

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 17 June 2024 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr G Minshaw, Cumberland Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: 3 Members of the public

97/24 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public. He explained that Cllr Graham would be arriving late and, if necessary, discussion of agenda item 9 would be delayed until he was present.

98/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr G Gilmour.

99/24 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that Cllr Millington had been given a dispensation to allow him to participate in discussion of drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane which affected his and other properties.

100/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public present expressed concerns about safety issues at the Abbey Vale/B5345 junction and pedestrian safety on Abbey Road. One member of the public was also interested in progress with drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane which was to be discussed under Cumberland Council & Highways Issues.

101/24 TRAFFIC & SAFETY ISSUES

(a) Safety Issues – Abbey Vale/B5345 junction

The Chairman invited members of the public to outline their concerns. They explained that traffic leaving the village tended to speed up after rounding the bends with many vehicles exceeding the 30mph limit as they approached the entrance to Abbey Vale. Traffic coming down the hill into the village from the north often travelled in excess of the speed limit. Drivers had little warning of the junction because of overhanging hedges and shrubs and the rumble strips laid some time ago were ineffective. Drivers exiting Abbey Vale had very limited visibility due to overgrown hedges and gardens. There had been an accident at the junction a few weeks ago and near misses were a regular occurrence. Residents believed that better speed enforcement, improved signage, cutting back overgrown hedges/shrubs together with further traffic calming measures were required to address the safety concerns.

Cllr Millington explained that the Parish Council had been involved in discussions with Highways officers in the past to look at traffic calming measures in that area and could do so again but it should be noted that enhanced measures could cause a noise nuisance which some residents might find unacceptable. Highways had powers to take action to deal with overgrown hedges and verges which obstructed the highway. The Parish Council could also press the local police for action on speed enforcement and he encouraged residents to report their concerns to the police individually to raise the profile of the issue. In addition, the Parish Council's Speedwatch volunteers could monitor speeds at this location.

It was RESOLVED to

- organise a site meeting with Highways officers, Cllr Minshaw and representatives of residents to discuss better signage and more effective traffic calming measures
- contact the police to request speed enforcement visits by officers
- request Highways to take action on the overgrown hedges & shrubs to improve visibility at the junction
- include this location on the schedule for monitoring by the Community Speedwatch Team

Residents also pointed out that recent highways work within the estate had been left unfinished. Cllr Minshaw agreed to visit the site and take up the issue with Highways officers.

The issue of pedestrian safety on Abbey Rd was raised. The Chairman explained the work that the Parish Council was currently doing with Highways to look at possible improvements in the context of the recent planning application for a further 5 houses.

(b) Speed limit

It was clear from matters raised at recent meetings that traffic speeds were a serious concern. Some years ago there had been a 20mph limit in the village but this had been removed, apparently due to a technicality. Cumberland Council was reviewing its policy on speed limits and this would provide an opportunity to ask for a 20mph speed limit in St Bees to be reinstated. Individual members of the public could also contact Highways with the same request to demonstrate support.

It was RESOLVED to ask Cumberland Council to replace the existing 30 mph limit in St Bees with a 20mph limit.

(Cllr Graham joined the meeting at this point)

102/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 20 MAY 2024

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the annual meeting on 20 May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

103/24 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

(a) Flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont Road

The Area Highways Network Manager had confirmed that work to address the flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont road was going to plan and was expected to be completed by the end of July. The work was currently taking place on private land so might not be obvious to passers-by. The road would need to be closed for a few days in mid-July to allow the work to be finished.

(b) Blocked Drain – entrance to Station car park

Cllr Minshaw reported that contractors were expected to be on site shortly to clear roots which were thought to be blocking the drain.

(c) Drainage Issues – Sea Mill Lane

Contractors had been on site and had cleared some tree roots. It appeared that the drain was not blocked or broken but the drain had several sharp bends which it was thought impeded the flow during periods of heavy rain, causing water to back up. A chamber had been found in one of the gardens but this had not yet been opened. The contractor would be providing a full report to Cumberland Council before further work took place.

(d) Collapsed Wall on Abbey Rd

Although the obstruction was barriered off, it continued to pose a safety risk for drivers exiting Abbey Farm. Cllr Minshaw agreed to contact the Highways Manager about the possibility of traffic lights to mitigate the risk for vehicles exiting Abbey Farm, as had been suggested at the last meeting. It was noted that correspondence had been received from the owners of the two properties involved, apologising for the inconvenience to other residents and explaining that the matter was in the hands of the two insurance companies involved and they were doing everything possible to press for a resolution.

(e) Street naming

Cumberland Council had invited comments from the Parish Council on the proposed name for the small development opposite Abbey Vale. The owners had proposed the street name 'Woodlands Way, as the area was shown as woodland on historic maps. Councillors suggested that 'Way' implied a through route and that 'Close' would be more appropriate.

It was RESOLVED to propose the alternative name of Woodland Close.

(f) Other Cumberland Council & Highways Issues

- Cllr Minshaw had reported the hedge overgrowing the pavement on Abbey Road. Highways would take up the matter but hedge cutting did not usually take place until after the nesting season.
- Cumberland Council had now received the consultant's report which would advise on whether the groyne should be repaired or removed. A meeting was due to take place with the Environment Agency shortly and Cllr Minshaw was asked to obtain a copy of the report and notes of the meeting for the July meeting.
- It was noted that recycling collections had not taken place in some areas because the vehicle was out of service. The replacement vehicle was too large to access narrow roads. The small vehicle was now back in service but it would not be possible to revisit the missed areas before the next scheduled collection. It was noted that there had been little communication to make residents aware of the problem.
- The company which emptied the large recycling containers at the beach car park had gone into administration. Cumberland Council was asking residents not to leave recycling beside the bins but to use household recycling sites until alternative arrangements could be made. The message would be publicised on the Parish Council's Facebook page.
- The verge on Beach Rd which was part of the rewilding project had been damaged during recent work by Viberoptix. However, Viberoptix had undertaken to pay for replacement plants and to help with the planting.
- The next Community Panel meeting would be on 20 June at the Beacon Portal. There would be no public participation event before the meeting in view of the imminent general election.

104/24 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**(a) Monthly Financial Report**

A summary of the accounts at 31 May was received and noted. FRAG would be meeting shortly to review the Qtr 1 variance figures and look at the new model financial regulations issued by NALC.

(b) Village Hall -Payment Arrangements

In recent years the Parish Council had made an annual donation to the Village Hall Committee to cover the use of the hall and upstairs room. It would help the VHC to secure grant funding if they were able to demonstrate regular income from lettings. If the Parish Council paid monthly hire charges, this would more accurately reflect the regular use of the hall.

It was RESOLVED to move to monthly payments for use of the hall and office.

(c) Weather Station

The weather station was now 20 years old and was no longer used for the website. The cost of a new data module would be over £200.

It was RESOLVED to write off the weather station as beyond economic repair.

(d) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity May £35.03 + £1.75 VAT Total £36.78
- Open Spaces Society – subscription Total £45.00
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting May £538.94 + £107.79 Total £646.73
- J Donaldson – salary June Total £871.25
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT Total £11.99
- HMRC – PAYE Qtr 1 Total £676.14
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service June £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

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

- Cumbria North Girl Guiding – donation (agreed at last meeting) Total £300.00
- WDS Ltd – amended car park designs £575.00 + £115.00 Total £690.00
- Answer 4 U -answering service £14.50 + £2.90 VAT Total £17.40 (direct debit 17/06/24)

105/24 BOAT PARK

A request had been received to lease/rent the small area at Sea Mill currently used as a boat park. At present the area was used to store only one seaworthy boat and was looking untidy. If it was agreed to lease the area, the prospective lessees had promised to tidy up and maintain the area so that it could be used to store equipment and they were happy that the boat could continue to be stored there. It was noted that the boat park had been renovated and advertised a few years ago but there had been little demand. There was discussion about whether there were other community uses for the land but no immediate projects were proposed.

It was RESOLVED to lease the area to the applicant for a period of five years at a peppercorn rent with some conditions attached on its use.

106/24 HYPERFAST GB PROJECT

Cllr Graham had attended the public meeting organised by Fibrus on 21 May and had circulated a report to councillors. It had been explained at the meeting that the government contract only covered certain parts of the village and installation of cables did not automatically guarantee access to higher speed broadband. Residents had been advised to use the postcode checker on the Fibrus website to check whether their property was within the contract but it was noted that the information provided had proved to be inconsistent and confusing. Fibrus representatives had agreed to attend the July Parish Council meeting to explain the position fully and answer questions from councillors.

107/24 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The environmental survey had now closed and there had been an encouraging response. The data had been collated and would be discussed by the Working Group at its next meeting.

108/24 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Beach & Play Area**

It was agreed to move ahead with the project for artwork on the outside of the beach toilet block. It was suggested that the design could feature three roundels portraying images typical of St Bees which could be printed on boards and mounted on the exterior walls. Cllrs Linton and Argyle would look at the space available and possible designs.

The parts had finally arrived for the zip wires and it was hoped that they would be back in operation shortly. It was noted that there were lengthy delays in obtaining replacement parts from Wicksteed and bearings for the dizzy roundabout were still awaited.

(b) Office Improvements

The decoration of the parish council room was almost complete and the flooring had been laid. Shelving was being ordered so records could be stored safely.

It was RESOLVED to authorise purchase of shelving within the budget of £500.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

There was no progress to report.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

Cllr Taylor had provided a written report explaining that initial cost estimates were being sought.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Cllr Taylor reported that there was no further progress following the recent discussions with officers of Cumberland Council.

(f) Priory Paddock

Cumbria Wildlife Trust had held an event on 25 May with a talk in the Village Hall and a walk around Priory Paddock as part of the Planting for Pollinators Project. It had been well supported and 17 different pollinating insects had been identified in the Paddock.

(g) Interpretation Boards

There was no progress to report.

(h) Storage Shed

The Village Hall Committee had agreed in principle that a small shed could be sited in the yard for the storage of tree planting equipment etc.

(i) Community Events

It was noted that the St Bees Big Bash would be taking place on Sat 29 June at St Bees School. It had been suggested that the Parish Council might wish to have a stand to promote its work but, unfortunately, there were insufficient volunteers available on the day.

109/24 PLANNING**(a) New Applications**

The Planning Advisory Group reported on a number of applications received for comment since the last meeting. As several of these had deadlines of only 21 days for comment, it was noted that the Clerk had responded under delegated authority to the following applications:

- Ref 4/23/2394/0F1 Re-consultation on amended description & additional/amended information:
Change of use & alteration of land for siting of 5 holiday pods including access road, drainage, landscaping, solar panels, parking area and proposed paving/decking
Land at Nethertown Rd, St Bees
Comments submitted: Whilst noting the changes, the Parish Council believed that the objections put forward in response to the original application remained valid.
- Ref 4/23/2366/0F1 Erection of roadside fence with screen hedge planting, installation of domestic oil tank, construction of garden/bike store & screened domestic waste bin enclosure (retrospective)
Moorleys, Egremont
Comments submitted: No objection
- Ref 4/23/2367/0L1 Listed Building Consent for above works
Moorleys, Egremont
Comments submitted: No objection
- Ref 4/24/2182/0N1 Prior notification application for concreting of yard & installation of rainwater collecting tank
Spring Bank Farm, High Walton
Comments submitted: No objection
- Ref 4/24/2153/0F1 Proposed two storey extension – additional & updated information
4 Ellerbeck Barns, Egremont
Comments submitted: No objection

(b) Other Planning Matters

(i) A resident had provided a copy of his response to the amended application for holiday pods on Nethertown Road.

(ii) Concerns had been raised about construction traffic damaging the grassed area at the Nethertown Rd/B5345 junction.

(c) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/24/2096/0F1 Demolition of existing detached bungalow & erection of replacement dwelling and garage – Mellendene, High House, Rd

4/24/2100/0L1 Listed building consent to install window in kitchen -10 Abbey Farm

4/24/2120/TPO Felling of cedar tree in conservation area – 3 Abbey Farm

4/24/2145/0N1 Prior approval for farm building -Moor Platt, Egremont

110/24 FOOTPATHS

It was noted that there was no progress with the footpath from Scalebarrow to Rottington which was obstructed by crops.

111/24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Mellor reported that the Village School was seeking new governors. Anyone interested was invited to contact Cllr Mellor for more details.

112/24 CLERK’S REPORT

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

113/24 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) CALC was seeking nominations for directors (two directors from each of the former local authority areas). It was RESOLVED to nominate Cllr Sim for re-election.
- (b) CALC Cumberland Branch would be meeting on Tuesday 2 July at 7pm via Teams. The meeting would include a presentation by Carolyn Otle, Community Resilience Co-ordinator with Cumbria CVS. Noted.
- (c) NALC had provided details of the 2024 Star Councils Awards. Nominations would close on 6 Sept. Noted
- (d) CALC had provided details of its new office address and new website. Noted.
- (e) An email had been received from a researcher for Lord Foster encouraging councils to support the introduction of legislation to improve safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries following a number of house fires linked to the charging of these batteries. Noted
- (f) CALC had forwarded information on funding opportunities for community energy projects. Noted
- (g) CALC had forwarded guidance on parish council activities during the pre-election period. Noted
- (h) CALC had forwarded details of a National Resilience Website & Toolkit. Noted.
- (i) Details had been received of the AGM of the Open Spaces Society on 4 July. Noted.
- (j) A letter had been received from the Guides thanking the council for its donation. Noted.
- (k) An email had been received from the Village Hall Committee thanking the council for its contribution to the costs of the new sub-lease. Noted.
- (l) Cumbria Local Resilience Forum was holding two workshops on summer hazards. Noted.
- (m) CAfS would be holding an event at Rheged to explain the fundamentals of climate science. Noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter
- Cumberland Council newsletters
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- Cumbria Police Newsletter May - Whitehaven & District
- Cumbria Police Newsletter May - Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
- Northern Gas Stakeholder Update
- CALC News April/May
- Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Newsletter Spring/Summer

114/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a) It was noted that St Bees School was working with the Triers on a proposal for a 10K run next year.
- (b) Cllrs Sim and Taylor had attended the recent Speech Day at St Bees School when the new library had been officially opened.

115/24 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 15 July 2024 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....