

Buttermere Parish Council

Minutes of the Buttermere Annual Parish Meeting immediately followed by the ordinary parish council meeting held on Tuesday 5th March 2024 in The Old School Room at 7.30pm.

The chairman declared the parish meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: H Fear Davies (chair), L Kyle, K Beard, E Beard (v-chair), R Wilkinson, A McGuire.

Cumberland Unitary Councillor. Not present.

Clerk: Mike Milner. Also, Peter Walter LDNP North Area Representative.

Apologies for absence: Y Kahane (BPC), J Perry Cumberland Unitary Cllr.

414.00 Apologies. As noted above.

415.00 The chair had circulated her annual report prior to the meeting and was taken as read. No other organisation in attendance to make a report, chair closed the Parish meeting. (The Chair's report can be found after these minutes.)

Parish meeting closed at 7.32pm.

416.00 The chair declared the parish council meeting open at 7.32pm.

417.00 Apologies for absence as recorded above.

418.00 Declaration of Interest. None.

419.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Buttermere parish council meeting held on Tuesday 5th December 2023 as a true record.

419.01 Minutes were approved by councillors present and duly signed.

The chair then used her authority to next deal with agenda item 9 as Peter Walter had been invited to the meeting to update council on proposals for the current holiday season.

420.00 Visitor management and Buttermere toilet charging, cash/card.

420.01 Head of Visitor Services, Tony Watson, LDNP, had provided an email response to the clerk's enquiries on 2024 visitor season, but P.W was also in attendance to provide extra input and take comments back to LDNP. Buttermere car parking charges not to increase, unlike other areas of the National Park, because the acute parking problems could be exacerbated if visitors chose not to use the local parking facilities.

420.02 Buttermere toilets are a major issue. They were originally provided as a free facility when installed, and are only connected to a septic tank. Because visitors often prefer not to pay, that puts extra pressure on the toilets in hospitality venues, all of which rely on septic tanks which are old, and costly to have emptied. Buttermere public toilets, even though charging users, do not breakeven and LDNP cannot worsen the expenditure issue. Portaloo is a very expensive option and not financially sound idea. It was agreed to ask Cumberland for funding towards cleaning, through the Lakes to Sea Community Panel, Cumb Cllr JP has said there is funding for community projects, and Cllr KB had been to a presentation about that recently.

420.03 PW touched on parking and stated he would promote additional pop-up parking because that did relieve the position at peak periods. Pop-up parking owners could not generally stagger their facilities as one week-end could be excellent weather and if wet no visitors, so no income.

420.04 PW confirmed there were more LDNP wardens for this year and their contracts allowed for more flexibility in their tasks they can perform. At LDNP visitor management meetings, there are now representatives of the Highways management team, so they are more involved with the issues. The long-term challenge is to get folk out of their cars and using public transport. There are more shuttle buses this coming season, timetables are now available.

420.05 PW advised that signage could be provided for pop-up parking, Cllrs did ask that better signage was made available for the public toilets. That may well drive traffic to them and boost income for the NP, and remove the extra demand being placed on commercial businesses. Chair thanked PW for his attendance and he left the meeting at 7.59pm and chair returned to original agenda layout.

420.06 PW was unable to comment on whether the NT intended to provide extra parking for the bluebell season this year. Clerk to contact the NT to ascertain.

421.00 Public participation, no members of the public present.

422.00 Police Matters. As normal clerk had circulated the relevant police e newsletter, when he received it.

423.00 Applications for development.

423.01 clerk updated on Cornhow 7/2023/2224 the parish council had made no recommendation and the planning officer has made no decision yet. The Honister Slate Mines Zip wire 7/2023/2286, majority of Cllrs were opposed so clerk had submitted an objection on behalf of the council, circulated to all Cllrs. No decision as yet. (*Since the meeting and before these minutes being written up, LDNP Planning committee have arranged a site visit for Wednesday 13th March at 11am, inviting a parish council representative. Clerk to attend in that capacity.*) At Croft House Farm 7/2023/2262 infill roof between barns approved. Finally, the mobile phone transmission mast at Gatesgarth, 7/2022/2312, which was dismissed by LDNP Planning and subsequently appealed by EE, clerk advised that the inspector visited the site on 19/12/2023 and on 18/1/2024 rejected the appeal and upheld the LDNP Planning decision to refuse planning approval.

424.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.

424.01 clerk had received a written report, in her absence, from Cllr J P and circulated it prior to the meeting.

425.00 clerk's salary revision and salary arrears, revised contract.

425.01 clerk explained that his last salary increase was in September 2022, which was for delayed period covering 2020/21 due to Covid 19, rate then agreed at all parishes he clerked for was £13.48/hr. He had noticed over Christmas 2023 on the CALC website that NALC had finally on 6th Nov' 2023 agreed a new pay scale for his level £15.48/hr and back dated to 1st April 2023. Clerk was not seeking any arrears for 2022, but current rate from April 2023. Cllrs resolved to that parish council would accept that hourly rate from April 2023.

425.02 Clerk thanked the councillors for their continued support.

426.00 High Speed Broadband update, grey areas of supply.

426.01 Fibus before the December meeting provided a provisional list of properties in Buttermere that can expect FTTP. There are properties that are going to be in grey areas of no supply to finalise the definite list of have and have nots, so until that is finalised, CC cannot take any definite plans to provide alternative options to provide the supply facility, , but they are looking into potential solutions.

427.00 Crummock Water UU weir removal latest position, planning application expected.

427.01 Chair reported that all that was been awaited now was the actual planning application with its associated documentation. That documentation will be numerous and will take the planning office some considerable time to put on their website. Therefore, the UU team will provide all the documentations directly to Buttermere parish council. Clerk confirmed that the planning officer had finally provided information about the criteria on which the planning application will be considered; this will be circulated to councillors when the planning application comes to be considered by them.

428.00 Progress Reports. Clerk.

428.01 Precept request had been submitted as per minute 406.01, £2900.

428.02 Minute 407.02 the HSBC Bank mandate status. Clerk had not actioned yet as he was experiencing serious communication problems with HSBC staff after completing such online requests at other parishes. Once he had resolved those demands he would resolve the Buttermere additions.

428.03 Parish Council vacancy, a brief discussion and chair to approach an individual recommended and supported by all Cllrs present.

428.04 clerk had requested the road sweeper for the leaves E1/178008 8th December. He assumed it had attended. No Cllr confirmation.

428.05 At last parish council meeting Old School Room was very cold, clerk had established that heating was switched on at 2pm. Room committee advised of heating problem.

428.06 clerk had been in contact with Friends of the Lakes, Dark Skies project leader, Jack Ellerby, about Buttermere Court Hotel lighting. He had visited twice, but made no progress.

428.07 Melbreak Community website, which hosts the 4 parishes content in Melbreak Valley requires an update. Clerk was aware no web hosting charges paid by the parishes for the service. He was proposing that all 4 parishes contribute £50 per annum to the running cost. All other parishes had agreed, so clerk was requesting that Buttermere resolved to support the £50 web hosting cost.

428.08 clerk explained that it was a legal requirement to have a specific website, which displayed, agendas, minutes and annual accounts plus other documents. At other parishes these charges could be £100 per annum, plus clerk's time at Melbreak all clerk did was supply the material and Melbreak did all the behind-the-scenes updating work. Cllrs resolved to pay the annual £50 charge.

429.00 Councillors reports.

429.01 Cllrs A M and R W were concerned about the growth on the gorse from Lanthwaite down to Buttermere and then out the other side towards Gatesgarth. Clerk would make a request to National Trust as according to Cllrs it was NT land and responsibility.

430.00 Correspondence.

430.01 clerk had circulated all e newsletters from North Area Representative, Peter Walter.
430.02 circulated the Friends of the Lakes e Postcards.
430.03 finally received, 17th Jan 2024, response from the planning officer about criteria that will apply when assessing the weir’s removal.
430.04 clerk had circulated details of a Melbreak Communities Curlew project, requesting support and a named representative. On that basis Cllrs did not feel able to support the project.

431.00 Payments for approval.

Intpay110, M Milner, £107.80, salary January £107.80. No expenses.
Intpay111, HMRC, PAYE, £27.00 January.
January HSBC account charge £8.00.
Clerk’s salary calculation for Feb payment after 5th March salary increase.
New hourly rate £15.48, increase of £2/hr from 2021 rate. Arrears 10 hours per month April 2023 to January 2024 is 10 months at 10 hours per month, 100 hours at £2 equals £200 arrears. February 10 hours at £15.48 = £154.80, total February payment gross £354.80.
Intpay112, M Milner, £284.00, 10 months arrears and Feb salary.
Intpay 113, HMRC PAYE, ££70.80. 10 months arrears plus Feb salary.
February HSBC account charge £8.00
Intpay 114, M Milner, £164.40, salary March £123.80, Exp’ £30.60.
Intpay 115, HMRC PAYE, £31.00 March salary
Intpay 116, Melbreak Communities, £50.00 2024 web hosting charge
March HSBC account charge £8.00.

All approved

432.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 28th May 2024, 7.30pm, at Old School Room, Buttermere.

Meeting closed 20.32