

Loweswater Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7th May 2020 By video conferencing, which commenced with parish council AGM

For future public record, this parish council meeting was held using the Zoom video conferencing facility. In March 2020 following a pandemic outbreak of Coronavirus, officially named Corvid 19, the UK government had on 23rd March announced a national lockdown on UK citizens with far reaching restrictions. One of which was to ban public meetings of more than 2 people and those participants must maintain a social distancing of 2mt between them. The government in early April brought in legislation which permitted local authorities, including parish councils, to meet using a video conferencing facility. The parish clerk studied the options from readily available Skype, Microsoft Team, and others before settling on a paid for monthly subscription using Zoom. This system will continue in use until such time as the government allows the return of public gatherings and meetings.

Video link Meeting opened: - The chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs K Mitchell (chair) K Leck, L Meadley, D Robinson, C Todd , M Astley, R Thompson, all by video link.

Cumbria County Councillor and Allerdale District. Neither present by video link.

Clerk: Mike Milner, no members of the public via video link.

215.00 Apologies for absence

A Bowness (CCC), C Bell (ABC)

Before any further business all agreed an 8pm stop for applause for NHS & Key workers.

216.00 To appoint a chairman and a vice-chairman for the coming year.

216.01 The chair indicated she was prepared to stand for one more year. Cllr K L proposed Cllr K M, seconded by Cllr M A, no other nominations Cllr K M duly elected.

216.02 Chair advised that Cllr K L who has been vice chair for 5 years, was not prepared to stand this year, so chair nominated Cllr D R who had indicated his willingness to stand, this was seconded by Cllr L M, no other nomination, Cllr D R duly elected. Cllr K L thanked.

216.03 As video meeting signing of declaration of office forms not an option. Forms would be signed in the future.

217.00 Declarations of interest. None

218.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Loweswater Parish Council held on Thursday 5th March 2020, as a true record.

218.01 Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

218.02 As a video meeting chair could not physically sign the true copy. Clerk had confirmed with Calc by email, that with the councillors approval, for the duration of the use of video meetings it was appropriate for clerk to sign all approved minutes pp on chairs behalf. It was resolved that for duration of video meetings that would be acceptable.

219.00 Standing Order amendment include use of virtual meeting medium.

219.01 Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting a copy of the amendment that required adding to cover how video meetings would be conducted. He had added the amendment into the section 2 headed General meeting. Councillors resolved to accept the amendment and its insertion into the parish standing orders.

220.00 Public Participation.

220.01 Clerk advised there had been no requests from the public seeking access to this particular meeting. This would require the link, meeting number, password as per agenda instructions. No outstanding reports March 2020.

221.00 Police Matters.

221.01 Clerk advised that the Cumbria Police website at Area Map option came up with Error 404 code. Clerk reported numerous email exchanges with Cockermouth police Insp' and LDNP about walkers vehicles and cyclists. Request to stay at home, stay safe and save the NHS not being observed by small minority.

222.00 Planning Applications.

222.01 Clerk had circulated 7/2020/2091 Conversion of traditional barns including extension to existing farmhouses Oakbank Farm, Thackthwaite, and all councillors who had responded raised no objections. Friends of the Lakes District had raised issues about possible light pollution from large area of glazing, so the clerk had also added a rider to the councils general acceptance, requesting the planners to consider the light pollution issue.

223.00 Matters concerning District and County Councillors. Neither on video link.

224.00 Receive and approve the parish council accounts for financial year 2019/20. Internal auditors report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statement for the year all to be resolved. Bank reconciliation and variance report.

224.01 Clerk advised that he had only been advised on evening of Wednesday 29th April that it was acceptable for the parish council's internal auditor, to provide an internal auditor's report based on historical fact of having completed a previous end of year assessment of the manner the parish accounting system had operated plus the auditor had also completed a physical examination of the accounts after September 2019 half year accounting period. Signed documentary evidence of that audit had been accepted by council. Minute note 178.01 November 2019 confirms that criteria, 2018/19 auditors report confirms same auditor as 2019/20. All relevant documentation and accounts had been scanned and forwarded to the auditor, plus all ledger files had been provided. All this material on return had been provided to the councillors.

224.02 Certificate of Exemption, AGAR 2019/20 Part 2. This confirms that the parish has neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25k. Inspected by councillors and to be signed by clerk and chair, social distancing meeting to be arranged for wet signature.

224.03 clerk had circulated the signed Annual Internal Audit Report. Internal audit had taken place 11/10/19 and 06/05/20. All boxes correctly ticked, and no issues or recommendations raised.

224.04 Annual Governance Statement. Councillors had read the content of the 9 boxes on the form and at each statement Yes box to be ticked with Cllrs approval. Form then to be receive wet signature by chair and clerk, as per 224.02.

224.05 Finally the accounting statement, which had been circulated was approved by councillors and again will be duly receive wet signature as 224.02 by RFO and chair.

224.06 Clerk confirmed that he would make the appropriate returns to the external government auditor, placing necessary documents required for the appropriate periods on the parish council website pages. Display in noticeboard would be dictated by government legislation about necessary journey by vehicle.

225.00 Parish council renewal, Zurich Insurance

225.01 Clerk advised that obviously Coronavirus was delaying Zurich renewal certification. However, as the parish is under a 5 year term with Zurich, with no increase, unless Insurance Tax is raised, he was asking that the council approve he pay the renewal on receipt as renewal 1st June and next meeting 1st July. Do not want insurance to lapse. Resolved that clerk pay Zurich insurance premium on receipt.

226.00 Update on Broadband project in Loweswater valley and use of Loweswater parish council as legal entity for the project to proceed if required.

226.01 Clerk advised that J H had managed to get 17 of the 19 addresses the clerk had originally established in Loweswater valley as potential candidates for a broadband speed improvement, by fibre to property connection. J H has presented all the paperwork to Openreach and they would be doing an assessment of the viability of the project and a cost. At the same time as costing the project they would confirm the total value of grants they would pay to the properties involved. NOT before that was agreed would there be any need to commit to the project.

226.02 If the property owners wished to progress, then and only then would they have to commit to the project and very importantly create a Community Interest Company (CIC) as the legal entity to enter into a contract with Openreach. Clerk had asked Calc for their thoughts and Calc had referred the request to NALC for their solicitors advice, which clerk had received on 5th September.

8pm clap for the NHS and front line workers. All clapped along with the nation, one councillor produced a trumpet and blew that loudly.

226.03 Chair discussed the options and asked the councillors if they were happy for the clerk to investigate a CIC along with the assistance of other parishes who had followed that path. Cllr C T enquired why the parish council were involved and what was the cost to the parish council. Clerk advised that the community had with the help of the parish council got the Mockerkin BT Cabinet boosted to fibre to the cabinet with a noticeable broadband speed. The properties remaining with an inadequate broadband had actually done most of the leg work themselves, clerk's input minimal other than correspondence to provide authority to the project. The CIC was just part of the progress and the parish council's involvement had meant solicitor's advice without a big bill. Councillors then unanimously agreed that the clerk continue to investigate the CIC for the broadband group.

227.00 Mockerkin Green project.

227.01 Chair reported on the various feedback reports she had received on a Mockerkin WhatsApp group. Should the green become a wildflower meadow in its entirety or just below the seat and pathway. There seemed to be agreement amongst residents that the top part should remain a cut village green and the lower area become a hay meadow.

227.02 After much discussion it was agreed that the project would commence as a two part task, village green cut 6 times a year and a wildflower meadow, developed over a few years Cllr Astley kindly agreed to complete a soil sample on the lower part of the green before the 2nd July meeting.

227.03 Clerk to obtain from tenders for the project. The upper green is currently being cut by a volunteer – it was agreed that an invoice for fuel could be submitted at the end of the season. The question was asked why the area was not cut by Allerdale or CCC, to which the response was the green is common ground and therefore not responsibility of either.

228.00 Progress reports, clerk

228.01 Minute 210.01 refers rubbish still at Mockerkin Tarn, new photos supplied to ABC.

228.02 Minute 210.02 The footway lighting has been returned to Allerdale and Calc are tackling the costing issues, because some lights are charging at 33 hours per 24 hour day?

228.03 The Lancaster Uni traffic survey has been curtailed by Coronavirus.

228.04 Clerk had advised MBC that parishes would not contribute towards insurance and provided an appropriate explanation.

228.05 Minute 210.08 refers, clerk had reported again the potholes discussed, but obviously Coronavirus has reduced the available workforce due to illness and self-isolating.

228.06 Minute 211.03 refers the Stoop Stones discovered and to be returned to correct site.

228.07 Clerk explained he had investigated personal email addresses for councillors, but it would require a domain name and the annual cost of that. Clerk's email to be central contact and councillors personal Email details to be removed from website and noticeboards.

228.08 Clerk explained Zoom account set up, £14.39 pcm, split between 5 councils £2.88

228.09 Allerdale first instalment of precept received £1300.50p

228.10 Due to social distancing, plus other Coronavirus restrictions no seat ordered for Mockerkin Green.

229.00 Loweswater Councillors reports.

229.01 Cllr R T reported that with reference to the MBC Insurance, it was proposed to be covered at NO charge by Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

229.02 Cllr M A advised that NT had blocked car park entrances, but not in Loweswater. The earliest car parks would become available would be 18th May as risk assessments had to be undertaken. He had obviously had no time to consider working at Thackthwaite Green.

230.00 Correspondence.

230.01 Clerk reported that he had received numerous emails and phone calls from Allerdale, Cumbria CC and other community groups. Relevant emails he had distributed. He had received the Calc annual subscription letter. It was £109.62 for 20/21 up from £102.71. He explained the benefits and assistance he had received from Calc and Nalc over the past few weeks especially resolving Zoom and the Standing Orders, accounts issues plus CIC legal advice

230.02 Councillors resolved to pay the Calc renewal.

231.00.00 Payments for approval.

M Milner Intpay 39, £141.24, salary £108.36 April. £32.88 April expenses

HMRC PAYE Intpay 40, £27.00 PAYE

Calc Intpay41 £109.62 annual subscription.

All approved

Meeting closed 8.38pm

232.00 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 2nd July 2020 at 7.30pm