

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 15 July 2024 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllrs G Gilmour (in the Chair), P Argyle, C Hale, A Kaldos, A Linton, J Mellor & the Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Paul Cretney, Fibrus
Cllr G Minshaw, Cumberland Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: 2 Members of the public

116/24 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Cretney and members of the public to the meeting.

117/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Graham, Millington, Sim, Taylor & Bettinson.

118/24 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no requests for dispensations or declarations of interest.

119/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public present expressed an interest in the Hyperfast GB Project to be discussed during the meeting. It was agreed that there would be an opportunity to ask questions about the project during discussion of this item.

120/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 17 JUNE 2024

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 17 June 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

121/24 HYPERFAST GB PROJECT

The Chairman invited Paul Cretney of Fibrus to outline the background to the project and progress to date.

Mr Cretney explained that this was a government funded project to bring full fibre broadband to properties where other providers had not expressed an interest in providing a service. The state funding covered 296 properties in the St Bees, Rottington and High Walton areas. Work to fulfil the contract was well advanced in most areas, although connections to Rottington would be delayed until next year, as the original route for the cables had proved to be unsuitable. Residents could use the postcode checker on the Fibrus website to check whether their property was one of the 296 covered by the government contract.

There were a large number of other properties which were not covered by the government contract and Fibrus had taken a commercial decision to offer connection to as many of these properties as possible within the capacity of the network. It was hoped that this would cover a further 400 - 500 properties. At this stage it was not possible to say which properties might be offered a connection, as end-to-end testing was needed to determine the light capacity of the cable. It was hoped that testing would be completed in the next few weeks. In the meantime residents could register an interest on the Fibrus website without any commitment to take up a connection. In the event that connections could not offered in all areas, the number of households which had registered an interest would be a factor in the commercial decision of which areas would be included.

In answer to questions Mr Cretney confirmed that, once testing was complete, the information on the Fibrus website would be updated to show which properties could be offered a connection and it was expected that this information would be available by the end of the year. Other providers would be able to use the Fibrus network but initially this was only likely to be taken up by smaller providers. In the longer term it might be possible for properties not covered by the current phase of work to be served either by other providers or by additional state aid being provided to increase capacity.

Residents asked whether a connection charge would be payable. Mr Cretney explained that the costs of connection to individual properties would form part of the contract price and would not be charged separately. In most cases connections to individual properties would use existing overhead lines but would be agreed with individual property owners.

Councillors expressed concerns about the number and extent of road closures and the proliferation of diversion signs which were causing confusion for drivers. Mr Cretney explained that 12 weeks notice had to be given to Highways of planned work and this was publicised as road closures even when the work could sometimes be done with less disruption. The long notice period also meant that plans could change in the interim so residents might not see work taking place. He acknowledged that this was frustrating for residents and he promised to share information with the Parish Council where possible. He hoped that road closures would not be needed beyond the end of the year.

Mr Cretney concluded by offering to respond to any questions raised by email and to provide the Parish Council with any updates on progress. The Chairman thanked Mr Cretney for attending the meeting and reiterated the council's offer to use its communication channels to pass on information to residents.

122/24 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Minshaw reported on a number of matters:

- The Outrigg to Egremont road had been re-opened following completion of the drainage work.
- Camera surveys had taken place on drains in various locations in the village to investigate drainage problems. The results would be studied to determine what further work would be required.
- The hedge overgrowing the pavement on Abbey Rd had been reported to Highways and their officers would ensure that the hedge was cut back.
- The hedge and verge causing visibility problems around the Abey Vale junction had also been reported to Highways.
- There had been reports of construction vehicles obstructing the pavement at the site of the new development opposite Abbey Vale, where pedestrian safety was already an issue. The police were aware of the issue and the situation would be kept under review.
- The re-painting of the speed humps on Beach Rd was on the list of work for the next line painting contract.
- Cumberland Council was keen to preserve traditional cast iron signposts where possible. The sign at the junction of Egremont Rd and Nethertown Rd had been added to the list for possible refurbishment.
- The insurers of the two properties affected by the wall collapse on Abbey Rd had apparently reached agreement on the work required but no work had yet taken place and there continued to be problems for drivers exiting Abbey Farm courtyard.
- The next meeting of the Whitehaven & Coastal Community Panel would take place on 4 September. The meeting would be held in St Bees with the public participation session at 5.30pm followed by the Panel meeting.

Councillors raised the issue of bin bags left out for collection being ripped open by seagulls, leaving rubbish strewn around the street. Cllr Minshaw reported that outer bags were available from the Market Hall in Whitehaven into which household bin bags could be put to give some protection. He also agreed to speak to officers about whether stronger, more bird resistant bin bags were available.

It was noted that the new larger bird proof bin had now been installed near the beach café.

123/24 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Monthly Financial Report

A summary of the accounts at 30 June was received and noted, together with the notes of the FRAG meeting on 20 June. It was noted that the Qtr 1 variance figures gave no cause for concern and no changes were required to the risk register.

A request had been submitted to change the signatories on the bank mandate as agreed at the May meeting and it was hoped that this would be approved shortly.

(b) Donation Request

A letter had been received from St Bees Garden Society seeking financial support for the Annual Show on 17 August.

It was RESOLVED to make a donation of £200 towards the cost of staging the show.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Npower- electricity June £32.54 + £1.63 VAT Total £34.17
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting/materials £606.94 + £121.39 Total £728.33
- J Donaldson – salary July Total £712.05
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT, tools £209.17 + £36.42 VAT, storage shed £319.98 + £64,00 VAT & shelving £273.00 +£54.60 VAT Total £969.16
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service July £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

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

- Answer 4 U -answering service £14.50 + £2.90 VAT Total £17.40 (direct debit 17/07/24)

124/24 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The Working Group had met to review the results of the environmental questionnaire and a report had been circulated with the agenda. The Group was proposing to report the results in the parish magazine and via social media and any comments would be welcome.

One of the improvements supported by respondents was a bus service. It was known that the previous bus service operated by Hobans had been withdrawn as passenger numbers had been very low. However, it had been a very limited service and only picked up at the station. If the Parish Council was to press for a new service, evidence would be needed to show demand for the service. It was agreed that the Working Group would carry out a further survey to find out where potential passengers wanted to travel, how often they would use the service and where would they wish the bus to pick up/drop off.

125/24 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Beach & Play Area**

Cllr Linton explained that the Art Department at St Bees School had agreed to help with the project for artwork on the outside of the beach toilet block. It was suggested that the design could feature three roundels portraying images typical of St Bees with a view of St Bees Head in the background. Cllr Linton would continue discussions with St Bees School.

Various tools had been purchased to enable volunteers to carry out minor repairs when carrying out play area inspections.

(b) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

There was no progress to report.

(c) Station Car Park Extension/Travel Hub

The written report from Cllr Taylor was received and noted.

(d) Valley Link Cycle Track

Cllr Taylor reported that it was hoped to facilitate a meeting between officers of Cumberland Council and a contractor who had offered help and advice

(e) Office Improvements

The new shelving had been installed and pipework had been boxed in. There was still some painting to be done but the room was almost ready for use.

(f) Priory Paddock

There was no report.

(g) Storage Shed.

The shed to be sited at the rear of the Village Hall had now been delivered and would be assembled by volunteers shortly. This would provide storage for tree planting tools & equipment etc

(h) Interpretation Boards

There was no progress to report.

126/24 PLANNING**(a) New Applications**

Ref 4/24/2130/0F1 Demolition of existing garages & erection of 1 new self-build dwelling with retention of a single garage – additional & amended information
Workshop & premises, Outrigg, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to the additional and amended information.

(b) Other Planning Matters

(i) It was noted that no decision had yet been made on the application for holiday pods on Nethertown Road.

(ii) A resident had provided a copy of correspondence with Planning Officers about construction vehicles obstructing the pavement opposite Abbey Vale.

(c) Applications approved by Cumberland Council

4/24/2154/0L1 Listed building consent for waterproofing membrane & associated work – Ghyll Farm, Egremont APPROVED

4/24/2182/0N1 Prior notification application for concreting of yard & installation of rainwater collecting tank – Springbank Farm, High Walton REFUSED

4/24/2212/DOC Discharge of condition 5 of 4/24/2096/0F1 – Mellendene, High House Rd APPROVED

4/24/2141/0L1 Listed building consent for second sink & relocation of external drain outlet – New College Hall APPROVED

4/24/2124/0A1 Illuminated & on-illuminated sign -Manor House Inn APPROVED

4/24/2123/0L1 Listed building consent for signs – Manor House Inn APPROVED

4/24/2115/0B1 Variation of condition 2 – Plot 2 Land south of Southrigg, Nethertown Rd APPROVED

4/24/2120/0B1 Variation of conditions 2, 5 & 16 – Land adjacent to School House APPROVED

4/24/2118/0F1 Replace flat roof on garage with pitched roof – 15 Firth Drive APPROVED

127/24 FOOTPATHS

It was noted that there was no progress with the footpath from Scalebarrow to Rottington which was obstructed by crops. Cllr Minshaw was taking this up with the Countryside Access Officer.

128/24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Mellor reported that the SATs results at the Village School showed an encouraging improvement in all areas.

129/24 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. Several residents had reported concerns about a vehicle parked at Sea Mill which appeared not to have been moved for some time. It had been confirmed that the vehicle had valid tax and MOT and could not be viewed as abandoned.

130/24 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) CALC had published a model policy on co-option of new councillors which would be available on the CALC website. Noted.

(b) CALC had circulated details of the training programme for the next few months. A copy had been forwarded to councillors.

(c) Notification had been received of a closure of the Outrigg to Egremont road from 8 to 11 July to allow the new drain to be connected. Noted

(d)Information had been received from Cumberland Council on various election matters including the requirements for photo ID. Noted.

(e) Cumberland Council was seeking views on its Healthy Child Programme to inform decisions on commissioning public health services for children. The survey was available to complete on the Cumberland Council website. Noted.

(f) Correspondence had been received reporting incidents of criminal damage to vehicles and property in the village. It was agreed to use the parish magazine and social media to remind residents of the importance of reporting all incidents to the police so that local officers were aware of the problems and were able to respond appropriately.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive’s Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter & Funding Digest
- Cumberland Council newsletters
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- Cumbria Police Newsletter June - Whitehaven & District
- Cumbria Police Newsletter June - Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
- ACT Update

131/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

(a) It was noted that several TV/film companies had expressed an interest in filming in St Bees over the summer.

132/24 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 16 September 2024 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....