

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 20 January 2025 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Cllr G Minshaw, Ward Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

01/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

02/25 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Bettinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Village Hall agenda item as a Trustee of the Pagan Trust.

Cllrs Millington and Benedicic declared an interest in drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane to be discussed under Cumberland Council issues.

03/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

04/25 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 DECEMBER 2024

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 16 December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

05/25 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw reported on a number of ongoing matters:

- Highways officers had confirmed that the work to line the new drain on Sea Mill Lane was in hand and, once completed, the deep cavities in the garden of one property would be filled.
- There had been another accident recently with a member of the public trying to access the beach. So far it had not been possible to get any positive assurances that better access arrangements would be provided but Cllr Minshaw had arranged to meet the Assistant Director on site to press the case for better access.
- The request for 20mph speed limits throughout St Bees had been added to the list for future assessment in line with the 20mph policy when the speed limits were reviewed over the 2026/27 financial year.
- The Cumbria Road Safety Partnership was currently exploring the possibility of obtaining SID's which could be mounted on a temporary basis and moved around Cumberland. If these units were sourced, then Abbey Vale would be put forward as proposed location.
- The issue of construction vehicles parking opposite the Abbey Vale junction had been raised with the PCSO. Councillors reported that there had been some short term improvement but this had not resolved the problem. Any further problems should be reported to the police.
- There had been problems with a blocked drain on the Outrigg road but this had been cleared by Highways staff.
- Highways officers had not provided an update on the various issues affecting the safety of the Abbey Vale junction which had been discussed at the site meeting some months ago. Cllr Minshaw would continue to follow this up. Councillors felt that the delay was unacceptable. It was RESOLVED to write to the Highways Manager to ask for a full response to the matters raised at the site meeting.
- Cumberland Council's bus survey was still open until the 31 January. Cllr Linton would forward the results of the Parish Council's own survey to the appropriate officer to be added into the results matrix.
- Whitehaven and Coastal Community Panel would be hosting a network event at Red Lonning Community Centre, Whitehaven on 27 January 2.30 – 4pm to discuss local bus services and parking issues near West Cumberland Hospital.

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- The Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel was seeking to recruit new co-opted members. The closing date for applicants would be 9 February.
- The road closure on Abbey Road was in place until the end of January to allow work to take place on the collapsed wall. The resident whose property was involved had confirmed that good progress was being made, although they had not been given a firm date for completion.

06/25 GROYNES/SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

Following the last meeting, Cumberland Council had supplied a copy of the Executive Summary of the consultant's report. However, it was not possible to fully understand the preferred options without seeing a copy of the full report. The Clerk had requested a full copy and had invited Cumberland Council's Coastal Flood Defence Officer to come to the next meeting for a full discussion.

07/25 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Monthly Financial Report

A summary of the accounts at 31 December and the notes of the FRAG meeting on 13 January were received and noted. Expenditure to date was below the expected figure due mainly to late invoicing of play area repairs and delays with the station car park project. The risk register had been reviewed and a minor change to the wording of Risk 11 was approved to cover other epidemic/pandemic infectious diseases which might arise in the future.

(b) Budget & Precept 2025/26

The precept for 2025/26 had been notified to Cumberland Council. The draft council tax base figure had now been received and this indicated that the rise in precept would amount to 17p per week increase for a Band D property.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity Dec £33.75 + £1.69 VAT Total £35.44
- Village Hall Committee– room hire Total £70.00
- Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd -Station car park rent £400+ £80.00 VAT Total £480.00
- M Kipling/R Mayow – defibrillator hosting Total £100.00
- Hospice at Home – donation in lieu of payment for Christmas lights Total £35.00
- J Donaldson – salary Jan Total £741.53
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT, annual contribution to phone/broadband charges £50.00 Total £61.99

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

- Water Plus – water/wastewater charges Total £186.49 (direct debit 17/01/25)
- Answer 4 U – answering service £15.99+ £3.20 VAT Total £19.19 (direct debit 17/01/25)
- S Kelly – toilet service charges £240.00 (SO payments 20/12, 27/12, 03/01, 10/01, 17/01)
- Friends of Priory Paddock– donation Total £100.00 (agreed Nov 24)
- HMRC – PAYE Qtr 3 Total £787.90

08/25 VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Taylor explained that there had been some changes in the membership of the Village Hall Committee and that he had agreed to join the committee on a short term basis. As the Parish Council was the custodian trustee for the Village Hall Committee, the VHC wished to keep councillors informed of the current situation with the sub-lease between the Freemasons and the Village Hall Committee. The sub-lease had still not been completed, as several further issues had been raised by the solicitors acting for the Freemasons. The Village Hall Committee was seeking clarification of the position with its own legal advisers and Cllr Taylor would provide an update at the next meeting.

Cllr Hale explained that the VHC was looking for new ideas to make best use of the hall and its facilities and would welcome all suggestions and offers of help.

09/25 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Linton had provided a written report on progress with the bus survey. There had been 99 responses and the data would be collated and results circulated as soon as possible. The results would be shared with Cumberland Council to be included in their bus survey.

10/25 VILLAGE SCHOOL GATE

It was reported that some residents had voiced concern that the gate from The Crofts to the school field was locked so children could not use that gate to access the school or play area. Councillors recognised that safeguarding was the main concern of the school and there was no public right of way. It was understood that the school was willing to leave the gate unlocked during school holidays when safeguarding was not an issue but this might not be possible at weekends if staff were not available. It was agreed to write to the Headteacher to clarify the position.

11/25 PLANNING**(a) New Applications**

The Planning Advisory Group reported on the following applications:

Ref 4/24/2419/0F1 First floor extension to provide additional bedrooms
2 Quarry Cottages, Bank End

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application

Ref 4/25/2011 /0F1 Removal of conservatory, construct new family room with raised roof area, covered yard area for porch, utility, WC & wet room
Moorclose, Outrigg Road

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application

Ref 4/25/2014/0F1 Installation of solar panels on garage roof
10 Seacroft Drive

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application

(b) Ongoing Applications

- Application for holiday pods- Nethertown Rd

Cumberland Council's Planning Committee had been due to visit the site on 6 January before the application was considered by the Committee on 8 January. However, the site visit was cancelled due to bad weather but the Committee meeting went ahead in Carlisle. At the meeting it was decided to defer a decision on the application until a site visit could be rearranged. Councillors felt that the way that the matter was dealt with was unacceptable, as the decision to defer the matter could have been taken when the site visit was cancelled. Instead, the PC's planning consultant, the Vice Chairman and a member of the public had wasted time and costs on travelling to Carlisle. It was now expected that the application would be considered in mid February. The planning consultant representing the Parish Council was available to attend but this would incur an additional cost of £200 in addition to the £300 charge already agreed for preparation and attendance at the first meeting.

It was RESOLVED to complain to Cumberland Council about the way in which the matter was handled and to seek reimbursement of the costs incurred.

It was further RESOLVED to approve additional expenditure of £200 for the attendance of the planning consultant at the next Planning Committee.

- Land to the south of Holly Mews

A decision had not yet been made on this application for 5 additional dwellings south of Holly Mews. It was noted that the applicant had submitted revised plans for pedestrian access from Abbey Road which could be found on the Cumberland Council website.

(c) Other Planning Matters

Cllr Graham explained his proposal that the Parish Council should advocate for and support the inclusion of solar panels in all new housing developments. The government would shortly be publishing its Future Homes Standard but it was not clear whether this would include a requirement for all new

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build properties to have solar panels installed as standard. The current Local Plan supported the principle of a low carbon economy but contained no specific measures.

It was RESOLVED

- to lobby Josh MacAlister MP to actively support the use of solar panels, including pressing ministers to include a strong requirement for solar panels in all new builds as part of the Future Homes Standard, and to support the New Homes (Solar Generation) Bill when it returns to the House of Commons
- to engage with Cumberland Council planning officers, via our Ward Councillor, to promote the idea of solar as standard in new builds
- to contact other Cumbrian parish councils to encourage them to adopt a similar stance.

(d) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/22/2407/0F1 Construction of three 2 storey, 4 bedroomed detached dwellings – The Knoll, High House Road

12/25 PROJECT REPORTS

(a) Community Events

The Christmas tree had been taken down and the stand and lights were now back in storage. Councillors thanked Cllr Kaldos for organising the arrangements for the tree and Christmas event.

(b) Beach & Play Area

Cllrs Linton, Benedicic and Sim had met to review the designs. A meeting was being organised to provide feedback to the school.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

Cumberland Council's Estates & Property Dept had now passed details to their legal department so a draft lease could be drawn up.

(d) Station Car Park/Transport Hub

There was no significant progress to report. It was understood that Cumberland Council and Network Rail had agreed the way forward to resolve the land registration issues and the necessary information would shortly be passed to the Land Registry.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Cllr Taylor reported that he had been invited to attend a meeting organised by Josh MacAlister MP on 20 February to discuss the plan for a new cycle link between St Bees and Whitehaven.

(f) Office Improvements

The office refurbishment was complete. The only remaining task was to order a small table for the room.

(g) Priory Paddock

Work had begun to clear the pond. Cllr Bettinson would be meeting the lengthsman the following day for photographs to be taken for the Works 4 You website to recognise the contribution made by the lengthsman in helping the Friends of Priory Paddock to achieve the recent RHS Gold Award.

(h) Interpretation Boards

There was no further progress to report.

13/25 FOOTPATHS

The report from Cllr Hale was received. It was noted that Cumberland Council would be carrying out work to improve drainage on the coastal path at Sea Mill. A temporary closure notice had been approved from 3 February restricting use of the path while work was taking place.

A problem had been reported with a gate on the path from the golf course towards Seacote beach. This was thought to be on the permissive path rather than on a public right of way. It was agreed to pass details to the landowner.

14/25 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports on meetings attended.

15/25 CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk’s report on ongoing matters was received and noted. Lesley Graffin, caseworker for Josh MacAlister MP, had confirmed that she would be attending the next Parish Council meeting.

16/25 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) A letter had been received from Cumbria Community Foundation seeking donations to their Cumbria Winter Warmth Appeal. Noted.
- (b) Details had been received of recent grant awards made by the Whitehaven & Coastal Panel. Noted.
- (c) CALC had forwarded guidance for councils wishing to organise events to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2025. Details were available from the Clerk.
- (d) NALC had launched an online survey to help formulate its response to the latest government consultation on standards. Noted.
- (e) CALC had forwarded information from Cumberland Council on help available during the winter months. Noted.
- (f) Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel would be holding a network event on Mon 27 January from 2.30 to 4.30pm at the Red Lonning Community Centre with topics including bus services and parking near West Cumberland Hospital. Noted.
- (g) Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel was seeking to co-opt a community representative with knowledge of/interest in the policy areas prioritised by the Panel. Details were available from the Clerk.
- (h) Correspondence had been received from a writer for The Herdwick News who was planning a feature on reasons why people choose to become parish councillors and seeking views of local councillors. Noted.
- (i) Notification had been received of two overnight road closures of the level crossing, the first on 25 - 26 January and the second on 1 – 2 February. On both occasions the level crossing would be closed from 9pm to 9am the following morning. Noted.
- (j) Cumberland Council had launched a Clean Sweep Campaign aimed at encouraging local people to become litter champions and organise community litter picking activities. Noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter & Funding Digest
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder Update
- Cumbria Police newsletter – Whitehaven & District
- Cumbria Police newsletter – Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
- Cumberland Council Libraries newsletter

17/25 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a) Some concern had been expressed about traffic speeds on High House Road and it was suggested that the Speedwatch team might be able to monitor speeds in this location. It was agreed to consider this at the next meeting when Cllr Mellor, the Speedwatch Co-ordinator, was present.
- (b) There would be a ‘Celtic Shindig’ at the Village Hall on the evening of Sat 25 January.

18/25 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 17 February 2025 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....