

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

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

In attendance: Cllr G Minshaw, Shadow Cumberland Council
Cllr C Whiteside, County Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: 3 members of the public.

42/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Cllr Taylor welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

43/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Millington, Mellor, Monaghan & Sim.
Cllr Hailes (Copeland Borough Council) had also sent his apologies due to work commitments.

44/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two members of the public present expressed an interest in planning matters, one in connection with the development on Nethertown Rd and the other in the application for three houses adjacent to School House with access from the B5345. One member of the public was interested in progress with various CBC and CCC issues.

It was **RESOLVED** to bring forward discussion of planning items on the agenda.

46/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 20 FEBRUARY 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 20 February 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47/23 PLANNING

(a) Nethertown Road Development

The Chairman invited a member of the public to address councillors about the development on Nethertown Road. He introduced himself and explained that he was the owner of one of the plots. He had previously lived in the village for 7 years and was intending to build a larger home for himself and his family. He apologised for the fact that work had begun on site before the pre-commencement conditions had been met and recognised the concerns which this had raised among local residents. He confirmed that the reserved matters applications had been withdrawn and amended applications were being submitted. He also confirmed that dye tests had been completed which showed that there was a connection to the public drains.

The Chairman thanked him for coming to speak to the council and explained that the new applications would come to the Parish Council in due course as part of the consultation process.

(b) New Applications

(i) Ref 4/22/2315/0F1 Erection of 3 dwellings adj to School House with access from the B5345

The Chairman explained that CBC had recently forwarded additional and amended information for the Parish Council's comments. The Planning Advisory Group had considered the new information and noted that the design of the properties had changed to a more traditional style and this was welcomed. A drainage report had been submitted which proposed that surface water and foul water would be discharged into a combined public drain and would not be fed into the culvert which ran within the development site. It would be for United Utilities and CCC as statutory consultees to comment on the acceptability of this arrangement.

The Parish Council's main concern was that the development should not increase the flood risk in the village. Over the New Year period water had backed up and surcharged through the verge on the B5345, sending a torrent of mud down towards the school and Priory, due to a blockage in the old culvert which runs through the development site. Although the new development would not feed into the culvert, it was noted that there would be building over the culvert. There was no information within the application about the state of the culvert or how building over the culvert might impact on the flood risk.

In answer to questions, the member of the public present explained that it was planned to establish a management company to ensure future maintenance of the drains serving the three properties. This would not involve a third party company and would simply be a vehicle for the property owners to share responsibility for maintenance. He was not aware of any approach from CCC to gain access to the site to investigate the state of the culvert.

It was RESOLVED to respond to CBC with the drainage concerns stated above.

(ii)Ref 4/22/2042/0F1 Provision of 4 glamping pods, 5 Ellerbeck Barns

The Planning Advisory Group reported on the additional information provided on this application and advised that there were no reasons to object. The Clerk had informed CBC that the council had no objections in order to meet the consultation deadline.

(c) Other Planning Matters

Cllr Graham thanked councillors for their comments on the proposed Validation Checklist. He had collated the comments received and the Clerk had circulated a copy to councillors and forwarded the council's response to CBC.

(d) Applications approved by CBC

There had been no applications approved in the parish since the last meeting.

48/23 CCC & HIGHWAYS ISSUES

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

- Highways had investigated the cause of the flooding at 125 Main Street and would be carrying out work to clear the blocked drain. Cllr Bettinson explained that the pavement had been excavated and the culvert had been found. Some dye testing had been carried out but it had not been possible to find out where the culvert ran. He had spoken the CCC officer on site who was unaware of the drainage survey undertaken by Mayson Bros in 2006 and the Clerk had now provided Highways with a copy.
- Repairs would take place in the next financial year on the damage caused by flooding on the B5345 by Abbey Vale.
- Cllr Whiteside had discussed with officers the process for considering new planning applications in light of the parish council's concerns about the impact of new developments on the outdated drainage infrastructure in the parish. Officers had confirmed that surface water drainage and flooding issues were looked at by the Flood Team to ensure that developments did not worsen the flood risk for other properties.
- Parish Councillors had confirmed that the new road markings at the Fleatham Croft junction had not been completed. Cllr Whiteside taken this up with Highways officers and had passed on the offer to ensure that the relevant section was not obstructed by parked cars when work was to take place.
- Patching work had taken place on Beach Rd with some further work still to be done on the speed humps. A gap had been created in the wall alongside Beach Rd to improve the safety of pedestrians crossing to/from the footpath to the beach estate. Councillors commented on the excellent quality of the work on the wall and Cllr Whiteside agreed to pass this on to the staff involved.
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust had been given a grant from the Local Committee's Environment Fund for various schemes including the rewilding of the verge on Beach Rd. It was agreed that the Clerk would act as the point of contact for the parish council.
- The Local Committee had given grants to various local groups including the Scouts. It was hoped that grants would continue to be offered to local organisations under the new Cumberland Council.

- Further information was awaited from officers on timescales for repairs on Sea Mill Lane.
- The request for repainting of markings at the junction of Seacroft Drive/Main Street had been passed to Highways officers. Cllr Whiteside would follow this up.

Cllr Whiteside explained that this was his last report to the Parish Council as the new unitary authority would come into being on 1 April but he would pass on information about ongoing matters to Cllr Minshaw. He had enjoyed his time as county councillor for St Bees and wished the council well for the future. On behalf of the council the Chairman thanked Cllr Whiteside for all his work for the residents of St Bees & Rottington.

49/23 COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Hailes had provided a final report on a number of ongoing issues:

- There was no news to report on the engineering survey of the promenade but David Bechelli would forward information as soon as it became available. The Clerk would contact him about the likely timescales.
- Officers had not provided any further information on the plans for a new bird proof bin at the beach café.
- The request for a notice to make it clear that stones must not be removed from the beach had been passed to officers but no response had yet been received. There had been no progress with the request for stones to be removed from the grassed areas.
- The public telephone at the beach was still operational and it was hoped that it would be retained.
- There had been some issues with parents parking on Outrigger Close at the start and end of the school day. The school would be contacting parents. The good work of the school traffic patrol had been praised.
- There had been a good working relationship with the British Transport Police over recent years and it was hoped that this would continue to ensure that there were no issues for rail users or local residents.

50/23 SHADOW CUMBERLAND COUNCIL

Cllr Minshaw explained that the new Cumberland Council would come into being on 1 April. A lot of work had been done in preparation and it was hoped that there would be no disruption to services. The budget had been agreed and the council tax set. An explanatory leaflet had been sent all households.

It was proposed that there would be eight Neighbourhood Panels across the new council area which would be coterminous with the divisions represented by elected councillors. The proposals were due to be agreed shortly and further information would be available for the next meeting. Cllr Gilmour asked whether it was likely that St Bees would be part of the Whitehaven Panel area. He explained that St Bees had previously been part of the West Copeland Locality Partnership with Egremont Town Council and the neighbouring parishes. This grouping had worked well and had set up initiatives such as the lengthsman scheme and the Partnership was keen to continue that relationship. Cllr Minshaw explained that there was no reason why the links with Egremont could not continue whatever arrangements were introduced by Cumberland Council.

Cllr Minshaw explained that there would be one Planning Panel for the whole of Cumberland. He had not volunteered to be a member of the Panel as the time commitment would be too great. However, he had offered to be a substitute member if required.

51/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Financial Report

The summary of the accounts at 28 February 2023 was received and noted. The replacement battery for the third defibrillator would be ordered shortly.

The internal audit was almost complete and the report was expected to be available for the next meeting. The first transaction had been successfully completed by online banking.

The asset register was being updated ready for the year end. It was proposed that the damaged seat on Nethertown Rd should be written off as beyond repair.

It was RESOLVED to write off the seat.

(b) Review of Financial Regulations

Amendments were needed to reflect the move to online banking. It was proposed to incorporate the relevant sections from the NALC Model Regulations, to reword the section dealing with verification of bank reconciliations to reflect the move to paperless procedures and to increase the Village in Bloom petty cash float to £200.

It was RESOLVED that the amendments to the Financial Regulations be approved.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- I McAndrew –reimbursement for Elementor renewal Total £61.57
- J Donaldson – salary March Total £625.09
- J Donaldson – reimb for printer ink charge £8.32 + VAT, postage £5.44, strimmer £82.49 + VAT Total £114.42
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (March) £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00

The payments made since last meeting were noted:

- St Bees Priory Church PCC -room hire £8.00 Total £8.00
- Water Plus water/wastewater toilets Total £167.55 (direct debit 04/03/23)
- Answer 4-U -answering service £11.50 + £2.30 Total £13.80 (direct debit 17/03/23)
- Npower – electricity to beach toilets £33.08 +£ 1.65 VAT Total £34.73 (direct debit 17/03/23)

52/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS

Cllr Ritson explained that a full Governors meeting would take place shortly and he would request further information to clarify whether the school field would still be available for children to play football etc outside school hours. Councillors believed that it was very important for there to be communication between the school and the local community on such issues. Cllr Ritson would pass on an invitation for the Headteacher to come to the next Parish Council meeting.

53/23 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The police had held another drop-in session on 22 February in response to requests for a session outside the working day but it had been poorly attended. There had been further minor incidents and it was important that residents report all incidents to the police. The police had provided a short article for the next edition of the parish magazine.

54/23 CLIMATE GROUP WORKING GROUP

Cllr Linton reported that the new working group had held its first meeting and looked at the Parish Council Toolkit. The group would meet again in early April. The proposed Terms of Reference had been circulated with the agenda.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference of the group.

55/23 BEACH PARKING

A local resident had asked whether there could be reduced parking charges for residents with health issues who used the beach area for daily walks but only stayed for a few minutes. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate the provision for blue badge holders and others at the beach car parks.

56/23 PROJECT REPORTS

(a)Community Events

Cllr Hale explained that a small group of volunteers had been established to plan for celebrations for the Coronation on 6 May. It was planned to organise a street party on Cross Hill on 7 May and to buy a commemorative seat. The street party would be open to all residents with food being provided on a 'bring & share' basis.

It was RESOLVED that a budget of £1000 be approved from the Community Events Budget.

(b) Beach & Play Area

The CBC inspector had confirmed that most of the repairs at the beach play area had now been completed. The faulty gate on the toddler area had been taken back to the workshop for repair and the zip wires would be repaired in the next week. The CBC inspector had offered to provide information on a different design of zip wire which might require less maintenance.

A resident had reported seeing older children using the toddler equipment and had pointed out that the notices were not immediately visible to anyone approaching from the car park and notices on the gates might be useful. It was agreed to keep the issue under review.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigger Play Area

Cllr Kaldos reported that the letter had been sent to the Village School to initiate further discussions. A reply had been received from the Headteacher offering to consult colleagues and then arrange further discussions. Cllr Ritson agreed to follow this up.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

Cllr Taylor reported that a further meeting had taken place with representatives of Network Rail, Community Rail Partnership and CBC. Network Rail had instructed solicitors to look at lease terms. Network Rail representatives were hoping to visit St Bees on 3 July.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

There was no further progress to report until the legal challenges to the approval of the mine were concluded. It was suggested that it might be appropriate to reopen discussions with West Cumbria Mining.

(f) Priory Paddock

A Friends of Priory Paddock group had been established following a meeting of volunteers on 21 February. A strimmer had been purchased from the grant funding held in reserves. It was proposed to reduce the willow canopy and replace with buckthorn to improve biodiversity.

(g) Interpretation Boards

There had been no progress since the last meeting.

57/23 VILLAGE IN BLOOM COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the Village in Bloom Committee meeting on 20 February were received and noted. It was noted that the willow tree in Stonehouse Garden was again overhanging the road and pavement. It was believed that the tree was the responsibility of CBC and they had been asked to check whether further work was needed to avoid a further complaint from Cumbria Highways.

58/23 FOOTPATHS

The report by Cllr Hale was received and noted. The start of PROW 423003A that passes to the rear of Fleatham Farm and Fleatham Cottage was frequently difficult to access because of gates being locked, difficult to open because of stiff/ inaccessible latches or simply jammed. This had been a long-standing issue and the recent problems would be reported to CCC.

It was reported that the path close to the entrance of Priory Paddock was very muddy and it was suggested that gravel might help. Cllr Bettison explained that in recent years gravel and stone chippings had been put in on several occasions but with limited success.

59/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Gilmour had attended a meeting of West Copeland Partnership which brought together Egremont Town Council, and the parish councils covering St Bees, Beckermeth/Thornhill and Haile & Wilton. The Partnership meetings were an opportunity for discussion for discussion of matters of common interest and members were keen to continue to meet after the local government structure changed in April.

60/23 CLERK'S REPORT

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

61/23 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a)CALC was offering access to bespoke e-learning modules to support the Civility & Respect project. Further details were available from the Clerk. Noted.
- (b) The Shadow Cumberland Council would be taking part in a virtual meeting with local councils on the evening of Thurs 23 March, The link was available from the Clerk. Noted.
- (c) An update received from Cumbria Highways on various large scheme sand initiatives across the county. Noted.
- (d)Details had been received of the RHS Big Seed Sow and Cumbria in Bloom’s Small Woodland Copse Award. Details were available from the Clerk.
- (e)Cumbria Local Resilience Forum was updating its plans for responding to widespread and prolonged loss of electricity and was seeking information on local community venues which had back-up generators or batteries. Noted.
- (f)An email had been received from someone who wished to marry at St Bees Beach and wished to put up a gazebo for guests on the grassed area. The email had been forwarded to CBC as land owner.
- (g)A press release had been received from Mid Copeland GDF Partnership. Noted.
- (h)A letter of thanks received from Hospice at Home for the recent donation. Noted.
- (i) A letter had been received from CBC confirming that the leases for the beach toilets and play area would be transferred to Cumberland Council from 1 April. Noted.
- (j) The Open Spaces Society had introduced a new guide to protection of rights of way and common land. Noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- NALC Newsletter
- NALC Chief Executive’s Weekly Bulletins
- Rural Services Network – weekly bulletin
- Cumbria Police update Feb
- Trudy Harrison MP Newsletter
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder update
- Open Spaces Society Feb Update
- LGR Updates

62/2 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

- (a)The next beach clean would take place on Sat 25 March. Volunteers were asked to meet at 10am at the lifeboat Station.
- (b) A Ceilidh & Hotpot Supper would take place at the Seacote Hotel on 29 April.
- (c) The Village Hall would be holding a Ceilidh on 16 April.

63/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Parish Meeting take place on Monday 17 April at 6pm in the Village Hall with the next Parish Council meeting following immediately afterwards at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....