

Lorton Parish Council

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 6th Nov' 2024

Present: Cllrs Peter Deeks (chair), Glenis Postlethwaite, (vice-chair), Chris Poate, Cathy Lee, Zindzi Cresswell, Tanya St Pierre.

Cumberland Councillor. Cllr Jill Perry.

Clerk, Mike Milner. 3 members of the public.

Apologies, Cllr Garan Comley (LPC).

760.00 Apologies for absence, as noted above.

761.00 Declaration of Interest. none

762.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council held on Wednesday 4th Sept' 2024, as a true record.

762.01 Councillors unanimously resolved to approve the minutes.

763.00 Public participation. Approx. 15 mins.

763.01 Chair confirmed that members of the public could state their comments at appropriate related agenda item.

764.00 Police Matters.

764.01 Clerk had circulated the e-newsletter.

765.00 Applications for development.

765.01 7/2024/2212 Field forming part of Cass How, Cass How, High Lorton, Cockermouth Proposal: Extension to existing shed to add storage for forestry related products/equipment and agricultural machinery. There is no provision for consultation on this type of application.

766.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.

766.01 Cllr JP confirmed monies for distribution to council following the cancellation of HS2 rail link had reached Cumberland. There was a bus consultation document and individuals have until 6 December to respond. She advised that the next network meeting will be 17th January 2025 at the rugby club in Cockermouth. She concluded by advising that there had been a review of public polling stations and the continued use of Yew Tree Hall was under review due to its limited access for individuals with disability. She was advised that before the next election access issues may well have been resolved. The chair thanked her for a contribution and attendance and invited her stay, that invitation was accepted.

767.00 Receive internally audited 6 months parish accounts ending 30/9/2024. Docs circulated prior to the meeting.

767.01 prior to the meeting clerk had circulated the audited six months parish accounts period ended 30th of September 2024. The accounts had been externally audited, councillors raised no queries and unanimously resolved to accept the accounts.

768.00 To resolve to finalise appropriate allocation of funding received by parish council to complete Interpretation Boards and environmental projects undertaken with funding.

768.01 Cllr T St P advised that meeting she had not yet completed the funders form which she would do so within the next few weeks.

She had obtained extra seeds which she had sown also some other plants. Both she and the clerk were able to confirm there had been no underspend on the funding requested to cover the installation of the 2 Interpretation boards or the environmental projects involved. There was a request from the shop for additional history books the parish council had had printed as they have nearly all sold out.

768.02 Cllr C P advised that she still had 100 history booklets and she would organise another supply directly to the shop. The same Cllr confirmed she was holding a substantial stock of compost for future use in the village planters.

769.00 Lorton school use of and responsibility of the school for maintenance of the parish field cutting regime. Use of area(s) of parish field for children's environment projects. Use of part of the parish field as a car park for residents/visitors?

769.01 there was a brief discussion about using a narrow strip of the parish field as the children had written and requested for an environmental project. However, the overriding issue was that currently the school use of parish field at no cost in return for being responsible for the annual grass cutting contract.

769.02 the school were now suffering from budgetary constraints and have requested that the parish council shoulder some of that cost. Cllr CL wondered if the budget restraint was due to the purchase of a school bus? The local bus had stopped running from Cockermouth therefore children from that area could not use school. Cllr ZC advised that the new bus was needed to bring children from Cockermouth to the school, and that the budget for the operation of the bus was separate from the main budget.

769.03 Cllr CP outline the history of the grass verges becoming cut by the parish council and that it was not a case of the parish council taking over any responsibility from Highways department. The chair finally asked Cllrs to indicate by a show of hands if they were in favour of accepting part of the annual cost, which they are all unanimously agreed with. He then asked for a show of hands to establish if a 50 per cent contribution was deemed acceptable. All but one Cllr agreed with that proposal.

769.04 there would have to be further discussions between the school and the chair and two other Cllrs to enable a solution prior to the January meeting of the parish council at which the parish council must agree it's precept figure.

768.05 the clerk raised his concerns about who would be responsible for the placing of the annual contract, paying the contractor and charging the other party for the payment due.

770.00 Parish Plan – update on progress.

770.01 as Cllr GC was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting this agenda item would have to be deferred until January 2025, but that no doubt a draft copy of the parish plan would be circulated prior to that meeting.

771.00 Speed limit in Low Lorton, 20mph in High Lorton. Current situation on enquiries.

771.01 the chair advised noted that two residents had been on speed awareness training, and the trainers had been very adamant that streetlights mean a 30mph limit whether this was signposted or not. The chair advised that he was aware that the clerk had emailed three times since the last meeting asking for highways assistance to confirm that there was a 30 MPH speed limit through the village of Low Lorton, and to ask for gateway signage. Clerk then read the response he had received the day before the meeting. The highways department response implied that the current street lights in the village were footway lights not highway lights. The clerk had responded to Highways quoting a section of the road traffic act pointing out the only reference to footway and highway lighting is made in the act is with reference to ownership, not one differential about which lighting governs the area's speed limit. There had been no response yet and the Cumberland Cllr JP advised she would take up the issue.

771.02 the clerk has email correspondence going back to 2016 on the speed limits issue and the chair asked him to establish a cost of 30 MPH roundels that could be issued to local residents to put on their wheelie bins.

771.03 Cllr CL advised that she had received a request from a resident in High Lorton for a 20 mile an hour zone in that area.

772.00 Lorton parish conservation status project. Report following meeting with LDNP Conservation Officer. Timescale and implication of such a decision, involvement of local appropriate societies and local residents.

772.01 the chair advised the meeting that this agenda item would be covered once the content of the parish plan had been decided.

773.00 Update on Yew Tree Hall renovation or relocation project.

773.01 The Chair noted that he had circulated by email on the afternoon of the meeting the Terms of Reference of the Development Group, the Project Overview, the Engagement Plan, and the minutes of the Development Group meetings of the 4th October, 17th October and 5th November. Councillors pointed out that there had been insufficient time to review these documents, and therefore discussion would be postponed until the next meeting.

773.02 Cllr CL advised that the Chair and she had met with the Lake District National Park Conservation Officer, Rose Lord, to discuss possible improvements too Yew tree Hall and the potential of a Conservation Area in Lorton. Rose Lord was of the opinion that the item of most, perhaps only, historic importance at Yew Tree Hall were its vaults.

773.03 Cllr CL explained that the heritage value of the Hall was an important consideration in terms of the improvement plans, and was critical to unlocking funding from a number of organisations who provide funding for the renovation of Listed buildings. She described the good progress that the Development Team had made, in terms of producing a project plan with a vision statement, set of objectives, a community engagement strategy and numerous working drawings. She explained that the Team now needed professional input from an architect and various surveyors, to move the project through the feasibility stage towards a planning application. An Expression of Interest (EoI) form to seek funding for this work, would be submitted to the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) by Friday. The AHF would ask for a full application to be made if they considered the project eligible for its project viability grant fund. The full application would be made before the deadline of the end of November, with a potential funding approval given at the beginning of January.

773.04 She explained that the AHF is more likely to invest in the project if match funding is provided from both the Yew Tree Hall Committee and Parish Council as it demonstrates serious commitment towards an important community project. She requested £2,000 to be donated to the project from the Parish Council. An equal amount would be sought from Yew tree Hall Committee". The Chair pointed out that a formal proposal for any funding would need to be submitted to the PC for consideration at the next PC meeting, and that we could not even consider such a request without such a proposal.

773.05 the clerk advised that he would seek guidance on the use of money from the parish precept, as the property is neither owned by the parish council nor are the parish council trustees. The chair of Yew Tree Hall committee was a member of the public present and he thanked the parish council for their input and acknowledged that transparency with the public was paramount, to which end there is a coffee morning in the hall on 14th December at which progress of the project will be fully explained to residents attending. There will also be details published in The Link and the PC Newsletter

774.00 Discuss current year's budget, and proposed budget for financial year 2025/26. Documents circulated prior to the meeting. Precept to be resolved at January meeting.

774.01 prior to the meeting the clerk had circulated copies of the audited accounts for the first half year, he had also circulated the current year's budget position and a proposed budget for the year 2025/26. After a brief discussion as the chair noted that until the council had clarified the situation with the grounds contract between the school and the parish council no conclusive discussion about a precept figure could be held.

775.00 Christmas edition of the Lorton newsletter, content and copy date for distribution.

775.01 the chair advised that the content for the Christmas parish council newsletter would contain articles on Yew Tree Hall and its development, parish plan, speed limit, planter tubs, the school grass cutting contract, bird boxes and the maintenance on the parish benches plus of course advising that the parish council now have a vacancy. It was agreed that all of the various material for the newsletter would be provided to the clerk by Wednesday, the 4th of December.

776.00 Councillor training through CALC and likewise for new chairman.

776.01 the chair advised he was to partake in a new chair training course run by Calc, but no Cllrs volunteered for the Cllr training modules, they would consider their positions.

777.00 Progress reports, clerk.

777.01 the clerk had as promised provide Cllr JP with all the details of interpretation boards and the history booklet procedures from conception to the installation for her to forward to another parish council interested in a similar project.

777.02 the clerk had provided highways with the response to the proposed highway changes adjacent to Bridge Side House and also with comments about the additional signage concerning advisory signs about unsuitability for wide loads. Highways department had responded to the email thanking the parish council and those members of the public who attended the meeting for their input and confirmed that Highways would not be implementing any local highway changes. They did however confirm that the warning signs would be installed, but were unable to provide a sign about not following Satnav directions at one the of the junctions requested, due to limited verge space. The clerk had received a lengthy email from the Bridge Side House owner, which he had responded to after discussions with the chair. All Cllrs had been copied in to the various email exchanges.

777.03 the new interpretation board by the bus shelter had suffered from water ingress, a design fault, but the board had been dismantled, cleaned and reassembled with a silicon seal. Now fully water tight.

777.04 the clerk has requested the grass contractor Bigfoot to provide a copy of this new insurance certificate as the current one held has expired.

777.05 the heavy bench purchased to celebrate the 2000 Millenium keeps being moved around the parish field, the chair and a work party will ensure it is fixed to the ground.

777.06 A big thank you to all members of the working party who volunteered their time and services to thoroughly clean the village bus stop. Excellent community spirit.

778.00 Councillors reports.

778.01 the chair thanked Cllr T St P for her service to the community as a parish councillor, she would be standing down from that position after this evening's meeting and he wanted to put on record the excellent contribution to environmental projects undertaken during her tenure. The Cllr thanked him for his comments and advised that she would be more than happy to help out as a volunteer in the future if required.

778.02 Cllr CP brought to the council's attention the landscaping at the property which is referred to, "land south of Lime Tree House". The property has over numerous years been subject to various planning applications and subsequent appeals, now that the building is nearing completion the exterior landscaping is not as agreed with the planning department. The clerk has been provided with various images and Cllrs requested that he take up the matter with the planning department enforcement officer.

778.03 Cllr GP updated on the Melbreak community group and confirmed that the very first Lorton Apple Day had been very successful. Cllrs unanimously acknowledged how delightful the day had been: a real community event.

778.04 the chair advised that he would update the parish bench list so that they can all be repaired, some are in need of quite urgent attention. He would also raise with the school the issue that Cllr ZC had raised about the matting underneath the play equipment in the parish field. Historically the school have undertaken and paid for the annual maintenance inspection and also maintained the equipment.

779.00 Correspondence

779.01 clerk had received an email about a serious RTA on the Thackthwaite road on Wednesday 11th of September. He can only assume that the police may eventually I advise Sustrans.

779.02 Cumberland Council added via used all the payment of the second instalment of the parish precept, it was received 30th of September, £3678.

779.03 an email had raised the issue of who was responsible for the table tennis table in the parish field. He has been advised by Adam Baker that the table tennis group are responsible for replenishing bats and balls. He noted that the bark chippings under the table and where the players stand require topping up, and any contribution by the parish council to the cost would be appreciated.

779.04 the monthly newsletter by Peter Walter the Lake District National Park north area representative had been circulated.

779.05 an email and images were provided to the clerk showing tyre tracks over the grass below Cross Gates crossroads. The vehicle broke one of the verge signs, a replacement has been provided from one of the spare signs held.

779.06 the contractor working on behalf of Fibrus had been in touch seeking a "wayleave" agreement to run a cable ducting in the parish Pound, from the BT manhole cover into the neighbour's land. The clerk established the ducting would be 400mm below ground level and 50mm diameter. After consultation with chair the clerk organised the document and duly signed it.

779.07 Cllr CP had placed an article in the Link concerning two brass plaques which she had removed from damaged seats in the parish field. Ken And Ruth Deas 1924-2009 and 1930-2021, Robbie Woodburn 1918-2003. There has been one response from a lady in Cockermouth that she had thought relations were living in St Austell but she had no accurate contact details.

779.08 at 6.25 PM that evening the clerk had received two grounds maintenance invoices, for the months of September and October from Bigfoot, both £242.05.

780.00 Payments for approval.

M Milner Intpay223, £185.80, salary October paid 23/10/24
HMRC PAYE Intpay224, Clerks tax £46.40, October. Paid 23/10/24.
Paid to conform with HMRC submission calendar
M Milner Intpay 225, £249.79, Salary November £185.60, Expenses £64.19.
HMRC PAYE, Intpay 226, £46.60, clerk's November PAYE.
Cllr Chris Poate, Intpay 227, £63.92, Plants/Bulbs for Lorton planters
Harvey Davidson, Bigfoot, Intpay 228, £242.05, September grass contract.
Harvey Davidson, bigfoot, Intpay 229, £242.05, October grass contract.
Direct charge by HSBC £8 monthly account charge 2 months October and November. 2024.
All Payments approved.

Meeting closed 9.49pm.

781.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 8th Jan' 2025 at 7.30pm, the meeting will be held in Yew Tree Hall.

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