

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on  
Monday 15 March 2021 at 6.30pm via Cisco Webex**

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

**In attendance:** Cllr C Whiteside, County Councillor - Egremont North/St Bees

**Also present:** 4 members of the public

**38/21 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman opened the meeting by reflecting on the life of Cllr Gus Kennedy who had died since the last meeting. Gus had been a member of the Parish Council since 2007 and served as Chairman of the Allotment Committee as well being a member of the Finance & Risk Group and playing a part in many of the events organised by the Parish Council. His wise counsel would be much missed. The Chairman then called for a short period of silence in his memory.

**39/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Hailes, CBC Ward Councillor.

**40/21 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made at this stage of the meeting.

**41/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The members of the public present all expressed an interest in the issue of the outline planning application for a development on Nethertown Road which had recently been approved by CBC Planning Panel. It was agreed to bring forward this item on the agenda.

**42/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2021**

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

**43/21 COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS**

**(a) Outline Planning Approval – Nethertown Rd**

The Chairman reported that the application for outline approval for 3 dwellings on Nethertown Rd had been considered by the Planning Panel on 3 March following objections lodged by the Parish Council. The Panel had voted to grant approval despite the site being outside the settlement boundary in both the old Local Plan and in the draft new Local Plan. It appeared that limited weight had been given to local considerations, as the old Local Plan was out of date and the new Plan had not yet been approved, and the decision had been based in large part on national planning guidelines.

Members of the public asked whether there were any avenues open to challenge the decision. The Chairman explained that there was no right of appeal for objectors to an application and it was virtually impossible to overturn a planning approval. However, it was important to fully understand the reasons for the Planning Panel decision and the implications it might have for other applications until the new Local Plan was approved. Members of the public asked whether the potential environmental impact had been taken into account, as great crested newts were believed to live on the site. However, an environmental survey could take some time to complete. A full planning application would be required for the proposed properties and an environmental survey could be required as part of the process, if there was some evidence to suggest the presence of protected species on the site.

It was agreed that the first priority should be to seek a meeting with officers at CBC to seek a fuller explanation of the position and to assess the potential implications.

It was RESOLVED to request an urgent meeting with the CEO and Development Manager at CBC.

**(b) Other CBC Matters**

Cllr Hailes had provided a report for the meeting covering the following issues:

- New dog fouling stencils had been requested on pavements around the village

- He had fed back to CBC the Parish Council's concerns about the outline permission for development on Nethertown Rd
- He had sent a letter of support to CBC Executive supporting the request for a community asset transfer of land adjacent to the station car park
- He was hoping to arrange to store the covers for recycling boxes at the Village Hall until they could be distributed. Cllr Mellor agreed to contact Cllr Hailes to agree the arrangements.
- He was hoping to work with the Parish Council on anti-social behaviour issues to prevent further problems over the summer months. Councillors welcomed the suggestion of a joint approach to tackling these issues.

#### **44/21 CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL & HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

##### **(a) Planning application by West Cumbria Mining**

Cllr Whiteside reported on the latest position with the application for a new deep mine. At the time of the last meeting Cumbria County Council had decided to refer the application back to the Development Committee for reconsideration. However, before a date could be set for its reconsideration, West Cumbria Mining had initiated a judicial review. The Secretary of State had then intervened and announced an enquiry into the application. This was unlikely to take place until at least the end of 2021 and would cause a further significant delay, despite the original application having been made in 2017 and having been approved three times by CCC.

##### **(b) Highways Matters**

Cllr Whiteside reported on a number of highways matters:

- A business case had been submitted for a digital demand responsive transport scheme which would allow residents to access transport to work, education etc. The St Bees/Egremont area had been suggested as a pilot area. He would send further details to the Clerk.
- Work was continuing on filling pot holes across the area. Councillors identified several locations which needed attention and the Clerk would report these to Highways.
- The new road markings had been put in at the junction of Fleatham Croft and High House Rd. It was noted that the white line did not extend as far as planned, apparently because a vehicle was parked close to the junction. The Clerk would take this up with Highways.
- There was no progress yet with the proposed extension to the pavement on Outrigg. The Local Committee had approved the highways budget for 2021/22 but this might need to be reviewed in light of government's announcement of funding allocations.

It was reported that old tarmac had been dumped in the car park behind Barony House, apparently without permission, when resurfacing work was done recently. Cllr Whiteside agreed to take this up with Highways officers.

#### **45/21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

The Government had launched a public consultation into the various options for reorganisation of local government in Cumbria. Four proposals had been put forward - one for a unitary authority covering the whole of the county and three for different models for a two unitary authority structure. CALC would be holding an online event for parish councillors on 18 March when the district councils and County Council would explain their proposals. The consultation was due to close on the evening of 19 April, the date of the next scheduled Parish Council meeting.

It was RESOLVED that councillors would submit their preferences to the Clerk to enable a report to be made at the next meeting and ensure that a response could be submitted before the deadline.

#### **46/21 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

##### **(a) Financial Report & Risk Review**

The notes of the FRAG meeting on 10 March were received, together with the summary of accounts at 28 February. FRAG had reviewed the risk register and income and expenditure position and had also carried out a routine annual review of the internal controls in place.

FRAG had also considered the proposal to have two sites listed as Assets of Community Value. Although there was no certainty that the Parish Council would be able to raise the necessary funds to purchase these assets, if they were to be offered for sale in future years, the listing would allow a future Parish Council time to consider the position.

It was also noted that the two vacant allotment plots had been let from 1 April, although one plot was in a poor condition.

It was RESOLVED that the following recommendations be approved:

- the contract price for grasscutting in 2021/22 be increased by 2%
- The old springies be written off
- Rent be waived for the first year of the tenancy on the allotment plot which was in poor condition.
- An application be made to CBC to list two sites as Assets of Community Value

#### **(b) Internal Audit Report**

The internal audit report for 2020/21 was received and noted. The report included one recommendation and two suggestions which FRAG would follow up.

It was RESOLVED that the report and its recommendation be accepted.

#### **(c) Donations**

(Cllr Monaghan declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Governor of the Village School)

St Bees Village School was hoping to use the donations in memory of Gus Kennedy towards a drama-related project in view of his contribution in supporting drama at the school.

It was RESOLVED that a donation of £100.00 be made.

#### **(d) Payments**

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Water Plus – water/wastewater to beach toilets Total £244.24 (to be paid by direct debit)
- Water Plus – allotment water supply Total £29.24 (to be paid by direct debit)
- Chq 002728 & 002729 J Donaldson – printer ink service £2.91 + £0.58 VAT, monthly Webex costs £12.50 + £2.50 VAT, salary March £549.52 Total £568.01
- Chq 002730 HMRC – PAYE Qtr 4 Total £722.64
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd -toilet service March £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (to be paid by SO)

#### **The following payments made since last meeting were noted:**

Chq 002727 CALC – course fee Total £20.00

Answer 4-U – answering service (March) £10.98 + £2.20 VAT Total £13.18 (paid by DD)

#### **47/21 COASTAL FLOODING & EROSION RISKS**

Cllr Millington reported on a meeting organised by Capita which had been commissioned by CBC to look at coastal flooding and erosion risks. It was noted that the study was only looking at a defined area of the coastline around the main beach. Capita was keen to receive any information on flood and erosion risk, including any historic flood events within the study area, sources of information that they might not be aware of and other stakeholders that they might not have contacted. It was agreed that councillors would contact Cllr Millington with any information they could provide.

#### **48/21 DOG BAG DISPENSERS**

Cllr Linton had circulated details of the proposal for the purchase of five dispensers with possible locations around the village.

It was RESOLVED to purchase five dispensers and bags.

#### **49/21 ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

Cllr Linton reported that she was continuing with work to set up a small group work to consider how the parish council could engage with younger members of the community. A progress report would be provided for the next meeting.

**50/21 PROJECT REPORTS****(a) Beach Regeneration & Play Area**

The new 2 Minute Beach Clean Station had been installed and Cllr Linton had organised publicity in the Whitehaven News and taken part in a programme on Radio Cumbria.

There had been a report of a blocked drain at the back of the toilet block. Tom Milburn was aware of the problem and was arranging a repair.

**(b) Beach Bowl**

The Working Group had now held a further meeting and the report provided by Cllr Kaldos was received and noted. There were still a number of matters which required clarification including planning issues and responsibility for management and maintenance.

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

The report by Cllr Taylor was received and noted. A meeting was to take place with members of the Community Rail Partnership and Network Rail within the next few days.

**(d) Other Projects**

It was noted that the new shed for the Village in Bloom Group was now expected to be delivered in April.

**51/21 FOOTPATHS**

Cllr Hale's report was received and noted. The results of the recent survey were being shared with CCC and it was hoped that some work would be done to clear the path at Pitman's Trod once the weather improved.

**52/21 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Gilmour reported on the meeting of West Copeland Partnership which had taken place on 8 March. The meeting had been called specifically to consider the future of the lengthsman scheme when the current 2 year scheme ended on 31 March. All the parishes involved in the current scheme were keen to see it continue but the Partnership did not have the funds to make a contribution as it had in previous years. It had been agreed to continue with the scheme for 2021/22 and to seek alternative sources of funding to replace the Partnership's contribution. Works 4 You Ltd were very supportive and had agreed to continue to provide the service whilst additional funding was being sought.

**53/21 PLANNING****(a) New Planning Applications**

There had been no new planning applications since the last meeting.

**(b) Decisions by CBC**

The following decisions by CBC were noted:

4/20/2491/001 Outline application for 3 dwellings -Land to the south of Southrigg, Nethertown Rd- APPROVED

4/20/2512/0F1 New sunroom to replace conservatory – Shorelinks, Nethertown Rd -APPROVED

4/20/2515/0F1 Side & rear extensions – 7 Solway Rise – APPROVED

4/21/2025/0F1 Extensions to general purpose/sheep buildings – Field 0043 Outrigg – APPROVED

**54/21 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

It was a statutory requirement to hold an Annual Parish Meeting between 1 March and 1 June each year. In the past the meeting had usually taken place before the May Parish Council meeting but it was still unclear whether the May meeting would be a physical meeting in the Village Hall or whether the regulations would be extended to allow a virtual meeting. If the meeting was to take place in the Village Hall, there would be restrictions on the numbers attending to allow social distancing.

It was RESOLVED to hold a virtual Annual Parish Meeting via Webex on Monday 19 April (immediately before the monthly Parish Council meeting).

**55/21 CLERK’S REPORT**

The Clerk’s report on on-going matters was received and noted.

**56/21 CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) The Police & Crime Commissioner’s Office was carrying out research into crimes related to modern slavery and human trafficking and was holding a series of seminars. Feedback from councillors would be welcome, particularly in rural areas where this type of crime could easily be hidden. Noted.
- (b)The Local Enterprise Partnership had provided information on the new Parish Council Carbon Calculator. Noted.
- (c)The Royal Horticultural Society was inviting local councils and groups to plant trees in memory of those who have lost their lives during the pandemic. The trees would be added to a new RHS Roots of Remembrance tree map. Noted.
- (d)Sellafield Ltd had provided details of the routine beach monitoring programme which had recommenced on 1 March. As in previous years, monitoring would be suspended over the Easter and summer holiday periods. Noted.
- (e)Breakthrough Communications were working with CALC to host a free webinar on 17 March on how parish councils could communicate and engage in a post-lockdown world. Booking details were available from the Clerk. Noted
- (f)CALC had circulated details of an online event organised by the GDF working group. A place had been booked for Cllr Gilmour. Noted.
- (g)CALC was hosting an online event when the various models for unitary authorities would be presented by those proposing each model. Details had been circulated to councillors.
- (h)A letter had been received from the National Trust outlining their preparations for an influx of tourists to Cumbria once travel restrictions were eased. Noted.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- NALC Chief Executive’s Weekly Bulletins
- NALC Coronavirus Update
- Trudy Harrison MP Newsletter
- CALC Newsletter February
- Cumbria Police -weekly Covid-19 updates
- Rural Services Network – weekly bulletins
- ACT Gazette Spring 2021
- Open Spaces Society Update Spring 2021
- Allerdale & Copeland Joint Covid 19 Update

**57/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDAS**

- (a)It was noted that CCC was assisting the organisers of St Bees Community Radio to set up a Community Interest Company. St Bees Radio had also been nominated for two County Covid awards.
- (b) It was noted that the Village School was concerned about parents and children lingering in the play area at the end of the school day. Whilst Covid restrictions were in place, the school was asking parents to leave the premises promptly to reduce social mixing and felt that closure of the play area might help. However, councillors believed that it would not be practical to close the Outrigger play area at a time when government advice was to keep play areas open and the beach play area remained open to all.

**58/21 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting would take place via Cisco Webex on MONDAY 19 APRIL 2021, immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting at 6.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....