

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

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

In attendance: Cllr G Minshaw, Cumberland Council

Also present: 4 members of the public.

128/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

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

129/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs D Millington & J Mellor.

130/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation

131/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 19 JUNE 2023

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 19 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to a minor amendment to min 115/23(b) to show the date of the direct debit payment to Npower as May 2023.

132/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two members of the public present explained that they were interested in the agenda item about parking issues on the Beach Estate. Another was interested in the discussion of drainage issues affecting properties on Sea Mill Lane to be discussed under Cumberland Council matters.

133/23 PARKING ISSUES – BEACH ESTATE

The Chairman explained that correspondence had been received from a local resident about recent problems with inconsiderate parking on Firth Drive. He invited the members of the public present to explain further.

Residents living on Firth Drive were experiencing difficulties in getting vehicles in/out of their drives because visitors to the beach were parking along the road to avoid paying car park fees. The parked vehicles were narrowing the road to the extent that manoeuvring in and out of driveways was difficult and emergency vehicles would be unable to get through. On a recent occasion a driver had been challenged by residents and asked to move his vehicle but had refused on the grounds that he was not parked illegally. Residents had requested a 'residents only' parking scheme some months ago and the Parish Council had endorsed this at the meeting in Sept 2022. Cllr Whiteside (County Councillor at that time) had forwarded this request to Highways but had suggested that it could take 18 months for the request to be considered.

Cllr Minshaw explained that a scheme of this sort would require a Traffic Regulation Order and it could be some time before an Order was due to be prepared for this area. However, he undertook to follow up the matter with Highways officers and report back on the position.

Residents questioned how a 'residents only' scheme would be enforced and whether residents could undertake training to do this. Councillors explained that on street parking restrictions were enforced by Cumberland Council Parking Enforcement Officers. Cllr Minshaw would check with Highways officers whether there was scope for volunteers to help with enforcement.

134/23 GROYNES

The poor state of the groyne at the beach had been raised at the last meeting. Cumberland Council's Flood Defence Officer had been asked for an update on progress with the specialist report which had been commissioned more than a year ago, the remit of which included the structural integrity of the promenade and the effectiveness of the groyne.

Mr Bechelli had replied that the consultant's report was not yet available. He had stated that at this stage no decision could be made on replacement of the groynes and, even if the report recommended their replacement, it would be a major scheme requiring central government funding. It was reported by councillors that new groynes had been installed near Allonby, suggesting that such schemes were possible.

The remaining groynes had deteriorated to such an extent that they were now an eyesore and posed a danger to beach users. The timber could not be reused in any future replacement so it was suggested that the damaged groynes and unused posts should be removed as they are an eyesore, until a decision was made on whether the groynes should be replaced. Cllr Minshaw agreed to arrange a meeting with David Bechelli to discuss the way forward.

135/23 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw reported on several Cumberland Council issues:

- Highways officers were asking for suggestions of where dropped kerbs were needed. Councillors would contact Cllr Minshaw with any suggested locations.
- consultation was taking place on the design of the sign for the lifeboat ramp.
- Highways had confirmed that the system for reporting problems was being redesigned so that issues with public rights of way could be reported more easily.
- the replacement of the outdated brown sign near the level crossing was being taken up with Highways officers.
- the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel would hold its next meeting in September. It was hoped to set up the Network Panel before then and a questionnaire was being devised to identify the priorities of local communities. There were three seats available for co-option on the Community Panel. No decisions had yet been made on co-option but it was likely that they would include representatives of housing providers, police and health services.

It was noted that the redundant 'mud on road' signs were still in place on the B5345 above Abbey Vale but work was taking place on the damaged gully and Byersteds Road was currently closed for repair work.

The issue of the blocked surface water drain from Nethertown Rd, which had caused flooding problems for properties on Sea Mill Lane, was still not fully resolved. A member of the public explained that he had emailed Highways officers with details of the deep hole which had appeared in his garden but had received no reply. It was noted that Highways had confirmed that a more extensive camera survey was being commissioned but this had not yet taken place. Cllr Minshaw agreed to follow up the matter with the officers concerned and report back.

The rewilding of a section of verge on Beach Road was moving ahead. Staff from the Planting for Pollinators project would be working with volunteers on 20 & 23 September to plant plug plants.

Cllr Minshaw then left the meeting.

136/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Financial Report

The summary of accounts at 30 June was received and noted. FRAG would be meeting shortly to review the Qtr 1 variance figures and would provide a report for the next meeting. The direct debit mandate to Npower had expired and a decision was required on whether to renew the mandate.

It was RESOLVED not to renew the mandate now that payments could be made electronically.

(b) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Works 4 You – grass cutting June £517.22 + £103.44 Total £620.66
- Cumberland Council – play area inspections Qtr 1 £382.65 + £76.53 VAT Total £459.18
- Egremont Town Council- contribution to lengthsman scheme Total £2000.00
- Blomfields Ltd – plants for baskets (VIB) £238.00 + £47.60 VAT Total £285.60
- Npower -electricity to toilets April £31.69 + £1.58 Total £33.27
- Npower- electricity to toilets May £32.13 + £1.61 VAT Total £33.74

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- Npower – electricity to toilets June £36.75 + £1.84 Total £38.59
- J Donaldson -salary July Total £633.49
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £8.32 + £1.67 VAT Total £9.9
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (July) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

Payments made since last meeting were noted:

- Water Plus- water/wastewater to toilets Total £40.46 (direct debit 02/07/23)
- Answer 4-U -answering service £11.50 + £2.30 Total £13.80 (direct debit 17/07/23)

137/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS

Cllr Mellor had reported that the school intended to maintain the path from The Crofts and it was noted that strimming had recently taken place.

The independent safeguarding survey had taken place but the report was not yet available. The report had been commissioned by the Changing Lives Multi-Academy Trust which the Village School was expected to join in September.

It was RESOLVED to seek a meeting with representatives of the Multi-Academy Trust to discuss the council's plans for upgrading the play area and the school's plans for safeguarding measures.

138/23 LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

Cllr Taylor and the Clerk had attended two meetings to discuss the future of the lengthsman scheme. There had been agreement that the scheme was worthwhile and that a new contract or service level agreement should be arranged from 1 April 2024. Egremont Town Council was seeking advice on how the contract should be set up as the status of West Copeland Partnership is unclear. In the meantime Works 4 You Ltd had agreed to provide more detailed reports on the work undertaken by the lengthsman.

139/23 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Linton had provided a written report which was received and noted. The exercise to create a parish wildlife map was welcomed and volunteers would now be sought to help with the project.

140/23 PROJECT REPORTS

(a)Community Events

No specific plans were suggested at this stage to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day in 2024.

(b)Beach & Play Area

Work had started to repair the render on the external wall of the toilets. It had not proved possible to obtain competitive quotations so the Chairman had authorised acceptance of the quote from Stobbarts Ltd to ensure that the work could be done as soon as possible.

Cllr Linton had checked the guidance on the government website about avian flu before the recent beach clean went ahead. The risk assessment had been modified to take account of the advice not to touch dead or sick birds and all those taking part had been made aware of this.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

There was no progress to report. It was noted that the Scouts were keen to be involved in discussions about future plans.

(d)Station car park extension/transport hub

Representatives of Network Rail had visited St Bees on 3 July and the meeting had also included representatives of Cumberland Council and Community Rail Partnership. One of those attending was Head of Regeneration & Placemaking for NR's North West and Central regions and she was interested in the potential of St Bees for promoting tourism on the coastal rail line. The visitors had been shown the proposed car park extension, the Priory and the beach area.

There had been significant progress with the project. Network Rail had now provided Heads of Terms for a 50 year lease on the existing car park which would provide long term access to the adjacent land. The Chairman outlined the main terms and the charges to be made by NR for drawing up the lease.

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The next step would be to work with Cumberland Council to secure a community asset transfer of the adjacent land.

It was RESOLVED to:

- accept the Heads of Terms and continue discussions with Network Rail to complete a 50 year lease on the existing car park
- approve expenditure on the charges to be made by Network Rail for drawing up the lease (£6600 + VAT + disbursements)
- continue discussions with Cumberland Council to secure the asset transfer of the adjoining land
- approve expenditure up to a maximum of £1500 to obtain a formal cost estimate for the creation of the new car park to underpin funding applications and support discussions with Cumberland Council.

It was also noted that the Cumbria Community Rail Partnership would be holding its meeting in St Bees on 27 July. The staff of the Community Rail Partnership had been very helpful in making the necessary contacts within NR which had enabled the project to reach this stage. The Chairman and Vice Chairman had been invited to explain the travel hub project to Partnership members and would provide a tour of the Priory.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

There was no further progress to report.

(f) Priory Paddock

The lengthsman had done some work to shred prunings and remove soft material. The compost bins were now in place. The Friends of the Paddock had entered the RHS community award scheme in the small copse category. Assessors had visited the Paddock and the results were awaited.

(g) Interpretation Boards

The boards for the various locations were due to be delivered tomorrow. The lengthsman would be asked to install them.

141/23 PLANNING

(a) New applications

The Planning Advisory Group reported on one new application received for comment:-

- Ref 4/23/2195/TPO Various works to seven trees within the conservation area
Meadow House, High House Rd, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application

(b) Other Planning Matters

Correspondence had been received on behalf of the owners of the plots adjacent to School House, explaining the works which were due to start on site shortly. The grass would be strimmed to meet the visibility splay requirements and consideration would be given to footpath users while the work was taking place. It was noted that it was not expected that there would be any other impact on residents.

(c) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/23/2114/0F1 Change of use from dwelling to mixed use (C3 dwelling house-holiday let)
Hampton House, 29 Main Street, St Bees

142/23 FOOTPATHS

Cllr Hale's written report was received and noted. It had been reported by residents that some of the paths were becoming overgrown. Strimming of public rights of way was a Cumberland Council responsibility but the Clerk had asked the lengthsman to cut back sections of the most popular paths and would try to obtain details of Cumberland Council's schedule to avoid duplication.

143/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports.

144/23 CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk’s report on ongoing matters was received and noted. A number of residents had reported problems with refuse bags being damaged by birds whilst out for collection. The Clerk had contacted Cumberland Council to see if more robust alternatives were available.

145/23 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Correspondence had been received from Cumbria Nature Partnership encouraging councils, communities & businesses to sign a pledge and take action to help pollinating insects. Noted.
- (b) The latest Legal Update had been received from NALC. Noted.
- (c) An email had been received from a local resident thanking Cllr Bettinson for his guided tour of Priory Paddock. Noted.
- (d) Information received on the Community Renewable Energy Event co-hosted by CALC. Noted
- (e) The agenda had been received for the CALC Special General Meeting on 22 July. Noted.
- (f) Details had been received of new government funding for defibrillators in community spaces. Noted.
- (g) Details had been received of CALC Copeland District Association AGM on 25 July. Noted.
- (h) Correspondence had been received from a resident about overgrown roadside verges. The Clerk had replied and Cumberland Council had now cut the verges.
- (i) A request had been received from a visitor wishing to park a motorhome at Station car park. The Clerk had replied and provided details of more suitable options.
- (j) Notification had been received of the closure of Byersteds Rd for utility work from 17 July for 7 days. Noted.
- (k) Cumberland Council had provided a copy of the Order closing a section of FP 423012 for 2 weeks from 7 July for repair work. Noted.
- (l) A letter had been received from a resident about several overgrown public footpaths. The lengthsmen had been asked to trim the sections most affected.
- (m) Correspondence had been received from CALC encouraging parishes to sign up to the Civility & Respect Pledge. Noted.
- (n) Details had been received of energy efficiency grants for properties off the gas grid. Noted.
- (o) Details had been received of a new UK Fund being launched by the National Lottery offering grants from £500k to £5m for projects aimed at expanding/developing community links. Noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- NALC Newsletter & Chief Executive’s Weekly Bulletins
- Rural Services Network – weekly bulletin
- Cumbria Police update June
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- ACT Update June/July
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder update
- Cumberland Partnership Information, LGR and Coronavirus
- Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Summer newsletter
- Trudy Harrison MP Newsletter
- FLAG Newsletter August

146/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

A Family Fun Afternoon would take place on Sat 5 August in St Bees Priory & Grounds with a range of activities including visits and pond dipping in Priory Paddock.

147/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council Meeting take place on Monday 18 Sept 2023 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....