

Loweswater Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7th January 2025 at Loweswater Village Hall.

Meeting opened: - The councillors present at 7.30 commenced the evening by completing Register of Interest forms requested by Cumberland Democratic Services.

The chair declared the parish council meeting open at 7.39pm. This meeting was rearranged from Thursday 2nd January 2025 due to adverse travel conditions the previous week.

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

Cumberland Councillor, not present

Clerk, Mike Milner.

Apologies. J Perry, Cumberland Cllr. R Thompson (vice-chair),

732.00 Apologies for absence, as noted above.

733.00 Declarations of interest. None

734.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the Loweswater Parish Council held on Thursday 7th November 2024, as a true record.

734.01 Resolved to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. Signed by chair.

735.00 Public Participation. No members of public present.

736.00 Police Matters.

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

737.00 Applications for development.

737.01 Askhill Farm, Fangs Brow, Loweswater, CA13 0SU. Clerk had circulated the documents to all councillors, there were no objections to the improvements to the farm buildings, however councillors did ask that the clerk request that the planning department did establish what provisions there were to be for effluent run off from the buildings.

737.02 clerk advised that he had received a planning approval for Croftside, Mockerkin, FUL/2024/0189. He had checked his emails and no actual notification had been sent to the parish council asking for their observations. The project was to demolish the existing building and rebuild on the same footprint.

738.00 Matters concerning Cumberland Councillor. Cllr not present, no written report.

739.00 To discuss and approve Clerk's hourly rate to increasing from £15.48/hr pay grade 19, to £16.10/hr pay grade 19, back dated to April 2024 as per NALC salary award 2024/25 agreed Nov 2024.

739.01 After a brief discussion councillors approved the salary increase and its back dating to April 2024. Clerk would make the appropriate adjustments and make with payment included in the January payment. This salary issue was usually resolved in time for the November meeting, but not this year.

740.00 Discuss and resolve the Loweswater parish precept request for financial year 2025/26 revised budget document circulated prior to meeting.

740.01 clerk had circulated budget documents for the councillors to consider prior to the meeting. One of the spreadsheets indicated that since the clerk had taken over in 2017, the parish council had enjoyed the benefit of being able to use its reserves to cushion residents and property owners from excessive inflationary increases. Unfortunately, although that had benefitted the property owners, the time had now arrived where increasing the precept was unavoidable.

740.02 the budget forecast for the coming year was £4633 and the precept last year was only £3275. There was a debate about what property owners actually got for their outlay, clerk advised only 182 registered voters, so average 2 per property 91 properties. Therefore, currently parish precept was £3275 per property equivalent to £35.99 per year or 69p per week. A 25% increase would be £4093, equal to £44.98 per year/86p per week. A 30% increase would be £4257.50 equal to £46.78 per year/90p per week. After much discussion including the possible need for a new laptop, not replaced since 2017, and should an amalgamation with another parish, due to the reduction in the number of full-time residents and ever-increasing inflation, the chair proposed an increase of the precept for 2025/26 to £4093 to ensure that reserves did not totally disappear. CALC advise all small parish councils should hold a one-year reserve. By a vote of 5 for and 1 against parish council resolved a precept of £4093. Clerk to make appropriate submission.

741.00 Update on meeting held with members of LDNP Visitor management team and also NT manager at Buttermere Parish Council meeting held in December.

741.01 the chair had attended the Buttermere parish council meeting held on 3rd December and he and the clerk reported back on the information supplied by Tony Watson, LDNP Head of Visitor Services and Bruce Hardy from NT. The tales of visitor behaviour and the risk LDNP Rangers and NT Rangers were now facing were frightening and not acceptable. Not only were illegal fly camping sites costing £1000's to clear up, but use of social media was making dealing with trouble hotspots very difficult and there had been 4 cases of Rangers suffering needle stick injuries during clearing up. What had been so very disheartening was the information that official Rangers had videoed some of the situations they were involved in and provided the video footage to the local police, who had cooperated with other police forces to identify the culprits, but the Crown Prosecution Service had failed to authorise any prosecutions.

741.02 TW had advised at Buttermere that there were various plans to be implemented this coming year to involve the higher ranking officers of various agencies at the frontline so they could experience the issues for themselves, on a busy day.

742.00 Crummock Water weir removal update on UU planning submission date.

742.01 clerk had put this item on the agenda, just in case the UU planning application had been submitted. No application made so no report. However, clerk advised Cllr M A that although the official consultee would be Buttermere parish council, all parishes, Lorton, Loweswater and Blindbothel would be consulted prior to any submission. Nothing to stop individual parishes making their own submission.

743.00 Progress reports, clerk

743.01 all issues had been dealt with by the agenda items.

744.00 Councillors reports.

744.01 Cllr PB advised that he had proposed to attend the meeting held by LDNP North Area Representative Peter Walter, but unfortunately could not make the meeting and Chair Cllr DR had already up dated on his visit to Buttermere. No other reports.

745.00 Correspondence.

745.01 Fibus local area manager L Bateman had emailed to advise that the contractors working in Mockerkin had reassessed the need for telegraph poles in that village and they would only now need to use poles on the south side of the village, other areas would be served by underground optic cabling.

745.02 Request received from Cumberland Democratic Services Department for all councillors to complete Register of Interest forms, that had been undertaken prior to commencement of that evening's meeting.

745.03 audit fee invoice received from Simone Morgan for half year's audit charge £30.

745.04 the annual letter received from Great North Air Ambulance Service requesting a donation. The parish council normally contributes £150. Councillors all agreed that due to the sharp increase in the precept, a reduced donation of £100 was appropriate, clerk to write to GNAAS and apologies for the reduction but thank for the service.

745.05 Invoice received from the Loweswater Village Hall for 6 meetings hall hire totalling £90.00.

745.06 Cumbria Community Foundation sent letter requesting a donation, not approved, for Winter Warmth campaign.

746.00.00 Payments for approval.

M Milner Intpay166, £148.76, salary December, no expenses claimed.

HMRC PAYE Intpay167, Clerks tax £37.00, December PAYE

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

M Milner Intpay 168, £265.56, salary £207.96 Jan'. £57.60 expenses. Dec/Jan'.

HMRC PAYE Intpay 169, £52.20 PAYE Dec/Jan'.

The above includes arrears from April 2024

Simone Morgan Intpay 170, £30.00 half yearly audit fee.

GNAAS Intpay 171, £100.00 air ambulance donation.

Loweswater Village Hall, Intpay 172, £90.00. Hall hire for meetings.

HSBC December/January monthly bank account charges of £8.00 per month taken as a standing bank deduction.

All approved

Meeting closed 8.31pm.

747.00 Date and time of next meeting Thursday 6th March 2025 at 7.30pm, at Loweswater Village Hall.