

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on  
Monday 21 October 2024 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

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

**150/24 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**151/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Argyle and Millington.

**152/24 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no requests for dispensations or declarations of interest.

**153/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

**154/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2024**

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

**155/24 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS**

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

- There had been no report yet from Highways following the site meeting in August to discuss safety issues around the Abbey Vale junction. Cllr Minshaw would follow this up.
- Residents of properties affected by drainage issues on Sea Mill Lane had now finally received the promised information on plans to resolve the problem with work due to take place on 12 November. It was agreed to contact the Highways Manager to express the hope that work would go ahead as promised with no further delays
- Resurfacing of Main Street was expected to be done in the next financial year.
- Cumberland Council officers were still awaiting the outcome of discussions with the Environment Agency on the future of the groynes. However, David Bechelli was willing to attend the PC meeting in January or February to brief councillors.
- Further discussions had taken place with Cumberland Council officers about improving access to the beach and it seemed likely that work would be undertaken to install steps and possibly also modify the small ramp.
- A meeting of the Community Network for the Whitehaven & Coastal area had taken place on 8 October with a focus on community food, parks and the natural environment. A number of groups and organisations had been represented including St Bees Parish Council and the Friends of Priory Paddock.

It was noted that there had been a number of problems with flooding from blocked drains and gulleys following the storm at the weekend, particularly on the B5435 from Byersteds Rd down towards the village. Cllr Bettinson had managed to clear some gulleys blocked by fallen leaves but others were completely blocked, resulting in water flowing down the road from surcharging gulleys. The inspection cover close to the Station car park had lifted and had now been replaced thanks to the efforts of a local resident. A comprehensive report had been submitted to Highways.

It was also noted that work was progressing to reinstate the retaining wall outside two properties on Abbey Rd. A road closure was in place until 20 December.

**156/24 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT****(a) Financial Report & Half Year Review**

A summary of the accounts at 30 Sept was received and noted, together with the notes of the FRAG meeting on 11 October. At the end of September income was close to the expected figure whilst expenditure was under budget due to delays with the car park extension project and delays in the invoicing of play area repairs. Looking ahead to the second half of the year it was now clear that the car park project would not reach the construction stage during this financial year and it was suggested that budget should be amended to remove the costs and matching grant/loan income.

It was RESOLVED that the budget be amended to reflect the delays with the car park project.

**(b) Boat Park**

Following the agreement to lease the land of the former boat park, two letters had been sent to the owner of a boat and trailer asking for them to be removed. There had been no reply and the items were still on the land.

It was RESOLVED to send a final letter to the owner's last known address to ask for the items to be removed or the Parish Council would take action to dispose of the items.

**(c) Village Hall**

It was agreed at a previous meeting to make monthly payments for the use of the Village Hall rather than make an annual donation. It was proposed to begin monthly payments from November.

It was RESOLVED to make monthly payments of £70 per month for 12 months beginning from November

**(d) Pagan Trust****Clrs Sim & Bettinson declared an interest as Trustees of the Pagan Trust**

It was noted that the Pagan Trust, owners of the Village Hall, had only four Trustees and, as an unincorporated body, the Trustees carried a personal liability. New Trustees were needed to ensure that the Trust could continue and it was felt that having indemnity insurance in place would help with recruitment of new Trustees. The Trust did not have the resources to pay the cost of insurance (estimated at £100pa.)

It was RESOLVED to donate a sum of £100 to enable the Trust to obtain indemnity insurance.

**(e) Beach Toilets**

Tom Milburn had given notice to end the contract for opening/closing/cleaning the beach toilets from 31 December. He had undertaken this work for 11 years since the Parish Council took over the management of the toilets and the Parish Council was extremely grateful to him for the service he had provided.

Cllr Taylor provided a report on efforts to find a new contractor. Expressions of interest had been sought via Facebook and by proactively contacting local companies. Two prices had been received -one for daily cleaning only and one for opening/closing/cleaning. Neither quotation included minor repairs for which separate arrangements would be needed.

It was clear that continuing to provide the public toilets would involve significant additional costs. However, there was agreement that it was vital to continue to provide toilet facilities for beach users and it was noted that the toilets were regularly used by Cumberland Council staff, delivery drivers etc as they were the only public toilets in the area.

It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Ms S Kelly for providing a service for opening/closing/cleaning the toilets and providing materials and consumables. The contract would be for one year in the first instance with a start date to be agreed following discussions with Tom Milburn. It was further RESOLVED to write to Cumberland Council to seek a contribution to the costs of providing the toilets.

**(f) Financial Regulations**

New draft financial regulations had been prepared based on the model regulations issued by the National Association of Local Councils. Minor changes had been made to fit with current practice and new limits for approval of expenditure had been included.

It was RESOLVED that the new financial regulations be adopted.

**(g) Payments**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity Sept £32.10 + £1.60 VAT Total £33.70
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting Sept £538.94 + £107.79 Total £646.73
- Unipar Services LLP– speed gun repair £177.00 + £35.40 VAT Total £212.40
- Village Hall Committee– room hire Climate Change Working Group Total £10.00
- J Donaldson – salary Oct Total £712.25
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT Total £11.99
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service Oct £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

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

- Cumberland Council – play area inspections (Outrigg)£186.78 + £37.36 VAT Total £224.14
- Cumberland Council -play area inspections (beach) £458.16 + £91.63 VAT Total £549.79
- I McAndrew –website software Total £54.18
- Water Plus – water//wastewater £186.49 (direct debit 18/09/24)
- Answer 4 U – answering service £14.50 + £2.90 VAT Total £17.40 (direct debit 17/10/24)
- Water Plus– water/wastewater Total £178.72 (direct debit 17/10/24)

**157/24 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR**

John Benedicic had submitted an expression of interest in being co-opted to the Parish Council to fill one of seats which had been vacant since the last election. He was unable to attend the meeting but had offered to provide any additional information required.

It was RESOLVED to co-opt John Benedicic to serve as a parish councillor until the next election.

**158/24 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Linton had provided a written report on progress. Cllr Minshaw had consulted officers at Cumberland Council and confirmed that they were happy for the group to go ahead with plans for a questionnaire to survey views on demand for a bus service through the village. The questionnaire would be piloted on a sample of residents before being rolled out more widely.

**159/24 PROJECT REPORTS****(a)Community Events**

Plans were in hand for the usual parade and wreath laying ceremony on Remembrance Sunday (10 November). The parade would assemble at 10.20am by the entrance to Station car park and then march to the war memorial by the Station Rd junction and on towards the churchyard to lay wreaths. The parade would disband in time for the service at the Priory. Two volunteers would be needed to act as marshals to control traffic during the parade. The wreaths would be displayed in the window of 22 Main Street in the days leading up to Remembrance Sunday.

The Christmas tree was due to be delivered on 13 November. It was proposed to put the tree up over the weekend of 16/17 November (weather permitting). It was hoped to hold the now traditional Santa Parade again this year, if a trailer and Santa were available. A provisional date of Tuesday 26 November was proposed subject to discussions with the RNLI about their plans. It was agreed to collect donations in aid of the RNLI during the parade.

**(b)Beach & Play Area**

Cllr Linton would check with the Art Department at St Bees School after half term about progress with designing artwork for the outside of the beach toilet block.

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

Cllr Bettinson had spoken to the officer in charge of Open Spaces at the recent Community Network event and the council had now offered to open discussions with the Parish Council on a lease of the land on which the play equipment stands. It was agreed to take forward discussions with Cumberland Council to secure a lease of at least 20 years to enable grant applications to be made for refurbishment of the play area.

**(d) Station Car Park Extension/Travel Hub**

There had been no further progress since the last meeting. Solicitors for Network Rail and Cumberland Council were working to resolve the issue of the erroneous registration of the car park with the Land Registry. Until this matter was resolved, there could be no further progress with the leases.

**(e) Valley Link Cycle Track**

Cllr Taylor gave a short verbal report. A contractor had offered its services to investigate current land ownership along possible routes and further discussions would take place with Cumberland Council officers with a view to developing the scheme to the point at which it could be implemented if funds became available. Cllr Taylor had met the local MP who was supportive of the project but at this stage the government had not announced any new initiatives for cycle track projects.

**(f) Office Improvements**

The parish council room at the Village Hall was now able to be used for meetings of up to five people. The antique desk which had belonged to a previous Parish Clerk many years ago had been donated by Cllr Sim and this was now in place in the parish council room. It was RESOLVED to purchase a small table for the room.

**(g) Priory Paddock**

The Friends of Priory Paddock had entered an RHS competition earlier this year and had recently learned that they had been awarded three awards including a rating of Outstanding in the Its Your Neighbourhood competition, Cumbria Best Copse award and the Cumbria in Bloom trophy. Councillors congratulated Cllr Bettinson and the volunteers from the Friends of the Paddock on the excellent achievement. It was agreed that the awards should be recognised with a sign on the gate to the Paddock at a cost of approximately £45.

**(h) Interpretation Boards**

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

**160/24 PLANNING****(a) New Applications**

The Planning Advisory Group reported on two new applications:

- Ref 4/24/2329/0F1 Change of use of utility room in detached garage to dog grooming studio – continuation of use granted under ref 4/21/2419/0F1 - 2 Solway Rise, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to the continued use as a dog grooming studio

- Ref 4/24/2334/0F1 Removal of existing wind turbine and erection of replacement wind turbine with up to 76m blade tip height with associated development – Highfield Farm, Bigrigg  
It was noted that the applicant had organised a consultation event some time ago but this had been poorly attended so little reliance could be placed on the consultation responses. Whilst the Parish Council was not opposed to wind turbines in principle and would not oppose replacement of the existing turbine with one of a similar size, it was felt that a larger turbine would have a detrimental visual effect on the landscape.

It was RESOLVED to object to the application.

**(b) Other Planning Matters**

- Local Plan 2021-35 – the Inspector's final report had been published and was available, together with the Main Modifications, on the Cumberland Council website and in local libraries. Once the modifications had been incorporated, the report would go to Cumberland Council Executive and then to full council for adoption.
- Holiday Pods, Nethertown Rd – a decision was expected early in November
- Abbey Road development – no decision had been made on the application but it seemed that the developer might be prepared to provide a path to link with the Dandy Walk
- The Knoll, High House Rd – no decision had yet been made. It was understood that a report was awaited on trees on the site.

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

4/23/2366/0F1 Erection of roadside fence with screen hedge, installation of oil tank, construction of garden/bike shed and waste bin enclosure – Moorleys, Egremont

4/23/2367/0L1 Listed building approval for above works- Moorleys, Egremont

4/24/2262/0F1 Change of use of conservatory to dog grooming parlour- 5 Ellerbeck Barns

**161/24 FOOTPATHS**

The report from Cllr Hale was received and noted.

**162/24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Bettinson reported on the recent Community Network event. There had been several excellent presentations and the event had provided useful opportunities for networking with other organisations. The Chairman reported on the recent CALC AGM in Newbiggin with speakers from both Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Councils.

**163/24 CLERK'S REPORT**

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

**164/24 CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) Details had been received of the latest grants awarded by Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel. Noted

(b) An update had been received from Cumbria Constabulary on progress with Operation Enhance which was targeting ASB in hot spot areas. Noted.

(c) Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Team had produced some initial maps of areas where nature recovery could take place in future. Events were being held in Kendal, Carlisle, and Penrith. Noted.

(d) CALC Cumberland Branch was holding an event on 20 November at 7pm to discuss what member councils want from CALC membership. Noted.

(e) Details had been received of the CALC AGM on 12 October (circulated to councillors by email).

(f) Correspondence had been received from a local resident about dense gorse in front of a stile on the footpath from Lovers Lonning to Coulderton. The issue was being reported to the Countryside Access Team.

(g) NALC had launched its new website. Details of how to register had been sent to councillors by email.

(h) CALC had forwarded a survey to support NALC's campaign to have rules changed to allow local councils to use the Financial Services Ombudsman Scheme. Noted.

(i) CALC had forwarded two surveys – one on membership and one on training with a closing date of 30 November. Noted.

(j) Correspondence had been received from Cumberland Council enclosing the Inspector's final report on the Local Plan and the Main Modifications which would be incorporated before the Plan was put to the full council for approval. Noted

(k) Feedback was being sought on the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory website. Details were available from the Clerk.

(l) CALC had provided provisional figures for membership subscriptions from April 2025. The subscription for St Bees would rise to £389.46. Noted.

(m) Notification had been received of a price increase for the answering service from November. The basic monthly charge would be £15.99 + VAT. Noted

(n) CALC had forwarded guidance from NALC on the new Positive Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment which would come into force on 26 October. Noted.

(o) CALC was organising an online meeting on 19 November with Cumberland Council Planning Officers. Details had been circulated to councillors by email.

(p) CALC was organising a website training/information session on 13 November. Details circulated to councillors.

(q) CAfS was working with Electricity North West to carry out a survey to support the transition to electric vehicles in Cumbria. Details available from the Clerk or via the PC Facebook page.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

**165/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA**

- (a) It was reported that the committee room upstairs in the Village Hall was now available for hiring. The Village Hall Committee was applying for grant funding to completely refurbish the toilet area.
- (b) Cllr Bettinson reported that it might be necessary to organise work next year to deal with invasive species such as Himalayan balsam, skunk cabbage and American pond fern which were known to be in the village and needed to be controlled or eradicated before they spread more widely.
- (c) Sea Mill car park had been damaged in the storm at the weekend with the stone surface being washed away. A post would be put on Facebook informing residents of the damage and Cllrs Taylor and Sim would assess the situation and decide what work was required.

**166/24 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 18 November 2024 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....