

**Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 20 May 2024 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Taylor, Area Highways Network Manager
Cllr G Minshaw, Cumberland Councillor, Egremont North/St Bees
Also present: 4 Members of the public

76/24 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN/VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for the office of Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2024/25.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Sim be elected as Chairman (proposed by N Bettinson, seconded by J Mellor) and that Cllr Taylor be elected as Vice Chairman (proposed by J Mellor, seconded by A Kaldos).

Cllrs Sim & Taylor then signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

77/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Millington.

78/24 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed Martyn Taylor, Highways Area Network Manager, and members of the public. He explained that this was the annual meeting of the council and election of a Chairman and Vice Chairman was required before the main business of the meeting could begin.

79/24 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Mellor & Hale declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 as members of the Village Hall Committee. Cllrs Bettinson & Sim explained that they were Trustees of the Pagan Trust, owner of the Village Hall, but the Trust was not directly involved in the matter of the sub-lease to be discussed later in the meeting.

80/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public present expressed an interest in several agenda items including pedestrian safety on Abbey Road, lighting on the beach car park and drainage issues in the village. All of these matters would be discussed under the Cumberland Council item.

81/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 15 APRIL 2024

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 15 April 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82/24 CUMBERLAND COUNCIL MATTERS

(a) Flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont Road

The Chairman welcomed Martyn Taylor, the Area Highways Network Manager, and invited him to outline progress with work to address the flooding on the Outrigg to Egremont road.

Mr Taylor explained that it had been possible to re-open the road after the owner of the adjacent land had agreed to allow the water to be drained on to his land. Design work had been completed on a more permanent solution and funding was in place. Work was expected to begin on 3 June and to be completed by the end of July but a temporary road closure would be needed to allow the work to be finished.

(b) Abbey Road Safety Issues

A member of the public explained her concerns about pedestrian safety on Abbey Road. As a parent of two young children, she found it impossible to walk safely to the village or beach with a pram. There were no pavements along much of the road and the pavements around Abbey Corner were very narrow and not suitable for pushchairs/prams. Traffic often travelled at speed along Abbey Road increasing the danger.

The Chairman explained that the safety issues had been discussed at the last meeting in the context of the new planning application for five new houses. There had been a proposal to create a safe off-road route via the Dandy Walk some years ago but at this stage it remained unclear why this had never happened.

It was suggested that it might be possible to request a 20mph limit under the new criteria being agreed by Cumberland Council Highways Group and it was agreed that this should be further investigated.

It was suggested that all avenues for improving safety should be considered including the creation of a narrow pavement in front of Holly Mews. Councillors recalled that in the past Highways had apparently acquired some land along Abbey Rd for highways improvements. Mr Taylor asked that the PC send him plans of the area so that he could investigate the options available.

It was pointed out that a hedge of a property on Abbey Rd was often overgrown and obstructed the pavement. Mr Taylor confirmed that this was a matter which Highways could follow up and Cllr Minshaw offered to report the details to Highways.

(c) Collapsed Wall on Abbey Rd

Although the obstruction was barriered off, it continued to pose a safety risk for drivers exiting Abbey Farm. Mr Taylor explained that the matter was with the insurers of the property and there was little that Highways could do to expedite repairs, although it could recharge the insurers for the costs of traffic management. He agreed to look at the possibility of traffic lights to mitigate the risk for vehicles exiting Abbey Farm.

(d) Other Highways Issues

Councillors thanked Mr Taylor for the repairs which had taken place since the last meeting on potholes through the village.

It was noted that the speed humps on Abbey Rd//Beach Rd had not been repainted after repairs over a year ago. This had been reported some time ago via the online reporting system but Mr Taylor agreed to follow this up.

Cllr Minshaw reported that there had been instances of drivers moving barriers when Main St was closed for gas works. Mr Taylor explained that drivers should be aware that doing so could invalidate their insurance.

(e) Lights at the Beach Car Park

Members of the public explained that the lights were on all night shining into nearby properties. They also felt that this encouraged antisocial behaviour with cars racing around the car park into the early hours of the morning. Councillors encouraged residents to keep reporting incidents to the police, as this enabled the police to build up a picture of what was happening and plan a response. Cllr Minshaw explained that he would discuss the comments with officers to see whether it was possible to have all or some of the lights on a timer, although other residents had in the past suggested that the lights helped to discourage antisocial behaviour.

(f) Sea Mill Lane Drainage Issues

Residents felt that good progress was being made. Mr Taylor confirmed that a contract was being placed for a camera survey. Residents were pleased with the work to date and the courteous approach by Highways staff.

(g) Car Park Enforcement

Cllr Taylor drew attention to a recent problem with enforcement action against an RNLI volunteer who parked near the lifeboat station. The matter was now resolved but Cllr Minshaw was asked to check the enforcement procedures to avoid further problems.

83/24 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Internal Audit Report 2023/24

The internal audit had been completed and the auditor's report was received and noted. It was RESOLVED that Julie Hartley be invited to act as Internal Auditor for 2024/25.

(b) Asset Register

The asset register at 31 March 2024 was received and noted.

(c) Annual Governance Statement

The assurances required in the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 were considered and it was agreed that affirmative answers could be given in all cases.

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman.

(d) Annual Accounting Statements

The Annual Accounting Statement for 2023/24 had been circulated with the agenda. A more detailed breakdown of income and expenditure for the year had also been circulated with a summary of funds carried over to 2024/25. The period for public inspection of accounts would begin on 3 June and the required notice would be published on the website and main noticeboard.

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Accounting Statement be approved and signed by the Chairman.

(e) Insurance

The insurance policy was due for renewal on 1 June. Two quotations had been received from Clear Councils, one for a one year policy, the other for a three year long term arrangement.

It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation of £1425.72 for a three year long term arrangement.

(f) Bank Mandate

It was RESOLVED that Cllrs Sim, Argyle, Kaldos & the Clerk be the authorised signatories for 2024/25.

(g) Monthly Financial Report

A summary of the accounts at 30 April was received and noted. The precept had been received and payment had been received from the donors of a new memorial seat.

NALC had issued new Model Financial Regulations which would be considered by FRAG at its next meeting.

(h) Donation Request

A letter had been received from Cumbria North Girl Guiding seeking a donation towards the cost of a visit to Canada over the summer.

It was RESOLVED to make a donation of £300.

(i) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Cumberland Council – repair to basket swing £821.33 + £164.25 VAT Total £985.48
- Julie Hartley – internal audit fee Total £200.00
- Npower- electricity April £33.71 + £1.69 VAT Total £35.40
- Works 4 You Ltd – grass cutting April + materials for seat £565.34 + £113.07 Total £678.41
- J Donaldson – salary May Total £632.65
- J Donaldson – reimbursement for printer ink charges £9.99+ £2.00 VAT Total £11.99
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service May £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (standing order)

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

- Npower -electricity March £39.93 + £2.00 VAT Total £41.93
- Solway Direct Ltd – seat £487.86 + £97.57 VAT Total £585.43
- Firpress – signs £55.00 + £11.00 VAT Total £66.00
- Water Plus – allotment water Total £57.26 (direct debit 29/5/24)
- Water Plus- water/wastewater charges Total £207.91 (direct debit 18/05/24)
- Answer 4 U -answering service £14.50 + £2.90 VAT Total £17.40 (direct debit 17/05/24)

84/24 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP & APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

It was RESOLVED that the membership of committees and advisory groups for the coming year would be as follows:

Beach Committee	D Sim, P Argyle, A Linton, A Kaldos & community reps
Allotment Committee	N Bettinson, A Linton & allotment holder reps
Traffic Calming Committee	D Millington, D Sim, J Mellor & community reps
Village in Bloom	G Gilmour & community members
Planning Advisory Group	G Gilmour, P Argyle, N Graham & E Taylor
FRAG	D Sim, C Hale, E Taylor, A Kaldos
Beach Toilets	N Bettinson, P Argyle
Valley Link Cycle Track Project	D Sim, E Taylor + additional representatives to be appointed
Data Protection Working Group	G Gilmour & C Hale
Play Area Working Group	A Kaldos, G Gilmour, A Linton, D Sim

It was further RESOLVED that the following representatives be appointed to outside bodies:

Adams Recreation Ground Committee	A Linton
Shepards & Whitehead Charity	N Bettinson, B Hewetson
Friends of the Priory	N Bettinson
West Copeland Partnership	G Gilmour
Village Hall Committee	J Mellor, C Hale
West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group	D Sim (deputies E Taylor & G Gilmour)
Friends of Priory Paddock	N Bettinson

85/24 LEAD RESPONSIBILITIES

It was RESOLVED that lead responsibilities for 2024/25 would be as follows:

Nuclear Issues	G Gilmour & E Taylor
Commons	D Sim
Footpaths	C Hale
Web-site	D Sim
Priory Paddock	N Bettinson
Speedwatch co-ordinator	J Mellor
Play area inspection co-ordinator	S Burgess
Station car park extension/transport hub	E Taylor
Tree Planting	N Bettinson

86/24 VILLAGE HALL

Correspondence had been received from the Village Hall Committee explaining that the sub-lease was now ready and awaiting signature by the Freemasons. This had taken much longer than had been originally anticipated and legal costs had increased over time but the new sub-lease would be in place for 50 years. The Parish Council had given an assurance several years ago that it would help to meet the legal costs, as the Village Hall had limited reserves which were needed for repairs and maintenance. It was RESOLVED to make a contribution of £3000 towards the costs of the sub-lease

87/24 ALLOTMENTS

One plot had become vacant and had now been let as two small plots. Works 4 You had been asked to carry out some work to help deal with the weed growth.

One rent payment was still outstanding and a reminder had been sent. Cllr Bettinson explained that it was proposed to leave the bank at the top of the field uncut until late summer to encourage pollinating insects.

It was RESOLVED to waive the rent on the two newly let plots to allow plot holders time to bring them into cultivation.

88/24 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Linton had provided a written report. So far there had been more than 70 responses to the environmental questionnaire. It would be advertised again in the June parish magazine before the survey closed on 15 June.

Cumbria Wildlife Trust had provided some signage for the Beach Rd verge which was part of the rewilding project and it was agreed that these should be put in place as soon as possible. It was noted that there had been some damage to the verge which it was thought had occurred during recent work by Viberotix.

89/24 PLANNING

(a) New Applications

The Planning Advisory Group reported on a number of new applications:

Ref 4/22/2407/0F1 Construction of 3 two storey, 4 bedroomed dwellings with associated infrastructure – additional & updated information
The Knoll, High House Rd, St Bees

It was RESOLVED that the concerns expressed at the time of the original application about drainage and parking remained unchanged and it was felt that the site was more suitable for two houses.

Ref 4/24/2120/0B1 Variation of conditions 2, 5 & 6 of approval of 4/22/2315/0F1 for the erection of 3 dwellings
Land adjacent to School House

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application

Ref 4/24/2145/0N1 Prior approval application for farm building
Moor Platt, Egremont

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application.

Ref 4/24/2141/0L1 Listed building consent for second sink on ground floor requiring relocation of existing external drain outlet
New College Hall, St Bees Priory

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application.

Ref 4/24/2096/0F1 Re-consultation on amended description & amended/additional information: Demolition of existing detached bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling including erection of detached garage & alterations to existing access
Mellendene, High House Road

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application.

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

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application.

Ref 4/24/2153/0F1 Proposed two storey extension
4 Ellerbeck Barns, Egremont

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application.

1521

Ref 2/24/2154/0L1 Listed building consent for inclusion of waterproofing membrane & associated drain, behind approved dry lining, to prevent water ingress to sections of internal walls that are below the external ground level.

Ghyll Farm, Egremont

It was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application.

Ref 4/24/2071/0R1 Application for approval of reserved matters relating to appearance, layout & scale for a detached dwelling and detached garage

It was RESOLVED that the application provided insufficient detail of finishes of the buildings and boundary fencing/hedging to enable the Council to make constructive comment.

(b) Other Planning Matters

(i) It was understood that further information was to be provided by the applicant for holiday pods on a site on Nethertown Rd and the Parish Council would be given the opportunity to comment. It was agreed to seek further advice from John Groves, if required.

(ii) An event had taken place at the Village Hall to provide preliminary information on a proposal to increase the size of the wind turbine at Highfield Farm.

(iii) Cumberland Council had provided a copy of the decision notice refusing the application for a new dwelling adjacent to Stonecroft, Sea Mill Lane

(c) Applications approved/refused by Cumberland Council

4/24/2067/0F1 Roof over silage clamp – Fairladies Farm APPROVED

4/24/2051/0F1 Erection of new dwelling & associated external works – Land adj to Stonecroft, Sea Mill Lane REFUSED

4/24/2092/DOC Discharge of condition 7 of approval 4/24/2022/0R1 – Land to the south of Southrigg, Nethertown Rd APPROVED

90/24 PROJECT REPORTS

(a) Beach & Play Area

Cllr Linton reported that it had not been possible to find a professional artist to help with the project to create a mural at the beach toilets. However, Cllr Argyle had worked with Chris Robson to create a design based on the legend of St Bega. Consideration was now being given to whether it would be better to paint this directly on the wall or to mount it on a board.

Cumberland Council had issued a press release about the illegal removal of stones from the beach as part of its Climate & Nature Strategy.

The next beach clean would be on Sat 8 June from 6.0pm to 7.30pm.

(b) Office Improvements

The decoration of the parish council room was almost complete and the flooring would be put down in the next few weeks.

It was RESOLVED to authorise purchase of shelving within the budget of £500.

(c) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

There was no progress to report.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

Cllr Taylor had provided a written report explaining that the design had been updated to include the details of the proposed ground make up and surface finish so it would now be possible to obtain some approximate costings. Network Rail was working with their solicitors and Cumberland Council to complete the legal work required to finalise a formal Agreement to Lease.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

Cllr Taylor reported on discussions with officers of Cumberland Council and others about the possibility of working up a scheme for a cycle track between Whitehaven and St Bees to be ready to take advantage of any funding opportunities which might arise.

The decision on the new mine was still awaited but it might be possible to find a route which was not dependent on the mine. Cllrs Graham and Minshaw offered their help in taking the project forward.

(f) Priory Paddock

Cumbria Wildlife Trust would be holding an event on 25 May with a talk in the Village Hall and a walk around Priory Paddock. It was noted that there had recently been a theft from Priory Paddock when several clumps of allium triquetrum had been dug up and removed.

(g) Interpretation Boards

Five small signs had been made for the Priory Paddock gates and Dandy Walk to encourage visitors to explore the Priory and Priory Paddock. The PCC had complimented the Parish Council on the excellent interpretation boards.

(h) Storage Shed

The budget for 2024/25 included a new shed for storage of tree planting equipment etc which had previously been stored upstairs at the Village Hall. It was agreed to approach the Village Hall Committee to discuss the possibility of siting the shed in the yard at the Village Hall.

91/24 FOOTPATHS

Cllr Hale reported that the new finger post was now in place on Scalebarrow but the route of the footpath was across a field in which crops were being grown. This had been reported to the Rights of Way officer at Cumberland Council.

92/24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Sim reported on the recent meeting of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group. The main topics discussed had been the leak from the MSSS and the request to delay the capping of a vault at Drigg. Information had been produced on plans for future buildings at the Sellafield site up to 2040. Cllr Sim would forward details to councillors.

93/24 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on ongoing matters was received and noted. The Clerk had met the officers concerned at Cumberland Council and it had been confirmed that both the beach and Outrigg play areas would be dog exclusion areas under the new Public Space Protection Order. The grassed area at the beach and main car park would be designated as areas where dogs must be on leads.

94/24 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Clear Councils (NALC insurance partner) had provided advice on risks associated with lighting of beacons etc to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Noted
- (b) National Highways had provided an update on progress with the dualling of the A66. A legal challenge has been lodged to the DCO. Noted.
- (c) An email had been received from Green Swallow North Ltd explaining plans for the conversion of the remaining units at Bega Flats. Work would begin in late May and was expected to be complete by Sept. Noted.
- (d) Cumberland Council had produced a Draft Climate and Nature Strategy and had launched an online survey to seek views on the proposed strategy. The link had been circulated to councillors by email.
- (e) Details had been received of free Health Drop-in sessions at the Senhouse Centre, Whitehaven. Noted.
- (f) Citizens Advice Copeland had provided information on the help and advice provided to residents of each parish. A copy had been emailed to councillors.
- (g) A member of the old St Beghians had forwarded an article which he wrote for a recent OSB magazine linking names inscribed on panelling at the school to a photograph of WW1 soldiers. Noted.
- (h) An invitation had been received to a Hyperfast GB meeting on 21 May in the Village Hall. Noted.
- (i) A request had been received to rent the boat park at Sea Mill for the storage of equipment. It was agreed that this would be considered more fully at the next meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- NALC Newsletters & Chief Executive's Bulletins
- Rural Services Network Newsletter & Funding Digest
- Cumberland Council newsletters & Environment & Climate summer newsletter
- Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
- Cumbria Police Newsletter April– Whitehaven & District
- Cumbria Police Newsletter April– Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
- Northern Gas Stakeholder Update
- Open Spaces Society April Update
- ACT Update May

95/24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDA

There would be a Strawberry Tea at the Village Hall on 1 June in aid of the NSPCC.

96/24 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The calendar of meetings for 2024/25 was received and noted. It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on Monday 17 June 2024 at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....