

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 18 September 2023 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Mr J Johnson OBE, Chief Executive, Changing Lives Learning Trust

Also present: 2 members of the public.

148/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting and introduced Jonathan Johnson who would be speaking to the council about developments at the Village School.

149/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs P Argyle, J Mellor & A Linton. Cllr Minshaw, Cumberland Councillor, had also sent his apologies due to work commitments.

150/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

151/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 17 JULY 2023

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 17 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

152/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS

The Chairman invited Mr Johnson to speak to the council about developments at the Village School which was to become part of the Changing Lives Learning Trust in November.

Mr Johnson began by explaining the academy system which offered schools an alternative to remaining within the Local Education Authority system. Academies received the same funding per pupil as LEAs but the funding came direct from central government. This allowed academies greater flexibility in the use of funding rather than the LEA top-slicing the funding to provide central services. Academy Trusts also had greater access to capital funding.

Mr Johnson explained that Changing Lives Learning Trust was a multi-academy trust which was a company limited by guarantee and was sponsored by the NDA, SL and UCLAN. It currently managed 1 secondary school and 4 primary schools with several schools due to join in the next year, including St Bees Village School. In answer to questions, Mr Johnson confirmed that all the schools managed by the Trust were in Cumbria and the Trust had no ambition to take on schools outside the county. The Trust provided some services in-house, such as finance and property management, and contracted out some functions such as HR. Discussions had been taking place with the Village School for some time and the school would join the Changing Lives Trust on 1 November.

Mr Johnson explained that the Changing Lives Trust would lease the land from the LEA. The lease would include the buildings and school field but would not include the area on which the Parish Council play area stood. This would remain with the LEA so discussions about the future of the play area would need to be direct with Cumberland Council. Safeguarding of children whilst at school was of paramount importance and this was likely to demand physical security measures to restrict access to the school field and ensure that litter and dog fouling were eliminated. The footpath from the Crofts to Main Street had been fenced off and would continue to be available for the public to use but there would need to be measures to restrict access to the school field which was used by the children at play times and for PE lessons. Whilst appreciating the need for safeguarding, councillors expressed concern that this could deny children the opportunity to play on the field out of school hours. This was the only green space available in the centre of the village. Mr Johnson explained that arrangements had been made at Westlakes Academy for the grounds to be available for letting out to local groups and the Trust would be happy to have further discussions with the Parish Council about possible options.

Councillors thanked Mr Johnson for his clear explanation of the situation and expressed the wish to establish an ongoing relationship with the school and Changing Lives Trust as the school moved into a new era. Mr Johnson explained that the Changing Lives Trust was committed to working with local communities and he would be happy to maintain the link with the Parish Council. Mr Johnson then left the meeting.

153/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One member of the public indicated that he was interested in the issue of the blocked drain between Nethertown Rd and Sea Mill Lane which would be discussed under Cumberland Council matters. Another member of the public wished to raise the problem of dog fouling along Nethertown Rd and down the public footpath from the pumping station to Sea Mill, a popular route with dog walkers. The Chairman explained the work that had been done in other parts of the village to reduce dog fouling and agreed to ask Cllr Linton to contact her to discuss the issue of signage etc. The state of the pavement south of Outrigg was raised. The pavement was narrow and very uneven making it impossible to use with a wheelchair. There was little scope to widen the pavement on this section but the Clerk would report the uneven surface to Highways.

154/23 GROYNES

The poor state of the groynes at the beach had been raised at the last meeting and Cllr Minshaw had been asked to try to arrange a meeting with Cumberland Council's Flood Defence Officer. Cllr Minshaw had reported that officers were not yet in a position to have meaningful discussions about future plans or recommendations but would be happy to meet representatives of the Parish Council in due course.

155/23 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw had provided a written report on ongoing matters:

- The dog fouling stencils had been repainted as requested
- A quote was still awaited for the new signage at the lifeboat ramp
- The new brown sign to be erected by the level crossing had been designed and, once agreed, it would be manufactured. Cllr Minshaw had asked that a similar sign should be obtained for traffic coming from the opposite direction.
- There had been no further progress with the proposal for a 'residents only' parking scheme on Firth Drive but Cllr Minshaw was continuing to follow this up with Highways officers. Officers had suggested other possible solutions such as contacting the police if driveways were obstructed or requesting 'H Bar' markings across drives, although this would be at residents' own cost.
- Cumberland Council's enforcement team had followed up reports of unauthorised camping at the beach area but there had been no recurrence.
- The Whitehaven & Maritime Community Panel had held its second meeting on 7 September. The initial Community Network Panel would be held on 21 September.
- Active Cumbria Walking to School campaign had been launched to increase the numbers walking or cycling to school and reduce the congestion caused by parked cars around schools.

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 resolved. The initial camera survey had not been able to cover the full length of the drain. A more extensive survey had been promised but had not yet taken place. Cllr Minshaw had requested a progress report and the residents affected had emailed to ask for the survey to take place as soon as possible but with no response. There was still a large hole in the garden of one property which posed a safety risk and there was concern that the position could worsen with further wet weather.

It was RESOLVED to write to Highways to press for urgent action to resolve this issue.

It was reported that the redundant light on the wall of 97 Main Street had still not been removed despite an assurance in Sept 2022 that the light would be removed. The Clerk would follow this up with the officers concerned at Cumberland Council.

156/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**(a) Financial Report**

The summary of accounts at 31 August was received and noted together with the notes of the FRAG meeting on 21 August. . It was noted that the Chairman had authorised expenditure (£800) for urgent repairs to the wall at Station car park.

(b) External Audit

The external audit of the accounts for 2022/23 had been completed with no issues identified. The required notice had been posted on the website and noticeboard.

(c) Internal Audit

As no volunteer had come forward to take over the role of internal auditor for 2023/24, enquiries had been made to find an auditor to perform the role on a paid basis. A neighbouring council had recommended their auditor who had provided details of her qualifications and experience. Her fee would be £200.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Julie Hartley as internal auditor for 2023/24.

(d) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Viking – stationery £64.39+ £12.88 VAT Total £77.27
- Npower -toilet electricity Aug £45.63 + £2.28 VAT Total £47.91
- Information Commissioner – Data Protection renewal Total £40.00
- Baker Mallett LLP – cost estimate £390.00 + £78.00 VAT Total £468.00
- Real Christmas Trees – 18 ft Norway Spruce £387.50 + £77.50 VAT Total £465.00
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting August plus materials for installing new bench & interpretation board £697.22 + £139.44 VAT Total £836.66
- J Donaldson -salary September Total £633.49
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £8.32 + £1.67 VAT, new dog watering bowl £2.91 +£0.58 VAT Total £13.48
- HMRC -Qtr 2 PAYE £710.46
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (Sept) £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 £165.99 (direct debit 1/8/23)
- Answer 4 U -answering service £13.08 + £2.62 VAT Total £15.70 (direct debit 17/8/23)
- Works 4 You Ltd – installation of water butt (VIB) £180.00 + £36.00 Total £216.00
- Moore – audit fee £315.00 + £63.00 Total £378.00
- Npower – toilet electricity (July) £41.04 + £2.05 VAT Total £43.09
- AST Signs -sign & interpretation board £149.66 + £29.93 VAT Total £179.59
- AST Signs – signs & interpretation boards £283.53 + £56.70 VAT Total 340.23
- Works 4 You Ltd - grass cutting July/clearing allotment £577.22 + £115.44 Total £692.66
- St Bees PCC – printing of annual report in magazine Total £70.00
- YNH Ltd – domain name renewal Total £22.00
- J Donaldson – salary August Total £633.49
- J Donaldson – printer ink cost £8.32 + £1.67 VAT Total £9.99
- D Robinson -reimb for plants (VIB) £110.72 + £21.15 VAT Total £131.87 (chq 2941)
- Water Plus -allotment water Total £36.48 (direct debit 23/8/23)
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service August £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (SO)

157/23 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

CLr Linton had provided a written report which was received and noted.

158/23 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Community Events**

The Christmas tree had been ordered. The Clerk had contacted the British Legion about wreaths for Remembrance Day.

(b) Beach & Play Area

Work to repair the render on the external wall of the toilets had been completed.

A member of staff at St Bees School had organised a beach clean on 15 Sept as part of the Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean.

There were several items of equipment out of use awaiting repair at the beach play area. The bearings on the roundabout had failed recently and arrangements had been made to take it out of service as a matter of urgency. A meeting was being sought with the Cumberland Council inspector to discuss time scales/costs for repairs and whether it might be more cost effective to replace some items.

It was noted that Cllr Graham had agreed to join the inspection rota. It was suggested that it would be useful to have some basic tools and equipment immediately available if it was necessary to take play equipment out of service.

It was RESOLVED to purchase tools etc at a cost of £200.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

The discussion with Mr Johnson earlier in the meeting had clarified that the land on which the play area stands would remain in the ownership of Cumberland Council. It was not clear whether this would change its designation as school land and therefore make it easier to secure a lease on the land. It was also noted that vehicle access to the play area was via the land to be transferred to the MAT and there would need to be provision in the lease to allow continued use of this route.

It was RESOLVED to contact Changing Lives Trust and Cumberland Council about safeguarding vehicle access to the play area and to write to Cumberland Council to reopen discussions about a lease on the play area land.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

There had been significant progress in discussions with Network Rail and Cumberland Council since the last meeting. A firm of quantity surveyors had advised on costings but further tests were required on the ground surface before the costings could be finalised. The cost of the testing would be £1790 + VAT. Some further design work would be required to reflect changes in the original plans. Discussions were continuing with Cumberland Council about the procedure to be followed to secure an asset transfer of the adjacent land and discussions were also taking place to identify possible sources of funding. It was hoped to have the information available for a full briefing of the Parish Council in early November with a view to making decisions on whether to proceed with the project at the November meeting.

It was RESOLVED to proceed with the ground surface testing at a cost of £1790 + VAT.

It was further RESOLVED to go ahead with the design work required provided that the cost was within the approved budget.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

There was no further progress to report.

(f) Priory Paddock

The seat to commemorate the Coronation in May was now in place. A price of approx. £50 had been received for a new sign for the gate.

It was RESOLVED to go ahead with the purchase of a new sign.

(g) Interpretation Boards

The boards for the various locations now in place. The board to be sited near the Priory would be installed shortly.

159/23 PLANNING**(a) New applications**

There were no new applications to be considered.

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It was noted that no objection had been made to the following application received over the summer break: - Ref 4/23/2224/TPO Felling & Removal of various trees within the conservation area – Highcroft House, High House Rd, St Bees

(b) Other Planning Matters

Correspondence had been received from the owner of one of the plots adjacent to School House, detailing their proposed response to the conditions attached to the planning approval.

An email had also been received from the owner of a plot on Nethertown Road explaining that work would start on site on 3 October and confirming that nearby residents had been notified.

(c) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/23/2150/0F1 Alterations & two storey extension – 13 Abbots Way

4/23/2151?0E1 Certificate of Lawfulness for an existing use of land to extend domestic curtilage & erection of two sheds – 6 Richmond Crescent

4/23/2195/TPO Various works to 7 trees within conservation area – Meadow House, High House Rd

4.23/2086/0B1 Variation of conditions 2 to 9 &11 of approval ref 4/21/2369/0R1 – Land to south of Southrigg, Nethertown Rd

4/23/2100/0R1 Reserved matters relating to access, road layout & drainage – Land to south of Southrigg, Nethertown Rd

160/23 FOOTPATHS

Cllr Hale's written report was received and noted. Cumberland Council had forwarded proposals for minor changes to rights of way following designation of the Coast to Coast Walk as a national trail. The changes reflected the routes already commonly used by walkers.

161/23 VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

The Village Hall Committee had provided copies of the minutes of their AGM and annual accounts for information.

162/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports.

163/23 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. The seat at Scalebarrow had been found to be in a very poor state and beyond repair. The lengthsman had been asked to remove it.

The owners of the Post Office had indicated that they would be happy to have a replacement litter bin installed in the same location after the previous bin was damaged by a vehicle.

It was RESOLVED to purchase a new wall-mounted bin.

164/23 CORRESPONDENCE

(a)Information had been received on government funding for installing AEDs. Noted

(b)The Pageant Master had provided a guide for councils and organisations wishing to take part in the celebration of the 80th anniversary of D Day on 6 June 2024. Noted

(c)The CALC AGM would take place on 30 Sept at 10.30am in Penrith with face to face and virtual attendance possible. Noted

(d)Cumbria Community Resilience Co-ordinator had provided information on the newly updated National Risk Register. Noted

(e)BHIB, our current insurer, had confirmed that it would become part of a new company, Clear Councils, from 1 Sept. Noted

(f)A local resident had contacted the PC with concerns about people camping at the main beach area. The concerns had been passed to Cllr Minshaw. Noted

(g)Cumbria Sustainability Network would be holding a Westogether Event at on 26 September. Noted.

(h)A letter had been received from a resident of Moresby asking whether the toilets could be open on Christmas Day as many people enjoy a morning walk on the beach. A reply had been sent explaining that our current contract explicitly excludes Christmas Day.

(i)Information had been received about a Green 2 Grow event at Energus on 31 October. Noted

- (j)Details had been received of government funding to boost local growth and energy security. Noted
- (k)An update had been received from the Environment Agency on Sellafield Ltd’s Radioactive Substances Activities Permit. Noted.
- (l)Details had been received of CALC training & development programme. Noted.
- (m)Cumbria Action for Sustainability were organising free training events (Participatory Practice & Zero Carbon Britain). Noted
- (n)National Highways had provided details of a programme to upgrade lighting on the A595 to LED. The work will begin at the end of September and will last for 8 weeks. Noted.
- (o)An invitation had been received to the first meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Network at 6pm on 21 September at Whitehaven United Reformed Church. Noted
- (p)Robin Rigg Community Fund had launched a new round of funding for community projects. Noted.
- (q)National Highways had provided details of overnight resurfacing work on the A595 from the Iron Bridge to the Blackbeck roundabout during the week commencing 4 Sept. Noted.
- (r)NALC had provided an update on the Energy Bill report stage. Noted
- (s)Information had been received from Cumbria Community Resilience Co-ordinator about the move to BT Digital Voice. Noted.
- (t)NALC had provided information about the DLUHC consultation on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. Noted
- (u)An invitation had been received to take part in a national data collection exercise to collate information on support received during the 2023 local council elections. Noted.
- (v)NALC was inviting views on the government’s proposed changes to the Local Plan process. Noted.
- (w) Cumbria Local Nature Partnership had issued a Cumbria wide call for the submission of information on land that could deliver Biodiversity Net Gain or habitat restoration through a change in land use or management. Anyone who owns, or has an interest in land, can put sites forward for consideration. Closing date 17 October. Noted.
- (x)Correspondence had been received from a local resident asking whether a cycle path to Egremont could be considered. The Clerk was replying to the request.
- (y)A letter had been received from a local resident about an overgrown verge on the lonning behind the houses on Station Rd. The Clerk had asked Works 4 You to ensure that it was done as soon as possible.
- (z) The Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner was recruiting members to its Ethics & Integrity Panel. Details of how to apply were available from the Clerk.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network & Funding Digest
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- CALC Newsletter May/June
- Cumbria Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Summer Newsletter
- Open Spaces update July
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder update
- Police Newsletters Whitehaven & District/Egremont & Rural July & August
- Cumberland Council newsletters
- CAfS Newsletter Sept & events update

165/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a)Cllr Sim reported that he was now a Director of CALC Ltd, a company limited by guarantee.
- (b) It was noted that political parties were announcing their candidates for the next parliamentary elections and some candidates were seeking views on local issues. It was felt that it would not be appropriate for the Parish Council to take part in any discussions in order to preserve its impartiality and ensure that there was no implication of support for any particular party.

166/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 16 October 2023 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....