graffin of the MP's office who was interested in learning about current issues in St Bees.

20/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Gilmour, Graham, Kaldos & Sim.

21/25 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Bettinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Village Hall agenda item as a Trustee of the Pagan Trust.

22/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no matters raised.

23/25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 20 JANUARY 2025

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 20 January be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24/25 LIAISON WITH MP

The Chairman welcomed Lesley Graffin to the meeting and invited her to explain her role. Lesley explained that she was a caseworker in the office of Josh MacAlister MP and involved in following up matters raised by constituents. She was visiting parish and town councils across the constituency to introduce herself and she would be happy to attend a future meeting if there was any particular item with which the MP might be able to assist. Councillors welcomed the offer of help if required.

It was noted that Cllr Taylor would be attending a meeting on 21 February in the MP's office to discuss plans for a cycle track between St Bees and Whitehaven. An invitation had also been received for representatives of the Parish Council to attend a meeting on 7 March to look at improvements in St Bees. It was not clear what subjects would be discussed or who had been invited. Lesley agreed to check what subjects were to be discussed but it was provisionally agreed that Cllrs Argyle and Benedicic would represent the Parish Council.

25/25 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw reported on a number of ongoing matters:

- Tenders were being sought for repainting road markings including those by Abbey Vale.
- The resurfacing work on Main Street was included as a high priority in the programme for the financial year 2026/27. Meanwhile it was important to continue to report potholes to Cumberland Council. This could be done through the online reporting system. Councillors reported that Highways staff were responding promptly to reports of potholes and asked Cllr Minshaw to pass on thanks to the local Highways team.
- The PCSO had been asked to monitor the situation with construction vehicles obstructing the pavement opposite the Abbey Vale junction. If further problems arose, the matter should be reported to the police.

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- Cllr Minshaw would be meeting the Assistant Director later in the week to look at the problems of pedestrian access to the beach and would report back at the next meeting. If there was no progress, the Parish Council would take up the matter with the MP.
- Cllr Minshaw had discussed with Planning Officers the possibility of requiring solar panels to be installed in new housing developments. Officers had confirmed that Cumberland Council had no power to insist on this unless the government changed national policy.
- The Whitehaven & Coastal Panel would be holding its next meeting on 20 March at Kells.

It had been reported that some properties at the bottom of Sea Mill Lane had not had their bins emptied, apparently because parked vehicles had prevented the bin lorry reaching them. Cllr Minshaw agreed to speak to Waste Services officers about the problems and what could be done. The Clerk would put an item in the parish magazine asking drivers to ensure that space was left for large vehicles to pass.

It was noted that residents had reported an increase in dog fouling around the promenade and dog waste bags were being left in hedges and open areas in the village. Cllr Minshaw would follow this up with officers at Cumberland Council and ask for stencils to be painted in problem areas. An item would be included in the parish magazine reminding dog owners to dispose of waste bags in litter bins.

There had also been concerns expressed about dangerous parking on yellow lines around the Seacroft Drive/Main St junction at the beginning and end of the school day which was putting pedestrians at risk. Cllr Minshaw would speak to the police and Enforcement Team about more enforcement visits.

26/25 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT/COASTAL EROSION

Cumberland Council had now supplied a copy of the full consultant's report. This was a lengthy document and it was agreed that councillors would inform the Clerk of any questions or matters requiring clarification which could then be forwarded to Cumberland Council.

27/25 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Monthly Financial Report

A summary of the accounts at 31 January was received and noted. Invoices for play area repairs were still awaited.

New chains were required for the swings at the Outrigger play area. The cost was expected to be under £200 and the expenditure had been authorised as an urgent repair.

The speed gun had been sent for recalibration and the frequency of recalibration would be considered for future years.

The wooden noticeboard at Rottington had been damaged beyond repair during storm Eowyn. An insurance claim had been made.

It was RESOLVED that the noticeboard, together with the display board at Sea Mill damaged during the previous storm, be written off.

(b) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity Jan £34.06 + £1.70 VAT Total £35.76
- Village Hall Committee- room hire Total £70.00
- St Bees PCC – costs of publishing annual report in parish magazine Total £70.00
- YNH Ltd- domain name renewal/new domain Total £59.00
- J Donaldson – salary Feb Total £741.53
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT Total £11.99

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

- Water Plus – water/wastewater charges Total £186.49 (direct debit 17/02/25)
- Answer 4 U – answering service £15.99+ £3.20 VAT Total £19.19 (direct debit 17/02/25)
- S Kelly – toilet service charges £240.00 (SO payments 24/01, 31/01, 07/02, 14/02)
- K Nesbitt -reimbursement for water butt base (VIB) Total £28.49

28/25 VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Taylor explained that he and Cllr Mellor had amended their register of interest declarations to reflect changes in the membership of the Village Hall Committee. The Committee was currently reviewing its financial position and was in discussion with its advisers on the matter of the sub-lease. Once the position was clearer, Cllr Taylor would provide a further report to the Parish Council.

Cllr Hale reported that there were a number of events planned in the coming weeks including a cabaret evening on 22 March and a flower arranging demonstration on 12 April. The events would be advertised on the noticeboards and via social media.

29/25 COAST TO COAST PASSPORT PROJECT

Cllr Taylor reported that the Parish Council had been contacted recently by a not-for-profit company (Richmond CIC) which had begun a project to introduce a Coast to Coast passport for those undertaking the walk. Walkers would be able to purchase a passport, have it stamped as they reached points along the route and apply for a certificate to mark completion of the walk. Any profits would be used to fund improvements to the walk eg signage & way marking. The Wainwright Society and local authorities along the route had agreed to support the scheme and the organisers were currently in discussion with Cumberland Council. Local businesses and organisations in St Bees were being invited to join the project as stamping stations and sales points for the passport. The organisers were seeking help from the Parish Council in publicising the passport. Councillors recognised that the Coast to Coast walk brought a significant number of visitors to the village who contributed to the local economy. It was agreed that the Parish Council would support the project and use its website and noticeboards to publicise the passport.

30/25 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Linton had provided the data from the recent bus survey to Cumberland Council. Cllr Minshaw offered to check that this had been received.

31/25 PLANNING**(a) New Applications**

There had been no new applications since the last meeting.

(b) Ongoing Applications

- Ref 4/23/2394/0F1 Application for holiday pods- Nethertown Rd

Cumberland Council's Planning Committee had carried out a site visit earlier in the day. Cllr Benedicic had attended as an observer on behalf of the Parish Council. The application would be considered at the Committee meeting in Carlisle on 19 February. The planning consultant representing the Parish Council would be attending to speak on behalf of the council and John Benedicic would also speak as a private individual.

A complaint had been made to Cumberland Council about the way in which the matter was handled at the January meeting. A copy of the response from Cumberland Council had been circulated, explaining that the rules did not permit a decision to be made to defer the application in advance of the meeting.

- Ref 4/24/2051/0F1 Erection of new dwelling – Land adjacent to Stoneycroft, Sea Mill Lane

It was noted that the applicant had lodged an appeal against Cumberland Council's decision to refuse the application.

(c) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/24/2366/0B1 Variation of pre-commencement conditions 3,4 & 6 of application ref 4/24/2096/0F1 Mellendene, High House Road

32/25 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Community Events**

The Village in Bloom team were planning to mark the 200th anniversary of railways with red plants and signs in some of the planters at the station. Cllr Hale reported that the Village Hall Committee were considering holding an event to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day in May.

(b) Beach & Play Area

A meeting had taken place with the Art Dept at St Bees School to discuss possible designs for a mural at the beach toilets. Some older pupils would now be invited to submit designs.

(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

There was no progress to report. A further meeting would be taking place on 25 February with Network Rail, Cumberland Council and the Community Rail Partnership. Cllr Minshaw agreed to speak to the Legal Dept at Cumberland Council to establish the position.

A quotation was being sought to repair a number of potholes in the car park. The garage which stands in the car park had been damaged during the recent storm. This was not part of the land rented by the Parish Council but Network Rail had contacted the owner who had promised to carry out repairs.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Cllr Taylor reported that he would be attending a meeting organised by Josh MacAlister MP on 21 February to discuss the plan for a cycle link between St Bees and Whitehaven.

(f) Office Improvements

The office refurbishment was complete. Cllr Hale was looking for a suitable table which could be purchased for the room.

(g) Priory Paddock

Cllr Bettinson reported that annual maintenance was being carried out on the shrubs and trees.

(h) Interpretation Boards

There was no further progress to report.

33/25 FOOTPATHS

The report from Cllr Hale was received and noted. Cumberland Council had carried out work to improve drainage on the coastal path at Sea Mill. The height of the path had been raised but it was not clear that this would be sufficient to deal with flooding problems in the longer term. Cumberland Council was also planning to carry out improvement work on the footpath from Scalebarrow to Rottington Hall.

The problem with the gate post on the permissive path from the golf course had been reported to the Trustees of St Bees School who had agreed to look at the situation.

34/25 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Taylor reported on a recent meeting of the West Cumbria Site Stakeholders Group where the discussion had centred on waste issues and proposed GDF facility.

35/25 CLERK'S REPORT

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

The request for speed monitoring on High House Rd had been passed on to the Speedwatch team.

The Village School had confirmed that the gate from The Crofts would be locked during school hours for safeguarding reasons but the policy for use of the gate during the evenings, weekends and holidays was currently under review. More information would be provided once the policy was decided.

36/25 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Green Swallow Ltd had provided an update on work to convert Bega Flats to two family sized properties. Work was almost complete and the properties would be available to rent from Eden Housing Association. Noted.

(b) CALC had pointed out that PDFs were not to download from the new NALC website. However, NALC had subsequently changed its policy. Noted.

(c) CALC had organised a Planning Policy event on 18 February. Details had been circulated.

- (d)CALC had provided information on help available to councils moving to a gov.uk domain name. Noted.
- (e)Cumberland Council had provided details of the proposed new public footpath to be created to link the promenade to the Coast to Coast footpath. Noted.
- (f)Cumberland Council had provided a copy of the temporary closure order to allow work to take place on the public footpath from Scalebarrow to Rottington Hall. Noted.
- (g)CALC & Cumberland Council would be holding a Health & Wellbeing Conference at Westlakes Science Park on 11 March, Details had been circulated to councillors and Cllr Benedicic would be attending.
- (h)CALC had forwarded details of Cumbria Constabulary’s Neighbourhood Policing Pledge. Virtual meetings would take place twice a year to provide feedback to representatives of parish councils. Cllr Taylor and the Clerk would be the nominated contacts initially.
- (i)Correspondence had been received on behalf of Lord Foster seeking support for a campaign for greater safety requirements for lithium batteries. Noted.
- (j)An email had been received from Keep Britain Tidy encouraging participation in the Great British Spring Clean from 21 March to 6 April. Noted
- (k)CALC had circulated a request for nominations to attend a Royal Garden Party on 7 May. Noted.
- (l)Cumberland Council had provided details of a planned road closure of Finkle St/High House Rd from 24 February for 3 days for Fibrus to carry out work. Noted.
- (m) CALC was seeking expressions of interest in possible training on the use of MS Office. Noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter
- Cumberland Council Newsletters
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder Update
- Cumbria Police Newsletter – Whitehaven & District
- Cumbria Police Newsletter – Egremont & Rural
- Open Spaces Society – Jan Update & Spring Newsletter
- CALC Newsletter – Nov/Dec
- Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Newsletter (Issue 5)

37/25 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/FUTURE AGENDA

- (a) It was reported that the light at the bottom of Fairladies footpath was not working.
- (b) There would be cabaret evening and supper at the Village Hall from 7pm on 22 March featuring music and songs from the ‘30s. Tickets £15.
- (c) The Village Hall would be hosting a flower arranging demonstration (Easter Surprise in flowers) by Norma Halpin of Barrow in Furness on 12 April at 2pm.Tickets £10.

38/25 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 17 March 2025 at 6.30pm.

It was further RESOLVED that the April meeting take place on 14 April, as the third Monday of the month was a Bank Holiday, and that the Annual Parish Meeting be held immediately before the Parish Council meeting on Monday 19 May.

Signed.....

Date.....