

Lorton Parish Council

Minutes of the annual parish meeting of Lorton Parish held on Wednesday 5th March 2025 at Yew Tree Hall, Lorton at 7.30pm followed by the March Parish Council meeting.

The parish council chair Cllr Peter Deeks chaired the meeting as is protocol and declared the meeting open at 7.30pm. One apology, Olivia Harrison, Lorton School Headteacher, whose report would be read by parish clerk.

The chair PD read his annual report (a transcript of that report can be found after these minutes.) Then followed reports from, Lorton School, the Local History Society, Yew Tree Hall Management Committee, Lorton Gardening Club, Melbreak Community and finally the chair contributed again on behalf of the Vale of Lorton First Responders.

Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 5th March 2025 at Yew Tree Hall, Lorton commencing 8.06 pm.

The chair Cllr PD declared the meeting open at 8.06pm

Present: Cllrs, Chair Peter Deeks, Garan Comley, Zindzi Cresswell. Glenis Postlethwaite (vice-chair), Chris Poate, Cathy Lee.

Cumberland Councillor. Jill Perry

Clerk, Mike Milner. 4 members of the public.

802.00 Apologies for absence, none

803.00 Declaration of Interest. Cllr CL, planning Low Swinside Barn, Cllr GC, planning, Kirkfell House.

804.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Lorton Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th Jan' 2025, as a true record.

804.01 Councillors unanimously resolved to approve the minutes.

805.00 Public participation. Approx. 15 mins.

805.01 clerk confirmed he had replied to resident who raised a written question at the last parish council meeting.

805.02 member of the public raised the issue of new HGV road signs. Clerk advised positioned by Highways due to issues with Bridge Side House and recent low loader with a residential mobile home onboard.

806.00 Police Matters.

806.01 Clerk had circulated the e-newsletter.

807.00 Applications for development.

807.01 application 7/2025/2036. Low Swinside Barn concerned an Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for use of a bedroom as holiday accommodation Clerk had contacted the case officer who had confirmed from information supplied there was no planning application needed. If circumstances changed at property to those indicated, then local residents could challenge the application.

807.02 7/2025/2185, Kirkfell House, change of use from garage with ancillary room for games and garden room to room for house use but also as a holiday let. Parish Council to object to the holiday let aspect of the application. Clerk to advise planning.

808.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.

808.01 Cllr JP advised on new bin emptying regime and its options. Boundary changes for 2027 Cumberland council elections, possibly 9 new councillors. Cumberland to be fast tracked for a possible Mayoral position, which will be shared with Westmoorland and Furness. Council tax rate fixed at 4.99% increase.

809.00 As per Lorton Parish Council Standing Orders, Section 26, note b), councillors to confirm the addition to minute content S/O section 3, t) as per attached sheet headed "Standing Order Minute Content." And then resolve to accept the revised Standing Orders. 3 sets of documents circulated to councillors.

809.01 Cllrs resolved to confirm the revised section of Standing Orders.

810.00 Consider Highways Response to appropriate speed limit in Low Lorton village and further action. Highways email circulated to councillors.

810.01 Discussion about installation of Gateway signs at both ends and use of repeater signs, and no additional street lights. Due to conflict of Highways view as to what constitutes a street light and a footway light at a future meeting with police parish council to ask the question of them. Chair and clerk to draft a response.

810.02 member of public, with chair's permission, contributed that the whole speed subject was brought about by enquiry for 20mph zone in Lorton. Clerk to contact Elterwater Parish Council about their 20mph signage, which was council approved and financed.

811.00 Tennis Club Lease, current position and tennis club to pay for new lease.

811.01 chair updated council; new heads of terms sent to Tennis Club. Local solicitors approached for quotation.

812.00 Parish Field grass cutting contract, arrangements with Tivoli. Administration arrangement details.

812.01 chair, clerk and Cllr CP had met with the Tivoli team and discussed all aspects of new contract, including access of machinery, tractor clearance under southern boundary and that there would be no wildlife strip. All parties fully understand the requirements.

812.02 Whilst on site Tivoli invited to tender for cutting and relaying the hedge behind the telephone exchange and supply a new 16m of stock fencing on parish field side. Tivoli quoted £709.06 ex VAT and Bigfoot £650.00. Cllrs awarded hedge contract to Bigfoot.

812.03 clerk still clarifying payment/invoice arrangements with Lorton school.

813.00 Bigfoot contract price increase for current season.

813.01 clerk advised that he had established that local grounds contractors accommodating the changes to NIC and minimum wage changes from April 2025 were charging an average increased job rate of 10.7%. Cllrs resolved that clerk could adjust Bigfoot contract by a similar percentage. Clerk to organise and get signed contract.

814.00 Crummock Water, weir removal planning application, update.

814.01 UU have advised that the weir removal planning application will be submitted mid-March.

815.00 Parish Plan position by Cllr GC and next action. Copy plan circulated.

815.01 chair advised an updated 19 page plan had been circulated just prior to meeting. Could Cllrs please read and advise him of their comments. Needs to be promoted in next parish magazine, an online copy to be put on website. 20 hard copies to be provided. Two public meetings, one morning, one in an evening, both in YTH to garner public opinion and then finalise parish plan.

816.00 Easter parish council magazine, content and deadline for printing.

816.01 content to include chair's notes, YTH update, Parish Plan, Melbreak Community update, Curlew project, litter pick, speed limit action, advise Parish Field cutting now parish council responsibility, increase in precept. All material to clerk for 28th March.

817.00 Parish Council vacancy.

817.01 one of the members of the public present was potentially considering seeking co-option. Vacancy to mentioned in next parish council magazine.

818.00 Progress Reports, clerk.

818.01 the proposed resurfacing of Low Lorton due 13th Jan never undertaken, rescheduled for w/c 7th April.

818.02 HSBC Safeguarding bank account process. Appointment booked for next day at 1.30pm by telephone.

818.03 Precept request submitted to Cumberland Council and acknowledged.

818.04 Signs saying "Unsuitable for HGV" have appeared at certain entrances to High Lorton.

818.05 the school warning sign by Broomcroft properties blown over in the recent storm, reported and amazingly reinstated already.

818.06 while resolving parish field grounds contract, clerk had established that the access area between the tennis courts and telephone exchange had been purchased in 1976 by parish council for £125. Parish council have a licence to use a small section of telephone ground to allow easier access, the licence is at a cost of 5p Peppercorn rent per annum, never charged since 1976. Now clear as to ownership when purchased.

819.00 Councillors reports.

819.01 Cllr CL reported architect appointed for YTH redevelopment, and associated consultants. On 21st May between 4-7pm a public drop-in meeting will be held to explain the options available. A preferred option would be developed after this option stage.

819.02 Cllr PD reported he was dealing with benches about the village and also organising a litter pick.

820.00 Correspondence.

820.01 invoice from Melbreak Community to cover web hosting charge £50.00 for 2025.

820.02 reminder from Pension Regulator to reregister by 29/9/25 can apply from 28/4/25.

820.03 email exchange about storm damaged tree on southern boundary of Parish Field. Not responsibility of parish council, adjacent land owners' responsibility. Tree felled.

820.04 account for new grounds contract set up with Tivoli.

820.05 email received about availability of councillors contact details and state of pathway between Low Lorton and Church Lane. Advised where contact details are available and that footpaths are not a parish council responsibility.

820.06 clerk was made aware of a map issued on Cocker mouth Fishing Associations website, indicating a parking spot that was actually a maintained grass verge. Clerk had emailed Association secretary and received acknowledgement map would be revised and an arrangement for parking had been sorted with Wheatsheaf inn.

820.07 letter from GNAAS dated 14/1/2025 thanking parish council for £250 donation.

820.08 emails on various topics from local resident, clerk had responded and included the chair.

820.09 Cumberland council had provided new bin collection changes.

820.10 illegal advertising signs had been erected on fencing in the parish and brought to the parish council's attention via clerk. An email submitted by the advertising signs owner was read out and also clerk's email to Lorton shop owner.

821.00 Payments for approval.

M Milner Intpay238, £193.30, salary February paid 24/2/25

HMRC PAYE Intpay239, Clerks tax £48.20, February. Paid 24/2/25.

Paid to conform with HMRC submission calendar

M Milner Intpay 240, £273.39, Salary March £193.10, Expenses £80.29.

HMRC PAYE, Intpay 241, £48.40, clerk's March PAYE.

Melbreak Community, Intpay 242, £50.00, Web hosting 2025

Direct charge by HSBC £8 monthly account charge 2 months February & March 25.

All Payments approved.

Meeting closed 9.51pm.

822.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 7th May 2025 at 7.30pm, the meeting will be held in Yew Tree Hall.

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Welcome everyone to the Lorton Annual Parish Meeting

I have been the chair of Lorton Parish Council since May 2024, so am nearing the end of my first year in office. I have had a very hard act to follow in Christine Poate, and I would like to again say thank you to Christine for her dedication and commitment to the Parish Council. Christine joined the parish council in 2002 and had been chair since 2009, so had fifteen years in the role. Fortunately, she is continuing to serve as a councillor so we have the benefit of her knowledge of parish affairs. We have also lost Tanya St Pierre as a councillor. Tanya has been on the Parish Council for five years, and in that time has brought her passion for the environment to the council and has made a significant contribution to the council during that time: of particular note are the wildlife and wildflower verges, the wildlife project and swift boxes, and the interpretation boards. Tanya has decided to step down, and we are very sorry to see her go. Thank you, Tanya.

This does leave us with a vacancy on the council, so if you know of anyone who is interested in getting involved with their community, please let us know.

There has been a lot happening this year;

- Our two new interpretation boards have been installed and the accompanying local history booklet published, and reportedly have been well received.

- There were some associated improvements to the village infrastructure, including gates and a new bench.
- We continue to manage the grass cutting of the verges, for the benefit of the wildflowers and the wildlife.
- We undertook a community survey, which we have reported on previously. There has been a huge amount of work carried out in reviewing and analysing the survey results, and then turning that analysis into an action plan – the Parish Plan. We are currently finalising this Plan, which we expect to bring forward for consultation with the community in the next few weeks. Huge thanks to Garan and Zindzi for moving this forward
- There are many issues that were raised in the survey that affect the parish, such as parking, traffic and speeding. second homes and holiday lets, to name but a few. We will not be able to solve some of these, but we are looking for solutions. We are in ongoing discussions with Cumberland Council about speed limits in the village
- A key issue has been the long term viability of Yew Tree Hall. The Parish Council has now joined with the Yew Tree Hall to form a joint Development Group, to look at upgrading of the Hall. Lots of progress has been made, draft schemes have been prepared, and the consultation process started. Initial funds have been raised, and an architect instructed to carry out a feasibility study and develop the designs. Thanks to all who have taken part, but especially Cllr Cathy Lee who has been instrumental in driving this forward.
- A new group has been set up – The Friends of Yew Tree Hall – to raise funds for the hall refurbishment. There is a more in-depth article in the Link about this, and I commend this to you

Reviewing the survey results, drafting the Parish Plan, listening to reports from community groups, and attending community events brings home how fortunate we are to live in such a vibrant and active community, in such a beautiful place.

Thank you to everyone, councillors and our Clerk, Mike Milner, and parishioners who run these community groups and events, for all the hard work you put into making our community what it is.