

Lorton Parish Council

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd July 2024.

Chair opened the meeting 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs, Peter Deeks (chair), Glenis Postlethwaite, (vice-chair), Zindzi Cresswell, Tanya St Pierre, Chris Poate, Garan Comley, Cathy Lee. 3 members of the public.

Clerk, Mike Milner.

Cumberland Councillor, Jill Perry.

718.00 Apologies for absence. None.

719.00 Declaration of Interest. None

720.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council and the minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday 1st May 2024, as a true record.

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

721.00 Public participation. Approx. 15 mins.

721.01 Chair confirmed that members of the public could state their comments at appropriate agenda item, if necessary.

722.00 Police Matters.

722.01 clerk had circulated the e-newsletter.

723.00 Applications for development.

723.01 clerk confirmed that there had been no new applications to consider, however he had 3 confirmations of approval. 7/2024/2096 Birkett Cottage, 7/2024/2096 Lambfold and finally 7/2024/2107, land north of Croft Barn, retrospective approval of landscape for access, parking and landscaping.

724.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.

724.01 CC had completed a housing needs survey. Funding was available for community groups, appropriately licensed, to assist with food production, but now can be used towards pollination projects. Did communities have spare land for allotments? Cllr J P advised that she had wrongly stated in the past that parish councils could not apply for funding, however they can apply provided they match fund.

724.02 chair asked about the 20mph criteria, Cllr J P advised she had provided the criteria leaflet and clerk confirmed that Cllr C P had received and circulated. Cllr J P thanked for attending by chair and invited to remain, which she accepted.

725.00 report on the unveiling ceremonies of both Interpretation Boards on 17th May 2024 and confirmation of funding status for the community project.

725.01 chair confirmed an excellent event at both locations, YTH and at Low Lorton. All present were impressed with the boards and content. Chair had provided both a press release and done a TV interview, but TV interview had apparently not aired.

725.02 Cllr T St P was just awaiting a confirmation figure concerning the installation of the grass verge signs and then she would spend the balance on appropriate plants for the grass verges.

726.00 Whinlatter Pass, early morning road closure issues. No Forestry Commission representative.

726.01 clerk had received various correspondence from the Forestry Commission, North Area Forester, Gareth Browning. Since the project had started the local team had applied 2 windows of traffic flow, 8am and 8.30am for locals going towards Keswick. Work had stopped as a buzzard family had hatched a chick, but that was now fledged and work to resume 8th July.

726.02 the issue of daylight hours as per official dawn and dusk had been explained by Forest Commission, the team were governed by availability of safe lighting conditions to operate power tools and machinery, not official daily daylight hours. The current situation would be made available to residents by use of noticeboards, shop and next parish magazine.

727.00 Discuss the initial assessment of results of the Lorton Questionnaire, how to move the project forward and advise the local residents. Initial update for circulation, attached.

727.01 clerk had circulated a copy of a proposed 2-page flyer for insertion in the next newsletter and the comprehensive 20 plus page survey response document. There was a discussion about the flyer and its presentation and content, which resulted in Cllr Z C requested to create another version of the flyer as suggested by Cllrs.

727.02 the main lengthy document would be made available on the Melbreak Community website. There would be an item in the next newsletter advising residents of the links to see the results and the order the parish council would prioritise the suggestions and comments provided in the survey questionnaire.

728.00 Parking issues, in Lorton village, raised by a recent wide load and inconsiderate parking brought to the parish council's attention. What action and relevant agencies should council involve?

728.01 parking problems are not a parish council responsibility, Cumberland Council are responsible for enforcement of the various by-laws, or the police will respond to obstruction issues. The chair had over the past week had conversations with local area police officers and the local officers would on their rounds now call in Lorton and establish problem areas and issues. They will either have a quiet word with vehicle owners and/or ticket if appropriate.

728.02 the next newsletter would again highlight the issues, especially parking on pavements in High Lorton and lack of consequential access for pedestrians, wheelchair users and pushchairs.

729.00 Parish verge maintenance and cut visibility strips.

729.01 the chair brought this item up the agenda list as he felt other items needed to be grouped together. Cllr T St P confirmed that the contractor Bigfoot was cutting the verges, there might be some question about his tape measures width, but strips were being cut.

730.00 Wildlife area in the parish field for school involvement, requested by school children.

730.01 Cllr C P had brought to the parish council's attention an open letter to them from the school children for a strip of grassed area in the parish field to be left uncut to aid insects, wildlife and wildflower growth. Cllrs P D, T St P and C P had visited the site and agreed it was a possibility and Cllr T St P had provided 3 options and management requirements. However, before any decision was taken the next agenda item needed consideration.

731.00 Parish council to consider a request by school to contribute to grass cutting and field maintenance cost. Currently 100% paid by school.

731.01 clerk had read in a recent email from the school head, that due to budgetary constraints, the school were requesting the parish council to consider a contribution to the cutting costs of the parish field, used by the school for various activities.

731.02 the clerk had emailed the school and established the current cost to the school was £1500 for 14 cuts per season. Before the Cllrs discussed the request clerk pointed out that their current precept was £7356 per annum and that in their budget, grass maintenance was £1455 per annum which was basically 20% of their budget, if they were to agree to accept the full cost it would mean 40% of their budget was grass maintenance and an increase to accommodate the additional monies would have to be raised by a precept increase, starting next year.

731.03 various Cllrs pointed out that historically the arrangement with the school had always been that the school had the use of the playing field for school activities with no charge, provided the school cut the grass. Tree maintenance and hedge laying was the responsibility of the parish council.

731.04 one Cllr raised the issue of the bottom field gate to the playing field being locked, denying access to the public. That could be because school children were out in the field and a safe guarding strategy. Various thoughts were discussed, could the school allow parking in its grounds outside school times to raise additional income. Cllrs finally agreed a discussion with the school was required and chair Cllr P D to make appropriate arrangements.

732.00 Lorton village Conservation status, should parish council resolve to pursue for future generations?

732.01 this issue had been raised due to recent tree felling in the village of well-established trees. Latest Defra legislation, brought into force 23rd May 2024, since the tree felling, would have stopped the action as it is now illegal to fell or trim trees or hedges from 1st March to 31st August(inclusive).

732.02 Cllr T St P had been in contact with the appropriate authority about the action and the best way to prevent the felling of mature trees. A TPO was not quickly obtainable, however perhaps consideration should be made of an "area conservation order." The LDNP authority had pointed out Cockermouth had such an order. Clerk pointed out that he had actually checked the "Cockermouth" conservation order and established it was not, as the email from the authority implied, a blanket order, but it was specific to very defined areas of Cockermouth.

732.03 it was agreed that Cllrs C L and T St P, would look into the matter in much greater detail and perhaps select areas for the parish council to discover. Current TPOs are viewable on current LDNP website.

733.00 Summer Parish Council magazine. Content, contribution date and circulation rota.

733.01 chair ran through with Cllrs who was to write what, clerk already had a couple of contributions. All outstanding articles by Friday evening 12th July. Clerk to drop printed magazines with Cllr C P.

734.00 Receive Lorton Parish Council 2024/25 first quarter accounts.

734.01 clerk had circulated the accounts a few days prior to the meeting. He had received no questions from any Cllrs, so he presented the bank statements confirming opening and closing balances and chair signed bank statement to confirm accounts accepted by all councillors.

735.00 Tennis club lease, copy obtained and can new rent be resolved by councillors?

735.01 chair confirmed that there had not yet been a new written lease presented for signatures, however the tennis club had the matter in hand and it should be forthcoming when drawn up by solicitor's acting for the tennis club. Rent for this year has been paid, at the old rate.

736.00 Progress reports, clerk.

736.01 as minute 713.01 verge spikes had been collected and delivered to Cllr T St P, for contractor to install.

736.02 all audit documents had been forwarded to external auditor's Moore and were on the website and the inspection document was in the parish council noticeboard.

737.00 Councillors reports.

737.01 Cllr G C had a draft format of the parish plan progressing slowly but positively and should be available by the end of the year.

737.02 Cllr G P advised progress on numerous local projects and groups, plus the Melbreak Community website update underway.

737.03 Cllr C L asked if it was OK to use the Lorton Curlew article at Blindbothel, which was confirmed as fine.

737.04 chair Cllr P D had no further notice on parish benches renovation task, the recent newsletter request for volunteers had brought no substantial response at all.

738.00 Correspondence.

738.01 Zurich Insurance had acknowledged insurance premium paid. They had also confirmed that the two new interpretation boards were duly insured and at no extra premium for this current year.

738.02 advised table tennis table in the parish field cleaned and new equipment provided.

738.03 CC Cllr J P had forwarded new 20mph Speed Limit & Zone policy and it had been circulated to all Cllrs.

738.04 Cllr T St P had requested clerk order 20 x 40lt bags of compost from Crocus, £239.80 inc VAT, plus £5.99 delivery making £245.79. Ordered, delivered and paid by clerk.

738.05 Peter Walter, North Area LDNP Cllr, newsletters circulated.

738.05 Plants purchased by Cllr T St P £315.95 for parish, reimbursed by parish council.

738.06 email received about High Mill Footpath new gate, hinge bolts protruding. Contractor had been contacted and responded promptly, hinge bolts trimmed and images provided.

738.07 exchange of emails about recently felled mature trees in Lorton see minute 732.00.

738.08 email from Buttermere chair, Cllr T St P, has established with Natural England that the wetland at Crummock Water behind the wave wall is now a recognised conservation site, served by a local spring and the Bog Myrtle is duly in the conservation area.

738.09 email advising no L in High Lorton approach SLOW sign, Highways advised E1/206083, 22/5/2024 refers. Patched pothole had deleted the "L".

738.10 Balsam bashing, Cllr T St P to contact new officer responsible and advise chair.

738.11 ICO Data Protection registration due for renewal 4th July 2024. Clerk had completed the online process and paid the £40 fee, displayed new certificate.

738.12 thank you email received from Bridgehouse resident for agreed private property signage.

738.13 emails about issue of footway light at Tenters, resolved by Cumberland lighting officer.

738.14 clerk had circulated Lakes Parish Council letter of no confidence in LDNP Authority.

738.15 Bigfoot had supplied grass maintenance invoice for June/July £484.10.

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739.00 Payments for approval.

CTM Signs Intpay 208/A £501.12 new grass verge signs. Paid 20/05/2024
Cllr Tanya At Pierre Intpay209, £315.95 plants paid 14/5/2024
M Milner Intpay210, £185.60, salary June £185.80. paid 27/06/2024
HMRC PAYE Intpay211, Clerks tax £46.40, June. Paid 27/6/2024.
M Milner Intpay 212, £529.79, Salary July £185.60, Expenses £343.99.
HMRC PAYE, Intpay 214, £46.40, clerk's July PAYE.
Cllr C Poate, Intpay 215, £59.70 parish plants
Harvey Davidson, Bigfoot, Intpay 216, £484.10, June/July grass contract.
Direct charge by HSBC £8 monthly account charge July 2024.
All Payments approved.

Meeting closed 9.23pm.

740.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 4th Sept' 2024 at 7.30pm, the meeting will be held in Yew Tree Hall.

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