

LORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 1st July 2020

Using the Zoom virtual platform format

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

Present: Cllrs, Chris Poate(chair), Glenis Postlethwaite (vice-chair), Peter Deeks, Pam Jaques, Julian Cruickshank, Steve Irlam

Cumbria County Councillor and Allerdale District. Cllr Carmel Bell(Allerdale Borough Council) Clerk, Mike Milner. Plus, Jack Ellerby, Friends of the Lake District, to present talk for agenda item 8 and 5 members of the public had applied to clerk for admittance.

Apologises, Cllr Tanya St. Pierre

The chair noted that J E was present to provide more detail on agenda item 8 and that there were 5 members of the public present, so she moved agenda item 8 to the first topic of the meeting

271.00 Dark Skies Project, Q&A session with Jack Ellerby, Friends of the Lakes.

271.01 J E thanked Lorton for the invitation and acknowledged that the clerk had distributed his briefing notes prior to the meeting. (Copy of note attached at end of minutes) J E spent 10 minutes outlining his project and invited questions. There were questions about establishing an areas base line light, light pollution from Cockermouth and if lights were to be replaced who would foot the final bill.

271.02 At the conclusion of a very informative Q&A session it was agreed that a consultation with the community was important, that the community needed the options explaining properly and that a joint Melbreak Community communication was the probably the best way forward. It was agreed that individuals at the meeting would contact J E and a plan formulated to move the idea forward in the timescale J E had detailed, including funding applications where appropriate.

At the end of the session Chair Cllr C P thanked J E for his attendance and he signed off at 7.58pm. Other members of public signed off, 1 remained.

Chair resumed the meeting at agenda item 1.

272.00 Apologises for absence

272.01 Apologises as noted above.

273.00 Declaration of interest. None

274.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th May 2020, as a true record.

256.01 Proposed P D 2nd S I, resolved to approve the minutes as a true record.

275.00 Public Participation.

275.01 Clerk reported that no reports on actions from last meeting, however pointed out one member of the public remained, and clerk had established the individual had views on agenda items 9 and 11. Chair brought agenda item 9 to the meeting.

276.00 Swimming in the beck from village pound and using adjoining properties land.

276.01 Clerk had received an email from the resident of Bridgeside House in which the resident had raised concerns about the use of the beck by children for swimming, especially a pool area under the bridge and that they also clambered on her wall and rocks on the beck edge and floor, along her property boundary which was her property under Riparian rights. The resident had brought this to the attention of the local police some years ago, but although the police carried out a school visit and explained the dangers, it was an ongoing issue and she wanted to know what the parish council intended to do about it?

276.02 The member of the public M T stated his interest in the topic. It was not children swimming under the bridge or beyond the bridge, he had used that area himself since aged five. However, he had concerns about children going downstream and, on to his land, or on the land on the opposite bank belonging to the parish council's chair. He was happy, if the problem continued and became a major issue, to put up a metre high timber post fence on his land with a small sign advising "private property keep out." He had done a similar exercise by the Yew Tree and that had stopped entry on his land at that point.

276.03 There followed a discussion of what if any action the parish council could take about swimming and the actions of swimmers. The clerk confirmed LDNP encourage wild swimming and historically for generations the village pound had provided access to children from those generations to use the beck. It was agreed that the parish council would in the next issue of the Lorton newsletter highlight the issues raised and children and parents should have regard for residents properties that bordered the beck. It would contact the school about reminding the local children of the use of the beck, but as was pointed out parents and children come from Cockermouth.

276.04 The parish council are not responsible for the actions of the children whether supervised or not by parents. Apart from take the actions in previous note 276.03 they could only contact the original resident who had raised the issue and suggest she consider a small sign advising "private property do not climb on this wall." M T would continue to monitor the problem on his land.

Chair then brought agenda item 11 to the attention of the meeting as next item.

277.00 Consider and approve action and its cost to trees at Lorton pound

277.01 Chair had requested the clerk to circulate a quotation from arborist Precision Tree Services concerning trees that were causing visibility and other issues if they were not attended to. Chair ran through the quote explaining each tree and its location.

277.02 member of the public M T said his interest was in the silver birch tree which was on the list to be reduced in height by 3 to 4 meters. It was close to his property and he pointed out that it had been planted by a former local resident Jeannie Hope, MBE, and he would like to be invited to attend the trimming of that tree. Cllrs agreed that would be very appropriate and they had forgotten who had planted the tree.

277.03 M T then reminded the parish council that perhaps it ought to contact Mike Farrell of the EA as he was responsible for some of the plantation as part of a project undertaken with the local school. That point was noted, and M F would be contacted before any further action. Cllrs though did agree that quotation of £225 from the contractor was very reasonable and his workmanship well acknowledged, therefore they approved the costing and that work should be undertaken at the appropriate time of the year, but subject to the discussions about third party contributions.

M T thanked the parish council for allowing his input and he left the meeting.

Chair resumed the meeting.

278.00 Police Matters.

259.01 Clerk advised that the Cumbria Police website at Area Map option continued with Error 404 code. Cllrs could subscribe to the Cumbria Police Newsletter if they wished.

279.00 Matters concerning District and County Councillors.

279.01 Cllr C B (ABC) was present at the meeting and she reported not a great deal to report, but she had been having regular email correspondence with local MP Trudy Harrison about the traffic issues in the area. She would also raise questions about the footway lighting and how the transfer of cost would be advised by Allerdale BC from general council tax to local parish precept.

280.00 Planning Applications.

280.01 clerk had received and circulated details of 7/2020/2013 3 Wythe Gill Mews, it concerned an appeal about a local occupancy condition stipulated in a S106 document when planning permission granted. Clerk had circulated a note he had prepared on council's behalf to submit to LDNP Planning Department, supporting the individual's request to be granted residency status. Cllrs agreed with the submission.

280.02 7/2020/2152 Lorton Hall, this was an application that concerned a stair lift, which does not require planning permission, but property is Grade 2 listed therefore applicant required for that permission. Clerk advised to confirm council's approval.

280.03 Approval notice received that day for 7/2020/2101 Field to east of Fellside, the removal of gulley and development of enlarged floodplain.

281.00 How Lorton PC responds to complaints or issues raised by residents.

281.01 Clerk read out a note that been submitted by Cllr T S.P, she had requested be read out by clerk in her absence. The note raised issue about the council and how its councillors dealt with complaints raised by residents, through the parish council. Her concerns were raised by councillors reactions to a request for trees to be felled or trimmed, but it was bird nesting time and also an issue with ivy growing on Boon Beck bridge, which as the bridge is Grade 2 listed building, that action without consent is criminal damage. Clerk read out the full note.

281.02 Clerk before inviting Cllrs comments, make some observations. He was aware that during his three years as the clerk, that with the council only meeting alternate months, the chair and councillors would bring items to his attention and advise that they would start actions, with clerk's approval to resolve issues. Everything was brought to clerk's attention.

281.03 In relation to the trees mentioned clerk had noticed the email exchanges, he had noted the comment by Cllr G P that a chainsaw would sort the issue, offering her husband's. Cllr S I had immediately responded "somebody say a chainsaw, I'm there." As Cllr T S.P states she is new to the council, clerk however was aware that Cllr G P is a farmer by profession and very aware of regulations concerning birds, having concerns about UU a year ago netting hedges to stop nesting. Clerk was not surprised by the joking responses to the trees by Cllrs as the chair was seeking a proper professional quote. A quote since received and discussed in these minute notes section 277.00. The ivy was a very professional observation by Cllr T S.P because no member of the council was aware that the bridge was grade 2 listed or officially the property of CCC. Recent repairs by Highway's had not brought about any ownership or listing status issues and when it had been damaged by a milk tanker, the clerk had done all the leg work of obtaining insurance details and quotes and then overseen the repair.

281.04 Clerk concluded that he understood the complaints by Cllr T S.P issues in her professional field and her points were all valid, but he was aware of the "banter" between councillors, that nothing had during his tenure as clerk ever been done illegally, but the ivy could have been a problem.

281.05 Cllrs all were supportive Cllr T S.P, her input with the "wilding" of verges was something they could not have achieved and then tackling the cutting schedule and organising the contractor was a Herculean task. Cllr J C did raise the issue of perhaps the instructions about dealing with public property could be better explained in the Standing Orders, but Cllr P J felt that from her experience on the parish council it was obvious everything was correctly directed via the clerk, with sometimes a quote or contact being made by the chair or councillor, but never direct action without approval. Clerk read out the relevant S/O section and Cllrs agreed that the current system was appropriate, it applied across all English and Welsh parish councils and that thankfully Cllr T S.P had stopped a potential criminal offence by ignorance of the councillors, they would have acted on previous inappropriate precedent, not by lack of procedure.

282.06 Cllr S I was noted to be wearing his lumber jacks shirt at the meeting; however, it was remarked it should be red and black check not green and black.

283.00 July Lorton Newsletter.

283.01 It was agreed all material to the clerk by 24th July. Content to cover use of Zoom for council meetings, how to participate. A Dark Skies update. The transfer of footway lighting costs to parish, but how are Allerdale to promote the change. Article on Boon Beck Bridge and its ivy, plus article on swimming in Beck, update on the verge "wilding." Trees in the pound and of course the chairs notes, including thank you to Lorton Shop.

284.00 Progress reports, clerk.

284.01 Clerk up dated council on his involvement at Buttermere Parish with getting the double yellows repainted, Allerdale enforcement officers now issuing parking tickets, a request for an urban clearway from Lanthwaite through to Gatesgarth. Providing additional 28 day car parking facilities.

284.02 All end of year accounts were now correctly available on the website, the exemption certificate lodged with PKF Littlejohn.

284.03 Clerk had approached Allerdale to clarify street lighting calculations. Establish how council taxpayers will be advised about change of charging to parishes.

284.04 Clerk had written, as requested, to Neville Mills thanking him for his contribution into the verge "wilding" signage.

285.00 Lorton Councillors reports.

285.01 Cllr P D reported that he had been chasing up the remedial work on all the parish seats, plus investigate the latest reported damage to a seat possibly caused by a Highway's mowing machine.

285.02 Chair read out a verge update on behalf of Cllr T S.P the new sign and ropes and posts were in place and locals had made positive comments about the project. A new cutting schedule had been devised and was to be put into action.

285.03 Cllr J C was concerned about the street lighting issues and how the matter would be dealt with by Allerdale with publicity, plus Footway lighting must not be confused with Dark Skies project.

286.00 Correspondence.

286.01 Clerk had received numerous emails about Corvid 19 and Members reports, which where appropriate he had circulated to Cllrs.

286.02 Clerk had received the Zoom charge for 2 months, £14.39 per month, but split between 5 parishes.

286.03 Information Commissioners Office had advised that the parish's Data Registration was due for renewal 4th July, clerk had paid and was in possession of a receipt and a new registration certificate.

286.04 Cllr T S.P had with clerk's agreement purchased new posts and rope for the verge area. She had submitted the invoices for payment, £31.11 and £33.98.

286.05 Clerk had received notice from a communications company of a new Emergency Services antenna at Swinside Plantation by Whinlatter Pass. It would be 25mtr in height and replace the existing 12 mtr antenna. He had forwarded the details to the First Responders.

287.00 Payments for Approval

M Milner Intpay62, £344.79, salary May/June £270.80 exp £73.99

HMRC PAYE Intpay63 Clerks tax £67.60

Cllr Tanya St Pierre Intpay64 £65.09. Verge project new rope and posts

All Payments approved

Meeting closed 9.26pm

288.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 2nd September 2020 at 7.30pm

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DARK SKIES NOTES ON NEXT PAGE.

Cumbria Dark Skies Project – Briefing for Lorton Parish Council 1 July 2020

Light pollution is the outward and upward transmission or reflection of light wasted into the night sky contributing to sky glow and lighting glare.

The three main aims of the Project and associated actions are:

1. *Celebrate and raise awareness of the value of Dark Skies and impacts of light pollution* – giving talks to community groups and organisations, a festival of events is planned for February 2021 (including an event in Lorton with the Cockermouth Astronomical Society), Dark Skies information on our website and regular media communications highlighting relevant issues/latest research.
2. *Preventing more light pollution* – I'm liaising with planners, highways lighting, crime prevent officers and others across the county and have written a lighting policy that will go on our website shortly to try to get better policies in place. We give guidance/comment on planning applications and public projects to try to prevent bad lighting. Do flag up any which concern you if you think we can help where your landscape character would be damaged (we can't comment on everything, so we focus on bigger, more damaging proposals).
3. *Reducing existing levels of light pollution* – the updated website will include a simple home lighting self-assessment and we will promote that with others. The main thing I'm working up is what I've called a Lighting Audit and Action Plan (LAAP) in four communities across Cumbria. I have picked the Melbreak Communities as the more scattered settlement area pilot (it's not been done before to the best of my knowledge). I am seeking funding now for this and would hope to appoint lighting consultants at the beginning of September.

The purpose of the Lighting Audit and Action Plan (LAAP) is to:

- Provide a baseline assessment of external lighting;
- Identify the main contributors to light pollution; and
- Identify priority actions to mitigate the effects of stray/obtrusive light on sky glow.

I would then work alongside a small team of key people from across the four Parishes to approach businesses, organisations and any premises where light pollution was a major issue, and try to fix the problem. I am hoping to secure further funding to pay lighting engineers to do individual assessments as an incentive to these property owners.

Jack Ellerby

Cumbria Dark Skies Project Officer employed by Friends of the Lake District (FLD)