

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on  
Monday 17 April 2023 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

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

Also present: 2 members of the public.

**64/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting. He explained that this was the first meeting since Cumberland Council came into being on 1 April, replacing Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council.

He reported that the election for the parish council had been uncontested with eleven nominations being received for the fourteen seats. All those nominated had been elected without the need for a poll. There would be three vacant seats which could be filled by co-option in the coming months. Three members of the existing council had not stood for re-election and the Chairman thanked them all for their contribution.

**65/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Graham, Mellor & Ritson.

**66/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Millington declared a pecuniary interest in the discussion of flooding issues, as his property was affected by flooding from a blocked drain on Nethertown Rd. He had requested a dispensation to allow him to take part in the discussion as he had detailed knowledge of the problem and his was not the only property which could be potentially affected.

It was RESOLVED that a dispensation be granted for 6 months as it was considered to be in the public interest to allow him to take part in discussions and share his knowledge of the problems which could potentially also affect other properties.

**67/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The members of the public present expressed an interest in planning matters, one in connection with the development on Nethertown Rd and the other in the application for a new dwelling adj to Stonecroft, Sea Mill Lane.

It was RESOLVED to bring forward discussion of planning items on the agenda.

**68/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 20 MARCH 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 20 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**69/23 PLANNING**

**Cllr Minshaw withdrew during consideration of planning matters as he is a reserve member of Cumberland Council Planning Panel,**

**(a) New Applications**

It was noted that three new applications had been received for comment since the agenda was issued – two relating to reserved matters for the development on Nethertown Rd and one relating to tree works at the Priory. The Planning Advisory Group had not yet had an opportunity to review the applications but would do so in the coming days so that the Clerk could submit comments under delegated authority to meet the consultation deadline.

A member of the public expressed his concern about the proposed traffic management plan submitted as part of application ref 4/23/2100/OR1 for the Nethertown Rd development. The plan covered the management of traffic on site but made no reference to how construction traffic travelling to/from the site would be managed. Residents were concerned that the road was too narrow for lorries and cars to

pass and that this would result in vehicles having to reverse for some distance, a potentially dangerous manoeuvre on a narrow road with no pavements.

Councillors explained that the comments would be taken into account in formulating the council's response to Cumberland Council and that individual residents could make their own representations, if they wished.

**(b) Other Planning Matters**

**(i) Ref 4/23/2035/0F1 Erection of new dwelling adj to Stoneycroft, Sea Mill Lane**

The applicant introduced himself and explained that he had contacted the Parish Council to address concerns which the Parish Council had raised in their objection to the application. He explained that neighbours had raised no objection to the development and he did not consider that there would be undue inconvenience during the construction, as smaller vehicles would be used and turning space was available. In answer to questions, he assured councillors that there would be no impact on the public footpath even during the construction phase.

Councillors thanked him for coming to explain his proposals but the letter of objection had already been sent to the Planning Officer and it would now be for Cumberland Council as planning authority to assess the application and make a decision.

**70/23 FLOODING & DRAINAGE ISSUES**

**Cllr Millington declared his pecuniary interest as owner of a property affected.**

It was noted that there had been no further progress with work on the B5345 near Abbey Vale. The entrance to the culvert was still surrounded by barriers and the hole in the road near the Byersteds junction was still marked with traffic cones. This was causing a potential danger as traffic heading north had to move out to avoid the cones. Cllr Minshaw agreed to check with Highways when the work would be completed.

There had recently been flooding affecting a property on Sea Mill Lane, apparently due to water flowing down from a blocked surface water drain from Nethertown Rd. There was concern that this was could cause a weakening of the retaining bank which could be a potential risk to other properties. United Utilities had investigated and confirmed that the flooding was not from a foul water drain but appeared to be from a surface water drain blocked by tree roots. Although the incident had been reported to Cumberland Council on 4 April, it appeared that the full implications had not been fully appreciated until Cllr Minshaw had taken up the matter. The Highways engineer had now contacted the property owner and had arranged for investigations to take place as a matter of urgency.

It was RESOLVED to write to Cumberland Council expressing appreciation for their help in getting investigations underway and asking that the matter be fully investigated and resolved to ensure that there was no recurrence of the problems.

**71/23 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL**

Cllr Minshaw explained that the new Cumberland Council came into being on 1 April and was now providing all the services previously provided by CBC and CCC.

He explained that he would be happy to follow up on any outstanding matters, if the Parish Council could provide the details. Councillors reported that the new signage at the top of Sea Mill Lane had been agreed but was not yet in place. Cllr Millington would forward details to Cllr Minshaw so that he could confirm the position with Highways. Cllr Hale asked Cllr Minshaw to feedback to Highways comments on the difficulty of reporting problems with public rights of way via the online reporting system.

New Traffic Regulation Orders were being considered for the Whitehaven area and Cllr Minshaw offered to take up any new requests from the Parish Council. It was suggested that a 20mph limit on the B5345 from Abbey Farm to the entrance to Fairladies should be reconsidered. In the past there had been a 20mph limit in parts of the village but this had subsequently been removed.

The recycling bins at the beach car park had been taken away temporarily while work was taking place but would be put back once work was completed.

There had recently been an accident when a visitor had fallen on the lifeboat ramp. Cllr Minshaw had held a meeting with officers to discuss access to the beach. Officers had agreed to erect some signage but had indicated that the steps would not be replaced, as a plan was to be developed for improvements to the promenade. Councillors noted that the report on the promenade and the groynes had been commissioned many months ago but nothing further had been heard. Cllr Minshaw agreed to follow this up with the officers concerned.

The new Community Panels would hold their first meeting in June with the St Bees/Egremont ward falling within the Whitehaven area. The Panel would be made up of the Cumberland councillors for the area plus some co-opted members representing the police, health services etc. The new Panels would have some delegated powers similar to the former Local Area Committees. The Panels would work with a Neighbourhood Meeting which would include representatives of parish councils and local organisations, although the details were still to be decided. Cllr Gilmour asked how this would impact on the West Copeland Partnership. Cllr Minshaw explained that the Parish Council could continue to meet with Egremont Town Council and neighbouring parishes but he would speak to Cllr Pollen about the future governance of the group.

### **72/23 BEACH LITTER BIN**

A response had been received from CBC officers to the Parish Council's letter asking for an explanation for the delay in providing a bird proof bin by the beach café. The reply indicated that the bin would not be installed until a new vehicle was delivered which was designed to empty these bins. The reply did not explain why other bird proof bins were already being emptied routinely. This bin was often full with rubbish being strewn around giving a poor impression to visitors. Cllr Argyle agreed to speak to the owners of the beach café to follow up the approach made by Cllr Hailes and seek their help in dealing with the situation on a temporary basis.

It was RESOLVED to ask Cllr Minshaw to take up the matter with Cumberland Council officers.  
(Cllr Minshaw left the meeting at this point.)

### **73/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

#### **(a) Financial Report**

The summary of the accounts at 31 March 2023 was received and noted. A detailed report on the year end position would be available at the next meeting.

Bills had been sent out for allotment rents for the coming year and a number of payments had already been received. A payment of £4750 had been received from Northern Rail's Seedcorn Fund which would offset the expenditure incurred in 2022.23 on designs etc for the Station car park extension.

#### **(b) Internal Audit Report**

The internal audit report for 2022/23 was received and noted. The report made no recommendations and identified some areas of good practice. Councillors thanked the Clerk and members of FRAG for their work in managing and overseeing the Parish Council's financial systems.

It was noted the Harry Strong had indicated that he would now be standing down as Internal Auditor, It was RESOLVED that a letter be sent to Mr Strong thanking him for his work over recent years which had helped the Parish Council to develop its financial management systems.

#### **(c) Donations**

St Bees & District Garden Society had requested a contribution from the Parish Council towards the costs of staging the Annual Show.

It was RESOLVED to make a donation of £200.

#### **(d) Payments**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- JRB Enterprise Ltd –dispenser bags £170.65 + £34.13 VAT Total £204.78
- CALC – annual subscription Total £344.55
- Cumberland Council – play area repairs £619.83 + £123.97 VAT Total £743.80
- Printpoint – posters Total £25.00
- J Donaldson – salary April Total £692.49

## 1448

- J Donaldson – reimb for printer ink charge £8.32 + £1,67 VAT Total £9.99
- E J Taylor -reimb for Coronation party expenses Total £118.30
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (April) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00

The payments made since last meeting were noted:

- N Bettinson – reimb for plants £120.88 +£16.49 VAT Total £137.37
- J Donaldson - reimb for defibrillator battery £223.00 + £44.60 VAT Total £267.60
- J Donaldson -VIB petty cash top up Total 61.93
- D Robinson (chq 002936) – reimb for VIB plants £208.19 +£41.64 VAT Total £249.83
- Water Plus water/wastewater toilets Total £151.13 (direct debit 01/04/23)
- Answer 4-U -answering service £12.69 + £2.54 Total £15.23 (direct debit 17/04/23)
- Npower – electricity to beach toilets £31.79 +£ 1.59 VAT Total £33.38 (direct debit 14/04/23)

### **74/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS**

Cllr Ritson had reported that the Headteacher would be writing to the Parish Council with further information on the plans for fencing etc at the Village School. It was also noted that the Headteacher would be leaving the school in the next few months but a successor had not yet been appointed. The Parish Council would extend an invitation to the new Head in due course to come and meet councillors.

### **75/23 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

It was noted that there had been more frequent police patrols with the lighter nights and the start of the Easter holidays. Any incidents should continue to be reported to the police.

### **76/23 CLIMATE GROUP WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Linton reported that the working group had looked at whether there were any unused areas which could be sown with wild flowers. A possible site had been identified which it was thought belonged to St Bees School.

It was RESOLVED to approach St Bees School to seek their help and co-operation.

### **77/23 PROJECT REPORTS**

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

Cllr Hale explained that plans were well advanced for the street party to mark the Coronation. St Bees School had offered accommodation in the case of rain. Local government reorganisation had caused some delay in progressing the road closure application but Cllr Minshaw had agreed to help if required. Spending on the street party was anticipated to be well within the budget. Cllr Bettinson offered to plant a young oak tree in Beck Edge Garden to commemorate the coronation and it was also proposed to purchase a commemorative seat. Several possible sites for the seat were proposed.

It was RESOLVED to site the new commemorative seat in Priory Paddock.

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

Cllr Linton had organised a successful beach clean on 25 March with 25 volunteers attending, including a group from the Isle of Man. The next beach cleans would be on 22 April and 29 May.

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

There was no progress to report.

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

Cllr Taylor reported that there would be a further meeting on 19 April with the Community Rail Partnership, Network Rail and officers from Cumberland Council. Representatives of Network Rail would be visiting St Bees on 3 July and the Community Rail Partnership would be holding their meeting in St Bees on 27 July. St Bees would also feature on the cover of the new Northern Rail timetable.

#### **(e) Valley Link Cycle Track**

There was no further progress to report.

**(f) Priory Paddock**

Volunteers from the Friends group had been carrying out some work and more plants had been ordered. An Open Day would be taking place on the afternoon of Sunday 23 April.

**(g) Interpretation Boards**

There had been no progress since the last meeting.

**78/23 FOOTPATHS**

The report by Cllr Hale was received and noted. Countryside Access officers had been made aware of the problems with access to PROW 423003A and would take appropriate action. Repairs were still awaited to the footpaths damaged during the floods at the start of the year.

It was reported that the spring on the gate at the end of the Dandy Walk was not strong enough to ensure that the gate closed properly. The Clerk would ask the lengthsman to fit a new spring.

**79/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

There were no reports from councillors.

**80/23 CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. The lengthsman had been asked to refix the nosings on the steps to the Fairladies car park.

**81/23 CORRESPONDENCE**

(a)The Environment Agency had agreed that the Rolls Royce SMR design would now be progressing to the next stage of the Generic Design Assessment (Step 2). Noted.

(b)CALC had provided more information on the new Emergency Alerts System to be used to send texts to all mobile phones in the event of major issues such as severe flooding, terrorist attacks etc. The system would be tested nationally on 23 April. Noted.

(c)Cumbria Action for Sustainability had circulated a newsletter with details of upcoming events. Noted.

(d)CALC had circulated details of a consultation by DLUHC on the Community Infrastructure Levy. The consultation would cover technical aspects of the design of the levy and preparation and content of the regulations. NALC would be responding to the consultation and would be interested in views from local councils. Noted

(e)CALC had provided details of changes to its structure to align with the new unitary authorities. Kate McGibbon would be the support officer for parish/town councils within the Cumberland Council area. Noted

(f)Trudy Harrison MP had organised a Skills & Careers Fair to take place on 28 April in Whitehaven Civic Hall. Noted

(g)Details had been received of an online survey by Healthwatch Cumberland on public involvement in the planning of services. Details were available from the Clerk.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

NALC Newsletter

NALC Chief Executive's Weekly Bulletins

Rural Services Network – weekly bulletin

Cumbria Police update Mar

Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder update

Open Spaces Society Mar Update

LGR Updates

Connecting Cumbria Newsletter

CALC News Jan-Feb

Cumberland Council Partnership Newsletter

**82/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA**

A question had arisen about whether camper vans were allowed to park in Fairladies car park. At present the Parish Council had no specific rules about the use of the car park and there was no signage to show which spaces were reserved for residents. It was agreed that a small working group would draw up some draft rules for approval.

**83/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Parish Council Meeting take place on Monday 15 May 2023 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....