

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 20 September 2021 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

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

In attendance: Cllr J Hailes, CBC Ward Councillor
Mr R Silk, Headmaster, St Bees School
Mr L Gribble, St Bees School

Also present: 11 members of the public

144/21 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced Robin Silk and Laurence Gribble who were to present a report on current developments at St Bees School.

145/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs D Sim, J Mellor and S Ritson. Apologies were also received from Cllr C Whiteside, County Councillor, who was unable to attend because of work commitments.

146/21 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this stage in the meeting.

147/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public present indicated that they were interested in the planning applications for the development on Nethertown Rd as well as the new consultation on the draft Local Plan and the report on St Bees School. It was agreed to bring forward discussion of the planning applications for Nethertown Road.

148/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2021

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 19 July be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

149/21 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – NETHERTOWN ROAD

Two new planning applications for the site on Nethertown Rd had been received for comment from CBC. One (4/21/2369/0R1) related to reserved matters for the three new properties approved in outline in March, the other (4/21/2368/0O1) related to a new outline application for two further properties on the same site.

The Chairman invited members of the public to put forward their views on the recent planning applications. There was great concern that outline consent was being sought for two further properties on this green field site, despite it being outside the settlement boundary in both the old Local Plan and the new draft Plan which was out for consultation. Residents living on Nethertown Road expressed serious concerns about the additional traffic which would be using the road, particularly the heavy vehicles which would need to reach the site during construction. The road had suffered subsidence in the past and was likely to be further damaged by heavy vehicles.

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had objected to the original outline application for three dwellings on the grounds that it was outside the settlement boundary and the highway was too narrow. After the application was approved by CBC, a meeting had taken place with Planning Officers to seek to understand the reasons for the decision. The explanation given was that only limited weight could be given to the old Local Plan as it was out of date and the new plan was still being developed. Cumbria Highways had not objected to the development in principle, although they had recommended a single access to the site. A meeting was being sought with Highways officers to look at the situation on site. Councillors expressed serious dissatisfaction with the apparent lack of consistency in the decisions made by principal authorities which was causing considerable frustration among local residents.

Cllr Taylor explained the Parish Council's concerns about the detailed application for the three properties originally given outline approval. The application showed the properties being constructed in Grey Lakeland Stone which was not in keeping with nearby properties. The access onto Nethertown Road was at a point where the road was only 2.5m wide with no pavements. The road was well used by pedestrians and cyclists as well as commuter traffic to/from Sellafield. The results of the traffic survey submitted by the applicant was misleading as it was carried out at a time when many people were working from home due to the Covid situation. There were also concerns about the drainage system proposed. The nearest connection to a foul water drain was 80m from the site and the drainage report was not conclusive but recommended further studies.

It was RESOLVED to object in the strongest terms to the new outline application on the grounds that it was outside the settlement boundary in both the old Local Plan and the draft Local Plan 2021-38 and it would be inappropriate to approve further development when the new Plan was in the final stages of preparation.

It was further RESOLVED to object to the finish proposed for the new properties and to raise concerns about the drainage and highways aspects of the reserved matters application and to seek a Planning Panel site visit to look at both applications.

150/21 ST BEES SCHOOL

The Chairman introduced Robin Silk, the new Headmaster, and invited him to explain developments at the school. Mr Silk explained that pupil numbers were continuing to increase and this year there were 74 pupils of whom 41 were boarders. The target was to have 100 pupils next year. The Covid pandemic had prevented students coming from mainland China but there had been significant growth in students coming from Europe. The examination results last year had been excellent and a number of families would be attending the planned open day.

The School was keen to develop links with the local community and there were plans for arts events to take place shortly. It was hoped to revive the annual fireworks event and promote use of the school's facilities by local groups. The School was supportive of the Parish Council's plans for a cycle track link between St Bees and Whitehaven.

In answer to questions, Mr Silk explained that the pupil numbers were not yet sufficient to ensure that the school was self-sufficient but it was hoped to reach this point in the next two years. Barony House was being brought back into use but other redundant buildings such as Grindal were being sold. If the number of boarders increased in coming years, it might be necessary to build new more eco-friendly accommodation on the site. He was able to confirm that the swimming pool would continue to be available to the local community.

Mr Silk explained that as numbers increased it was hoped to increase music provision which had always been a strength of the school and they were looking to build on links with the Priory. The school chapel was now back in use.

It was suggested that there could be more incentives to attract local families to send children to the school. Mr Silk explained that a number of local children did receive bursaries. Most local pupils tended to join in Year 7 so it would take some years to build up the numbers.

The Chairman stated that the Parish Council looked forward to rebuilding the links between the School and the local community and Cllr Robson agreed to liaise with the school on this. The Chairman thanked Mr Silk and Mr Gribble for coming to the meeting.

Mr Silk and Mr Gribble then left the meeting.

151/21 COUNTY COUNCIL & HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Whiteside had provided a brief written report for the meeting. Work was due to begin in November on extending the pavement on Outrigg. The Local Committee had now approved funding for the next stage of the LCWIP study to progress walking & cycling infrastructure schemes.

It was noted that repairs to the wall on Beach Road had not yet been completed and this was being followed up with Highways.

152/21 COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

Cllr Hailes reported on the following issues:

- The draft Local Plan had been issued for further consultation and a site south of Fairladies had been included as a site for 30 houses.

1336

- The abandoned vehicle had been moved following the report to CBC's Enforcement Team.
- There was widespread support in Mirehouse and within CBC for the cycle track project. Cllr Hailes agreed to ask those supporting the project to provide written evidence of support.
- The litter bin which was located by Stonehouse Garden had still not been put back in place. Cllr Hailes agreed to follow this up with Cllr Whiteside.
- CBC was to look at the possibility of recycling tetra packs.
- Cllr Hailes had raised the issue of revenue from the beach car park. CBC had confirmed that they received considerable receipts from car park tickets but they were not willing to share the proceeds with the Parish Council.
- There had recently been a report of men wearing hi-viz jackets impersonating enforcement officers and fining dog owners for allowing their dogs off the lead on the beach. The culprits had disappeared before CBC staff were able to reach the scene.
- The recent GDF exhibition at the Management Centre had not been well attended. Although there had been a leaflet drop, there had been no signs up on the day to show where the exhibition was being held.
- It was noted that there had been no progress with dealing with the issue of litter at the main beach. The Parish Council's request for seagull-proof bins was still being considered by CBC officers. Councillors pointed out that the discussions with CBC had been going on since the spring and there was still no resolution. The most recent correspondence from CBC had included a suggestion that removing litter bins altogether might be an option to encourage people to take their rubbish home. Councillors objected strongly to this approach which they believed would only worsen the situation.

It was RESOLVED to review the position at the next meeting and, if no progress had been made, a formal complaint would be made to CBC. If bins were removed in the interim, the Clerk would be authorised to send a formal complaint immediately.

153/21 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Financial Report

The summary of accounts at 31 August was received and noted. The Finance & Risk Advisory Group would be meeting shortly to review the position at the end of Qtr 2.

The company who had supplied the new VIB shed had said that they had been unable to cash the cheques because of working restrictions during the Covid pandemic and they had asked that a replacement cheque be issued. The Clerk would arrange to cancel the previous cheques before issuing a new cheque.

(b) External Audit 2020/21

It was noted that the external audit had been completed. An unqualified opinion had been given with no issues had been drawn to the council's attention.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Chq 002772 Works 4 You Ltd – grasscutting Jul/Aug £797.36 + £159.48 VAT Total £956.84
- Chq 002773 I McAndrew –reimbursement for web-site costs Total £31.37
- Chq 002774 A Linton – reimbursement for key cutting £10.63 + £2.12 VAT Total £12.75
- Chq 002775 Information Commissioner – data protection renewal Total £40.00
- Chq 002776 PKF Littlejohn LLP – audit fee £300.00 + £60.00 VAT Total £360.00
- Chq 002777 J Donaldson – reimb for Webex costs, printer ink, stamps & domain name renewal & hosting fee £57.33 + £3.08 VAT Total £60.41
- Chq 002778 J Donaldson – salary £491.12
- HMRC – PAYE Qtr 2 £895.77
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service Sept £583.33 + £116.67 Total £700.00
- Water Plus – allotment water £21 59 (to be paid by Direct Debit)
- Water Plus – water/wastewater to beach toilets £397.66 (to be paid by Direct Debit)

The following payments made since last meeting were noted:

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- Answer 4 U -answering service August £10.98 + £2.20 VAT Total £13.18 (DD)
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- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (SO)
- Chq 002763 Water Solutions Ltd -legionella testing £550.00+ £110.00 VAT Total £660.00
- Chq 002764 D Sim -reimbursement for printing Total £80.00
- Chq 002765 Playsafety Ltd – play area inspections £186.00 + £37.20 VAT Total £223.20
- Chq 002766 YNH Ltd – domain name renewal £22.00 (cheque lost in post – now cancelled)
- Chq 002767 J Donaldson – salary Aug £491.12
- Chq 002768 J Donaldson – reimb for postage, Webex & printing charge £36.66+ £5.75 VAT Total £42.41
- Chq 002769 D Robinson – reimb for VIB plants £93.27 + £18.65 VAT Total £111.92
- Chq 002770 J Donaldson -reimb for lap top £374.99 + £75.00 Total £449.99
- Chq 002771 J Donaldson – reimb for MS Office £99.99 + £20.00 Total 119.99

154/21 PLANNING

(a)New Applications

The two applications for the Nethertown Road site had been discussed earlier in the meeting, The Planning Advisory Group reported on a further application received for comment:

- Ref 4/21/2405/TPO Removal of sycamore tree within the conservation area
117 Main Street, St Bees

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

The responses sent under delegated authority since the last meeting were noted.

(b) Applications approved by CBC

It was noted that the following applications had been approved by CBC:-

4/21/2358/DOC Discharge of conditions 5,6,7&8 of approval 4/2155/011 - Moorleys, Egremont

4/21/2295/0F1 Side & rear extensions & alteration to roof height of existing dwelling – 8 The Crofts

4/21/2241/0G1 Variation of conditions 3,4 &5 of approval 4/20/2516/0F1 – Plot 1 Fleatham Farm

(c) Local Plan 2021-38

CBC had launched a five week consultation on changes to the draft Local Plan since the consultation earlier this year. The relatively short deadline (17 October) was designed to allow the draft Plan to go to CBC for approval at the end of the year and be submitted for public examination by April.

There were a number of changes to policies and site allocations. In St Bees the site at Scalebarrow had been removed as a site for housing development on highways grounds but a new site to the south of Fairladies had been included. If this site was confirmed, the settlement boundary would be changed to include this site.

Correspondence had been received from a local resident expressing his opposition to the inclusion of the site to the south of Fairladies. Councillors agreed that this site was on such high ground that it would have an unacceptable visual impact. It was also agreed to reiterate the view put forward at the last consultation that there should be no further development without a firm commitment to improve the infrastructure in the village.

It was RESOLVED to respond to the consultation opposing the inclusion of the site south of Fairladies on the grounds of visual amenity and stressing the need for infrastructure improvements before any development was approved.

155/21 PROJECT REPORTS

(a)Beach & Play Areas

The reports of the annual RoSPA inspections had been received. No high risk issues had been identified. Some of the lower risk items had been dealt with as part of routine maintenance. It was agreed to look at different types of surfacing for the beach play area to avoid the problems of soil erosion around the play equipment. The bushes around the Outrigg play area were in need of pruning and the surface around the slide needed to be built up. It was agreed to ask the lengthsman to carry out the work.

The Clerk was in touch with two families wishing to donate seats.

(b) Upgrading of Outrigg Play Area

A meeting was being arranged with representatives of the Village School.

(c) Beach Bowl

A meeting had taken place on site in August. CBC officers had given some helpful advice but some definite sign of support from CBC was required. Cllr Hailes stressed the importance of making progress before the local government re-organisation.

(d) Station car park extension/transport hub

Cllr Taylor had provided a written report on progress. Work was progressing with a view to seeking outline planning permission. There had been a further positive meeting with the Community Rail Partnership.

(e) Valley Link Cycle Track

There was growing support for the project from individuals and local groups. Further progress was could not be made until the outcome of the inquiry into the new mine was known.

(f) Community Events

- The order for the Christmas tree would be placed shortly.
- The Queen's Platinum Jubilee would take place next year. Information had been circulated on the national events being planned and it was suggested that work would need to begin shortly on planning how to mark the event locally. Cllr Monaghan agreed to act as co-ordinator.
- A local First Responder had volunteered to lead further CPR/AED training sessions. The previous events had been well attended and it was agreed to take up this offer of help. Cllr Linton would liaise with the First Responders to organise the events.

(g) Priory Paddock

It was now clear that the damage to the gate caused by vandalism a few months ago could not be repaired and the gate and possibly the gate posts would need to be replaced. The Clerk would seek quotes for the work.

156/21 BAG IT, BIN IT CAMPAIGN

Cllr Linton reported that the new dispensers were in place around the village and were being very well used, particularly at the beach. It was felt that the campaign was being effective with fewer instances of dog fouling around the village. It was agreed that bags should still be provided to the Post Office and beach shop. A further supply of dispenser bags was now needed.

It was RESOLVED to place an order for more dispenser bags.

157/21 FOOTPATHS

The report prepared by Cllr Hale was received and noted. The process of dedicating land on the Dandy Walk was underway. A response had been received from the landowner about the creation of a public footpath to link Pitman's Trod and the Common and discussions would be continuing.

158/21 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS WITH OUTSIDE BODIES

The Three Tier Meeting had taken place recently immediately after the annual meeting of CALC Copeland. Cllr Sim had been elected as Vice-Chairman of CALC Copeland.

The Three Tier Meeting had included a report on preparations for the move to a unitary authority (details of which had been circulated to councillors) and a report on progress with GDF.

159/21 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on on-going matters was received and noted. The Clerk had contacted CBC about a suitable hooded bin to replace the damaged bin by the Post Office. CBC officers were checking whether they had a suitable model in stock, otherwise a like for like replacement would be needed.

It was RESOLVED to proceed with purchase of a replacement bin.

160/21 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) The Environment Agency had published responses received to its consultation on its initial assessment of the UK HPR nuclear power station design. A final decision would be made in early 2022.
- (b) CCC had provided details of a new bus service from Seascale to Whitehaven, calling at St Bees. The service would be provided by Hobans and would run Monday to Thursday. Noted.
- (c) CCC had provided details of a new mental health support service for new mums and pregnant women. Cllr Linton would publicise it through the Parent & Toddler Group. Noted
- (d) CALC had details of a recent national survey of land owned by parish councils. Noted.
- (e) CALC had provided a copy of the pre-action protocol letter sent by CCC to the Secretary of State following the decision to create two unitary authorities. Noted.
- (f) CBC had consulted on a request by Natural England to hold an event at the beach on 22 Sept to launch the new coastal path. The event would be by invitation only. The Clerk had replied on behalf of the PC raising no objections.
- (g) The agenda had been received for the CALC Copeland District annual meeting and Three Tier meeting on 14 Sept. Noted
- (h) CALC had forwarded a request from Highways that parishes use the online reporting system to report repair issues rather than refer them to a county councillor. Noted.
- (i) CALC had provided an update on work being undertaken by NALC to improve the banking services offered to parish councils. Noted
- (j) Details had been received from CCC of Flood Training sessions during Sept and early October. Noted
- (k) Details had been received of a planned road closure of Main Street from 27 Sept for 3 days to enable UU to carry out work. Noted
- (l) NALC was seeking comments on a DEFRA consultation on Local Nature Strategies. Noted
- (m) Details had been received of a planned closure of a section of Sea Mill Lane (120m south of Sea View) on 27 Sept for utilities work. Noted.
- (n) Highways had provided an update on the new HIAMS reporting system, including a survey which councillors could complete on their experiences of using the system. Noted.
- (o) National Highways (formerly Highways England) were carrying out a Route Strategy Review which would feed into the Department for Transport's future investment strategy. The consultation would run until 30 November. Details were available from the Clerk.
- (p) CCC had issued its Transport Infrastructure Plan for consultation. The consultation would run until 25 October and the document was available on the CCC web-site. Noted
- (q) The Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership had provided information on a number of events around the county linked to the Big Green Week. Noted.
- (r) CBC had announced adoption of its Shopfront Design Guide SPD. Noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

NALC Chief Executive's Weekly Bulletins & NALC Newsletter
 Cumbria Police Update -Egremont, Cleator Moor & Rural
 NW Coastal Access Update
 Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder updates July & August
 Copeland Tourism Update
 Trudy Harrison MP – newsletters Tourism and Nuclear Matters
 Connecting Cumbria Newsletter
 Copeland GDF Working Group Newsletter 9

161/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION /FUTURE AGENDAS

- (a) The work to replant the area by Abbey Wood with native trees was now underway.
- (b) It was reported that the Arts Trail across the local area had been quite successful.
- (c) Cllr Hale would attend the event organised by Natural England to officially launch the Coastal Path.
- (d) Cllr Bettinson suggested the creation of a community orchard, if a suitable site was available.

162/21 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting take place on Monday 18 October at 6.30pm in the Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....