

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

**PRESENT:** Cllrs D Sim (in the Chair), P Argyle, N Bettinson, C Hale, A Kaldos, J Mellor, E Taylor,  
& the Clerk

**In attendance:** Cllr G Minshaw, Cumberland Council  
Ms K Davis, Headteacher Designate St Bees Village School  
Mr J Johnson, CEO Changing Lives Learning Trust

Also present: 6 members of the public.

**186/23 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting and introduced Ms Kate Davis, the newly appointed Headteacher of the Village School.

**187/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Gilmour, Graham, Linton & Millington.

**188/23 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest at this stage in the meeting.

**189/23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 OCTOBER 2023**

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

**190/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members of the public raised several issues relating to flooding and drainage issues and parking/safety issues around the Outrigg junction. It was agreed that these matters would be discussed as part of the Cumberland Council agenda item.

**191/23 VILLAGE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Johnson, CEO of the Changing Lives learning Trust and Kate Davis, the newly appointed Headteacher of the Village School who would be taking up her post after Christmas. Mrs Davis explained that she and her family had moved to Cumbria two years ago from Dorset. She had worked for several years in a Multi Academy Trust and appreciated the support which this offered to schools within the Trust. She firmly believed that schools needed to be part of their local community and she had been impressed by the friendly atmosphere and caring staff at the Village School. At this stage she had no specific plans for the school but wanted to take time to listen and learn before formulating her plans.

Councillors expressed the hope that the school and parish council could develop a close ongoing relationship. In past years the school had been at the heart of village life with the annual school fete being a highlight of the calendar. There were opportunities for the school to use facilities such as Priory Paddock and members of the local community had a range of skills which the school could draw on. It was hoped that there would be opportunities to work together on matters of common interest, including the Parish Council's plans for upgrading the Outrigg play area.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Davis and Mr Johnson for their attendance and looked forward to working together in the future.

**192/23 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS**

**(a) Flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont Road**

The Chairman invited members of the public to explain their concerns about the ongoing flooding problems. The closure of the road was causing significant inconvenience to residents and to those who had land in the area and the water was now affecting other land. A number of observations were made about the cause of the flooding and possible short term and long term solutions. It was clear that the flooding had worsened considerably in the last two years. Vehicles were still trying to drive through the flood despite the closure signs, spreading water for some distance on either side of the flood.

With winter approaching there were real concerns that the road would become icy and it would only be a matter of time before there was a serious accident. The diversion route was via a narrow minor road which was not suitable for this volume of two-way traffic.

Cllr Minshaw reported on the information provided by Cumberland Council's officers. They were still trying to negotiate with the adjacent landowner to gain access to the land but so far there had been no agreement. Officers were confident that they could find a long term solution to the flooding if access was available.

Councillors expressed frustration that the situation had apparently reached an impasse with no prospect of a solution in the immediate future.

It was RESOLVED to write to Karl Melville, Assistant Director of Highways & Transport, to ask that an urgent review of the situation take place with consideration being given to options for both short term and long term solutions.

#### **(b) Safety Issues – Outrigg/Main Street Junction**

Members of the public raised concerns about safety at this junction. The double yellow lines on Main Street were in need of repainting and vehicles often parked very close to the junction making it difficult for vehicles turning south from Outrigg. Vehicles also mounted the pavement as they turned out, causing a danger to any pedestrians using the footpath. This was a particular concern as this was a route used by children going to/from the village school. It was suggested that bollards might help to prevent vehicles driving onto the pavement.

Cllr Minshaw explained that Highways officers had already agreed to look at this area after reports that the pavement could not be used by a wheelchair user. He would request that these safety issues should also be considered at the same time.

#### **(c) Blocked drain Nethertown Rd/Sea Mill Lane**

Cllr Minshaw reported that officers had now received permission to access private land to carry out further investigation of the drain. This work was expected to take place before Christmas together with some investigation of problems of drains surcharging further up Sea Mill Lane. It was noted that there were still cavities in the garden of one property which posed a safety risk. Whilst the timescale for further investigation of the drain was welcome, it did not address the issue of the cavities.

#### **(d) Drainage & flooding problem – entrance to Station car park**

Cllr Minshaw confirmed that work was being scheduled on this drain but he had no specific date.

#### **(e) 'On demand' bus service**

Cllr Minshaw reported that Cumberland Council would be funding an 'on demand' bus service in certain areas. The St Bees/Egremont area had been selected as one of the pilot areas. Further details would be provided in due course with the scheme due to begin in the new year.

Cumberland Council also had some funding to subsidise bus services. Cllr Minshaw had asked whether St Bees could be included but had not yet received a reply.

#### **(f) Other issues**

- It was reported that the redundant light on the wall of 97 Main Street would be removed shortly once ENW had disconnected the supply.
- Councillors commented favourably on the standard of the work that had recently taken place to repair pot holes on Cross Hill.
- It was noted that vehicles were continuing to park close to the junction of High House Rd and Fleatham Croft. Cllr Minshaw agreed to follow this up.
- The next meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Panel would take place on 6 December.

### **193/23 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

The summary of accounts at 31 October was received and noted. Details had been received of the 2023/24 salary award for Clerks which was effective from 1 April 2023.

**(b) Budget 2024-2027**

Work had started on preparing the draft budget which would need to be approved at the meeting on 15 January. Three new projects had been proposed for inclusion in the budget (a mural on the wall of the beach toilets, shelving and storage for parish council archives and a small shed for storage of tree planning materials etc).

It was RESOLVED that the three projects be included in budget plans for next year.

**(c) Donations**

It was RESOLVED that the following donations be made to local groups:

- St Bees PCC – contribution to publication costs of parish magazine £1270
- Village Hall Committee – use of hall & office £750
- Royal British Legion – wreaths & additional donation £150
- St Bees Over 60s – towards transport costs £120
- 1st Beckermest/St Bees Scout Group- camping equipment £250
- Great North Air Ambulance – contribution to costs £100
- Friends of the Priory £40
- Furness Line Action Group £40

**(d) Payments**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower -toilet electricity Oct £36.25 + £1.81 VAT Total £38.06
- Glasdon Ltd– wall mounted bin £179.14 + £35.83 VAT Total £214.97
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting Oct £517.22 + £103.44 VAT Total £620.66
- Cumberland Council – play area inspections Qtr 2 £382.65 + £59.18 VAT Total £459.18
- R Mayow/M Kipling – hosting defibrillator Total £100.00
- J Donaldson -salary Nov (incl backdated salary award) Total £1012.19
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £8.32 + £1.67 VAT, stationery £2.08+£0.42 VAT, postage £1.55 Total £14.04
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service (Nov) £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 09/11/23)
- Petty cash top up £189.06
- Brockbank Curwen Cain & Hall – advance payment of solicitor costs £100.00
- Answer 4 U -answering service £14.50+ £2.90 VAT Total £17.40 (direct debit 17/11/23)

**194/23 LITTER BINS**

Cllr Minshaw had not been able to obtain any information on the Cumberland Council policy on provision of new bins following the requests received at the last meeting.

The new wall mounted bin had been delivered to replace the bin damaged by a vehicle.

It was RESOLVED to contact the Street Cleansing Team about the feasibility of new bins near the golf club and at Rottington and to ask the lengthsman to instal the new bin outside the Post Office.

**195/23CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP**

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

**196/23 FULL FIBRE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Chairman explained that full fibre broadband infrastructure was to be installed across the village as part of a government funded project. This would be delivered by a combination of overhead lines and underground cables and would offer the opportunity for residents to access much higher broadband speeds. Viberoptix had sought permission to lay a cable underground in the lonning behind the former station garage as part of the work. After a site visit the Chairman had signed the wayleave agreement to allow the work to go ahead. The Parish Council would receive a one-off payment of £800+.

**197/23 PROJECT REPORTS****(a) Community Events**

- The traditional Remembrance Day parade and wreath laying ceremony had been very well attended with 10 wreaths being laid. The Parish Council would make one payment to the British Legion for the 7 wreaths ordered by the PC, with organisations making a contribution to the Parish Council.
- The Christmas tree had been put in place on 17 November with help from a number of volunteers. Plans were in place for the Santa Parade on Tues 28 November with the sleigh setting off from the turning circle by Fairladies at 5.45pm and arriving at Cross Hill at 7pm. A licence had been granted for a street collection in aid of the RNLI during the parade.

**(b) Beach & Play Area**

The reports of the annual inspection of both play areas had just been received. The recommendations would be reviewed and any urgent work would be identified. A final decision was yet to be made on the repair/replacement of the dizzy roundabout. It was agreed that Cumberland Council be asked to provide a firm quotation for replacing the bearings and reinstating the equipment.

Cllr Hale reported that the Outdoor Partnership had sought views on whether the Parish Council might be interested in hosting a training session in water safety next summer. It was agreed to seek further information about the proposal.

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

Cumberland Council had now confirmed that the land on which the play equipment stands would not be included in the land leased to the Changing Lives Trust. This might make it easier for the Parish Council to secure an asset transfer, making it possible to obtain grant funding for renovating the play area.

It was RESOLVED to make a formal approach to Cumberland Council to request an asset transfer of the land.

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

Cllr Taylor explained that the ground penetrating radar survey had taken place and the CBR testing would take place shortly. The owners of Stonehouse Farm had kindly agreed to allow access for the testing from their property on condition that the vehicles did not leave mud in the farmyard. The contractor had suggested that wheel washing could be organised for a small additional cost to ensure that the site was left in a clean state.

Cllr Taylor had spoken to the owner of a property next to the site and listened to their concerns. The design had yet to be finalised but every effort would be made to minimise the effect on neighbouring properties.

It was RESOLVED to approve additional expenditure of £225 + VAT to cover wheel washing & clean-up of the yard.

**(e) Valley Link Cycle Track**

There was no further progress to report.

**(f) Priory Paddock**

Cllr Bettinson reported that further work had taken place to remove invasive weeds from the pond and the giant rhubarb had been given some protection against the winter weather. An estimate was awaited for crown reducing the large alders which were overshadowing the garden.

**(g) Interpretation Boards**

The new board would be installed shortly by the Priory. Better notices were needed for the gates at the entrance to Priory Paddock, where it was hoped to refurbish the Mill Hill plaque. Next year would be the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the evacuation of Mill Hill School to St Bees and it was hoped to have an unveiling of the refurbished plaque to coincide with the anniversary.

It was RESOLVED to obtain three new signs for the gates and to refurbish the plaque at a total cost of £180.

**198/23 PLANNING****(a) New applications**

There were no new planning applications to consider.

**(b) Applications approved by Cumberland Council**

4/23/2261/TPO Pruning of sycamore tree within the conservation area – 7 Seacroft Drive

4/23/2140/0F1 Alterations to attached cottage to facilitate use as an annexe – Ghyll Farm, Egremont

4/23/2141/0L1 Listed building consent for above works – Ghyll Farm, Egremont

4/23/2228/DOC Discharge of conditions 2-8 of approval 4/22/2315/0F1 – Land adj to School House

**199/23 FOOTPATHS**

Cllr Hale's written report was received and noted.

**200/23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chairman reported on the recent meeting of the West Cumbria Site Stakeholders Group. There had been a number of press and public present and the proceedings had been reported in the local press.

There had been discussion of skills shortages as well as a report on the ongoing leak from a silo.

**201/23 CLERK'S REPORT**

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

**202/23 CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) The Environment Agency had published its annual geological disposal report, available on the GOV.UK website. Noted.

(b) CAfS was organising a workshop for councillors entitled Climate Science & Solutions for Cumbria on 30 November. Noted.

(c) An email had been received from the developer of a plot adjacent to School House informing stakeholders that tree felling would begin on site shortly. Noted.

(d) The minutes of the CALC AGM had been received. Noted.

(e) An email had been received from a visitor to the beach thanking the PC for maintaining the toilets. Noted.

(f) The Environment Agency had published its annual report on radioactivity in food and the environment. Noted.

(g) Correspondence had been received about anti-social behaviour around Halloween. Noted.

(h) A public consultation had been launched by Cumbria Constabulary and Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. The survey could be completed online and would run to 27 Nov. Noted

(i) Notification had been received from the developers of the site on Nethertown Rd that phase 2 of the work would begin at the end of October. Noted.

(j) Information had been received on the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain to be included in planning applications. Noted.

(k) The Open Spaces Society was seeking donations to help fund legal action in appropriate cases. Noted

(l) Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board was offering online training for councillors on 21 Nov. Noted.

(m) Details had been received of a road closure at Rottington for utility works from 27 Nov for 3 days. Noted.

(n) ACT was holding an event on 24 Nov to present the findings of research on appetite to travel differently in/around the Lake District. Noted.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

NALC Newsletters & Chief Exec Bulletins

Rural Services Network Newsletters

Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder Network

Police Newsletters – Whitehaven/Egremont & Rural

Cumberland Council Newsletters

Connecting Cumbria Newsletter

CAfS Newsletter

**203/23 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA**

Cllr Taylor had followed up a contact made at the Community Network Panel a few weeks ago and had spoken to the organisers of the Youth Engagement Group. They were intending to visit St Bees to look at the need for activities for young people. It was suggested that there should be an item on the next agenda to receive feedback from their visit.

**204/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 18 December 2023 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....