

Loweswater Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3rd Sept' 2020 By Zoom video conferencing, which commenced at 7.30pm

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

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

Cumbria County Councillor and Allerdale District. No representation

Clerk: Mike Milner, one member of the public via video link.

248.00 Apologies for absence. Cllr C Todd (LPC) Cllr A Bowness (CCC) Clerk confirmed district councillor Carmel Bell had resigned so no representation at Allerdale BC.

The chair Cllr K M was experiencing serious audio problems and was not sufficiently audible to continue as chair. Vice Chair Cllr D R at the request of the clerk chaired the rest of the meeting.

249.00 Declarations of interest. None

250.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Loweswater Parish Council held on Thursday 2nd July 2020, as a true record.

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

Acting Chair acknowledged that John Hudson was present and therefore moved agenda item 11 be the next item of business.

251.00 Loweswater valley broadband, current position.

251.01 John Hudson has spent much personal time trying to establish a suitable and useable broadband connection for 17 residencies/business properties in Loweswater valley. He outlined that Openreach have looked at the issues and had finally advised that a total cost of £233k or £13,700 per property was the cost, a private residence would receive a £3k voucher towards that cost and business properties a voucher to the value of £7k. John had asked about options to reduce the cost and Openreach using overhead cabling in some areas reduced the price to £180k or a revised figure of a little over £10k per property.

251.02 J H was now of the opinion that the parish council should be approaching all members of Loweswater Community Fibre Partnership to sound out their views on the potential cost. He further added that if some property owners chose to not proceed and others did proceed, the remaining members of the partnership would still have to embrace the total cost of the scheme between a smaller number, therefore facing a larger individual final cost.

251.03 After a discussion it was agreed that J H would write a suitable communication explain the situation and that would be circulated by the clerk with some urgency. The voucher scheme ends next March 2021. Acting chair Cllr D R thanked J H for all his efforts and conformed that the draft communication would be with the clerk for distribution by the week-end.

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Acting chair Cllr D R resumed at agenda item 4.

252.00 Public Participation. No members of the public present to participate.

253.00 Police Matters.

253.01 Clerk again this month could only advise that the Cumbria Police website at Area Map option came up with Error 404 code. As the improving Covid 19 status was now allowing some return to work, clerk to enquire if website maintenance could be resumed.

254.00 Planning Applications.

254.01 clerk advised no new applications, but he could advise that Oakbank Farm, applications 7/2020/2091 and 7/2020/2138 had both been approved. Also 7/2020/2179 Dubs Field, Loweswater the retrospective curtilage had been approved. Application 7/2020/2177 Thackthwaite House, Thackthwaite, clerk had advised LDNP Planning that parish council raised no objections but had asked the planning officer to mitigate the light pollution of the development. Finally, 7/2020/2122 again Oakbank Farm, planning had approved a change of residence condition from "local occupancy" to "resident of Cumbria."

254.02 Cllr K M by hand movements attracted the attention of acting chair to eventually draw the clerk's attention that Oakbank Farm did have an outstanding application for consideration with reply to planning by 8th September 7/2020/2182. Clerk checked his planning folder and spotted his error. He apologised and acting chair agreed that councillors could consider the application and let the clerk know their views over the week-end.

255.00 Presentation of accounts 1st April 2020 to 31st July 2020 and acceptance.

255.01 Prior to the meeting clerk had as required by the parish's Financial Code circulated a statement of accounts and also a copy of the bank statement confirming the parish ledger displayed the bank figure matching that of the bank statement.

255.02 There were no questions raised and councillors resolved to accept the accounts.

256.00 Clerk's salary appraisal.

256.01 Clerk advised that Nalc had finally agreed the new nationwide clerks pay scale increase. It applied from April 2020. He was asking for a grade increase from SCP23 to SCP24, however as legislation had brought in a new minimum wage rate Nalc had regraded their scale and the clerk was therefore requesting to be graded at SCP15 which gave a new hourly pay rate of £12.24.

256.02 Cllrs unanimously agreed to the increase and that the increase was back dated to April 2020. Clerk thanked councillors for their support.

257.00 Mockerkin Green, rewilding and grass cutting.

257.01 Clerk advised that he had spoken prior to the meeting with the chair, Cllr M A is collecting seeds for the proposed meadow area and Cllr C T will harrow the lower area and sow said seeds when there was a suitable dry spell of weather.

257.02 Clerk had received a quote for the proposed cutting regime next season, 6 cuts (cut and drop) for the upper area, £30/cut + VAT and £50/cut for the meadow area which will be cut twice a year (cut and collect). These additional costs would be accounted for in the annual budget when setting the precept. Clerk to obtain alternative quotations, Cllr R T to provide contact of contractor.

258.00 Replacement seat on Coffin Trail.

258.01 Clerk had been exchanging emails with a member of the public about the iconic seat much photographed on the Coffin Trail. The idea proposed by the individual was for a new substantial timber seat and its installation at the individuals expense as a replacement for the current repaired but rather worse for wear seat. However, as the clerk has pointed out the seat is situated on private land, it is not within the parish council's remit to get involved.

258.02 Cllr L M advised that she had the phone number of the new owner of the land the seat is on. Clerk requested that Cllr L M contact the owner and request an email contact address and advise that the parish clerk would then email the landowner directly and copy in the individual making the seat offer. The two parties could then resolve the matter between themselves with no breach of data protection protocol.

259.00 Progress reports, clerk inc Highway's matters

259.01 minute 240 refers, all noticeboards were refurbished using Danish oil, a thank you to Cllr K M and D R who completed the task.

259.02 minute 243.02 the street lighting issue, its cost and hand over to the parishes by Allerdale was still on going. Allerdale still not receiving details of the unit cost per light of electricity usage from ENW. Clerk had written a strong email of objection to Calc about the current situation, the scheme in principal and he would forward that email after the meeting to Loweswater councillors.

260.00 Loweswater Councillors reports.

260.01 Cllr K M from her quiet corner raised eventually by dint of sign language, lip reading and shouting down a very iffy audio link concerns about parking issues in Loweswater on grass, blocking vehicle access and reducing visibility when turning onto the main road, Cllr D R to provide images for clerk, also past the Kirkstile Inn there was a right turn which is a road to nowhere, but visitors are driving up it, could clerk get a No Through Road sign organised and one saying don't follow sat nav directions.

260.02 Cllr R T reported from the Melbreak Community meeting that the Hydro Electricity scheme was continuing on Buttermere Beck and noted that the Dark Skies project should be moving forward in October. She also raised concerns about Wild Camping, clerk pointed out it was a NT problem and she should raise the issue with NT or the local police.

261.00 Correspondence.

261.01 Clerk had received a request for a financial donation from West Lakes Squirrel Initiative, but as not a registered charity public funds could not be used to support this appeal.

261.02 Also received a request for financial donation from Allerdale Citizens Advice, but parish had never supported that charity and due to Covid 19 such letters being issued by all charities to compensate for normal funding sources. No contribution given.

261.03 Invoice received from Tom Lindsay to cover 2 replacement noticeboard support posts at Thackthwaite Green, £60 + VAT £72.00.

262.00.00 Payments for approval.

M Milner Intpay 45, £267.73, salary £216.72 Jul/Aug. £51.01 July/August expenses

HMRC PAYE Intpay 46, £54.00 PAYE

Tom Lindsay Intpay 47, £72.00 replacement posts Thackthwaite noticeboard

All approved

Meeting closed 8.51pm

263.00 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 5th November 2020 at 7.30pm