

LORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 6th Jan' 2021.

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), Pam Jaques, Julian Cruickshank, Tanya St Pierre, Peter Deeks, Steve Irlam.

Cumbria County Councillor and Allerdale District. Cllr Alan Bowness (CCC) Carmel Bell (ABC)

Clerk, Mike Milner. Plus 5 members of the public.

Apologises

324.00 Apologises for absence.

324.01 None, full attendance

325.00 Declaration of interest. None

326.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council held on Wednesday 4th Nov' 2020, as a true record.

326.01 Unanimously resolved to approve the minutes as a true record.

Due to a busy agenda and members of the public to make representation at Dark Skies item and Applications for Development, chair advised meeting would start with agenda item 8, then deal with item7 and then resume at item 4.

327.00 Lorton lighting review and Dark Skies project, update since Dark Skies community meeting and response to community questionnaire concerning street lighting.

327.01 This item was opened by Cllr S I who along with Derek Poate had collated the spreadsheets and graphs from the 30% residents response to the questionnaire circulated with the Christmas parish council newsletter. The responses were generally in favour of lighting which could be switched off for part of the night, all recorded a desire for modern LED units rather than current yellow sodium, but as Cllr S I stressed this was not a decision for this evening. He had also produced a list of the 40 current lights in Lorton, location, whether working or not and also current ownership.

327.02 Jack Ellerby, Friends of the Lakes Dark Skies representative then took up the progress report advising that he was having constructive discussions with Allerdale BC and also light unit manufacturer Thorn Lighting about Lorton Parish being used to trial 4 of the new units which are not yet commercially available, so this would be an important development for both the light manufacturer and the user, Allerdale, to assess their suitability and performance in a working environment. There are grants available for the exchange of current units for the new alternatives, 100% cost, however there is a slight stumbling block, the lights have to be owned by the parish council, all Lorton's are either Cumbria County Council or Allerdale Borough Council owned.

327.03 J E explained that the next step should be to decide which lights could be considered for the 4 trial units. This though could only involve proper ENW approved lamp standards, not timber posts or units that attached to buildings. Cllr S I had circulated his list of lights and from that 4 suitable lights could be selected, but one was thought to be for certain should be the recently demolished wooden pole, being replaced by modern approved lamp post, at the end of the YTH ground and Boon Beck bridge. That would leave 3 other units. After discussion it was decided that perhaps 2 units down by the school, as this would demonstrate the safety issue for children and their safety on winter's morning and evenings to and from school. The fourth light should be in a rural setting so that its performance in that situation could be assessed.

327.04 Cllr J C concluded by asking Jack Ellerby what research was being undertaken about solar powered light units? He aired the view that perhaps that was possibly the way forward and that concerns about ongoing running costs could be reduced to just ongoing maintenance. J E would investigate.

At the conclusion of this agenda item chair thanked J E for attending and all those who had created the comprehensive documentation to support the project. J E left virtual meeting.

328.00 Applications for development. New applications, 7/2020/2305 Land adjacent to Meadows Bank, 7/2020/2295 Tenters, 7/2020/2296 Airwave Tower, Whinlatter, 7/2020/2302 Cross Gates. Update on recent applications already considered.

328.01 The first application to consider was 7/2020/2305 and the applicants Chris and Rachel Edmunds were at the virtual meeting accompanied by their agent Peter Winter who stated the reasons for the application's approval in his estimation. He explained it was designed to look like a converted coach house. It was for a local family with historical connections to Lorton, a younger generation who would be supporting the local school. He concluded by stating that currently there had been 28 emails of direct support on the LDNP planning website and one which raised no objection.

328.02 Cllrs questioned P W about parking and Highways views about access. P W advised that the entrance would be set back from the current roadside verge, so physically widening the road and not stopping people opposite as was currently the practice. Highways had not yet responded; they were, due to Covid 19 restricting site visits until an actual application had been received so no available comment from Highways yet.

328.03 Cllr G P asked if the applicants had considered purchasing one of the larger properties being developed at Croft Barn in Low Lorton? P W replied that his sources advised that all 5 properties on the development had potential purchasers names allocated.

328.04 There was an issue about housing units for Lorton for development. As P W pointed out Lorton was part of the northern area of the LDNP planning area and that as an area had a target number of housing units and parishes as individual areas were not allocated a specific housing target. After discussion Cllrs all agreed that the development was an acceptable addition to Lorton and that it would as a consultee be recommending the development. At this point the Edmund's and P W left the virtual meeting.

328.04 7/2020/2295 Tenters, this was a similar application to 7/2020/40 which the parish council had supported, the only change was that the pitched roofs were now to be clad in local slate, not the zinc sheets as per the first proposal. Again, unanimously approved.

328.05 7/2020/2296 Air Wave Tower at Whinlatter. Cllr P J pointed out it was a taller mast than the current emergency services only facility but would be well hidden by the local forest until felling in a few years' time, however modern society dictated that for the emergency service and also modern mobile communication demands this was necessary. Unanimously approved.

328.06 7/2020/2302 Cross Gates. Further to Nov' minute 313.05 the clerk had been provided with photographic evidence of the issue raised by Cllr P D and contacted the planning officer with the councils concerns. This application before the council also demonstrated that there were other changes from the approved planning application.

328.07 Cllrs agreed that the original plans showed for both the house and frontage wall that they should reflect the agricultural character of the nearby stone walls. Also, the front parking area the tarmac apron is a completely different shape, plan and size to the original application and visually has an extremely poor, urban appearance, which could discharge rainwater on to the carriageway. There is no area of stone shillies and soft landscaping is much smaller than originally proposed to assist drainage.

328.07 Clerk to advise LDNP Planning Officer that they do not approve of the changes as they are not as proposed or accepted by the planning officer in his written approval submission.

328.08 clerk confirmed that 7/2020/2251 covering the replacement 3 tier fountain had been approved, 7/2020/2240 Tents had been refused see minute note 328.04 above and that 7/2020/2254 the subdivision of single storey dwelling at Low Swinside had been approved.

328.09 Clerk had been made aware of an application 7/2020/2272 Orchard Cottage which concerned the change of an old S106 requirement that the property should change from being one for local affordable housing to one of local occupancy only. He had contacted the LDNP Planning Officer and the officer had apologised that the council as a mandatory consultees had not been contacted and that the planning officer had advised the applicants that he would only consider up dating to local current conditions, not remove the local affordable criteria.

329.00 Public Participation.

329.00 Derek Poate who had been instrumental in organising the Lorton Winter Wonderland event, advised it had been an amazing success. Excellent local turnout, encouraged by good weather, all attending were also very mindful of social distancing and no public gatherings in groups. There had been a Christmas Tree at Cross Gates road junction and the tube and hole had been capped so it could easily be used for a May Pole or other suitable idea.

329.02 At the end of the day the event had raised £825.00 and as agreed in the programme that was to be split equal between 3 charities, NSPCC, the First Responders and the Calvert Trust the individual cheques for £275 would be distributed shortly.

329.03 Cllr P D on behalf of the First Responders thanked D P for the donation and the support of those who attended.

329.04 Clerk confirmed that as per minute 310.02 the heritage signpost finger had been removed for refurbishment.

330.00 Police Matters.

330.01 Clerk advised that the Cumbria Police website at Area Map option continued with Error 404 code. No further comment.

331.00 Matters concerning District and County Councillors.

331.01 Cllr A B advised that apart from a 50mph speed limit on A595 at Bothel nothing to report. Cllr C B that apart from rubbish collection problems due to icy road conditions nothing to report. Both thanked for attending and both left the meeting.

332.00 Lorton 3 year grass and verge cutting contract for period 2021/23 update.

332.01 The clerk provided the council members with details of the 4 quotes he had obtained for the tender procedure, then the discussions he and Cllr C P and Cllr T St P had undertaken by a Zoom meeting. Cllr T St P had had further discussions with one of the potential contractors as agreed during the Zoom and finally the decision was made that the current contractor would be awarded the contract for the next 3 years. He was neither the cheapest nor the most expensive. Clerk had circulated the agreement that he was to sign with the contractor. It contained a clause for terminating by either party with one month's written notice plus there were stipulations within the agreement about when invoices must be presented for payment.

332.02 Cllr T St P advised how they used an established assessment points system was used along with the simpler direct price comparison. She was convinced that the current contractor had demonstrated that he understood the new schedule after operating it for 2020 and that he was very aware of the need to provide invoices on time and respond to communications. Cllr P J said time would tell.

332.03 Cllr J C was concerned that the parish council had not gone for the cheapest quote which was common practice in his working environment. The clerk was adamant the parish council had followed a very transparent tender procedure and had to consider more than just price, but also best value for the parish's monies. Clerk was prepared to back the procedure without any compunction and as requested would note the minutes that Cllr J C had raised the issue. Clerk to contact contractor and put agreement in place.

333.00 Confirm the Lorton parish precept request for financial year 2021/22

333.01 After a short discussion and based on there can be no village project plans due to Covid 19 restrictions councillors agreed to keep the precept at £5722 for the 2021/22 financial year.

334.00 Whinlatter Road closure and road closure notifications.

334.01 Chair had requested the item about concerns of how details were circulated. Clerk advised that he received the notifications and circulated them to the councillors, Lorton village shop and first responders, but that was the limit to his circulation. He did not think putting a notice in the village noticeboard would be productive.

333.02 Cllr G P stated she would investigate the possibility of publishing them on the Melbreak Communities website.

335.00 Lorton Autumn/Christmas parish newsletter update.

335.01 The next newsletter would have coverage of the lighting and councillors considered community projects such as red squirrel or wildlife surveys the community could be get involved with.

336.00 Lancaster University traffic survey update.

336.01 Clerk reported that at Buttermere the undergraduate from Lancaster Uni had established contact. In the forthcoming Link magazine, there is to be a 500 word article on the traffic survey and also a link to a questionnaire about views on traffic in the area. The hard copy version of the link to also have a copy of the questionnaire inserted.

336.02 All the above was arranged prior to the latest countrywide Covid lockdown.

337.00 Progress reports, clerk.

337.01 The lamp post at the corner of YTH land and Boon Beck bridge has been knocked down by an ENW lorry, to be replaced at ENW expense.

337.02 All tree work has been carried out by Peter Livesey in the Lorton Pound area.

337.03 Clerk had established with Cumbria Highways that provided the Christmas tree at Crossgates was further than 500mm from the kerb at its closest point no further documentation was necessary. It can now become an annual affair without any further reference.

337.04 Lorton parish website material had passed Calc's annual test over Christmas.

337.05 Everything else that clerk had dealt with had been subject to an agenda item.

338.00 Lorton Councillors reports.

338.01 Cllr T St P is keen to establish a parish Biodiversity Action Plan. She will provide greater detail at the next parish council meeting in March and produce an article for the next newsletter to get public involvement and also the local school.

338.02 Cllr P D will continue to follow up the village bench repair schedule but obviously not a bad weather project.

338.03 Cllr J C raised the issue of Hedgerows and them being removed. Cllr T St P advised that they may well be covered by ancient hedgerow status so should not be grubbed out. Cllr J C advised that he could take issue as an individual with the LDNP.

339.00 Correspondence.

339.01 Invoice received from Printpoint Magazine 175/£56 and Dark Skies flyer 175/£15

339.02 Invoice from Precision Tree Services £180.00

339.03 2 months Zoom contribution at £2.88/month £5.76.

339.04 Clerk had circulated an email about the Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill. Cllr J C had already raised the issue with clerk about responding to lobbying emails. Cllr P J had reservations on the email content even though it had come from Calc. She had investigated some of the people involved and they are just self-appointed activists. Clerk to contact Calc on the topic.

337.05 All other important email communications circulated where appropriate.

340.00 Payments for Approval

M Milner Intpay74, £322.96, salary Nov/Dec £293.80 exp £29.16

HMRC PAYE Intpay75 Clerks tax £73.40

Printpoint Intpay76 £71.00 Christmas newsletter and Dark Skies flyers

Precision Tree Services Intpay77, £180, Tree work in Lorton Pound.

All Payments approved

Meeting closed 9.50pm

341.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.30pm