

**Buttermere Parish Council Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 in Croft House Farm Café, Buttermere at 7.30pm.**

The chair declared the meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs H Fear Davies (chair), K Beard, E Beard (vice-chair), G Medd, A McGuire.

Cumberland Councillor, Cllr Jill Perry.

Clerk: Mike Milner. Tony Watson LDNP Head of Visitor Services. Bruce Hardy NT North & West area Lake District Manager.

Also, from Croft House Farm Café, Suzanne Medd, Manager, Buttermere Court Hotel, Tracey Riley, General Manager, Cllr Peter Deeks, Chair Lorton Parish Council, Cllr David Robinson, Chair Loweswater Parish Council and Cllr Peter Walter LDNP North Area Representative.

Apologies. Councillors L Kyle, Y Kahane and invited NT guests, Jane Saxon and Mark Astley.

The chair when opening the meeting thanked Croft House Farm Café management for the use of the venue for the evening due to the difficulties heating and accessing The Old School Room for a night-time meeting at this time of year.

**463.00 Apologies.** As noted above.

**464.00 Declaration of Interest. None**

**465.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Buttermere parish council meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 as a true record.**

465.01 The minutes were approved by councillors present at that meeting and duly signed.

**466.00 Buttermere Parish Council had invited representatives from LDNP Authority and the National Trust, to discuss how visitor management has progressed this summer season based on actions implemented from previous years experiences, feedback assessment and possible changes for 2025 tourist season. Local hospitality business management also invited to the meeting.**

466.01 The chair opened the agenda item by welcoming Tony Watson, Head of Visitor Services and Communications and the Safer Lakes team leader to the meeting as the lead speaker. TW commenced by advising that the new CEO Of the Lake District National Park Gavin Capstick had worked for LDNP for six years and he himself had been in their employ for eight years. TW advised that normally his department had a three-year funding commitment but he explained that this year due to the new government it was what he called "flat cash" as he only had one year's commitment. He explained that visitor numbers were very unpredictable in 2024. He gave the example of Brockhole where the LDNP would expect the takings through the food outlet in July to be £11,000 per day, but one wet day this July it had only taken £400. And in September when the sun shone it actually took £13,000 in one day.

466.02 He then went on to explain that use of social media and especially TikTok created major problems with visitor numbers and their location.

He quoted the local example of the so-called "infinity pools" near Gatesgarth which attracted numbers which would have been unimaginable prior to social media. He also quoted the example in Loweswater at Holme Wood where a rope had been hung from a tree and social media broadcast video of people swinging on the tree, that area then became another unexpected visitor trouble spot in 2024.

466.03 Based on these experiences they were now planning ahead for the next holiday season in 2025. He acknowledged that in the past year there had been a visible feeling of less police being in attendance. Social media posts meant his team, and the National Trust Rangers, had had to deal with more troublesome and significant fly camping issues. One such camp took three days to be cleared up, costing the National Trust several thousand pounds, and although plenty of mobile phone video footage was presented to the police to highlight the issues caused and the abuse, the warden's and rangers had experienced, the Crown Prosecution Service had declined to prosecute those responsible. Teams were routinely having to deal with unpleasant and dangerous waste, excessive fly tipping and damage to trees and surrounding landscape: - certain local areas were now notable for the number of tree stumps where the rest of the tree has been felled by axe.

466.04 Due to the fact that phone video evidence has been shown to be not actionable as far as the CPS are concerned the plan for the coming year is for the visitor management team to engage with higher management of all agencies and get them to attend on an appropriate busy day so that they can see the variety of folk and challenges that are being dealt with on a such days. Both the chair of Buttermere Parish Council and the clerk will ensure that a suitably worded email is addressed to the Police and Crime Commissioner for the county asking him to bring pressure for more police attendance during busy periods and when problems arise. The first date proposed for such an exercise involving all the higher managers is Maundy Thursday in 2025 but only if the weather is good. The reason being if the weather is bad, those attending will not experience the issues caused by high visitor numbers. As a trial for 2025, there will be a visitor management warden in attendance in Buttermere and surrounding area for the entirety of the Easter weekend, so they can be pro-active rather than reactive. A new LDNP ranger is in the process of being appointed, who has significant local knowledge of Loweswater, Buttermere and the surrounding area.

466.05 Just to highlight the problems from this year there is still the residue of 400 summer illegal fly camps to be cleared across the Lake District area and we are already at the start of December. National Park Rangers now all have uniform video cameras

466.06 Chair asked about Bluebell parking for next year around Rannerdale and the meeting was advised that that is a topic for discussion at a meeting this Thursday (unfortunately, as Jane Saxton was unable to attend, she could not update councillors on her current proposals in this respect). Chair advised Bruce Hardy that there was now a mobile phone signal in the Rannerdale area, which might make it possible for the National Trust to run a temporary carpark in their preferred manner. (TW to ascertain more details as to how that new mobile phone signal has become available). Bruce Hardy explained that if the National Trust provide emergency pop up parking, they have to also provide temporary toilets so need to ensure that cost is covered, by parking fees. TW advised that he had been working closely with Cumberland Council Highways department in relation to parking enforcement, and had a regular call with them on a Friday to discuss anticipated enforcement needs and plans for the coming weekend.

466.07 The clerk raised the issue of parking by coaches in the centre of Buttermere village. They spend many hours blocking space in a busy area. The clerk has written to various coach operators after having been supplied with images of their parked vehicles and without exception all his emails have been ignored. The roadway in central Buttermere is not adopted by Highways department, it is the property of NT. The management of the local businesses present confirmed that these large 40 plus seater coaches did not actually provide them with any additional income or footfall. Bruce Hardy confirmed that coaches could park in the quarry that they owned at the entrance to Buttermere but they would be charged £20 per coach.

466.08 The representative from Buttermere Court Hotel asked if the turnstiles in the toilets could be removed and TW advised that they were looking at an alternative solution as they caused access problems. A suggestion was made that more serious no parking signs were installed in Buttermere and other appropriate areas but as TW pointed out they were quickly stolen and if the right material burnt. Tony Watson did ask the question of the local business managers attending had they noticed an increase in theft from their displays over the past year and all of them said that it had not been a problem. He was pleased to hear that but advised that in some areas theft of drinks and food had become a very major issue.

466.09 After a short question and answer session at which all involved agreed that there was a need to get senior police involved to witness the problems on the ground TW advised that he would happily attend the parish council meeting being held at the end of May. At the end of the session, which all agreed had been very informative the chair thanked both TW and BH for coming along to the meeting and she also thanked TW for his generous supply of mince pies and biscuits. She also thanked the two parish council chairs who had attended plus the management of the local businesses for their valuable input. All the visitors left the meeting at 8:30 PM with the exception of councillor JP.

**467.00 Public participation,** no members of the public present.

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

**469.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.**

469.01 Councillor JP asked if any of the councillors or local residents were interested in a wider discussion following the Friends of the Lake District newsletter proposing that the National Park charge an entrance fee to all visitors. None of the councillors present were interested, so the chair said that there was no appetite for such a talk at this time.

469.02 Councillor JP advised that there would be an event on the 17<sup>th</sup> January between 1-3pm at Cockermouth Rugby Club and to discuss ways of moving around Cumbria other than using a car. She also advised that there was a waste review recycling discussion under way and Allerdale Waste Services will be taken back in house by Cumberland Council so that they were comparable business models to that operated at Carlisle and Copeland. She also advised that all plastic that was recycled by the council was actually used in the UK not exported abroad. Domestic Waste Collections are to be moved to a once every two weeks in line with recent legislation and there was a brief discussion about how that would work. Clerk advised that in Carlisle, one week it was general waste and garden waste and then the alternative week was plastic, paper and glass. Cllr JP concluded her round up by saying that there was a second tranche of money for rural bus services and there was an online consultation, the deadline for which had been extended. The chair thanked her for her attendance and invited her to stay for the rest of the meeting, but due to the distance Cllr JP had to travel back home she declined the offer.

**470.00 Applications for development.**

470.01 There had been an application 7/2024/2201 circulated on 1<sup>st</sup> October, concerning Lanthwaite house, Buttermere and its west elevation, Cllrs had not objected and clerk confirmed approval had been granted.

470.02 planning application 7/2023/2224 Corn How, this was a change of approved 7/2021/2235 application, to increase the number of cabins from 3 to 6 in number on site. LDNP planning Department have refused the application.

470.03 clerk was just updating on 7/2023/2286 Honister Slate Mine, that has still not been decided, but clerk noted on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 3 additional documents submitted by the applicant.

470.04 Not a planning application at this stage but an email advising that it was proposed to submit a planning application for a 20m mobile phone mast for EE at Burtness Wood South. The clerk had circulated the drgs and site plans. Not all Cllrs had had the opportunity to review, so chair asked Cllrs to let Clerk know within a week if they had any specific comments to make.

**475.00 Receive and approve the parish council accounts for 6 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. All documents distributed prior to the meeting.**

475.01 Clerk had circulated the accounts prior to the meeting and no questions had been raised. The accounts had been externally audited as per the terms of the parish council's Finance Code. Councillors unanimously resolved to approve the accounts.

**476.00 Receive an update on budget for financial year 2024/25 and consider the budget presented for 25/26. Resolve the precept figure for 2025/26. Budget spreadsheet and budget notes to be circulated to Cllrs. Budget submission required Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to Cumberland Council.**

476.01 Before Cllrs discussed and resolved the precept figure, the clerk had now established the latest annual salary awards for clerks and his current rate was £15.48/hr which was to rise by 62p/hr to £16.10/hr. These were the figures in his latest budget proposal document circulated that afternoon. Therefore, he required agreement that his salary just be increased in line with the SLCC approved figures for SCP level 19. There was a discussion about the clerk's salary, he is the parish council's largest annual cost. Cllrs resolved to agree the proposed salary increase. The clerk would be paid at the old rate this month as the HMRC PAYE software had been used to calculate at the current rate. In January, clerk to increase the pay rate and pay outstanding arrears to April 2024, the date the new salary deal is approved from.

476.02 Chair Cllr H F-D then raised the issue of fixing the new precept rate, as all Cllrs had pointed out, a new laptop had been purchased, therefore as the parish has no other commitments apart from clerk and laptop and its annual insurance and hall hire, plus Calc subscription, carrying a reserve of 1 year's £3400 precept is not really appropriate. The clerk said he ideally therefore would like to see a reserve of £1200, and Cllrs unanimously agreed to set a precept figure for this year of £3400, clerk to make the appropriate submission to Cumberland.

**477.00 Crummock Water weir removal, update on current position, if any.**

477.01 Chair was able to advise that the latest update from UU team concerning the weir removal, was that they would be making the planning application in early 2025. It was just a case of wait and see what January brought.

**478.00 Telecommunication issues, landline and mobile.**

478.01 Chair had seen recent correspondence from Fibrus, which confirms no proposed high-speed link to Rannerdale properties. Chair and Clerk to draft a letter to Connecting Cumbria, due to this, and ongoing problems with the existing infrastructure.

**479.00 Progress Reports, clerk.**

479.01 Reference minute report 462.01, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cumbria Celebration at Carlisle Cathedral on 4<sup>th</sup> October, the parish sent no official representation as none of those who might have attended were free on that date.

479.02 The clerk has twice emailed the contact provided by Cllr RW about the useable mobile signal and how and who it was responsible, but had received no acknowledgement or response.

479.03 clerk on 25<sup>th</sup> September had a prearranged phone call with an HSBC representative, regarding the council's Safeguarding review. After the phone conversation clerk had provided the documents requested by the bank representative. Clerk has an email acknowledging receipt of those documents dated 25<sup>th</sup> September timed at 22.45hrs.

**480.00 Councillors reports.**

480.01 chair advised that she and Cllr K B had attended the Peter Walter, LDNP North Area Representatives meeting on 11 September about priorities for the LDNPA, and then the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November to meet the new CEO of LDNPA Gavin Capstick, both had been interesting in their respective ways. She also advised that there was a plan concerning Yew Tree Hall and its redevelopment and that fuller details were available in The Link magazine, available on Melbreak Community website, and at a coffee morning on 14 December.

**481.00 Correspondence.**

481.01 clerk had received from Democratic Services at Cumberland Council, a request for Pecuniary declaration forms for Cllrs LK and GM, which he had posted the Cllrs hard copies of for completion, both 10-page documents received that evening and he would drop off at Civic Centre in Carlisle.

481.02 Clerk had received the annual letter from GNAAS requesting a donation. The parish do not make such a contribution.

481.03 clerk had received confirmation of transfer of 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the precept, receipt of which had been evident in first half year's accounts.

481.04 clerk had received an offer of an oil painting featuring St John's at Buttermere. As parish council have no building, but Old School Room their meeting place was part of Loweswater and Buttermere Parochial Church Council clerk had contacted their treasurer and the painting was now in their custody for hanging in Old School Room or St John's in the future. The painting was provided as a gift.

481.05 Peter Walter's e newsletters have been circulated.

481.06 email received from Calc advising that next year's subscription anticipated to be £109.59.

481.07 Government NIC changes don't affect Buttermere as clerk over state pension age.

481.08 email request about Buttermere allotments, clerk advised no allotments in the parish.

481.09 Request to place a memorial seat at Buttermere Lake, clerk referred to NT's Facilities and Support Services Co-Ordinator.

481.10 Invoice received from external auditor Simone Morgan, for half year audit, £30.

**482.00 Payments for approval.**

Intpay132, M Milner, £123.80, salary Oct' £123.80.00. No expenses.

Intpay133, HMRC, PAYE, £31.00 Oct'.

Oct HSBC account charge £8.00.

Oct' clerk's payments made to confirm with HMRC submission and payment time limits

Intpay134, M Milner, £123.80, Nov' salary £123.80 No expenses

Intpay 135, HMRC PAYE, £31.00 November.

November HSBC account charge £8.00

Nov' clerk's payments made to confirm with HMRC submission and payment time limits

Intpay 136, M Milner, £159.60, December salary £123.80 expenses £35.80

Intpay 137, HMRC PAYE, £31.00 December.

December HSBC account charge £8.00.

Intpay 138, Simone Morgan, £30.00. half yearly audit fee.

All approved

**483.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 7.30pm, at Old School Room, Buttermere.**

**Meeting closed 21.09**