

# Lorton Parish Council

## **Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024, which commenced with parish council AGM.**

Chair opened the meeting 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs, Chris Poate(chair), Glenis Postlethwaite, Peter Deeks (vice-chair), Zindzi Cresswell, Tanya St Pierre. 5 members of the public. Clerk, Mike Milner.

Cumberland Councillor, Jill Perry.

**697.00 Apologies for absence,** Garan Comley.

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

698.01 Current chair, Cllr C P announced that she no longer wished to continue in the position of chair, but she could advise the councillors that the current vice chair Cllr P D had indicated he would be willing to take on the position, if councillors were prepared to elect him. Therefore, Chair C P proposed his nomination, which was seconded by Cllr T St P, chair enquired if there were any further nominations. No other nominations so Cllr P D was unanimously elected by Cllrs present.

698.02 Cllr P D took the position of chair, thanked Cllrs for their support and then asked for nominations for vice chair. Cllr Z C proposed Cllr G P and that was seconded by Cllr T St P, approved unanimously. Clerk then asked both elected Cllrs to sign the declaration of office forms.

698.03 Cllr P D then thanked Cllr C P for her service as a councillor. She had joined the parish council in 2002 and was elected to the chair in May 2009, so she had 15 years in the chair. Cllr P D was pleased to see she was continuing as a councillor, he would appreciate her continued experienced input. At the end of his verbal contribution, councillors loudly applauded Cllr C P.

Chair declared the AGM closed 7.35pm.

## **Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 at Yew Tree Hall, Lorton commencing 7.36 pm.**

Chair opened the meeting 7.36pm

Present: as above

**699.00 Apologies for absence, as 697.00**

**700.00 Declaration of Interest. None**

**701.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council rearranged and held on Wednesday 13th March 2024, as a true record.**

701.01 Councillors unanimously resolved to approve the minutes. Chair signed minutes.

**702.00 Public participation. Approx. 15 mins.**

702.01 No report up date from clerk. One member of the public wished to discuss the interpretation board being attached to the YTH and removal of the Jennings Brewery plaque currently on display. Chair, using his procedural power, advised he would allow participation at the agenda item. No other public comments.

**703.00 Police Matters.**

703.01 clerk had circulated the e-newsletter.

**704.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.**

704.01 Cllr J P announced that the 20mph speed limit across the county had been approved, provided 3 criteria were ALL met. Firstly, the mean limit must be below 24mph, AND secondly outside a school or where there was no public footway, AND thirdly the area must be explained to drivers.

704.02 Cllr J P advised a Climate and Nature Strategy email and questionnaire had been circulated, which clerk confirmed he had distributed to all Cllrs. There was a Carbon and Energy Plan and could people please respond and she asked Cllrs to study the report and complete the questionnaire.

704.03 Clerk had circulated an article from the recent Sunday Times, which explained how Blackpool in Lancashire had dealt with its pothole issues. Cllr J P noted the content, advised that Cumberland had a defined criteria for a pothole, that the county had a budget for repairing potholes and also for resurfacing surfaces. Chair P D noted that a recent hot patching exercise in Lorton opposite the end of Church Lane on the Cockermouth road had after only 6 weeks become again a large pot hole.

704.04 Cllr J P accepted chair's invitation to remain when invited and Cllr Z C would discuss her road closure issues on Whinlatter Pass later in the meeting.

**705.00 Applications for development.** No applications to consider or update reports.

**706.00 Co-option of Cathy Lee to Lorton Parish Council. Clerk has made appropriate enquiries and confirms relevant qualifications are met.**

706.01 Chair introduced the candidate and then Cllr G P proposed her co-option and that was seconded by Cllr T St P, the proposal was unanimously approved. Clerk obtained the signed declaration of office document.

**707.00 Receive and approve the parish council accounts for financial year 2023/24. Internal auditors report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statement for the year all to be resolved. Bank reconciliation and variance report. Documents attached.**

707.01 Clerk had circulated all the necessary documentation prior to the meeting, and he then proceeded to go through each section with the councillors.

707.02 Certificate of Exemption, AGAR 2023/24 Part 2. This confirms that the parish has neither income or expenditure exceeding £25k. Document duly signed by chairman and parish Responsible Finance Officer, the clerk.

707.03 clerk presented the signed Annual Internal Audit Report. Internal audit had taken place 13/10/23 and 20/04/24. All boxes correctly ticked, and no issues or recommendations raised.

707.04 Annual Governance Statement. RFO read out the content of the 9 boxes on the form and at each statement ticked the Yes box with Cllrs approval. Form then duly signed by chair and clerk.

707.05 Finally the accounting statement, which had been circulated was approved by councillors and duly signed by RFO and chairman.

707.06 Clerk confirmed that he would make the appropriate returns to the external government auditor, put necessary document required in the village noticeboard for the appropriate period and ensure they are displayed on the parish council website pages.

**708.00 Interpretation Boards, official unveiling ceremony details, guests and associated matters, site clear up. Ceremony planned for 17<sup>th</sup> May at 11am at Yew Tree Hall, History Board before moving to Low Lorton by bus shelter Wildlife Interpretation Board.**

708.01 Cllr T St P confirmed that the Wildlife Panel on a lectern was to be installed by the Low Lorton bus shelter and the History Panel was to be attached to the YTH, in the position currently occupied by the Jennings Brewery plaque. The two panels and installation kits were due within the next few days and Cllr T St P was impressed with all the local individuals who had contributed to finished products. There was also a local builder to install the boards and Cllr T St P had written to all relevant contributors plus funders and other local dignitaries inviting them to attend on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May, initially at 11am at YTH for the start of the unveiling ceremony and then everyone would move down to the Low Lorton bus shelter, for the unveiling of the second board.

708.02 At this point there was a discussion, as permitted earlier by the chair, with representatives of the YTH committee about the removal and relocation of that Jennings plaque, suitably resolved.

708.03 The commissioned "Local History Booklets" had been delivered and were now for sale in the local shop at £3 each. All the proceeds from the booklets would benefit the shop, parish council was not seeking reimbursement for printing the booklets, from the sales income. The boards both have QR codes which can be scanned by a mobile phone, to provide those who did so, with important local information of both boards.

708.04 Clerk and Cllr T St P had organised new verge signs from the Heritage funding, which was all built into the application wording of monies use. New stiles had been installed around the village and any surplus underspend could be used for plant funding around the village.

708.05 Chair concluded by thanking Cllrs T St P and C P for their tremendous amount of individual work to see the project completed and also acknowledged the huge contribution by former Cllr Pam Jaques who initially started the heritage funding ball rolling and obtained the funders commitment.

**709.00 Update of circulated Lorton questionnaire with Easter newsletter. Numbers returned and initial observations. Detailed analysis July meeting.**

709.01 Cllr Z C provided a brief update of the response to the questionnaire circulated with the Easter village magazine, fuller details and breakdown would be provided at the July parish council meeting and then in the July Summer magazine.

709.02 Cllr Z C advised that there had been 36 paper questionnaire submissions and 27 using the online QR code link. Interestingly she noted that 8 submissions were from 2<sup>nd</sup> home owners.

**710.00 Clerk to update on Fibrus broadband and UU Crummock Weir positions.**

710.01 clerk advised the item was to keep it on the agenda and in everyone's minds. The local Fibrus broadband installation was progressing well across the Melbreak valley, however it was evident that if people used the post code checker, that was not correctly advising all properties true status. White flagged properties, broadband supply guaranteed and grey properties, no supply were getting incorrectly defined. The issues have been pointed out to Fibrus.

710.02 UU have still not submitted a planning application, anticipated in June, but they are currently doing further investigative works in the weir area and until that is completed no application anticipated.

**711.00 Parish Insurance renewal, Zurich Insurance.**

711.01 Clerk confirmed it was the annual parish council renewal time. Zurich had advised the renewal premium for this year was £263.11 including insurance premium tax. He confirmed that Cllr G P had raised a question about the table tennis table in the parish field as it was not shown as a parish asset. He advised that the table had been provided by external funding not parish funds, so although not a parish asset he had actually had it included on the policy since installation. Currently valued for insurance purposes at £2740.50. It was unanimously resolved to accept the premium.

**712.00 Summer Parish magazine content, publication schedule.**

712.01 Cllr C P pointed out that more residents were required to help distribute the magazine. Chair finalised the final copy date to the clerk as Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July, the school summer holiday commences the following Friday, so distribution aiming for Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>. Clerk would contact the printer to confirm the tight turnround schedule.

712.02 content was decided as; usual thumbnail penned bit on new Cllr, survey details, new board installation ceremony, a piece from the school and if possible, a list of upcoming community events.

**713.00 Progress reports, clerk.**

713.01 the verge spikes, minute 688.01, have been ordered at £34.80p each, a dozen ordered. As soon as ready for collection clerk to collect and deliver to Cllr T St P. Similar spikes for Cumbria Wildlife Trust were £74.00 each.

713.02 clerk had found parish copy of Tennis Court lease, minute 683.02 refers, in box of documents since his recent house move. It was not missing pages just the top of page 2 and likewise page 3. Chair advised that Tennis Club approaching Cockermouth solicitor for a replacement copy of full lease.

713.03 Rubbish bin repositioned from right hand side of Low Lorton bus shelter to the left to accommodate the new Interpretation board.

713.04 clerk supplied with copy of article for the Link from Alan Baker, concerning Fibrus position.

**714.00 Lorton Parish councillors' reports.**

714.01 Cllr Z C has been involved with a local WhatsApp group exchange about the closure of Whinlatter pass just the other side of the visitor centre, for 20 weeks from 4.30am to 9.30am Monday to Friday. Highways had maintained that parish councils involved had been advised, but clerk had finally received a written statement to confirm the parish council had never been advised. Cllr Z C wanted Cllr J P (CC) to intervene and get the closure stopped by 8.30 am. She provided numerous facts about increased milage, that cost, time involved and that Forestry Commission had not even entered into negotiations, it was a take it or leave it position.

714.02 clerk had received in the past couple of days 2 emails from Forestry Commission area manager which he had circulated to all Cllrs and as Cllr Z C was explaining the situation, he forwarded to Cllr J P. He advised all, that he had agreed with chair Cllr P D that evening to invite the author of the Forestry Commission emails to the 3<sup>rd</sup> July meeting.

714.03 Cllr T St P advised that the grass verges had been cut by contractor Bigfoot.

714.04 Chair Cllr P D advised he was updating parish bench images and schedule and would investigate getting them refurbished by contractors. Report next meeting.

**715.00 Correspondence.**

- 715.01 Quotation received from Door 6 Ltd for two new 4' gates and post, which had that day become an invoice for payment for work completed. £1389.60 inc VAT.
- 715.02 Invoice rec'd from Fitzpatrick Woolmer for Lectern, £1359.00. Funding from national Heritage therefore paid as agreed at March meeting.
- 715.03 Invoice rec'd from Printpoint for Easter newsletter and also 225 questionnaire forms, £83.00 and £100. Invoice paid by end of March to clear end of year accounts.
- 715.04 Newsletter from Peter Walter LDNP North Area representative.
- 715.05 invoice rec'd from Spinnaker Print for £322, charge for Lorton History booklets 300 off.
- 715.06 Exchange of emails with Cllr Z C about Whinlatter closure already discussed 714.01.
- 715.07 annual subscription from Calc received, £162.32 for 2024/25. There are 219 registered electors.
- 715.08 Invoice received yesterday from Bigfoot £242.50p as per contract price and copy of insurance, waste removal certificate and also his signed new three-year contract.
- 715.09 clerk had been handed that evening a letter from local resident, original to Cllr Z C as it refers to the questionnaire and Cllr C P would respond as addressed to her personally.
- 715.10 invoice from Simone Morgan internal auditor £30 for year-end audit.
- 715.11 Invoice from Chrissie Baker £600.00 art work on wildlife board.

**716.00 Payments for approval.**

- M Milner Intpay196, £232.20, salary April £185.80.
  - HMRC PAYE Intpay197, Clerks tax £46.40, April.
  - HSBC bank charges D/D for April £8.00
  - M Milner Intpay 198, £312.48, Salary May £223.04, Expenses £89.44.
  - HMRC PAYE, Intpay 199, £55.60, clerk's May PAYE.
  - Spinnaker Print Ltd, Intpay 200, 300 History booklets.
  - Chrissie Baker, Intpay 201, £600.00 wildlife art work on Interpretation board.
  - Calc annual subscription, Intpay 202, £162.32, 2024/25 subscription.
  - Harvey Davidson, Bigfoot, Intpay 203, £242.50, April grass contract.
  - Door 6 Ltd, Interpay 204, £1389.60, 2 new 4' gates and posts plus installation.
  - Zurich Insurance Intpay 205, £263.11, annual insurance renewal.
  - Simone Morgan, Intpay 206, £30.00 end of year audit fee.
  - Direct charge by HSBC £8 monthly account charge May 2024.
- All Payments approved.

Meeting closed 8.53pm.

**717.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 at 7.30pm, the meeting will be held in Yew Tree Hall.**