

Buttermere Parish Council Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 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, L Kyle, Y Kahne.

Cumberland Councillor, Cllr Jill Perry.

Clerk: Mike Milner. Also present, Cllr Peter Walker, LDNP North Area Councillor. No public present.

Apologies for absence: Two invited members of local businesses sent their apologies.

539.00 Apologies. As noted above.

540.00 Declaration of Interest. None

541.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Buttermere parish council meeting held on Tuesday 2nd September 2025 as a true record.

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

542.00 Buttermere Parish Council has invited Cllr Peter Walter LDNP North Area Representative, to discuss visitor management this summer season based on actions implemented from previous years experiences, feedback assessment and possible changes for 2026 tourist season. Local business management have also been invited to the meeting.

542.01 Chair Cllr H F-D welcomed Cllr P.W and asked him to make his update to Cllrs. He commenced by advising the seasonal circular bus had operated 31 days during the holiday season, carried a total of 1200 people over that time. On occasions bus would be full, but an average number of passengers was 5. Cllr P.W explained that during August 2025, a 2-week period, there had been traffic monitoring across the National Park (NP) and that would provide useful information for next year.

542.02 Cllr P.W explained how that all actions of anti-social behaviour should be reported, this provided a truer background for analysis of issues and their location. Unless it was a criminal offence, there would not be a response from police / PSPO officers. Bad parking where a campervan was taking up three parking spaces needed reporting, but a campervan not creating a parking issue, although it maybe illegal parking, please don't report. The plan for next year is for action to be taken with regard to parked vehicles obstructing other traffic, by actually towing them away. It is proposed that next year there will be more two person patrols across the NP and it would hopefully include Buttermere.

542.03 Currently LDNP have employed 2 social media 'influencers' individuals who had posted reels about camping, fires and general acceptable visitor behaviour. These had been on Instagram. Chair did advise that she although she does not follow the accounts in question not on social media, their posts had come up as suggested so that was obviously being a positive forward step on the issue. Cllr P.W did confirm that statistics indicated that visitor number had fallen slightly, but visitor impact on the NP had risen, so such material to educate visitors on how to act/behave was welcomed.

542.04 At the end of his presentation chair invited comments. Cllr EB raised an issue about visitors causing damage on agricultural land and cited an example of a wall and gate being damaged. Tenants/occupiers were being held responsible for repairing them. Cllr PW wasn't sure if anything could be done about that, but it was agreed that the Clerk would follow it up with the Rights of Way officer at LDNP.

Cllr P.W remained as chair moved agenda item 8 up to the next item, so he could contribute if required.

543.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.

543.01 Cllr J.P advised that Cumberland Council were creating a Valley Action Plan including Buttermere, as had been done in the original Wasdale Valley. It is to understand the ideal situation for residents, local workers and local businesses in 15 years' time, including in terms of visitor management. The idea is not those normally involved in public matters – a 3rd party company was engaged to ensure this happened. The area being considered was the Buttermere valley, Newlands, Borrowdale and Keswick as a hub for those places. There was some discussion and concern that this was too great an area, particularly as the intention is to only recruit 20 volunteers across that area. to get residents, workers and business owners to participate, approx. 20 across the area. Observations were made about getting appropriate area volunteer involvement, and how the 3rd party company would reach out to, for example, workers who do not have an address in the valley. Chair pointed out to Cllr J.P that a general style circular Dear Resident letter delivered to every property would likely be quickly recycled into the waste and there would be no general circular via CALC about the scheme, which again is not reaching the target recipient. The enrolment of volunteers would mean no action on the plan in 2026.

543.02 Cllr J.P advised that the Cumberland Council boundary change consultations was being extended until January 2026 and full result would not be known until May 2026, but Melbreak Ward would continue to contain Buttermere, Loweswater, Lorton and Blindbothel, this had been acknowledged as a result of the initial consultation.

543.03 Cllr J.P then asked about waste collections. She was left in no doubts as to the current poor state of affairs. She concluded by saying if issues this Friday, immediately contact her. The chair thanked Cllr for her attendance and invited to stay, which she accepted.

Chair then resumed with agenda item 5

544.00 Buttermere Lake water condition. West Cumbria River Trust flyer circulated.

544.01 Chair Cllr H F-D explained about the issue of Buttermere Lake water and other Cllrs discussed and explained which becks were running into the lake and cited one in particular which was frequently affected by mining waste The properties which had wastewater treatment on site which ran towards Buttermere lake (rather than Crummock), were named and noted by the chair, for follow-up with WCRT. Cllr P.W left the meeting.

545.00 Public participation, no members of the public present.

546.00 Police Matters. As normal clerk had circulated the relevant police e newsletter, he had also attended the police TEAMS meeting. Chair advised she had complained about fireworks on public land, but police had not responded and Cllr EB had had to deal with it. Clerk had raised this with local PCSO and an apology was received as to the response Chair was given at the time, but confirmed it was unlikely that officers could have attended that night.

547.00 Applications for development.

547.01 clerk advised that Cornhow planning app 7/2023/2224, increase from 3 to 6 cabins at Cornhow location, originally rejected by LDNP, which had been appealed by applicant, the Planning Inspectorate has now reported and refused the appeal. Clerk had circulated the decision notice to all Cllrs.

547.02 clerk had circulated 7/2025/2180, 2 Water Board Cottages, application to extend the two levels, as already undertaken by attached property 1 Water Board Cottage, 7/2017/2128. Cllrs unanimously approved the application. 547.03 clerk had circulated details of revised braking and landing post details for Honister Zip Wire. No decision, information only.

548.00 Crummock Water weir removal, update on current position.

548.01 the chair briefly updated the position with UU that they were considering 3 options. Chair and Clerk explained that meeting to which all councillors had been invited on 25 November had been cancelled by UU, but shortly afterwards on the same day there had been an offer to reinstate, with attendance by Chair and Clerk only. The invitation had been declined. Chair explained to councillors that she felt that going forward, all councillors should have the opportunity to attend discussions with UU, even if they chose not or were unable to attend.

549.00 Receive and approve the parish council accounts for 6 months to 30th September 2025. All documents distributed prior to the meeting.

549.01 clerk had circulated all the documents, duly audited by independent external auditor and Cllrs unanimously resolved to accept the accounts.

550.00 Councillors to consider the proposed 2026 Cumberland Community Governance Review, clerk to advise on potential financial changes with regard to Council Tax Bands if Buttermere Parishioners were to consider a merger with Loweswater parish, a process that would involve public consultation at both parishes.

550.01 clerk explained that since the review had been announced, he had learnt that day the boundary review was to be extended, as noted in minute 543.02. This meant the Community Governance Review could not begin until after the conclusion of that review in May 2026. An email from Electoral Services had explained that there might not be sufficient time to undertake a CGR before the next elections in May 2027. Having said that it was explained that Cllrs at Loweswater had that they would be prepared to merge, if the public consultation, which must be undertaken in both parishes, proved in favour. Clerk then outlined the financial benefits to both parishes if they combined. He presented factual figures for this current year for both the parishes with the council tax payable figure for Band D. Then a hypothetical figure for properties in Buttermere and Loweswater if they had been combined, for the current year, based on a budget he had prepared and a precept £4990, would have meant Buttermere residents in Band D would have paid just 55% of their current council tax charge and Loweswater would have been paying just 75% of the current years charge. Buttermere would have a greater reduction as a much smaller pool of properties joining a bigger pool to share the cost. No further discussions now until the Cumberland Boundary review resolved.

Clerk answered a few questions, but he could not be more informative at this stage on the procedures etc. A brief discussion about number of Cllrs that would be allotted by Cumberland and how the make up was considered.

551.00 Clerk to advise on Assertion 10 guidelines, the continued use of Melbreak Communities as Buttermere's official website and registration of a gov.uk domain name and all councillors be allocated a gov.uk email box for all official communication.

551.01 clerk again explained the nuts and bolts of the Assertion 10 guidelines, it is not legislation. He had had email and telephone exchanges with the Public Services Office in London about the process. Major issue was all local parishes used the Melbreak Communities website. The guidelines stated that a new website would be required, for all parishes, with all those additional costs when a gov.uk domain name was purchased. Clerk obtained written confirmation that all parishes could continue to use the Melbreak Communities website and he advised a simple advisory note about issues with reading a webpage was sufficient to meet the guideline rules, which were not obligatory.

551.02 Then he explained the cost of obtaining a gov.uk domain name and the use of every Cllr having a gov.uk domain name email address. He had asked 5 registered companies for costings, they ranged from £1679 per annum ex VAT, to £57 ex VAT per annum. He concluded by saying he was using the lowest quote at Lorton and had registered the domain name at the Cabinet Office, but as there was a possible parish merger pending, as noted in minute 550.00 above, he had obtained a dispensation from Public Service Office, on further action until merger situation resolved.

551.03 chair Cllr H F-D concluded by advising the Cllrs clerk had worked hard on the last two agenda items and thanked him for his input, and all councillors added their thanks.

552.00 Receive an update on budget for financial year 2025/26 and consider the budget presented for 26/27. Resolve the precept figure for 2026/27. Budget spreadsheet and budget notes to be circulated to Cllrs. Budget submission required Friday 16th January 2026 to Cumberland Council.

552.01 Clerk had circulated the budget figures and his proposed figures. The Cllrs held a brief discussion about the spreadsheet and figures on it and resolved unanimously to accept the clerk's figures and agreed a precept increase for the coming financial year 2026/27 of £3570, a 5% increase from the current £3400 received for 2025/26.

553.00 Progress Reports, clerk.

553.01 Numerous exchanges with Highways about the road at Buttermere junction with road to Lorton to Loweswater in October, and then an email about a further closure on the B5289 at Rannerdale in November for telephone pole works.

553.02 clerk confirmed further to minute note 535.06 concerning the double yellow lines from Gatesgarth towards Honister Slate Mine, were still not painted on 8th September, but "no operational" date yet known, he would chase Highways again, they had been promised for summer 2025. This was also highlighted to Cllr JP before her departure.

553.03 all other issues dealt with by agenda items.

554.00 Councillors reports.

554.01 Cllr Y.K advised that the drains from top of bank down to The Bridge Hotel as you approached from Buttermere direction were again all blocked. Clerk to report. This brought a comment from, Cllr Y.K on behalf of the business that was being used this evening for the meeting wanted to raise the issue of the location of the bus stop sign, which is currently directly outside the café, but the bus physically picks up on the other side of the road. This causes issues, with 2 queues, as regular visitors and bus users no the procedure. Clerk advised that he would both contact Stagecoach, responsible for the bus stop sign and then also NT as their permission will be required to move the sign on their ground. Clerk to include Croft House Farm into the email exchange.

554.02 Cllr L.K raised the issue of the drain opposite the Old School Room. It was continually blocked and he and the clerk had complained about the issue back in 2019 and no response.

Clerk to report and clerk to let Cllr J.P have a copy of the E1/ number once reported and she would take the issue up with Highways.

554.03 Cllr L/K plus Cllrs Y.K and A.M raised the issue of a spring road race that involved night runners approaching the Old School Room as a stage point and being cheered and clapped into the building. The noise in the early hours was annoying to say the least and the Cllr A.M, owner of The Bridge Hotel, diagonally opposite the Old School Room, confirmed his guests complained of being woken or kept awake by the noise. Clerk to have contact with those who hire the building out. Polite requests for no clapping had been made at the site, but not responded to.

555.00 Correspondence.

555.01 Cllr P.W newsletters circulated.

555.02 Exchange of emails with Cllr Y.K about state of road, verges and drains from top of bank down to the hotel on Buttermere, minute 554.01 refers.

555.03 emails and phone calls with Public Services Office re minute note 551.00.

555.04 request for clerk to oversee a marriage vow renewal, at St James, redirected to local vicar.

555.05 two emails from Wiltshire based charities seeking a contribution for their cause. There is a Buttermere in that county and they have discovered namesake in Cumbria.

555.06 phone call and email from a journalist for Telegraph about Elterwater and Honister Zip wire installations. Referred to the chair who had not responded.

555.07 Invoice received from Simone Morgan, £30, to cover her half yearly audit fee.

556.00 Payments for approval.

Intpay162, M Milner, £429.60, salary Oct/Nov/Dec £399.00, expenses £36.60.

Intpay163, HMRC, PAYE, £99.60 three months Oct/Nov/Dec.

Intpay 164, Simone Morgan, £30.00. half yearly audit fee.

All approved

557.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 3rd March 2026, 7.30pm, at Old School Room, Buttermere.

Meeting closed 21.12