

**Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 20 February 2017 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllrs D Sim (in the Chair), P Argyle, N Bettinson, G Gilmour, J Haile, T Kelly, J Mellor, H Monaghan, C Robson, N Smart & the Clerk

In attendance: Cllr H Wormstrup, County Councillor for St Bees/Egremont North

Also present: Mrs T West & Ms C Spedding – St Bees Pre-School (Public Participation item only)

18/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Lockie, F Kennedy D Millington, and M Riley.

19/17 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20/17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2017

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 16 January be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

21/17 CCC & HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Cllr Wormstrup reported that the highways works programme for 2017/18 had been agreed by the Local Committee and the scheme to provide enhanced gateway features at the southern approach to the village had been included. Whilst funding for the scheme was not yet certain, it would have a high priority if there was slippage on other schemes. Cllr Wormstrup emphasised that CCC was doing everything possible to discourage drivers from using minor roads through villages to travel to/from Sellafield and had agreed to implement one way systems through parts of Beckermest as a trial measure.

Cllr Wormstrup also reminded councillors of the importance of recording tracking numbers when reporting problems to the Highways Hotline. A tracking number was essential if it was necessary to follow up the issue at a later date.

A meeting had taken place with the Area Highways Manager to discuss the request for warning signs to be erected between the top of Outrigg and the Loughrigg junction to warn drivers of horses on the road. It had been agreed that signs could be provided and a member of the highways team would look at the most appropriate positions for the signs.

It was reported that the local highways team had carried out pot-hole repairs through the village and it was agreed to ask Cllr Wormstrup to pass on the parish council's appreciation of the care taken over the work.

It was noted that the wall alongside Beach Road had still not been repaired. It was believed that the wall was owned by CCC and the Clerk would liaise with Cllr Wormstrup to follow up the matter.

22/17 STRATEGIC TRAFFIC ISSUES

Following consultation with councillors, the Chairman had drafted a letter to all candidates in the forthcoming by-election asking them, if elected, to press for a major upgrade of the A595. A further meeting of the parish council's working group had been arranged for Wed 22 February when a representative of Highways England would be present.

It was noted that the need for major improvement of the A595 was being more widely discussed. Questions had been raised at the recent Sellafield Stakeholder Group about emergency procedures once building began on the Moorside site, particularly in light of the inadequacy of the A595 to deal even with normal volumes of traffic.

Traffic issues had also been discussed at the Sellafield Parish Liaison Forum and the Chairman had asked whether the temporary large electronic signs provided near Sellafield could be extended to provide drivers with information on areas of congestion to help traffic flows.

Cllr Wormstrup then left the meeting.

23/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed the representatives of the Pre-school and invited them to speak to councillors about their new project. Mrs West & Ms Spedding explained that it was hoped to provide a new secure outdoor area to the front of the building to create more space for outdoor play and learning. Demand for places had increased and the preschool had increased its number of places to 32. It was hoped that it might be possible to get some in-kind help with design and project management but it was likely that grant funding would be needed. At this stage there were no costings and the group simply wanted to make councillors aware of the project and seek their general support.

Councillors expressed general support for the project and offered the council's assistance with publicity and funding advice. Councillors asked the Pre-school representatives to keep the Parish Council informed of progress and indicated that the council would be willing to consider a request for a financial contribution, if required, once the project was further advanced.

24/17 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Finance Report

Cllr Kelly presented a report from the Finance & Risk Management Group on income & expenditure and variance from budget (copy attached to the minutes). Income for the year was higher than budget due to additional donations and grants and a refund of non-domestic rates. Expenditure was still below budget but there were a number of invoices yet to be paid. It was anticipated that there would be a small underspend at the year end. A copy of the approved budget for 2017/18 had been circulated to all councillors.

A quotation had been received from CBC for play area inspections for 2017/18. It was noted that the inspections service received during the current year had been entirely satisfactory and the only issue had been a delay in completing repairs to the swings and zip wire, partly due to staff sickness. The swings were now back in commission and the Clerk would follow up the outstanding repair to the zip wire to ensure all equipment was back in use before Easter.

It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation for play area inspections for 2017/18 in the sum of £1240.80 + VAT.

(b) Donation Request

A request had been received for a donation of £200 towards a Cumbria Dyslexia Project. It was noted that the applicant had not consulted local schools about the project and it was unclear exactly how the Village School might benefit.

It was RESOLVED not to make a donation.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Chq no 002274 K James – Reimbursement for sweets for Xmas parade Total £19.90
- Chq no 002275 P Preston – Electricity for Christmas tree lights Total £30.00
- Chq no 002276 CALC – Councillor & Clerk training courses £35.00 & £5.00 Total £40.00
- Chq no 002277 YNH Ltd – domain name renewal (stbees.org, stbees.net) £38.00 + £7.60 VAT Total £45.60
- Chq no 002278 Works 4 You Ltd – work on the allotments, boundary hedges and seat repair £1338.89 + £267.78 VAT Total £1606.67

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- Chq no 002279 Npower – electricity to beach toilets 1 Nov-31 Jan £46.91 + £2.35 VAT Total £49.26
- Chq no 002280 J Donaldson – reimbursement for postage Total £14.28
- Chq no 002281 J Donaldson – salary (net) Feb 2017 - £621.39
- Chq no 002282 Petty Cash top -up (Village in Bloom) Total £124.11
- Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service Feb £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (to be paid by SO)

Payments since last meeting to report

- Chq 002269 Sustrans Ltd – cycle track feasibility study £12500.00 + £2500.00 VAT Total £15000.00
- Chq 002271 Sustrans Ltd – cycle track feasibility study (final invoice) £424.92 + £84.98 VAT Total £509.90
- Chq 002272 D MacKay – retirement gift (public donations) Total £435.00
- Chq 002273 Network Rail – annual rent for Station car park £400.00 + £80.00 VAT Total £480.00
- Answer4 You – answering service £9.68 +£1.94 VAT Total £11.62 (paid by direct debit on 17/02/17)

25/17 ST BEES SCHOOL

Cllr Kelly declared a non-pecuniary interest as Clerk to the Trustees of St Bees School.

Cllr Kelly reported that detailed discussions were on-going between the Trustees and the SE Asian consortium. It was hoped that more information would be available at the next meeting. Meanwhile the school's facilities continued to be available for letting. It was asked whether notice could be given to the Village School and local residents when police training activities were taking place so as not to cause alarm. Cllr Kelly agreed to ensure that the Village School was aware that the buildings and grounds were used for training but it would not be possible to give exact dates.

26/17 PROJECT REPORTS

(a) Beach Regeneration

There was no progress to report.

(b) Traffic Calming/Speedwatch

A reply had been sent to the Strategy & Technical Director at Sellafield Ltd welcoming her undertaking to speak to contractors about the number of their vehicles travelling through the village and her promise that Sellafield representatives would come to speak to the Traffic Calming Committee once the Sellafield Travel Plan was published.

Speedwatch sessions were continuing and it was hoped to find a volunteer to take responsibility for the gun during periods when Cllr Mellor was away.

A letter had been received from Sgt Franks of Cumbria Constabulary who was setting up a group representing parishes affected by the Sellafield 'rat-run'. It was agreed that Cllrs Millington/Mellor would be the most appropriate representatives from St Bees and the Clerk would pass on contact details to Sgt Franks.

(c) Community Events

The pantomime had been a great success and had raised a sum of £850 for Village Hall funds.

(d) Tree Planting

It was noted that the plants and equipment for the next stage of planting at the Adams Ground would be ordered shortly and would be funded from the Nu-Gen grant.

Some planting would also take place in the grounds of St Bees School where the planting had been disturbed by Network Rail's bridge replacement work.

It was noted that the grounds staff at St Bees School had reported a significant improvement in drainage of the land since the trees had been planted.

(e) St Bees – Whitehaven Cycle Path

The invoices from Sustrans had now been paid and the contribution from Whitehaven Town Council had been received. Landowners who had been involved in discussions with Sustrans had been contacted and given an update on progress with the project.

(f) Station car park extension

It had been agreed at the last meeting that it would not be possible to go ahead with the project to extend the car park in light of Network Rail's refusal to grant a long term easement to give security of access to the land currently owned by CBC. The Chairman invited councillors to consider whether the Parish Council wished to continue to express an interest in acquiring this land from CBC despite the cancellation of the car park project. There was discussion of the possible uses of this land. It was agreed that the position of the land in the centre of the village, between the Seacroft Estate and the Station, offered the possibility of a number of community uses.

It was RESOLVED to contact CBC to express an on-going interest in acquiring the land for community purposes.

27/17 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report was received and the following points were noted:

- A request had been made to CBC for permission to mount a new noticeboard on the toilet block to replace the damaged board from Firth Drive and a response was awaited.
- A report had been received that the seat at the south end of the golf course path is in poor condition. A member of the public had offered a donation to replace the seat but consultation would be needed with St Bees School who own the land.
- Beckermat/Thornhill PC had delayed a decision until March on whether to be part of the Lengthsman Scheme for 2017 – 2019 so final costs could not be confirmed at this stage. The lengthsman had been asked to remove the posts which supported the old noticeboard at Firth Drive and also to repair the gate on the Outrigger play area.

28/17 PLANNING

(a) New planning applications

The Planning Advisory Group reported on the following applications received for comment:

- Ref 4/17/2007/0F1 New stairs and alterations to elevations
Stone House Farm, Main St, St Bees

It was noted that this application had been received just before the January meeting and the deadline for comment was before this meeting. Following consultation with the Planning Advisory Group the Clerk had sent a reply to CBC under delegated authority stating that there were no objections.

It was RESOLVED to ratify the response.

- Ref 4/17/2011/0F1 Erection of double garage to side & canopy roof to front elevation;
flat roof over rear extension replaced with slate hipped roof
Syke House, Howman, Egremont

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

- Ref 4/17/2015/TPO Reduction of two poplar trees and five sycamores within the conservation area

Land in front of Holly Mews, Churchyard of St Bees Priory

It was noted that the application from a resident of Holly Mews included work to trim back branches overhanging the boundary of the churchyard and also more substantial pruning to reduce the height and spread of the trees. The PCC had provided a copy of their letter of objection sent to CBC. It was noted that the application was not supported by a specialist report to justify why the pruning of these mature trees was deemed necessary.

It was RESOLVED that, whilst it would be appropriate for overhanging branches to be trimmed back by agreement between the applicant and the PCC, the Parish Council would object to the further work as it had not been demonstrated that the work was necessary for the health of the trees or that the trees posed a danger to people or property.

(b) Applications approved/refused by CBC

As the Copeland Borough Council web-site had been out of action for the last few days, it had not been possible to check whether decisions had been made on applications relevant to St Bees since the last meeting.

29/17 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Argyle reported on a meeting to discuss the Egremont Growth Plan and Masterplan. CBC was developing plans for the development of towns such as Egremont and Cleator Moor funded by Nu-Gen.

30/17 CBC MATTERS

Cllr Hill had been following up reports of further erosion by the bungalows at Sea Mill. CBC staff had inspected and confirmed that work was included in the Grant in Aid programme for future work but this currently had a low priority.

Cllr Gilmour reported that the budget consultation meeting at the Beacon had been poorly attended. The Mayor had outlined the difficulties facing CBC following a deficit identified in the accounts for previous years.

31/17 REPORT FROM COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER

No report had been received since the last meeting.

32/17 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) An invitation had been received from West Cumbria Mining for a Parish Council representative to attend an event on 2 March to see current progress with plans for the new mine. Noted.

(b) Pre-election guidance had been received from CALC (applicable to both the Parliamentary by-election & local elections). Details had been circulated to councillors by email.

(c) Health Watch Cumbria were seeking feedback on experiences of treatment at a distance. Details had been previously circulated.

(d) A letter had been received from West Lakes Academy inviting local councils, businesses and organisations to become involved with supporting the Academy in some way. It was RESOLVED to respond and offer help with citizenship training, involvement of students in local projects etc

(e) An email had been received from Nu-Gen, postponing its decision on the latest round of Green Grant funding. A decision was now expected in March. Noted.

(f) A joint meeting of the Coastal Communities Teams for North & South Copeland had been arranged for Thursday 23 February at Muncaster. Noted.

(g) Details had been received of the Police & Crime Commissioner’s Property Fund which offers grants up to £2500 to local organisations for projects that align to the Police and Crime Plan. Noted.

(h) A briefing note had been received from the National Trust on a proposed extension of St Bees Heritage Coast. Discussions had taken place with CBC and a proposal to extend the designation northwards to Whitehaven was expected to be included in CBC’s Site Allocations Plan which would be published for comment shortly. Noted.

(i) Details had been received from CALC of the new audit contract from 2017/18. Parishes in Cumbria would be audited by PKF Littlejohn LLP Arrangements for the external audit for 2016/17 remained unchanged. Noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Cumbria Wildlife Trust –e-Newsletter Feb 2017

CALC Circular Feb 2017

Coastal Access Monthly update

E-newsletter from Open Spaces Society

Conserving Lakeland Winter/spring 2017 (Friends of the Lake District newsletter)

33/17 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

(a) It was noted that brambles were growing out over the pavement alongside the Adams Recreation Ground. The Clerk would arrange for the brambles to be cut back by the lengthsman or the council’s grasscutting contractor.

(b) The Village School had expressed an interest in bringing groups of children on visits to Priory Paddock. The Friends of the Priory had offered a donation to enable the Parish Council to purchase equipment for pond dipping etc which could be used by groups visiting Priory Paddock.

(c) The Triers were organising a 10 week programme called ‘Couch to 5K’ to help people get fit and take up running.

(d) It was reported that a property on Peck Mill had been empty for a long time and was rapidly deteriorating. It was agreed that the Parish Council would try to make informal contact with the family involved.

(e) It was noted that the licensing of Rev Becky Gibbs as Curate-in-Charge would take place on 3 March in the Priory. All parish councillors were invited to attend.

34/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting take place on MONDAY 20 MARCH 2017 at 6.30pm. The Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Monday 15 May, immediately before the annual meeting of the Parish Council.

Signed.....

Date.....