

# Lorton Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7th March 2018

**Present:** Cllrs. Poate (Chair), Postlethwaite, Young, Deeks & Edmunds.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Irlam

**Also in attendance:** Dave Smith (Clerk), Mike Milner, Julian Cruickshank, Adrian Jones (Forest Enterprise) & 5 members of the public.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **19.18 Declarations of Interest:**

Cllrs. Young, Poate and Edmunds all stated that they were members of Lorton Tennis Club.

### **20.18 Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The minutes of the January meeting and the Special Planning Meeting held of 15th February were accepted as an accurate record by the Councillors present and the Chair duly signed them.

### **21.18 Co-option of a new Councillor:**

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had now been given the go-ahead by Allerdale Borough Council to co-opt a new Councillor to fill the current vacancy. The Clerk informed the meeting that there had been one expression of interest in becoming a Parish Councillor and that this was from Julian Cruickshank who had introduced himself at the January meeting and explained why he was interested in becoming a Councillor.

The Councillors present had no questions for Mr. Cruickshank and his co-option onto the Council was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Deeks

Seconded by: Cllr. Edmunds

All those present agreed and Mr. Cruickshank was duly co-opted onto the Council. The Chair welcomed Julian to the Council.

**ACTION: Clerk to inform ABC of the co-option of Cllr. Cruickshank and send them a copy of the Declaration of Pecuniary Interests form.**

**ACTION: Clerk to send Cllr. Cruickshank all the appropriate documents and paperwork associated with becoming a Parish Councillor.**

### **22.18 Update from Whinlatter Visitor Centre:**

Adrian Jones, the Forest Enterprise Recreation and Business Manager for the area introduced himself and explained that he was keen to have a good working relationship with Lorton Parish Council as he had with Below Derwent Parish Council.

He was part of the management team at Whinlatter and his responsibilities included setting and delivering the local strategy and developing the recreation offer on the Whinlatter site. Forest Enterprise receives £20m each year from the government which is split between six regions. As this is not a lot of money to deliver what is expected of the organisation, it is crucial that income generation is developed. Timber sales

currently provide the main part of income generation for the organisation but as this is gradually declining it is essential that other business opportunities are developed, At Whinlatter these include a variety of recreational activities such as Mountain Bike trails, bike hire, walking trails, a cafe, and a shop. These activities, together with fees received from parking charges, currently provide a turnover of £1.6m. On this turnover there is predicted to be an operating loss of £7,000 for the current financial year. The fees from car parking is the main income generator on the recreational side of the business.

The fees that are paid by the public for car parking are an emotive issue and most people do not like having to pay them. However, within the parking areas, there is a 90% honesty rate with 10% of visitors not paying for their ticket. The main concern, and one that has long been recognised as a problem by Forest Enterprise, is the people that choose to park on the verge. These forest users are causing problems for other road users as well as using the forest facilities for free. The people parking on the verge tend to be mountain bikers or people intending to walk up Grisedale Pike. Some local people park on the verge because they think that they should get the forest facilities for free but it is not possible to operate a car parking fees system based on post codes.

Forest Enterprise understands that people parking on the verge is a problem and do want to do something about it. Adrian asked those in attendance what they would do about it.

Making the verge much more difficult to park on by building up the verges, as has been done on the other side of the road. AJ stated that that could be done but it would probably just move the problem further down the road. The engineering costs of building banks alongside the road would also be considerable. Similar obstacles were also considered such as wooden bollards, tree trunks and hedges, all of which would need permission from Cumbria Highways, but each of them had problems associated with them.

Extending the double yellow lines, possibly as far down the road as Hobcarton, would solve the problem though, initially at least, they would have to be policed. AJ explained that he was going to look into this and had a meeting arranged with an officer from Cumbria Highways to look at the possibility. However, when the original double yellow lines were put down it had cost FE nearly £30k, £22k of which was for future maintenance works. It is certainly possible that the cost of extending the lines down to Hobcarton would just not be financially viable.

An alternative to double yellow lines might be the introduction of a 'Clearway', i.e. no parking under any circumstances, for the road possibly from Hobcarton up and over the top and down the other side towards Braithwaite. There would need to be repeater signs along the stretch of road and it would need policing for a number of months after its introduction but it would probably be cheaper than the extension of yellow lines. Although it could be argued that this was an urban solution to a rural problem, AJ felt that most of the visitors were from an urban location and would understand the concept of 'Clearways'.

The idea of extending the existing car parks was considered but AJ stated that the existing parks were rarely full and it would be doubtful whether the LDNPA would grant planning permission for additional car parking facilities as they were keen to reduce car number in the National Park.

The question of car parking fees and whether they were too high was considered but AJ stated that in comparison to car parks operated by both the LDNPA and the National Trust, the car park at Whinlatter was good value and people only had to pay for the time that they were there rather than having to pay an all day fee. The average length of stay is less than three hours. He went on to state that for regular visitors the annual car parking permit, costing £45, was the cheapest option.

The concerns regarding the speed of timber wagons as they came down from Whinlatter through High Lorton was then considered. AJ explained that the route through High Lorton was the recognised route as

agreed by Cumbria Highways and the timber industry. The alternative route through Braithwaite was just not viable because of the narrowness of the road. Councillors understood why the wagons came through High Lorton but explained that coming down the hill they picked up speed and on narrow roads were quite intimidating to oncoming vehicles. The national speed limit of 60mph covers the road in question so the lorry drivers are not breaking the law but they are not driving to the condition of the road. AJ stated that he would talk to the timber contractors about this issue and further stated that there was a 15mph speed limit on timber wagons on the Whinlatter site. During times of road closures then the wagons are given permission to use the road through Braithwaite though it is very tight in the village.

Over the last couple of years there has been an effort to extend the visitor base and there is now a different demographic using the forest which is good for increasing visitor numbers but also provides challenges as well. Peak times are during the school holidays and at weekends.

It was stated that the forest now looks a lot better than it has ever done and it was recognised by local residents as a real asset and one that is much appreciated and used.

It was agreed that a letter of support should be sent to AJ and that any additional support that might be required from the Parish Council in trying to address the issues raised would be available as and when required.

**ACTION: Clerk to write a letter of thanks and support to Adrian Jones.**

**ACTION: Adrian Jones to provide the PC with feedback from his meeting with Cumbria Highways.**

#### **23.18 Public Participation:**

Derek Poate from The Yew Tree Hall informed the meeting that the refurbishment of the toilets in the hall had now been completed and that the next phase of the works, which will cost £12k, would see the refurbishment of the kitchen. £6k has been raised to date and further funding applications have been made. These works will hopefully be completed by the summer. Once the work on the kitchen has been completed the next phase of works will see the decoration of the main hall and the small hall which is expected to cost about £9k. Fund raising for this element of the works has not yet commenced. The management committee of the hall were also thinking about PV panels on the roof of the hall to help with the running costs of the building.

#### **24.18 Introduction to the new Clerk: Mike Milner:**

Mike explained that he would be starting work as the new Clerk to Lorton Parish Council on April 1st and would be liaising closely with both the existing Clerk and the Chair of the Council before that date. He currently is the Clerk to three Parish Councils, these being Lowca, Outerside & Allerby and Buttermere. He is also taking over the Clerks role at Loweswater so eventually he will be Clerk to five Parish Councils. He had discussed with the Chief officer at CALC the idea of taking on five parish Councils and she had felt that given his experience he should be able to manage the five. Mike went on to explain that whilst each Clerk had a different way of doing things, Councillors would not notice too many changes to the way the retiring Clerk had undertaken his work. However, there was one area where he would like to bring about a change in the new financial year and that would be to initiate online banking for the Council.

All those present wished Mike well in his new roles.

#### **25.18 Progress Reports:**

##### **A: The Clerk's Progress Report:**

Actions on the Clerk from the previous meeting:

03.18: Clerk to inform ABC of co-option of new Cllr: Done

03.18: Clerk to send new Cllr. all relevant documentation: Done

03.18: Clerk to place Vacancy Notice on notice-boards: Done  
 04.18: Cllr. Annison to make enquiries at ABC re: signage & insurance cover for litter picking:  
 04.18: Clerk to request another visit from the Leaf sweeper: Done  
 04.18: Cllrs to undertake litter picking as and when they are able:  
 04.18: Clerk to write to the Forestry Commission re: parking at Whinlatter: Done  
 04.18: Above issue to be raised by Cllr. Postlethwaite at Police meeting: Done  
 04.18: Clerk to write to holiday cottage providers re: fireworks at New Year: Done  
 04.18: Cllr. Postlethwaite to request information from the Police re: cycling events in the area:  
 04.18: Clerk to inform Mr. Roberts of actions above: Done  
 04.18: Clerk to request the re-seeding of the triangular area: Done  
 04.18: Clerk to write to Karl Melville re: crash barriers: Done see below  
 06.18: Cllrs. Deeks, Edmunds and Young to meet up and report back to March PC re: Neighbourhood Planning: Not done see below  
 07.18: Clerk to inform the LDNPA of the views of the Council: Done  
 09.18: Clerk to report various issues to Cumbria Highways: Done and some confirmations received  
 10.18: Clerk to send out all payments: Done

A list of correspondence received, as below, was read out and duly noted by councillors.

<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>For information</b>	<b>For action</b>
CALC Newsletter February	X	
Report from Allerdale Parishes LDNPA member: Dec & Jan	X	
Croft Barn appeal inspectors ruling	X	
Email from Cumbria Highways re: Crash Barriers (to be assessed)	X	
Letter from ABC giving the go-ahead to co-opt a new Councillor	X	X
Various road closure notices	X	
Invoice from Yew Tree Hall 2017	X	X
Email from John Mcfarlane re: poor signage related to road closures	X	
Letter from CCC Commons registration Office: app to correct register	X	X
Notice of Allerdale 3 tier meeting: Allerdale House 22/03 at 7.00pm	X	

It was agreed that the Council was not in a position to respond to the application to correct the Common Land Register.

**A: Parish Maintenance Report:**

Parish Benches: The Clerk has now been in touch with David Brindle with regards to the invoice for the work done on the benches. This will be presented to the Council when the work has been completed.

Winter maintenance work in the Parish: It was agreed that the Clerk should ask Richard McCree to undertake some additional works in the Parish to be agreed by the Chair.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact Richard McCree.**

**B: Neighbourhood Planning:**

Cllr. Deeks reported that the meeting of the sub-group had had to be postponed because of the bad weather. It was to be re-scheduled shortly and they would report back to the May meeting with their recommendations.

**Neighbourhood Planning sub-group to report back to the May meeting.**

**C: Report from the Borough Councillor:**

Cllr. Annison was not in attendance at the meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact Cllr. Annison with regard to an update on insurance cover for community litter picks.**

**D: The Melbreak Communities Report:**

Cllr. Postlethwaite reported that the group had recently received an award of £1k from the Cumbria County Council reducing waste fund. This money was going to be used to deliver a series of workshops which intended to show people how to reduce clothing waste. Cllr. Poate reported that the Coffee Mornings were continuing to be very successful and the next one is to be held on the 17th March by Lorton Garden Club.

The Melbreak Communities AGM is to be held on May 15th.

**E: Centenary of the end of WW1:**

The Chair asked those present if they felt that the parish Council should commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. A number of ideas were discussed, some of which Cllrs. Young and Edmunds are to discuss with members of the History Society and report back to the May meeting.

**ACTION: Cllrs. Young and Edmunds to report back to the May meeting.**

**26.18 Lorton School Adventure Playground:**

The Chair reported that Olivia Harrison, the Head teacher of Lorton School was unwell and therefore unable to attend the meeting. However, the Chair had met with the Head and duly reported back to those present.

Whilst fund-raising is continuing for the new adventure playground there seems to be a change of heart with regard to where the new equipment will be placed and the Head teacher is now considering placing the new equipment where the old equipment currently is, i.e. in the school playground rather than on the Parish Field. There seems to be a number of reasons for this change of heart and these include the move of the school to Academy status, under the auspices of The Good Shepherd Academy Trust, the cost of removing the swings from the Parish Field and the fall in pupil numbers over the last year. The head teacher was keen to find out what the views of the Parish Council were with regard to the potential change of site for the new adventure playground.

There followed a discussion on the pros and cons of the two sites for the adventure playground and the general consensus was it would be cheaper to site the new equipment in the school yard and that the school should do whatever they felt was most appropriate with regard to the placement of the adventure playground.

**ACTION: The Clerk is to write to the Head Teacher outlining the views of the Council.**

**27.18 Lorton Tennis Club update:**

Cllr. Edmunds informed the meeting that the Tennis Club had recently received some funding that would be put towards the re-surfacing of the main court, though additional funding is still to be sought. The fund-raising activities are part of a wider programme to try and encourage more people to become members and to further develop the Youth Training Programme at the Club. It is important that local people use and support the club.

He went on to state that at a recent meeting of the West Cumbria Tennis Association it had become clear that two local clubs were struggling to retain and recruit members to such an extent that the future of the clubs in question was in some doubt and this in turn would have a negative impact of inter club tennis in West Cumbria should they cease to exist.

However, Lorton Tennis Club was heading in the right direction with membership up and the courts all being well used. Facilities for visitors, including rackets for them to use, were being developed and the club was going to inform local holiday accommodation providers that guests were more than welcome at the club.

### **28.18 Planning:**

There were no new applications to consider.

One application had been dealt with at a special planning meeting held on 15th February:

Ref: 7/2018/2013  
Location: Land adjacent to Rothersyke, Low Lorton CA13 9TB  
Proposal: Local Needs Dwelling (Outline application)

After due consideration Lorton Parish Council agreed to '**Support**' the application for the following reasons:

- The application gives a young family with deep roots in the local area an affordable opportunity to move back to the locality.
- In this instance, the needs of the family should take priority over landscape protection.
- Communities need to develop over time to remain viable.

### **Notice of Grant of Planning Permission:**

7/2017/2317: Terrace Farm High Lorton - extension to existing livestock shed

7/2017/2260: Winder hall Low Lorton - approval of details reserved by condition of planning application

7/2016/2261 condition 1 relating to change of use from hotel to single dwelling house for use as holiday letting

Refusal of Appeal: Land adjacent to Croft Barn Low Lorton- five dwelling houses.

### **29.18 Police Report:**

The Clerk reported that one incident in the area was highlighted for January 2018. This was described on the website as 'Violence and sexual offences' and given as taking place on or near the B5289 in the Lorton area. The current status was given as 'unable to prosecute suspect'.

It was noted that there had been a number of thefts in adjacent parishes during recent weeks, mainly from farms.

Cllr. Postlethwaite and Cllr. Poate had attended the Police Liaison meeting and highlighted a number of local concerns with Claire Parker the local PCSO.

### **30.18 Highways issues:**

The Clerk reported that Cumbria Highways had dealt with most of the previously reported issues with the exception of:

- Flooding along the Hopebeck Road near to the Lorton end of the road. (No quick fix is available for this issue and it will require extensive works to be undertaken)
- Triangle of land at Cross Gates, Lorton left as muddy patch after recent resurfacing now need reinstated as the grassed area that it previously was. (To be reported again)

New concerns raised by Councillors include:

- Refilling of the salt bins in the Parish
- Pot holes along Church Lane, particularly between the Vicarage and the Cockermouth end of the road.

- Pot holes throughout the length of the High Armaside Road

Councillors were not aware of any recent visit from the leaf sweeper so asked the Clerk to request the visit again.

It was noted that there was much unhappiness with the current works being undertaken on the B5292 Cockermouth to Lorton section and the various diversions that people were expected to take.

**ACTION: The Clerk to report the above to Cumbria Highways and request a visit from the leaf sweeper from Allerdale BC.**

**31.18 Finance:**

The Clerk informed the meeting that the balance of the account as given in the most recent bank statement dated 15th February 2018 was £9,620.93p with all the payments agreed at the last meeting having cleared through the account and income received from the Transparency Fund, £350, together with donations, £180, given to support the cost of producing the newsletter.

The Clerk reported that the following payments were outstanding:

i: D. Smith Salary Qtr 4:	£356.50p
ii: HMRC PAYE Qtr 4:	£89.00p
iii: D. Smith Expenses Qtr 4:	£96.00p
iv: The Yew Tree Hall Rent 2017:	£200.00p

All councillors present agreed to these payments.

Taking the above payment into account, the reconciled balance of the PC account as of 7th March 2018 is £8,879.43p.

The Clerk talked Councillors through a draft version of the end of year accounts in which he drew attention to the end of year balance which is predicted to be nearly £9,000, some £3,000, once existing spending commitments have been taken into account, over what it should ideally be. Councillors agreed that they would consider allocating funds to community projects during the coming months.

**ACTION: Clerk to send out all payments.**

**32.18 Reports from other meetings:**

Councillors Postlethwaite and Poate had attended the Police Liaison meeting in Cockermouth as reported above.

**33.18 Items for the next meeting:**

- Future Projects/strategic financial planning
- Spring Newsletter
- Centenary of the end of WW1 (Nov 18)

**34.18 Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 2nd May 2018 at 7.30pm**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_