

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on  
Monday 20 February 2023 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

**In attendance:** Cllr J Hailes, CBC Ward Councillor  
Cllr C Whiteside, County Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: 1 member of the public.

**20/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

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

**21/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Argyle & Gilmour. Cllr Minshaw (Shadow Cumberland Council) had also sent his apologies due to work commitments.

**22/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**23/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The member of the public present expressed an interest in the drainage issues which had been discussed at the last meeting, particularly in relation to the proposed housing development adjacent to the B5345 opposite Abbey Vale. It was agreed that this would be covered in the discussion on flooding & drainage issues.

**24/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 JANUARY 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 16 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**25/23 FLOODING & DRAINAGE ISSUES**

Advice had been sought from CBC on the availability of sandbags following the difficulties experienced by residents on New Year's Eve. It was CBC policy to supply sandbags to residential properties threatened by flooding. The out of hours helpline listed on the CBC website should be manned on public holidays and should be able to deal with urgent requests.

Cllr Whiteside explained that he had not yet received a detailed progress report from CCC officers but had passed on the request for better signage at the flooded section on the Outrigg road. He was continuing to follow up the offer made by the Lead Flood Team to meet Parish Council representatives on site.

Cllr Bettinson reported on his own local investigation into the drainage problems. Following the unsuccessful attempts by CCC to carry out a camera survey of the drain in Main Street, United Utilities had carried out further investigations and believed that the flooding at Nursery House was caused by drains from the property being unable to discharge into the main drain which was blocked under the highway. The property owners were currently undertaking work to try to avoid a recurrence. CCC had sent a team to carry out a camera survey and jetting on Main Street, although the inspection cover outside the Bega Flats could not be opened.

CCC had investigated the surcharging drain on the B5345 verge above the proposed development site adjacent to School House. Excavations had shown a large catchpit and concrete blocks had been put in place to make the area safe. It was believed that drainage was piped from the B5345 into the catchpit and then by a culvert down to the valley bottom and through the school grounds to Pow Beck.

The member of the public present explained that new drainage plans had just been submitted to CBC for the proposed new housing development. The plans showed the existing culvert which was considered to be inadequate to deal with any additional surface water. The proposed drainage

strategy was for both surface and foul water from the development to be discharged into the combined public drain. In his view the dropped kerb at the entrance to the new properties would not worsen the situation.

The Chairman thanked him for his explanation and reassured him that the Parish Council would give the new plans detailed consideration when they were received for comment from CBC.

## **26/23 CCC & HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

Cllr Whiteside reported on a number of on-going matters:.

- The new signage at the top of Sea Mill Lane was in hand but might take some time to produce.
- Highways officers believed that the new road markings at the Fleatham Croft junction had recently been completed. Parish Councillors would check and confirm this.
- The potholes and surface damage on the B5345 which had been reported to Highways would be repaired.
- Highways would be putting new road markings at the southern entrance to the village to slow traffic speeds but he would be asking for the suggestion of installing setts to be reconsidered.
- Reports of inconsiderate and dangerous parking around the Village School had been passed to the Enforcement Team with a request for more visits at the start /end of the school day.
- Patching work on Beach Rd was now scheduled to take place shortly.
- CCC had agreed to repair the street light on the Fairladies footpath and bill the Parish Council.
- CCC officers had confirmed that the site of the former scout hut was not owned by CCC.
- CCC Property Team had confirmed that they were hoping to complete work on the roof and electrical system at the Village School before the transfer to the Academy Trust.
- The plans for the rewilding of the Beach Road verge would be part of a package of schemes to be supported by the Wildlife Trust and the Local Committee's Environment Fund. The Parish Council should hear more shortly.
- There was unlikely to be significant progress with the new cycle track until the legal challenges to the new mine were resolved. If the mine did go ahead, the Section 106 agreement signed some time ago would continue to be valid.
- Officers had provided a detailed explanation of the process for applying for a 'residents only' parking scheme. Cllr Whiteside would ensure that the information was passed to the member of the public who had asked about this.

Councillors noted that the signage for the work on Beach Rod was causing some confusion. The information on the CCC website was that there would be work under signal control from 22 February to 3 March but the sign in place on Beach Rd indicated a road closure from 2 March.

It was noted that the white lines across the junction of Main Street and Seacroft Drive were very worn. The white lines were used by visually impaired residents to help them cross safely. Cllr Whiteside agreed to pass on a request for the lines to be repainted,

## **27/23 COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS**

Cllr Hailes reported on a number of ongoing issues:

- A meeting had yet to be arranged with the owner of the land on Byersteds Rd.
- The light outside 5 Firth Drive was now working. Cllr Hailes agreed to follow up a report of a loose cover on another light in that area.
- The loose lid on one of the new bins had been reported.
- CBC's Coastal Defence Officer had inspected the cracks which had appeared in the wall of the promenade and had reported them to the consultant who was undertaking a report on the structural integrity of the promenade.
- Officers had been asked to consider providing signage to warn the public that removing stones from the beach was an offence. No response had yet been received.
- Work had now stopped on the Nethertown Rd site.
- The recent work by Northern Gas Networks had prevented CBC emptying the black bins on Sea Mill Lane. CBC had now offered to arrange a collection early this week.
- With spring arriving it might be timely for British Transport Police to visit local pubs. Cllr Hailes would suggest this to Cllr Minshaw and pass on appropriate contact details.

- Officers had explained that the new bin to be sited by the Beach Café had been delayed as the new vehicle had not yet been delivered.

Cllr Millington questioned the delay in providing a new larger bin by the Beach Café. In August it had been promised that the new larger bird proof bin would be provided 'as soon as possible' but recent emails had given no definite commitment to supply a new bin, suggesting instead that the café owners could be asked to help and that the public should be prepared to walk to the next available bin. A clear statement of CBC's intentions had been requested but there had so far been no response. CBC officers had blamed the delay on difficulties in obtaining a new collection vehicle. However, there were other bird proof bins at the beach area which were being emptied regularly so it was difficult to understand why provision of a new bin was dependent on the delivery of the new vehicle. Cllr Hailes offered to speak to the café owners to seek their help in providing more bins on their premises. It was RESOLVED to write to CBC to confirm the position.

It was noted that CBC had launched a consultation on the introduction of a validation checklist for planning applications. The deadline for comment was 17 March. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Graham would circulate the details of the consultation and collate comments to enable a response to be sent to CBC.

Cllr Hailes explained that this would be the last PC meeting that he would be attending. Work commitments would prevent him attending the March meeting, although he would supply a written report. On behalf of the Parish Council the Chairman thanked Cllr Hailes for all he had done over the last 4 years to support the Parish Council and help local residents.  
**(Cllr Whiteside left the meeting at this point)**

## **28/23 SHADOW CUMBERLAND COUNCIL**

Cllr Minshaw had provided a written report on progress with local government reorganisation which was received and noted.

## **29/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **(a) Financial Report**

The summary of the accounts at 31 January 2023 was received and noted.

The internal audit was underway and the Clerk was providing the documentation requested by the auditor.

The application to move to an online bank account had been successful and arrangements were in hand to activate the account and set up authorised signatories.

A quotation had been received from CBC for monthly play area inspections in the coming year.

It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation in the sum of £1530.60 + VAT.

### **(b) Annual Policy Reviews**

The Health & Safety and Risk Management Policy were due for review.

It was RESOLVED to reapprove both policies without amendment.

### **(c) Grass Cutting Contract**

Bids had been received from four contractors for the grass cutting contract. The contract would be for one year in the first instance with extension for two further years subject to satisfactory performance and by mutual consent. The bids had been opened by the Chairman & Vice Chairman earlier in the day. It was RESOLVED to accept the bid from Works 4 You Ltd and to arrange a pre-contract meeting with the contractor to agree the level of service required.

### **(d) Payments**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Chq 002929 CBC – contribution to Rottington lights 2022/23 £194.52 + £38.92 VAT Total £233.42
- Chq 002930 CALC – course fees £30.00 Total £30.00
- Chq 002931 I McAndrew –reimb for website costs Total £47.84

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- Chq 002932 Unipar Services –recalibration of speed gun £261.00 + £52.20 VAT Total £313.20
- Chq 002933 Hospice at Home West Cumbria -donation in lieu of Xmas electricity Total £30.00
- Chq 002934 J Donaldson– salary Total £624.89
- Chq 002935 J Donaldson -reimb for Webex costs £12.50 + £2.50 VAT, printer ink £8.32 + £1.67 VAT, packaging for speed gun £5.50, domain name renewal £44.00 Total £74.49
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (Feb) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00

The payments made since last meeting were noted:

- Chq 002928 S Ritson -reimb for timber for board walk repair £29.74 + £5.95 VAT Total £35.69
- Water Plus water/wastewater toilets Total £167.54 (direct debit 01/02/23)
- Answer 4-U -answering service £11.50 + £2.30 Total £13.80 (direct debit 17/02/23)
- Npower – electricity to beach toilets £33.96 +£ 1.70 VAT Total £35.66 (direct debit 16/02/23)
- Water Plus – allotment water Total £24.30 (direct debit 24/02/23)

### **30/23 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

The Standing Orders were due for four yearly review,  
It was RESOLVED to re-adopt the Standing Orders without amendment.

### **31/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT**

Following the last meeting the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk had met representatives of the Village School to learn more about plans for new boundary fencing, tree planting, and growing areas on the school field. The school had held a meeting the following day with residents of neighbouring properties to explain the plans and answer any concerns. Many of the changes would benefit the children and help with safeguarding but it had not been clear to residents whether the school field would still be available for children to play football etc outside school hours. Cllr Ritson agreed to clarify this with the school as it was his understanding that the public would be able to access the field outside school hours.

It was suggested that periodic reports from the Village School Governors at Parish Council meetings would help to improve liaison between the school and the local community.

### **32/23 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

There had been a number of reports of antisocial behaviour since the last meeting, including several incidents of graffiti around the village. The incidents had been reported to the police who were following up the reports and speaking to the parents of those thought to be responsible. The police had stressed the importance of residents reporting all incidents so that they had a full picture of the situation.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team would be holding another drop-in session in the Village Hall on 22 February from 5 -6 pm.

### **33/23 CLIMATE GROUP WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Linton reported that the membership of the new working group would be made up of three Parish Councillors, plus representatives of St Bees Green Future, Eco Church, Village School and local residents. The first meeting would take place shortly.

### **34/23 PROJECT REPORTS**

#### **(a)Community Events**

The coronation of Charles III was due to take place on 6 May and planning would need to begin shortly for community celebrations. It was suggested that a street party similar to that held for the Platinum Jubilee could be organised on Cross Hill and that a commemorative seat might be purchased. It was agreed that Cllr Hale would bring together a small group to make outline plans and report back to the next meeting. A message would be included in the parish magazine asking local groups to keep the Parish Council informed of plans to avoid clashes of dates.

#### **(b)Beach & Play Area**

The CBC inspector had returned from sick leave and had confirmed that the outstanding repairs would be carried out as soon as possible. A quotation had been received for repairs to the basket swing.

The cost was within the budget but there was a 6 -8 weeks delivery on the parts. After consultation with the Chairman, the quotation had been accepted to get the equipment back into use as soon as possible.

**(c) Upgrading of Outrigger Play Area**

Cllr Kaldos reported on preliminary discussions with a representative of the Scouts who were keen to work with the Parish Council on future plans. It remained unclear whether any transfer of ownership of land for the play area would require Dept for Education approval when the Village School became part of the Changing Lives Academy Trust. Cllr Kaldos would provide the Clerk with some suggested wording for the letter to be sent to the Village School to initiate further discussions.

**(d) Station car park extension/transport hub**

Cllr Taylor reported that a meeting had taken place with representatives of the Community Rail Partnership. They had visited the land for the proposed car park extension and had also visited the Priory. They had been impressed by the tourism potential of St Bees and were thinking of bringing colleagues on a further visit. A Teams meeting would be taking place on 24 February with representatives of the Parish Council, Network Rail, Northern Rail, Community Rail Partnership and CBC.

**(e) Valley Link Cycle Track**

There was no further progress to report.

**(f) Priory Paddock**

The pollarding had been completed for the season. A meeting would take place on 21 February to set up a Friends of Priory Paddock group who would help with maintenance, etc. It was proposed to purchase a strimmer for the use of the volunteers to be funded from the grant funding held in reserves. It was RESOLVED to purchase a battery powered strimmer for use in Priory Paddock.

**(g) Interpretation Boards**

There had been no progress since the last meeting.

**35/23 PLANNING**

**(a) New Applications**

Cllr Taylor explained the Planning Advisory Group's comments on the following new application:-

- Ref 4/23/2035/0F1 Erection of new dwelling – Land adj to Stoneycroft, Sea Mill Lane  
There were significant concerns about the development of this site at the far end of the lane. The development would be set into the steep bank and would require the removal of large quantities of earth. Sea Mill Lane is very narrow at the top and also in the lower section with no turning space for large vehicles. It would be impossible for large vehicles to access the site so materials would have to be delivered elsewhere in the village and then transferred to smaller vehicles. This would cause significant inconvenience for other residents.  
Public footpath FP423012 runs across the front of Stoneycroft and the site of the new development and links with the English Coastal path. It is used not only by many local people but also attracts visitors walking the coastal path. There is no mention of the footpath in the plans but it is difficult to see how the footpath would be unaffected, at least during the construction phase. The footpath currently has a permeable gravel surface but the plans seem to suggest that the area would have a tarmac surface. The site is also very close to the railway line so Network Rail might need to be consulted on safety issues.

It was RESOLVED to object to the application on the grounds that this was inappropriate development based on the grounds stated above.

**(b) Nethertown Road Development**

The planning approvals for new housing development on Nethertown Road had included a number of pre-commencement conditions which had to be satisfied before work could begin. However, work had taken place on site with earth moving equipment creating a roadway and demolishing part of the wall along the highway. This had been reported to CBC which had instructed the developer to halt the work and to submit new applications which would be sent to the Parish Council for comment.

**(c) Applications Approved by CBC**

4/22/2453/0F1 Modifications to conservatory -Bell House, Sandwith

4/22/2495/DOC Discharge of condition 4 of approval 4/22/2389/0F1 -Grindal House

It was also noted that application ref 4/22/2465/O01 Outline application for 2 dwellings – Land at Fleatham Farm had been withdrawn

**36/23 FOOTPATHS**

The report by Cllr Hale was received. It was noted that repairs had not yet taken place to the surface of the public footpath by the hockey field which had been damaged during the heavy rain. The Clerk would follow this up.

**37/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Taylor had attended a meeting of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group. There been no issues relevant to St Bees. The Chairman reported that there were to be changes to the membership of the group with CBC and CCC members being replaced by 6 community members.

West Copeland Partnership would be meeting on 28 February.

**38/23 CLERK'S REPORT**

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

**39/23 CORRESPONDENCE**

(a)Cumbria Action for Sustainability had provided an update and details of forthcoming events. Noted

(b)CALC had provided information on the Coastal Foundation Fund 2023 designed to reduce the impact of single use plastic water bottles by providing grants for water fountains. Noted

©CALC had forwarded an e-poster highlighting how town & parish councils could support Community Resilience. Noted

(d)Details had been received of the next Copeland Health & Wellbeing Forum. Noted

(e) The Hobans bus service linking St Bees to Whitehaven would be withdrawn from 29 March due to rising fuel costs and low passenger numbers. Noted

(f)CCC had provided details of a 3 day road closure of part of Sea Mill Lane from 13 Feb for gas work. Details had been posted on Facebook.

(g)CBC had provided details of the requirements for voters to produce ID when voting in parish council elections in May. Details would be included in the next parish magazine and posted on Facebook.

(h)An enquiry had been received from a journalist seeking comment on the threat posed to coastal properties by coastal erosion. The Chairman had responded.

(i)The Environment Agency had provided notes from the Cumbria Nuclear Sites Engagement meeting in Oct 2022. Noted

(j)Information had been received from CALC on nominations for the Royal Garden Party on 3 May.

(k)An email had been received from the Secretary of the Village Hall Committee thanking the council for its recent donation. Noted

(l)National Highways had provided details of drop in sessions at Parton to provide information on the A595 Moresby Improvement Scheme. Noted

(m)A request had been received from the organiser of two long distance running events asking whether the beach toilets could be available from 7am on 1 April. This had been arranged;

(n)An email had been received from a local resident about dangerous parking in Main Street/ junction with Seacroft Drive at school start/finish times. Details had been passed to CCC.

(o)An email had been received from a family offering donate a tree or commemorative bench in memory of a young man who died recently. The Clerk would reply with possible locations.

(p)An online training session had been arranged by CCRG on Finding, Understanding & Using Weather Information to help emergency planning. Noted

(q)CCC would be holding a series of Cost of Living & Better health Exo events including at Cleator Moor Civic hall on Wed 8 March midday to 7pm. Noted

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

NALC Chief Executive's Weekly Bulletins

Rural Services Network – weekly bulletin & funding digest  
Cumbria Police update Jan (Egremont, Cleator Moor and Rural/ Whitehaven & District)  
Trudy Harrison MP Newsletter  
Copeland Tourism Update  
Open Spaces Society Jan Update  
LGR Updates  
Connecting Cumbria Newsletter

**40/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA**

A local resident had asked the Parish Council to consider approaching local car park owners about the possibility of season tickets/reduced charges for residents, particularly those with health or mobility issues. It was agreed to include this on the agenda for the next meeting.

**41/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting take place on Monday 20 March 2023 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....