

## **LORTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

#### **Which commenced with parish council AGM**

For future public record, this parish council meeting was held using the Zoom video conferencing facility. In March 2020 following a pandemic outbreak of Coronavirus, officially named Corvid 19, the UK government had on 23<sup>rd</sup> March announced a national lockdown on UK citizens with far reaching restrictions. One of which was too ban public meetings of more than 2 people and those participants must maintain a social distancing of 2mt between them. The government in early April brought in legislation which permitted local authorities, including parish councils, to meet using a video conferencing facility. The parish clerk studied the options from readily available Skype, Microsoft Team, and others before settling on a paid for monthly subscription using Zoom. This system will continue in use until such time as the government allows the return of public gatherings and meetings in community buildings.

Video link Meeting opened: - The acting chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs, Chris Poate(chair) Peter Deeks, Pam Jaques, Julian Cruickshank, Tanya St. Pierre, Steve Irlam

Cumbria County Councillor and Allerdale District. Neither present via video link

Clerk, Mike Milner. No members of the public had applied to clerk for admittance.

Apologises, Cllr Glenis Postlethwaite (vice-chair), Alan Bowness(CCC), Carmel Bell(ABC)

#### **253.00 Apologises for absence**

253.01 Apologises as noted above.

#### **254.00 To appoint a chairman and a vice-chairman for the coming year.**

254.01 Cllr P J proposed that Cllr C P continue in the chair, Cllr T St. P seconded. Cllr C P confirmed her willingness to serve as chair. Returned as chair unanimously

254.02 Cllr P D proposed that Cllr G P be re-elected as vice chairman seconded Cllr T St. P. Cllr G P had confirmed to clerk happy to continue and was duly elected unanimously.

254.03 As video meeting signing of declaration of office forms not an option. Forms would be signed in the future.

#### **255.00 Declaration of interest.** None

#### **256.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020, as a true record.**

256.01 Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

256.02 As a video meeting chair could not physically sign the true copy. Clerk had confirmed with Calc by email, that with the councillors approval, for the duration of the use of video meetings it was appropriate for clerk to sign all approved minutes pp on chairs behalf. It was resolved that for duration of video meetings that would be acceptable.

**257.00 Standing Order amendment include use of virtual meeting medium.**

257.01 Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting a copy of the amendment that required adding to cover how video meetings would be conducted. He had added the amendment into the section 2 headed General meeting. Councillors resolved to accept the amendment and its insertion into the parish standing orders.

**258.00 Public Participation.**

258.01 Clerk advised there had been no requests from the public seeking access to this particular meeting. That required the link, meeting number, password as per agenda instructions.

258.02 Clerk however could advise that, minute 241.01 refers, he had investigated the barbed wire issue on public footpath 242015. He had confirmed that the use of a barbed "breast wire" was not illegal. He had emailed the member of the public who had raised the issue and they had acknowledged the parish council's prompt attention to the issue and was satisfied with the response provided.

**259.00 Police Matters.**

259.01 Clerk advised that the Cumbria Police website at Area Map option came up with Error 404 code. Obviously due to Corvid 19, crime has drastically dropped, no unnecessary journey instruction, police patrols with power to stop any vehicle resulting in 80% reduction of vehicles on roads. Clerk could report numerous email exchanges with Cockermouth police Insp' and LDNP about walkers vehicles and cyclists. Request to stay at home, stay safe and save the NHS not being observed by small minority.

**260.00 Matters concerning District and County Councillors.** Neither on video link.

**261.00 Planning Applications.**

261.01 The clerk had circulated 7/2020/2113 Broomlands, new orangery extension and pedestrian gate entrance, 7/2020/2101 removal of culvert to create a meandering beck on field on Fellside, to slow flood water to Lorton and ultimately Cockermouth.

261.02 Both applications raised no concerns or objection and clerk to confirm that view to LDNP planning.

**262.00 Receive and approve the parish council accounts for financial year 2019/20. Internal auditors report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statement for the year all to be resolved. Bank reconciliation and variance report.**

262.01 Clerk advised that he had only been advised on evening of Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April that it was acceptable for the parish council's internal auditor, to provide an internal auditor's report based on historical fact of having completed a previous end of year assessment of the manner the parish accounting system had operated plus the auditor had also completed a physical examination of the accounts after September 2019 half year accounting period. Signed documentary evidence of that audit and they had been accepted by council. Minute note 208.01 November 2019 confirms that criteria, 2018/19 auditors report confirms same auditor as 2019/20. All relevant documentation and accounts had been scanned and forwarded to the auditor, plus all ledger files had been provided. All this material on return had been provided to the councillors.

262.02 Certificate of Exemption, AGAR 2019/20 Part 2. This confirms that the parish has neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25k. Inspected by councillors and to be signed by clerk and chair, social distancing meeting to be arranged for wet signature.

262.03 clerk had circulated the signed Annual Internal Audit Report. Internal audit had taken place 11/10/19 and 06/05/20. All boxes correctly ticked, and no issues or recommendations raised.

262.04 Annual Governance Statement. Councillors had read the content of the 9 boxes on the form and at each statement to be ticked Yes box with Cllrs approval. Form then to be receive wet signature by chair and clerk, per 262.02.

262.05 Finally the accounting statement, which had been circulated was approved by councillors and again will be duly receive wet signature as 262.02 by RFO and chair.

262.06 Clerk confirmed that he would make the appropriate returns to the external government auditor, placing necessary document required for the appropriate periods on the parish council website pages. Display in noticeboard would be dictated by government legislation about necessary journey by vehicle.

### **263.00 Parish council renewal, Zurich Insurance**

263.01 Clerk advised that obviously Coronavirus was delaying Zurich renewal certification. However, as the parish is under a 5 year term with Zurich, with no increase, unless Insurance Tax, he was asking that the council approved he pay the renewal on receipt as renewal 1<sup>st</sup> June and next meeting 1<sup>st</sup> July. Do not want insurance to lapse. Resolved that clerk pay Zurich insurance premium on receipt.

### **264.00 Cllr P Deeks, update of proposed maintenance to parish benches for current year.**

264.01 Cllr P D had circulated a list of the parish benches and a proposed work schedule for each individual seat. He estimated that for the 10 seats requiring attention, paint, preservatives, and labour would probably amount to £45 per seat. Councillors resolved that the work is undertaken this summer if possible. Cllr P D to arrange with D B.

264.02 Cllr P J brought up the topic of replacement seats or new ones for other locations. She remarked that she had seen in Northumberland, metal seats which had arms that were fashioned like the famous Bedlington Terrier of that area. New seats for Lorton, with a Herdwick sheep she felt could be a possibility. Concerns expressed about security of such a metal seat, but Cllr P J to investigate the source and price for future reference.

### **265.00 Cllr T St Pierre, update on Lorton Grass Verge project and sign.**

265.01 Cllr T St. P reported that the sign for the verge had been delivered to Lorton and currently in possession of the chair. Available to be viewed by prior arrangement in these social distancing times and public gathering restrictions. However, she was extremely impressed with the finished product from the sign maker. She acknowledged the input of N M who had spent hours designing the item. Clerk to write and acknowledge that contribution and thanks of the parish council. Clerk confirmed £94.26 paid Intpay57 to SC Signs 21/04/20.

265.02 That very afternoon Cllr T St. P had met up with the grounds maintenance contractor for the parish and gone through the revised maintenance schedule she had produced and circulated to councillors. Hopefully the implementation of the new schedule and its procedures plus the installation of the sign would explain the verge wilding project.

### **266.00 Progress reports, clerk**

266.01 Minute 248.01 refers, Air Ambulance £200 paid

266.02 Minute 248.02 Coronavirus has suspended Lancaster Uni traffic survey.

266.03 Initial instalment of precept received 1<sup>st</sup> April, £2861.00

266.04 Minute 248.05 refers, clerk emailed MBC committee detailing why parish would not pay public liability insurance.

266.05 Clerk explained Zoom account set up, £14.39 pcm, split between 5 councils £2.88

266.06 If councillors receive any emails from chair with executivecommittee@ don't open report immediately as Spam.

266.07 Clerk had tackled Allerdale about the costings on street lighting, lights being charged for a 33hour, 24 hour day? Taken up with Calc and thanked Cllr S I for his knowledgeable input.

### **267.00 Lorton Councillors reports.**

267.01 Cllr J C raised the prospect of creating a parish record covering how it coped during the Coronavirus pandemic. Pictures, text, poetry chair to consider involving others and will report back. Cllr C P remarked next addition of newsletter could be starting point.

267.02 Cllr P D raised the issue of key workers and then enquired what happened if clerk was struck down or hit by a bus. Clerk advised if self-isolating no problem over video link and in the case of the bus scenario, he advised what was in place and they would have to consult his wife who was aware of how his study worked. P D pointed out that there were currently only two first responders in the area, but no call out since February 2020, because of the Coronavirus concerns and safety. Cllr P J confirmed she had just applied to become a first responder

267.03 Cllr S I updated on how MBC emergency plan had been adapted for Coronavirus. The telegraph tree and new WhatsApp group. He confirmed the MBC hydro project at Buttermere had reached a stage where they would be seeking further funding for additional feasibility study. A local hotel is likely to take up the power produced, at a discount to their normal provider's cost, but substantially greater than the national grid payment the hydro scheme would receive. Possible car charging point(s) in local car park.

### **268.00 Correspondence.**

268.01 Clerk reported that he had received numerous emails and phone calls from Allerdale, Cumbria CC and other community groups. Relevant emails he had distributed. He had received the Calc annual subscription letter. It was £118.15 for 20/21 up from £111.89. He explained the benefits and assistance he had received from Cal and Nalc over the past few weeks especially resolving Zoom and the Standing Orders and accounts issues.

268.02 Councillors resolved to pay the Calc renewal.

### **269.00 Payments for Approval**

M Milner Intpay58, £172.27, salary April £135.40 exp £36.87

HMRC PAYE Intpay59 Clerks tax £33.80

Calc Intpay60 £118.15. Annual subscription 2020/21

All Payments approved

Meeting closed 8.38pm

### **270.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 at 7.30pm**