

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 18 November 2024 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllrs E Taylor (in the Chair), P Argyle, J Benedicic, N Bettinson, G Gilmour, N Graham, A Kaldos, D Millington & the Clerk

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

167/24 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly John Benedicic who was attending his first meeting since his co-option.

168/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Hale, Linton, Mellor & Sim.

169/24 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Bettinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7c as the council's representative on the Friends of the Priory and in his capacity as a member of the Friends of Priory Paddock. Cllrs Millington and Benedicic declared an interest in drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane to be discussed under Cumberland Council issues.

170/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

171/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 21 OCTOBER 2024

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 21 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

172/24 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw reported provided a progress report on a number of ongoing matters:

- The problem of blocked drains on the B5345 had been reported and remedial action had been taken.
- There had been no report yet from Highways following the site meeting in August to discuss safety issues around the Abbey Vale junction. Residents had contacted Cllr Minshaw and the Parish Council pointing out the continuing problems and pressing for further action to be taken by Highways. Cllr Minshaw was continuing to follow this up with Highways officers. It was noted that swift action had been taken to repair the pot hole near the Byersteds Rd junction and Cllr Minshaw was asked to pass on thanks to the highways team.
- Work had taken place to resolve the drainage problems affecting properties on Sea Mill Lane and the drain was now clear. However, it was noted that some cavities were yet to be filled and the resin sleeve had not yet been put in place to keep the drain clear.
- Cllr Minshaw was seeking confirmation of the proposed timing of the resurfacing work in Main Street.
- Discussions were continuing with Cumberland Council officers about improving access to the beach. It was reported that there had been another accident involving someone trying to access the beach from the promenade.
- Cumberland Council's bus survey was open until 6 December.
- The police were seeking views of residents in the Whitehaven & St Bees areas about current issues. Details of how to take part in the survey were available on the Cumbria Constabulary website and on the Parish Council's Facebook page.

It was noted that at Cllr Minshaw's request the planning application for holiday pods on land at Nethertown Rd would be considered by the Planning Panel early in 2025.

It was reported that part of the Coastal Path near Sea Mill was almost permanently flooded making the route virtually impassable. It was not clear whether this was still within the remit of Natural England or whether Cumberland Council was responsible for maintenance. It was suggested that the problem should be reported to Cumberland Council in the first instance.

Cllr Minshaw then left the meeting.

173/24 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Monthly Financial Report

A summary of the accounts at 31 October was received and noted. The national salary award for local government staff had been published, effective from 1 April 2024.

A draft budget for 2025-2028 was being prepared for discussion at the next meeting. Any suggestions for inclusion in the budget should be forwarded to the Clerk as soon as possible. There were a number of additional costs anticipated in the next financial year with increased expenditure on the beach toilets and higher staffing costs as a result of changes in national insurance and salary award. The current Lengthsman Scheme was due to end in March 2025. It was agreed that this was a valuable service and discussions would continue with Egremont Town Council about a continuation of the scheme.

(b) Beach Toilets

Following the last meeting discussions had taken place with Tom Milburn and it had been agreed to waive the notice period. The new contractor had taken over on 1 November. There would be a need to make separate arrangements for plumbing repairs and discussions had taken place with a local plumber who was prepared to respond to requests for repairs as required.

(c) Donations

It was RESOLVED that the following donations be made:

- St Bees PCC £1300– contribution to publication costs of parish magazine
- Royal British Legion £225 – payment for wreaths and additional donation
- St Bees Junior Football Club £250 – contribution to new goal posts
- Beckermot/St Bees Scout Group £150 – contribution to volunteer training costs
- Cumbria Rungwe Community Link £100 – contribution to hosting visit from Tanzanian student
- Friends of the Priory Paddock £100 - to set up bank account & help attract grant funding
- Over 60s £75 – contribution to Christmas lunch
- Friends of the Priory £50 – membership & voluntary donation
- Furness Line Action Group £50 – membership & voluntary donation

(d) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity Oct £32.33 + £1.62 VAT Total £33.95
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting Oct £538.94 + £107.79 Total £646.73
- Village Hall Committee– room hire Total £70.00
- YNH Ltd – domain name renewal Total £13.00
- Viking Office UK Ltd – stationery £55.30 +£11.06 VAT Total £66.36
- Holt’s Framing- framing old photograph Total £100.00
- J Donaldson – salary Nov (incl backdated salary award) Total £946.89
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT, telescopic cleaning tool £29.07 +£5.81 VAT, Santa suit £24.99 + £5.00 VAT, postage £3.35 Total £80.21

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

- JRB Enterprise Ltd – dispenser bags £209.95 + £41.99 VAT Total £251.94 (8/11/24)
- Craimin Construction Ltd – repairs to Sea Mill car park £885.00 + £177.00 VAT Total £1062.00 (8/11/24)
- S Kelly –toilet service Total £240.00 (8/11/24 & 15/11/24)
- Water Plus – water//wastewater £186.49 (direct debit 18/11/24)
- Answer 4 U – answering service £15.99 + £3.20 VAT Total £19.19 (direct debit 18/11/24)
- Water Plus– allotment water Total £10.89 (direct debit 28/11/24)

174/24 LAND AT SEA MILL

After discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman urgent work had been authorised to repair the storm damage at Sea Mill. The car park area was closed pending repairs to avoid vehicles becoming stuck. A contractor had been found who was willing to carry out the work over the weekend to minimise the disruption. One interpretation board had been damaged and this might provide an opportunity to update the information and relocate the board in a less vulnerable position.

A reply had been received from the owner of the old boat which was still in the former boat park. He was unwilling to see the boat scrapped and was trying to find someone to take the boat.

It was RESOLVED to write to the owner to give a short extension of time to have the boat removed.

175/24 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Linton had provided a written report on progress. Following a successful pilot of the bus survey, the survey was launched for residents. As well as advertising via the Parish Council's Facebook page and shared from there, a poster had been put on various noticeboards and would be advertised in the December/January parish magazine. Paper copies and a return box was available in the Post Office for anyone without internet access. The response so far had been good.

Walks were taking place this month for those in the parish wildlife mapping group to Rottington Common, St Bees Common and St Bees Valley, ahead of organising some walks in future for the wider community to help stimulate interest in the project.

176/24 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Community Events**

The parade and wreath laying ceremony on Remembrance Sunday was very well attended by local organisations and members of the public. Wreaths were laid at the war memorial near the Station Rd junction and the Parish Council also laid a wreath in the churchyard.

The Christmas tree had been put up by volunteers over the weekend. Arrangements were in hand for the Santa Parade on Tues 26 November. Santa's sleigh would set off from Fairladies at 5.40pm and travel around the village before Santa switches on the lights at 7pm. Santa would be accompanied around the village by elves on bicycles. A street collection licence had been granted so donations for the RNLI could be collected during the parade

(b) Beach & Play Area

Cllr Linton had spoken to the Art Department at St Bees School and students were creating possible designs for a mural. There would be a further progress report after the Christmas break.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

There had been no further progress following Cumberland Council's offer to begin discussions on a lease. Officers had explained that they were dealing with a large workload and had apologised for the delay. The Clerk would continue to press for some progress.

(d) Station Car Park/Transport Hub

There had been no further progress since the last meeting. Both Network Rail and Cumberland Council had agreed in principle to grant the leases required but the leases could not be finalised until the land registration issues were resolved. It was noted that Cumberland Council had proposed slight changes to the provisions for recovering a contribution if in the future the Parish Council imposed parking charges.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Mott MacDonald, the company which had offered help on a pro bono basis, had completed its mapping of the land and identified land ownership along possible routes. Sustrans had been asked to confirm whether the standards for cycle tracks had changed since their feasibility study was done a few years ago. Former MP Trudy Harrison, now had a role in promoting cycling and she and the current MP had agreed to meet Cllr Taylor to see what support they could give. It was hoped that this would help to bring the scheme to a point at which it was ready to be implemented if funding became available.

(f) Office Improvements

The office refurbishment was almost complete. The 1927 photograph of the visit of the Prince of Wales to St Bees was now framed and displayed in the office.

(g) Priory Paddock

The unusually mild weather had made it difficult to clear the pond as wildlife was still active in and around the pond.

The Friends of Priory Paddock had set up its constitution using the template on the Charity Commission website and was opening a bank account. Once these formalities were complete, the group would be able to apply for grant funding for improvements to the Paddock.

(h) Interpretation Boards

There was no progress to report, although plans were in hand for further information boards.

177/24 PLANNING

(a) New Applications

The Planning Advisory Group reported on two new applications:

Ref 4/24/2120/0B1 - Variation of conditions 2 (plans), 5 (culvert protection) and 16 (culvert surveying) of planning approval 4/22/2315/0F1 - erection of three dwellings
Land adjacent to School House with access from the B5345

Ref 4/24/2366/0B1 Variation of pre commencement conditions 3 (sustainable drainage scheme), condition 4 (measures to prevent surface water discharging onto or off the highway) and condition 6 (land for parking vehicles engaged in construction operations) of planning application 4/24/2096/0F1 - demolition of existing detached bungalow & erection of replacement dwelling including erection of detached garage & alterations to existing access
Mellendene, High House Road, St Bees

It was noted that both applications involved changes to drainage arrangements.

It was RESOLVED to respond to Cumberland Council to make clear that the Parish Council would not wish to see the changes result in any weakening of the requirements for appropriate surface water drainage.

(b) Other Planning Matters

- Local Plan 2021-35 – the Plan had now been adopted by Cumberland Council.
- CALC had organised an online event with planning officers from Cumberland Council on 19 November.
- Holiday Pods, Nethertown Rd – it was understood that the application would go before the Planning Panel early in 2025.
- Abbey Road development – no decision had been made on the application as a further report was awaited from one of the statutory consultees. Any significant changes to the application would be subject to further consultation.
- Replacement of wind turbine, Highfield Farm – it was understood that the applicant had been asked to provide more information to justify the need for a larger turbine.

(c) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/24/2130/0F1 Demolition of existing garages, erection of one self-build dwelling with retention of workshop/garage for private/domestic use – Land at Outrigg, St Bees

178/24 FOOTPATHS

The report from Cllr Hale was received and noted.

179/24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports.

180/24 CLERK’S REPORT

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

181/24 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) CALC Cumberland Branch would be holding an Open Forum meeting on 20 November at 7pm via Teams. Details had been circulated by email.
- (b) CALC had forwarded a briefing from NALC on the implications of the government’s announcement of an increase in employer’s NI. The government had confirmed that local councils would not be reimbursed for the additional costs. Noted
- (c) An email had been received from a local resident enclosing a copy of correspondence sent to Cumberland Council and the Whitehaven News asking for the large recycling bins to be removed from the beach car park. It was agreed that the Clerk would reply explaining the Parish Council’s commitment to recycling.
- (d) ACT had provided information on their 75th AGM & Youth Voice celebration event held recently. A copy of the Annual Review was available online. Noted.
- (e) NALC had forwarded details of the Local Government services pay agreement for 2024/25 effective from 1 April 2024. Noted.
- (f) NALC had forwarded details of a new government consultation. The government had expressed a commitment to allow remote and hybrid council meetings and was seeking views on the practical implications. It was also testing views on possible proxy voting where a councillor was unable to join even remotely eg during maternity/paternity/adoption leave. The consultation would run to 19 December and was open to councils and individual councillors via the gov.uk website. Noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter & Funding Digest
- Cumberland Council newsletters
- Cumberland Council Environment & Climate Autumn newsletter
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter Oct
- Cumbria Police Newsletters Oct Whitehaven & District
- Cumbria Police Newsletters Oct Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
- Hyperfast GB Autumn Newsletter
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder Update
- Open Spaces Society News

182/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a) It was reported that the large ‘St Bees’ sign at the station had become loose from the wall and was now in safe storage pending a decision on its future.
- (b) A tea party would be taking place at the Village Hall on Sat 23 November with entertainment from the Hodgetts Singers.
- (c) The episode of Villages by the Sea featuring St Bees is expected to be screened on 16 December on BBC 2.
- (d) It was reported that residents in some parts of the village were now able to set up broadband contracts with Fibrus.

183/24 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 16 December 2024 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....