

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 17 February 2020 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllr D Sim (in the Chair), P Argyle, N Bettinson, G Gilmour, C Hale, A Kaldos,
F Kennedy, D Millington, C Robson, D Rothery, E Taylor & the Clerk

In attendance: Cllr J Hailes (CBC Ward Councillor)
Lorraine Smyth, Action with Communities in Cumbria

21/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs A Linton, J Mellor & H Monaghan.
Apologies were also received from Cllr Whiteside (County Councillor Egremont North/St Bees).

22/20 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised.

24/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2020

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 20 January be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25/20 COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING

The Chairman welcomed Lorraine Smyth from Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) who had been invited to the meeting to explain the background to community-led housing projects.

Lorraine began by explaining the work of ACT in helping local groups to achieve various projects for their communities. One area of work was supporting groups who wanted to deliver community-led housing projects. Government funding had been provided to enable communities to build and manage small scale housing projects which would not otherwise be provided by commercial developers. This was particularly relevant where a specific housing need had been identified eg affordable homes for local people or accommodation for older people. The properties would then be permanently in the owned and managed by the local community. In some cases these would be new builds but in other cases where there were suitable empty properties, these could be adapted and used as community owned and managed units. Funding was currently available for the capital costs and projects could typically take up to 10 years to come to fruition.

The first step for any group considering such a project was to establish whether there was a housing need which could be met by a community-led scheme. CBC was currently carrying out a housing needs survey which could provide useful information and the Empty Homes Officer at CBC could also help with information on empty properties. The next step would be to establish whether there was support in the community to take forward a scheme. ACT would be happy to assist any group or parish council interested in developing a project.

The Chairman thanked Lorraine for coming to the meeting and explaining the concept of community-led housing.

26/20 COUNTY COUNCIL & HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Hale reported on a meeting with Cllr Whiteside and a representative of Cumbria Highways to discuss the issue of visibility at Fleatham Croft/High House Rd junction. Highways officers believed that it would be difficult to justify changing the decision not to proceed with a short section of double yellow lines, as they did not have firm evidence of the number of near misses at the junction. However, a different solution had been proposed which would improve visibility for drivers exiting Fleatham Croft and make the junction more obvious to drivers travelling down High House Road. A design of the proposed road markings would be available for the next meeting.

The poor state of the road surface between the level crossing and the Priory had been discussed and Cllr Whiteside had asked Highways to look at repairs as an urgent matter.

As the Area Highways Manager had not been able to attend the meeting, it had not been possible to progress discussions about other on-going highways matters but Cllr Whiteside would be providing a written update which would be circulated to councillors. It was noted that there was still no firm information on whether the proposal for time-limited parking between the Station Rd junction and the Priory would be implemented. If no information was received on this, it was agreed that a letter would be sent to clarify the situation.

27/20 CBC MATTERS

Cllr Hailes reported on a number of issues:-

- New dog fouling stencils had been painted in Main Street but it was noted that there were other areas where stencils were needed. Cllr Hailes would ask CBC staff to liaise with Cllr Argyle to identify the most appropriate locations.
- It was still hoped that repairs to the lifeboat ramp would take place shortly. Cllr Rothery agreed to liaise with the appropriate RNLI representatives to facilitate discussions between CBC and the RNLI.
- The steps down to the beach from the promenade had been removed by CBC as a safety issue after the steps came away from the promenade. Cllr Hailes would press for them to be repaired/replaced as soon as possible.
- Cllr Hailes had visited the beach area with CBC officers to look at a number of repairs which were required. The dog toilet area would be improved, the damaged sign on the toilet block had been removed and new bins were to be put on the promenade. The dog waste bin by the café had been removed and would not be replaced as officers felt that the new bins would be in a more appropriate location. Two new seasonal employees were to be recruited to cover the beach area. The pot-holes in the beach car park were to be filled and it was hoped to repair the car park lights which were not working. However, councillors suggested that lighting actually increased the risk of anti-social behaviour and that CBC might wish to consider whether removing the lights would be more appropriate.
- The Manor was currently closed. Cllr Hailes would be seeking an early meeting with the new licensees.
- BT had responded to the request to replace the kiosk at the beach with an ‘emergency only’ telephone but stated that they no longer install this type of equipment. However, they had now agreed to install new equipment and upgrade the kiosk.
- Several post-16 students at Westlakes Academy were still not being allowed to use the school bus even though there were seats available. Cllrs Haile and Whiteside were continuing efforts to resolve this.

Councillors noted that the litter bins at the beach were often not put back until Easter and asked whether this could be done earlier as the beach was often busy before Easter if the weather was good. Cllr Hailes agreed to take this up with officers at CBC.

28/20 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Finance Report

The summary of the accounts at 31 January was received together with the qtr 3 variance report and notes of the meeting of the Finance & Risk Advisory Group on 6 February. FRAG had reviewed the risk register and had recommended that the only amendments required were minor changes to the comments section.

It was RESOLVED to approve the risk register with the changes recommended by FRAG.

(b) Play Area Inspections 2020/21

A quotation had been received from CBC for play area inspections at both play areas during 2020/21. It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation in the sum of £1344 + VAT.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

1250

- Chq 002615 Unipar Services LLP– servicing of speed gun £231.00 + £46.20 VAT Total £277.20
- Chq 002616 Works 4 You Ltd– grasscutting Oct £390.86 +£78.17 VAT Total £469.03
- Chq 002617 YNH Ltd – domain name renewal Total £44.00
- Chq 002618 J Donaldson– printer ink/postage £13.98 + £1.33 VAT Total £15.31
- Chq 002619 J Donaldson – salary February £565.42
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service February £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (to be paid by SO)

Payments since last meeting to report:

- Chq 002613 CBC – planning application fee £117.00
- Chq 002614 Hospice at Home West Cumbria – donation £30.00 (agreed at last meeting)
- Answer 4-U – answering service £9.99 + £2.00 VAT Total £11.99 (paid by DD 17/02/20)

29/20 FUNDING OF TOILETS & BEACH PLAY AREA

Historically CBC had provided both the toilets and play area at the beach. In 2012 CBC had decided to close the toilets on cost grounds and the Parish Council had agreed to take a 99 year lease on the toilets to ensure they were kept open for visitors to the beach. A similar situation had arisen in 2013 when the play area had become very run down and the Parish Council had raised funds to provide a new play area. The costs of maintaining the toilets and play area now fell solely on the residents of St Bees. No contribution was received from CBC despite the fact that St Bees was an important part of Copeland's tourist economy and CBC's current tourism strategy was focussed on promoting Copeland's coastal attractions.

It was noted that income generated by the car park charges was retained by CBC and was not shared with the Parish Council, although the facilities of the toilets and play area were a major factor in attracting visitors who used the car park.

It was RESOLVED to contact Copeland Borough Council to seek a financial contribution to the costs of the play area and toilets.

30/20 RIGHTS OF WAY

Cllr Hale had attended a site visit to the bridleway at Green Lonning with a member of the County Council's Countryside Access Team. In his view the lonning was still satisfactory for use as a bridleway and no action was required from CCC. The issue of damage caused by large agricultural vehicles was a matter for the land and property owners affected.

It was reported that the gate at the start of the public footpath (Pitman's Trod) close to properties at Fleatham Farm was obstructed by a bin. Cllr Rothery agreed to investigate.

CCC would shortly be carrying out some work on the new route of the footpath from Sea Mill Lane to Sea Mill before it was officially opened. They would be using a small area of Sea Mill car park as a base while the work was taking place.

31/20 WEB-SITE

The Chairman explained that work had been taking place for some time on updating the village web-site. Whilst it was still not complete, it was hoped that the new look site would go live shortly. The Chairman was looking at changes to the Parish Council pages and a link to the site would be circulated to councillors. Suggestions for minor changes were welcome but there were some technical limitations on what changes could be incorporated.

32/20 PROJECT REPORTS

(a)Beach Regeneration

A quotation was awaited for refurbishing the equipment where rust had been noted and also for work to repair worn ground surfaces. Cllr Kaldos agreed to look at the options for replacing the two springies with other equipment.

Cllr Argyle had attended an event at the Beacon to discuss plans for art installations in coastal locations as part of the Hidden Coast project. Consultants had been engaged but plans were still at a very early stage and there were no firm proposals yet.

It was noted that the Seagals hoped to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day with a display of knitted poppies at the beach shelter. The display on the west facing wall of the shelter was looking tired and the shelter needed to be repainted. Cllr Robson would organise the re-painting and new display materials.

Cllr Argyle agreed to paint the section of wall at the toilet block where the display board had been removed.

It was noted that the anchor was still being stored in the lifeboat station. Cllrs Sim and Kaldos would agree a specification for the repainting work required on the wall so quotations could be sought.

(b) Traffic Calming/Speedwatch

The speed gun had been recalibrated and a new Speedwatch rota had been drawn up.

(c) Community Events

- A list of activities & events planned to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the Priory had been circulated. The celebrations would be officially launched on Sunday 10 May. The organisers had received grants from West Copeland Partnership and from Cllr Hailes which would enable publicity materials to be purchased. One of the ideas was for a mural at the beach area. It was agreed that this could be on the wall of the toilet block and the Clerk would confirm with CBC that this would be acceptable to them.
- Cllr Rothery explained that plans were underway for the St Bees Bash to be held on Sat 4 July at St Bees School. There would be no Village School fete this year so the school was joining in plans for the Bash. It was hoped that there would be the usual parade from the Fairladies turning circle as well as stalls, music and refreshments. Cllr Rothery had been asked to become part of the organising committee and would continue to keep the Parish Council informed of plans.
- It was noted that this year would be the 50th anniversary of the RNLI station in St Bees. An event was planned in early September to mark the anniversary and further details would follow.

(d) Tree Planting

Plans were in hand for further planting but the recent weather had been unsuitable for such work.

(e) St Bees – Whitehaven Cycle Track

The news that there was to be a judicial review of the approval of the mining project meant that no progress could be made until the outcome was known.

(f) Priory Paddock Pond Project

The lengthsman had carried out the annual strimming of areas at the Paddock and had removed the trimmings. The work to eradicate the non-native species in and around the pond appeared to have been largely successful and plans were now being made to restock the area with native plants. The grant funding from Nu-Gen, currently held in reserves, would cover the costs.

(g) Station Car Park Extension

Cllrs Hailes & Whiteside were trying to arrange a meeting with Trudy Harrison MP to enlist her help.

(h) Village in Bloom – New Base

A planning application had been submitted for a new shed in the grounds of St Bees School. A decision was awaited.

33/20 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman reported on the recent meeting of West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group at which there had been a presentation by the NDA on their socio-economic strategy. Although millions of pounds were provided each year through the NDA and Sellafeld Ltd for socio-economic projects in the local area, there was little transparency about how this money was being used and how local communities could access funding. The NDA had promised that from April this information would be more easily

accessible through their web-site. The Chairman would continue to monitor the position to ensure that the parish council was able to take up opportunities for funding of major projects such as the cycle track and car park extension.

Cllr Gilmour reported on the recent meeting of West Copeland Partnership. A number of issues of relevance to parishes around Egremont had been discussed. It was hoped to have a presentation by United Utilities at the next meeting to explain progress with the Thirlmere Link project.

34/20 PLANNING

(a) New Planning Applications

The Planning Advisory Group reported on one application received for comment:-

Ref 4/20/2038/TPO Pre-construction training of red oak tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order
Plot 4, Fleatham Gardens, High House Rd, St Bees

It was noted that the application gave no information on the extent of pruning proposed.

It was RESOLVED:

- to object to the application on the grounds that this was a mature tree subject to a TPO and work should only be approved where it was necessary for the health of the tree
- to seek a statement from CBC on their policy towards Tree Preservation Orders and replacement of trees.

Three new applications had arrived very recently and there had been insufficient time for these to be reviewed by the Planning Advisory Group before the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would submit a response under delegated powers and report back to the next meeting.

(b) Applications approved by CBC

The following applications had been approved by CBC:

- 4/19/2334/0G1 Removal of condition 5 of approval 4/78/0513/O03 re agricultural occupancy High House Farm, High House Rd, St Bees
- 4/20/2004/TPO Felling of beech tree in conservation area– Khandallah House, High House Rd

35/20 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on on-going matters was received. It was noted that the lengthsman had been asked to clear the vacant allotment plot to get it into a satisfactory state for letting from April.

36/20 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) CALC had circulated a list of upcoming courses. There would be a course for new (or aspiring) Chairmen in New College Hall on 16 June 6.30 -8.30pm. Noted.
- (b) CALC had provide details of a day conference as part of the Climate Change Emergency Support Programme which would take place at Newbiggin on 13 March. 9.30am – 4pm. Details had been circulated to councillors.
- (c) Correspondence had been received from Highways inviting parishes to take part in the Working Together Service. Noted.
- (d) Details had been received of the next meeting of Copeland Health & Well-being Forum on 24 March at the Copeland Centre. Noted.
- (e) A letter received from Sellafeld Ltd announcing the appointment of Martin Chown as the new CEO from 1 February. Noted.
- (f) The Police & Crime Commissioner had launched his annual consultation on the precept for policing to be levied as part of the council tax. Details had been circulated by email to enable councillors to respond.
- (g) Keep Britain Tidy had provided details of the Great British Spring Clean to take place between 20 March & 13 April. Noted.
- (h) A letter had been received from the Officer Commanding RAF Spadeadam inviting local communities to join in with the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain (between 10 July & 21 October). Noted.

- (i) A letter had been received from Hospice at Home thanking the PC for the recent donation. Noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- NALC Chief Executive’s Bulletins 24/01, 31/01 & 7/02/20
- Copeland Matters February
- Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder Update
- Rural & Community News - ACT
- Police Update – Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
- CALC Newsletter February
- The Hive Issue 9 (St Bees School)

37/20 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/FUTURE AGENDAS

- (a) It was noted that the BBC Any Questions programme was looking for locations for future programmes. Cllr Robson agreed to follow this up.
- (b) The next Arts Society meeting would take place on Wed 19 February when John Scanlon would be speaking on how public art could improve identity of place.
- (c) It was reported that there were two potholes in Station car park. The Clerk would arrange repairs.

38/20 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council meeting take place on MONDAY 16 MARCH 2020 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....