

**Minutes of the Meeting of St Bees Parish Council held on
Monday 15 June 2015 at 6.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Cllrs D Sim (in the Chair), N Bettinson, M Davies, G Gilmour, J Haile, T Kelly, J Mellor, M Riley, C Robson, N Smart, H Strong and the Clerk

In attendance: Cllr I Hill, CBC Ward Councillor
Cllr H Wormstrup, County Councillor Egremont North/St Bees

Also present: 5 members of the public

116/15 QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST

On behalf of the council Cllr Gilmour congratulated the Chairman on being awarded the British Empire Medal in the Birthday Honours List for services to the community of St Bees. Cllr Sim explained that the award had been completely unexpected. It was one of the few awards that had been given for parish council work and he believed that it should be seen as an honour for the whole council.

117/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Argyle, Kennedy and Millington.

118/15 DISPENSATIONS & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A number of councillors declared interests in the agenda item concerning St Bees School:

Cllr Smart declared a pecuniary interest as his wife was employed by the school.

Cllr Mellor declared a non-pecuniary interest as a former member of staff who had undertaken some supply work during this year but no longer had any pecuniary interest.

Cllr Robson declared a non-pecuniary interest as a former member of staff.

Cllr Kelly declared a non-pecuniary interest as a parent of a pupil.

Cllr Bettinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in view of his involvement with various school activities in a voluntary capacity over many years.

119/15 CCC ISSUES

It was RESOLVED to bring forward this item on the agenda.

Cllr Wormstrup reported that the traffic survey would be taking place shortly as part of the speed limit review.

A request had been received for a diversion of a public footpath at Bell House Farm, Sandwith and comments were being sought from interested parties. CBC Planning Panel would be carrying out a site visit to consider the amended application for a wind turbine on land to the south of Bell House Farm and he had been invited to attend.

Cllr Wormstrup reported that he had been approached by local residents concerned about the possible development of land behind Abbots Court. Cllr Hill explained that he had made enquiries of the Planning Dept at CBC but no planning application had been received. He would make further enquiries to confirm that the position remained the same.

Cllr Wormstrup then left the meeting.

120/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Those present indicated that they were interested in the discussion of the item relating to St Bees School. The Chairman agreed to bring forward discussion of this item.

121/15 ST BEES SCHOOL**Cllr Smart withdrew from the meeting during this item in view of his pecuniary interest.**

A letter had been sent to the Governors as agreed at the last meeting. Parish Council representatives had been invited to a meeting at the school on 8 June. Cllr Millington and the Chairman had attended the meeting at which Mr Erskine, Interim Bursar, and the Headmaster had represented the school.

The Chairman outlined the main points from the meeting:-

1. The School had explained that there had been a number of factors which had contributed to the decision to close the school:- its relatively remote location was a disincentive for parents living outside the immediate area, there had been a drop in income from traditional sources such as armed forces subsidies, there were too few families in the catchment zone able to pay full fees and too many bursaries created a drain on the school's finances. Diversification had been necessary to maintain economic stability but had created a complex operational model which was no longer sustainable. A sale of land which would have generated capital last year did not proceed. In the circumstances the Governors could not be confident that the school could remain solvent for the following 12 months and it was decided that an orderly closure was preferable to possible insolvency.
2. The ownership of assets had been discussed. The School is a charitable foundation. Only the buildings owned by the school foundation are subject to oversight by the Charities Commission whilst it operates as a school. St Bees School owns the land and assets, apart from Lonsdale Terrace which is leased to the School by the Old St Beghians Association. The Friends of the School is also a charity but exists only for fund-raising purposes. St Bees Enterprises is a private company responsible for those assets which have revenue earning potential.
3. The School had stated that there was no current plan to sell assets and it hoped that as many of the assets as possible would continue to be available to the community. A review was being carried out by professional consultants to establish the options for the use of the School's assets. The School was exploring with interested parties possible use of the assets but confidentiality requirements precluded the School from making further details known. However, there was no possibility that the school could open in 2016 using the same model as hitherto.
4. The School had had positive discussions with CBC and the Mayor, which would be progressed in the future.
5. The meeting concluded with a promise that the School would contact the Parish Council for further discussions in July/August.

A number of questions were raised by councillors and members of the public, including whether estimates of future pupil numbers had taken account of the likely impact of developments such as Moorside and why there appeared to have been significant investment in building maintenance when the financial position was so precarious. The Chairman explained that a long term projection of pupil numbers beyond the immediate situation had not been discussed. The School had explained that refurbishment work had been essential as there had been little investment in the fabric of the buildings for many years.

Concerns were expressed about the care and maintenance of buildings and grounds in the interim period whilst the various longer term options were being explored. The Chairman replied that the School had given no information on this other than that it was discussing the situation with insurers.

Whilst little new information had emerged at the meeting, it was generally agreed that it had provided a useful starting point for further dialogue with the School and that the parish council should continue to communicate with all parties involved including the parent groups, the Old St Beghians Association and local community.

It was RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the Governors thanking them for meeting Parish Council representatives and expressing the council's wish to meet again with the Trustees/Project Group to discuss educational issues, the care and maintenance of assets and the socio-economic impact on the parish.

122 /15 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2015

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 18 May 2015 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman subject to an amendment to min 95/15 to read 'Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs G Gilmour, M Riley and C Robson.'

123/15 FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

(a) Financial Report

A summary of the accounts at the end of May was received and noted.

The Finance & Risk Advisory Group would be meeting shortly to carry out a review of income/expenditure against the budget at the end of quarter 1 and would also be considering the recommendations contained in the internal audit report for 2014/15.

(b) Donations

A request had been received from St Bees Garden Society for a donation towards the costs of staging the Annual Show in August. It was noted that the show would take place in the Sports Hall as in previous years despite the closure of the school in July.

It was RESOLVED that a donation of £150 be given.

(c) Payments

It was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

- Cheque no 002083 CBC-NNDR Beach toilets 4th instalment Total £153.00
 - Cheque no 002084 CBC- NNDR Station car park 4th instalment Total £77.00
 - Cheque no 002085 Npower- Electricity beach toilets £149.01 + £7.45 VAT Total £156.46
 - Cheque no 002086 Open Spaces Society – annual subscription Total £45.00
 - Cheque no 002087 ACT – annual subscription Total £75.00
 - Cheque no 002088 J Donaldson –Clerk Salary June 2015 £614.55
 - Answer 4 You –answering service £8.80 + £1.76 VAT Total £10.56 (to be paid by direct debit 17/6)
 - Thomas Milburn Property Ltd – toilet service June £583.33 + £116.67 VAT Total £700.00 (to be paid by SO)
- Payments since last meeting to report:
- Cheque no 002081 Aon UK Ltd - insurance renewal £1149.23 (agreed at last meeting)
 - Cheque no 002082 Open Spaces Society – donation £25.00 (agreed at last meeting)

124/15 CBC ISSUES

It was RESOLVED to bring forward this item on the agenda.

Cllr Hill gave an update on several items. The travellers had now left the village but there remained the possibility of further problems in the future.

The closure of St Bees School was likely to worsen the problems of recruitment of medical staff at WCH.

The Labour Group on CBC had now agreed to work with the new mayor. It was noted that Cllr Sim had written to the mayor seeking a meeting to discuss matters of concern to both the parish council and CBC and a reply was awaited.

Cllr Hill then left the meeting

125/15 CONSULTATION – MOORSIDE PROJECT

The first phase of consultation on plans by NuGen for a new nuclear power station close to the Sellafield site was now underway. NuGen had organised a number of public events around the area to explain their plans. It was noted that plans included an emphasis on rail as the preferred method of transport for equipment and people, with temporary villages being set up for workers during the construction phase.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Gilmour and Smart provide a report to the next meeting when a response to the consultation would be agreed.

126/15 BEACH ROAD FOOTPATH PROJECT

An application had been submitted to Copeland Community Fund for a grant to help with the costs. Local residents had offered to provide volunteer labour to help with the work. A decision on the funding application would be known in mid-July and, if successful, work was expected to take place in the autumn.

127/15 PROJECT REPORTS**(a) Beach Regeneration**

Cllr Robson reported that the anchor and beach shelter had now been repainted. A meeting of the Beach Committee would be organised in September to discuss possible projects.

(b) Traffic Calming/Speedwatch

A quotation had been obtained for the servicing and recalibration of the speed gun. It was agreed that a new co-ordinator should be found before a decision was taken on repairing the speed gun. Cllr Mellor would speak to the previous co-ordinator about the organisation of the scheme.

(c) Community Events

It had been decided that there was insufficient time to organise an event to coincide with the run on 12 July. Cllrs Kennedy and Argyle were contacting organisations who had stalls last year to see whether there was interest in holding a beach event over August bank holiday.

(d) Tree Planting

It was noted that recent cold dry winds had damaged some of the newly planted trees in exposed locations.

(e) Station Car Park Extension

The Clerk was continuing to press for a reply from Network Rail.

(f) Outrigg Play Area

Cllr Riley was drawing up a list of repairs required so the urgent work could go ahead.

128/15 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's report on on-going matters was received and the following points were noted:

- A training course for parish councillors would take place on 23 June and other parishes would be invited to participate.
- Radio Cumbria and Look North had carried a feature on the ENW policy of removing pole lights. The Chairman had been interviewed about the situation in Rottington. CBC had organised a site meeting in Rottington on 9 July to look at the possible replacement of the lights but no costs were available at this stage.
- A new tenant had been found for one allotment plot. A second plot was also becoming vacant which could be let as two small plots.
- St Bees had been awarded a Seaside Award again this year. CBC had been asked to put up the new flag and there would also be a plaque for display.
- The next meeting of CBC/CCC/Parishes had been postponed until 30 June at Waberthwaite.

129/15 PLANNING**(a) New planning applications**

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

Ref 4/15/2169/TPO Reduction & removal of branches of trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order
2 Fleatham Gardens, St Bees

It was RESOLVED to object to this application. Work on protected trees should only be carried out where this was required for the health of the trees but the application provided no specialist report to justify this work.

Ref 4/15/2172/0F1 Erection of summerhouse & garden shed
2 Fleatham Gardens, St Bees

It was noted that this was in effect a retrospective application as the summerhouse and shed were already in place.

In the circumstances it was RESOLVED not to object to the application.

Ref 4/15/2181/0F1 Conversion of part of existing barn to form additional accommodation
Tarnflatt Hall Cottage, Sandwith

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

Ref 4/14/2511/0F1 Amended plan for siting of wind turbine
Land to the south of Bell House Farm, Sandwith

It was RESOLVED to continue to object to this application on the grounds of the detrimental visual impact.

Ref 4/15/2180/0F1 Notification of prior approval for change of use of agricultural barn to dwelling house
Barn adjacent to Stanley House, Sandwith

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

Ref 4/15/2198/TPO Felling of two sycamore trees
Meadow House, High House Rd, St Bees

It was RESOLVED to object to this application as no report was included in the application to provide justification for the work.

Ref 4/15/2201/0F1 Erection of raised deck/patio
Bank How, Seamill Lane, St Bees

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

(b) Applications approved/refused

The following applications had been approved by CBC:-

- Felling of 3 no trees – Land at Meadow House, St Bees
- Installation of 42 no 10kW solar panels – Field adjacent to Long Meadow, Rottington.

130/15 REPORT FROM COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER

A written report had been received from PCSO Kane. There had been two incidents of anti-social behaviour at pubs within the village to which the police had been called. There had also been a report of children causing a nuisance on the Crofts and a report of children camping on the school field but both had been easily dealt with.

Councillors expressed concern that incidents at local pubs seemed to be happening more frequently and involved people from outside the village. It was recognised that the local pubs provided a valuable asset for the village but rowdy behaviour was causing nuisance to local residents and also to visitors staying in the village.

It was RESOLVED to contact the local police to seek advice on what could be done to prevent the problems worsening.

131/15 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) A briefing paper had been received from CALC on the implementation of the Local Government (Religious etc Observances) Act 2015. Noted.
- (b) Details had been received of the 2015 Rural Crime Survey which was open to anyone to complete. Noted.
- (c) An email had been received from CALC on the government’s announcement of the Success Regime for North Cumbria. Hospital services in North Cumbria would now be managed directly by the regulators. Noted.
- (d) Details had been received of Wasdale Fell Care Day on 4 July, organised by Friends of the Lake District. Volunteers were being sought to help carry out work such as path maintenance. Noted.
- (e) Details had been received from the Office for Nuclear Development of a meeting in public between the Independent Review Panel and Radioactive Waste Management to be held in London on 23 June. The meeting would provide an opportunity to observe the Panel’s deliberations and discussions with RWM on the current draft national geological screening guidance. Noted.
- (f) A letter had been received from the Secretary of St Bega Lodge about the state of the entrance to the Village Hall. The letter had been passed to the Village Hall Committee which was responsible for the upkeep of the building and a reply had been sent to the Lodge.
- (g) An invitation had been received for the AGM of Open Spaces Society on 9 July in London. Noted.
- (h) A letter had been received from CCC seeking comments on the application by the owner of Bell House Farm to divert the public footpath away from the house and farm buildings. It was RESOLVED not to support the request as this was a well-used and established path which formed part of the Coast to Coast walk. It was felt that walkers would continue to use the original path with the potential for conflict between walkers and property owners.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- Cumbria Coastal Access Monthly Update –June 2015
- CALC Newsletter –June 2015
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust – June e-newsletter
- NALC Newsletter 1 June 2015
- Blood Donor session – 30 June 15.00 – 19.00 hrs Egremont Market Hall

132/15 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

It was noted that new keys were needed for the beach toilets as one of the locks had been changed following damage whilst the travellers were parked on the car park.

133/15 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was RESOLVED that the next meeting take place on Monday 20 JULY 2015 at 6.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....