

Lorton Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2015

Present: Cllrs. Poate (Chair), Postlethwaite, Sloan, Armstrong and Deeks.

Apologies: Cllrs Irlam, Aitken and Cllr. Tony Annison (ABC)

Also present: Cllr. Alan Bowness (CCC), Anne Roberts (LWI), Derek Poate (YTHC), Leslie Webb (First Responders), Lois Suckling (Lorton Gardening Club) & Olivia Harrison (Lorton School), Sue Ritchie (Lorton Tennis Club) and Carol Priestley.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meeting.

113.15: Minutes of the previous Parish Meeting:

The Chair asked if all the councillors present were content with the minutes of the 2013 Annual meeting held on May 1st. There were no matters or issues arising. The councillors present agreed that they were an accurate record.

114.15 Election of Chair:

Cllr. Poate stood down and nominations were sought for the position of Chair.

Cllr. Deeks nominated Cllr. Poate.

Cllr. Postlethwaite seconded the nomination.

All those present agreed and Cllr. Poate accepted the nomination.

115.15 Election of Vice Chair:

Cllr. Sloan nominated Cllr. Postlethwaite.

Cllr. Poate seconded the nomination.

All those present agreed and Cllr. Postlethwaite accepted the nomination.

116.15 Chairman's Report:

Cllr. Poate presented her report to the meeting.

Since our meeting last year quite a lot seems to have been happening in the Parish, and the valley, with a range of events and challenges facing us all.

Sadly our long standing Allerdale Parishes representative, John Hayton, died in December, and a previous Lorton Parish chair, David Kerr, also died more recently. Both are remembered for their significant contributions to the community.

As from June of this year, the Allerdale Parishes Member, representing our views at the LDNP, is to be replaced with a North Distinctive Area Member, and Geoff Davis, (who has been acting in the role since John Haytons resignation) from Above Derwent Parish Council will be the proposed candidate, following their AGM today.

The first Lorton Parish Council Newsletter was published in the summer of 2012, we have managed to produce three letters each year since then. These are free, and delivered by councillors, to approximately 150 households in the parish. We hope they provide a useful source of information to residents, and welcome contributions relevant to the parish. Thanks to Marian Sloan who has taken over the role of managing the newsletter, from Dave Smith.

Lorton Council continues to meet every 2 months, with additional meetings held occasionally to deal with specific planning applications.

At the time of writing, your council has considered 18 planning application since last year, of which the council supported 15, 1 was objected to, and 2 are still to be dealt with.

The LDNP has approved 12 of those applications, refused 1 and 5 are still being considered.

Applications in relation to the property on land to the south of Lime Tree cottage, in Low Lorton continue to be dealt with by the LDNP Compliance team, and regular updates are sent to the council and nearby residents.

The Pound Wall project has been successfully completed, the wall that was in danger of collapse has been moved and rebuilt, and the road widened to allow vehicles improved turning space on the sharp bend. Late last summer gravel was dredged from Whitbeck, along to High Mill Bridge, and The Pound was used to dump the gravel, before it was moved off site. Luckily this took place after the summer holidays, so children were able to enjoy the beck on those many hot summer days we all recall !

The gravel removal did cause considerable mess at the time, but the EA did reinstated the grass area with turf, but I think we may have lost quite a few bulbs, as the show of daffodils on The Pound was quite minimal this Spring. Requests for use of The Pound for gravel removal in the future will have to be considered by the council.

Richard McCree continues to manage the grass cutting around the village, a difficult job sometimes with the challenge of wet weather often interrupting his schedule. Our thanks to the Lorton Vale Garden Club for the continued maintenance of the flowers tubs, replanted as the year passes.

Those of you who visit the Pound, or who walk over Boon Beck Bridge may have seen a recent 'garden makeover'... The Yew Tree Hall Garden has been in need of some attention, and members of the Garden club and Yew Tree Hall Committee worked very hard to clear and re vitalise this very pretty part of the village. New slate chippings have been laid, a garden bench is on order, and the garden will be 'open' for residents to sit and enjoy the magnificent views of our valley.

Another community effort enjoyed by many of us, was the support and participation of various groups when Lorton School held its annual 10k race in March. Car parking for over 160 participants, safety Marshals on the road, water station, and refreshments at the school managed by the WI, all helped to make it a great day. The sun shone, and approx £ 1500 was raised for the new school adventure playground on the Parish field.

This project is still in early stages, but discussions have taken place at several council meetings, so come along to meetings if you want to know what is going on.

Lorton School sports day and Summer Fayre will take place on Thursday 9 th July on the Parish Field.

Three Lorton Parish councillors continue to attend meetings of the Melbreak Communities Steering group, a fuller report from the MBC will be out lined in due course. Funds are available from the MBC for community projects in the valley.

Sadly the Lorton Shop at the Wheatsheaf pub closed at the end of November, in part due to lack of support, but the good news is that Arwen and Lee have bought the Shop in High Lorton, and have submitted refurbishment plans to the LNDP. You can follow their updates on the MBC website.

The Mobile Post Office, parked at Broomcroft, near the Tennis club, now operates every Friday: 11.55 for thirty minutes. The van has disabled access and provides a range of services, so please support this valuable service to our rural area.

I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their continued commitment to the parish council, attending meetings and undertaking various additional duties to ensure matters that are our responsibility are dealt with as soon as possible.

Many thanks also to our clerk , Dave Smith, who works hard on your behalf, pursuing Highways Issues, seeking information, completing grant applications etc, we may not always get the results we would like, but I can assure you it not because we aren't trying !

We look forward to your attendance and participation at our meetings held in The Yew Tree Hall at 7.30 pm.

117.15: Presentations from Community Groups:

1. Lorton Vale Community First Responders: Les Webb informed the meeting that at present they had twelve First Responders, two having recently retired. Three people are currently undertaking the training to become First Responders, including one person from Buttermere where there is only one First Responder at present. A number of other people in the area have expressed an interest in becoming a First Responder. Call outs in the area are averaging two a month and most of these are fairly low-key usually only requiring care until the ambulance arrives. During the last year funds were raised to place a defibrillator for public use at the Croft Cafe in Buttermere.

Cllr. Bowness informed the meeting that BT are looking at decommissioning public phone boxes that have very low levels of use and have suggested that the phone box could be used for the placement of defibrillators. The phone would be deactivated but 999 calls would still be able to be made, allowing people to access the pin code for the defibrillator.

2. Lorton Tennis Club: Sue Ritchie explained that the Club was still waiting for planning permission for the new flood-lights which, once they were in place, would allow the club to extend the playing sessions. The current flood-lit sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays were well supported. There are social sessions held on Saturday and Monday and the club has eighty adult members and forty junior members. The Junior section is doing really well and it includes twelve pupils from Lorton School. The Juniors are participating in the 'Road to Wimbledon' scheme as well as numerous on-going tournaments. People come to use the club facilities from a wide radius, not just Lorton and the immediate surrounding area. The adult Ladies Team came first in the league recently and the adult

Mens team came second. The club is thriving and is rightly seen as a much valued asset in the community.

3. Lorton School: Olivia Harrison, the Head Teacher of the school, provided the meeting with a rundown of school activities during the last year. There had been a performance of Robin Hood in the outdoor classroom, a well attended sports day and various days out with the National Trust, Sports Camps and the Outdoors Pursuits Week. Sports activities include cricket, netball and football. To commemorate World War 1 there has been an art project making tiles with poppies on them. The poly-tunnel has been planted up with flower and vegetables just before Easter, though this might have to be removed when the Adventure playground is built (see below). The After School Club has ten regular users, though this can be as many as eighteen at times.

Community activities that the school is involved in include the annual 10k race that is organised by Friends of Lorton School. This year it raised £1,500. The Lorton Lunches which has a regular attendance of thirty people with the money raised being used to buy fruit for the school children and to assist with kitchen refurbishment. The school now has its own defibrillator which will be based in the Pavilion and training for interested community members will be undertaken shortly. Lease agreements and plans are currently being developed for the new Adventure Playground which is expected to cost in the region of £50,000. The Friends of Lorton School are concentrating all their fund-raising activities on this project. A new grounds maintenance contractor has been engaged to look after the Parish Field and it is hoped that they will deal with the number of rabbit holes on the field.

There are currently seventy-four pupils on the school register with ten due to leave in September and nine signed up to start.

4. Lorton Gardening Club: Lois Suckling informed the meeting that the Gardening Club continues to be well supported. A day trip to Tatton Park was undertaken last summer and a social gathering had been very successful. There will be further visits to gardens during the coming summer. Winter talks had included topics such as tulips, pest control and the restoration of Lowther Gardens. The annual plant sale had been arranged to coincide with a Melbreak Communities Coffee Morning and had been a great success with over £200 being raised for the Gardeners Benevolent Fund. A recent project had seen Garden Club members working on The Yew Tree Hall community garden which was now looking a great deal better. The tubs in the village have recently been planted up.
5. Lorton Women's Institute: Anne Roberts reported that the group currently had twenty-four members and had met eleven times during the last year. There had been a craft evening, a talk on the Cockermouth Floods and a guided tour around Maryport. The members at the Christmas Party had been entertained by Anne Marie Kerr and at the Darts event, one of the Lorton teams had reached the final. A Coffee Morning for the League of Friends was well supported and, as in previous years, the group provided the refreshments for the 10k race.
6. The Yew Tree Hall Committee: Derek Poate reminded those present that there had been a public meeting held during the last year to consider the idea of a dual community facility at the Church. It was clear that most people were opposed to the idea and after a vote at the meeting against the idea the Yew Tree Hall Committee had dropped it and agreed that the Yew Tree Hall would be remaining in its current role as a village hall for the foreseeable future. Grants were currently being sought for the refurbishment of the toilets and the replacement of the chairs in the hall, the current ones being both old and heavy. If funds allow, a projector will also be installed in the hall for use by groups hiring the facility. The community garden has recently been tidied up and it was good to see a number of community groups coming together to work on this project.

7. The Melbreak Communities: A report had been received from Carolyn Davis, the acting Secretary of the group.

The Melbreak Communities (MC) acknowledges with thanks the continuing support of residents of Lorton Parish and the formal representation on the Steering Group of 3 representatives from Lorton Parish Council. We are also very pleased that Bev Rowlands has joined the Steering Group representing Blindbothe PC. (At present there are no Parish Council representatives from Buttermere or Loweswater.)

Following the resignation of John Hayton as Chairman and Penny Poole as Coordinator, Chris Poate agreed to be the Acting Chair and Carolyn Davis (Treasurer) offered to act in a secretarial capacity until substantive replacements could be found. The Steering Group remain very grateful for John and Penny's knowledge and expertise - and for the enthusiasm they sustained over 5 years.

These are some of the year's highlights:

- Thanks to Cheryl and Ian Aitken's tireless efforts - and aided by their team of helpers - monthly Coffee and Cakes are proving ever more popular social events and raised a surplus of nearly £800. This May's event incorporated the Gardening Club's Plant Sale and was spectacularly successful.
- The Lorton Oil Consortium set up and managed by Liz Pemberley made an additional contribution of just over £500.
- The proceeds from both revenue streams are being split 50:50 between the Melbreak Communities and funding for donations that either directly or indirectly benefit the local community. A contribution of £200 was made to Lorton PC for the Community notice-board; £100 was donated to the Vale of Lorton First Responders; and the Melbreak Communities paid for Yew Tree Hall and disco hire for a children's Christmas party. A bid is due to be considered from the Gardening Club and Yew Tree Hall Committee for improvements made to the Yew Tree Hall Garden. Further requests for funding from local individuals or organisations are always welcome.
- A grant of £500 made by Age UK will be spent, in part, on a soup and sandwich lunch for over-65s to be held at The Grange on Tuesday 30 June.
- The Melbreak Communities' website, coordinated by Richard Easton, continues to act as a very useful source of information for people in the Valley and beyond with site visits running at 1,200 to 1,300 a month – the most viewed pages are 'Accommodation' and the 'Message Board'.
- The Melbreak Communities Emergency Plan is nearing completion and will soon be submitted to Cumbria County Council to ensure that our Coordinator (Steve Irlam) is contactable by the Emergency Services in a real emergency. Following a "Building Resilience" Community Emergency Planning conference, Steve Johnson (from Cumbria Constabulary and Chair of the Cumbria Resilience Forum) has reviewed our Plan and the generic suggestions he made have been incorporated appropriately.
- The Melbreak Communities' AGM will be held on Tuesday 7 July at Yew Tree Hall at 7.30pm. As usual, this will be an open meeting and local residents are very welcome to join us.

It was noted that The Lorton and Derwent Fells History Society had been unable to send a representative to the meeting.

118.15 The End of Year Accounts:

The Clerk presented the End of Year Accounts and talked those present through the figures. Total income during the year was £8,910.00p. Total expenditure was £8,859.10p. Together with the balance brought forward from the previous financial year, the balance of the Parish Council account on March 31st 2015 was £5,216.68p. The figures had been audited and agreed by Mr. J. Hankin, the internal auditor. The Clerk highlighted the fact that both income and expenditure were considerably higher than in the previous year. This was due to The Pound Project which, after additional income was taken into account, had cost the Parish Council a little under £1,000. The End of Year accounts were formally agreed by the councillors present together with the annual governance statement contained within the external audit form as completed by the Chair and the Clerk.

There were no issues raised by Mr. Hankin who has stated that he is happy to undertake the internal audit next year.

The Chair thanked all the speakers for their presentations.

The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____

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