

Loweswater Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4th January 2024 at Loweswater Village Hall.

Meeting opened: - The chair declared the parish meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs D Robinson(chair), C Todd, P Battrick, K Leck, M Astley.

Cumberland Councillor, J Perry.

Clerk, Mike Milner. Plus, one member of the public.

Apologies. R Thompson, L Meadley

640.00 Apologies for absence, as noted above.

641.00 Declarations of interest. None

642.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Loweswater Parish Council held on Thursday 2nd November 2023, as a true record.

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

643.00 Crummock Water weir removal update.

643.01 Clerk read brief update from Cllr H F-D chair of Buttermere. No change since November.

644.00 Public Participation. One member present but wished to contribute to a planning application.

645.00 Police Matters.

645.01 No police reports. Clerk had circulated the police e-newsletters.

646.00 Applications for development.

646.01 The member of the public present was the owner of Oakbank Fold, Loweswater which was subject to the planning application 7/2023/2246. Details of the application and all its supporting documentation had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. As the owner pointed out the application was as a result of the planning officer requesting that the roof solar panels approved in 7/2023/2107 now be recessed not laid on top of the existing roof.

646.02 A discussion about the reduction in efficiency of the system if it was to be recessed and that other similar applications had been approved without the use of a recessed construction followed. As the owner also pointed out the roof was not easily visible in the local landscape. The earlier application had been approved by the parish council and the all the parish councillors present saw no reason to change that decision. Clerk was instructed to make a formal submission confirming its continued support of the installation as per originally proposed. The owner thanked the parish council for its continued support and accepted the chair's invitation to remain at the meeting as an observer.

646.02 7/2023/2165 Whinfell Caravan Site, clerk had made a submission of objection as instructed.

646.03 clerk had clarified with the enforcement officer that if Pottergill tracks were not dealt with as per the Building Inspectorates decision then a non-compliance action would be taken.

646.04 Askill Farm 7/2023/2014 application opposed by LDNP planning; the applicant is appealing to Building Inspectorate at Bristol.

647.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor.

647.01 Cllr J P confirmed there was to be boundary review, to consider a requirement for more Cllrs and should that mean smaller wards, or more Cllrs within the existing boundaries. This review would be completed by Oct' 2025 and implemented by 2026. There is a problem with not enough Cllrs to fill committee positions.

647.02 The Community Partnership meeting panel are looking to Co-opt 3 members of the public, to assist with the drawing up of the community plan. The co-optees will be voluntary positions, no remuneration package or voting rights, but travel expenses will be paid. The first batch of grant applications had been awarded. No firm details yet of next Network event, but expected shortly. Chair thanked Cllr J P for her report and invited her to stay.

648.00 Confirm the Loweswater parish precept request for financial year 2024/25, revised budget document circulated prior to the meeting.

648.01 clerk had again revised the budget document that afternoon and handed out a newer budget document. He advised the Cllrs to concentrate on the right-hand column and the figures in red.

648.02 the grounds maintenance contract was due for renewal, therefore with the chair's approval he had renegotiated the contractor for the next 3 years and that provided the £370 contract budget figure, which was accurate,

648.03 clerk then explained that his last salary increase was September 2022, which was for delayed period, covering 2020/21 due to Covid, rate agreed then at all parishes he clerked for was £13.48/hr. He had seen over Christmas that NALC had finally on 6th Nov' 2023 agreed a new pay scale for his pay level, £15.48/hr and back dated to 1st April 2023. Cllrs agreed that parish council would adopt that figure from April 2023. Clerk not seeking older arrears. That clarified the accuracy of the salary budget figure and clerk thanked the Cllrs for their continued support.

648.04 parish councils using the Melbreak Community's website should pay an annual £50 hosting fee and he had contacted all 4 parishes in the valley. Lorton, Loweswater and Buttermere chair had all agreed. That was why he had created a new cost and the contribution would enable to Melbreak Community website to be updated.

648.05 Cllr P B asked for clarification on why not asking for a greater increase than the 3.9% clerk proposing. Clerk explained that basically compared with other parishes Loweswater had no physical areas too maintain, apart from Mockerkin Green, therefore no need to carry a large reserve to repair trees, fences and walls or playground equipment.

648.06 Cllr M A proposed and chair seconded the precept be increased by 3.9% in line with December RPI, making the proposed figure £3275, unanimously approved.

649.00 HSBC Bank Mandate update.

649.01 Clerk had checked the bank mandate form and he advised that Chair Cllr D R and Cllr L M were the two current signatures if required. Clerk would like 4 options as mandate is any 2 of named, so it was agreed that Cllr P B and Cllr C T would be added to the mandate. Clerk to organise with HSBC.

650.00 Progress reports, clerk

650.01 Circulated all of the Loweswater addresses that currently were to be offered a highspeed fibre to property broadband connection. Clerk briefly explained that Libby Bateman the Fibrus customer manager had attended the Buttermere December meeting and the Fibrus team anticipated connecting Buttermere in summer 2024.

650.02 As already discussed the clerk had renegotiated the Mockerkin Green contract for 3 a further three years 2024-26 inclusive.

651.00 Councillors reports.

651.01 Cllr K L raised a problem she was experiencing with Fibrus, who want to put fibre optic cables under her land to service two adjacent properties, but apparently were unable to provide a service to her property or The Grange. She would put problem in email and clerk would contact Fibrus and Connecting Cumbria.

652.00 Correspondence.

652.01 various emails from phishing companies, all reported to appropriate authority and deleted. All requesting payment for goods supposedly supplied.

652.02 Great North Air Ambulance had submitted their annual request for a donation to support their charity. Previous donations £150 annually since 2020. Budget figure £150 so unanimously approved to provide a similar sum.

652.03 clerk had circulated North Distinct Area newsletters from Peter Walter.

652.04 email from local resident about the state of the back road from Scale Hill to Kirkstyle Inn, past the chair’s property and Muncaster. Clerk would photograph and request action, but as the route is likely to part of the road used by contractors’ vehicles when the Crummock Water weir project is in progress, no real chance of anything other than a patch repair. Also, the route is far from a high usage carriageway. Clerk to pursue with photographic evidence.

652.05 An invoice received that very evening from Loweswater Village Hall for the 2023 hall hire charges, £125.00.

653.00.00 Payments for approval.

M Milner Intpay132, £129.56, salary December, no expenses. 28/12/2023

HMRC PAYE Intpay133, Clerks tax £32.20, December, PAYE 28/12/2023

The above payments made to conform with HMRC reporting and payment legislation.

HSBC December bank charge £8.00.

M Milner Intpay 134, £352.41, salary January 2024 £321.36, expenses £31.05

The January payment includes back pay for April – December 2023.

HMRC PAYE Intpay 135, £80.40 PAYE January.

The January submission includes tax on Jan’ pay and backed salary payment.

Great North Air Ambulance Intpay 136 £150.00 annual air ambulance charity donation.

Loweswater Village Hall Intpay 137, £125.00, Village Hall hire charge for 2023.

HSBC January monthly bank account charge of £8.00 taken as a standing bank deduction.

All approved

Meeting closed 8.19pm.

654.00 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 7th March 2024 at 7.30pm, at Loweswater Village Hall. This is also the Loweswater Village AGM.