

# Levens Parish Council

**MINUTES of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 April 2026 in Levens Methodist Church commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs R. Atfield (Chair), H. Burrow, D. Forshaw, K. Holmes, R. Mason, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy.

**In Attendance:** M. R. Curry (Clerk) and three members of the public.

**Note:** The Parish Council may be referred to as the PC and Westmorland and Furness Council as W&FC where appropriate in these Minutes.

**122/25 Apologies for Absence:** Written apologies had been received from Cllr. J. Battye.

## **123/25 Minutes:**

- a) **Draft Minute 117/25** - Chair's Review: The Chair confirmed that three Councillors had not agreed to draft Minute 117/25 and that an alternative had been submitted. In the meantime, the Clerk had reviewed and re-drafted the Minute and circulated an amended version.
- b) **Proposed amendments:** Councillors considered the Clerk's re-draft. Cllr. Holmes felt that it satisfactorily addressed earlier concerns and his proposal that it be adopted was seconded by Cllr. Forshaw. Councillors **Agreed** unanimously that the Clerk's re-draft should be adopted as an amendment to the original draft.
- c) **Revised Minutes:** With the inclusion of the revised draft 117/25 it was **Resolved** that the Chair be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 10 February 2026 as a true record.
- d) **Further discussion:** It was **Agreed** that a Working Group of the Parish Council be convened to further discuss matters relating to Minute 117/25 and a provisional date of 29 April was proposed subject to Cllr. Battye's availability.

**124/25 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation:** The following Declarations of Interest were noted:

- a) Cllr. Atfield declared an interest in planning application 2026/0673/TPO (6&7 Greengate Gardens) as the tree in question is on the boundary of his property.
- b) Cllr. Willacy declared an interest in planning application 2026/0598/HOU as he has been advising the applicants.

**125/25 Public Participation:** In response to a question from the floor, the Chair confirmed that there have been no formal developments in relation to the possible building on Greengate and no planning application yet submitted. There are indications that the proposed number of houses might have increased to from 54 to 58 and marking out appears to be taking place on the site. Cllr Forshaw reported that there have been 202 responses to the local questionnaire to date, with just one respondent expressing unqualified support for the scheme. Other than its expressed concerns about the capacity of local infrastructure to support large scale development, the PC has not determined its position until such time as development details are submitted via a planning application.

## **126/25 Reports:**

### **a) Reports from Councillors attending meetings:**

- i) Cllr. Rogerson reported from a recent meeting of the Village Hall Committee when it was announced that the Chair would be stepping down. The Hallmaster booking system is being introduced.
- ii) Cllr. Atfield had attended an on-line discussion on Assets of Community Value on 24 March. This had explored the purpose and process relating to ACVs.

### **b) Westmorland & Furness Council (W&FC):** Cllr Battye was unable to attend but had submitted updates on the following matters:

- i) Planting for Pollinators: Cllrs. concluded that the procedure for setting up the scheme and subsequent management requirements appear to be beyond the resources available to the PC and it was **Agreed** not to proceed for the time being.
- ii) The Old Carpet Shop: It appears that this might not qualify for W&FC's Empty Home Strategy but there may be other options that can be considered. It was **Agreed** to place this on the Agenda for the next meeting.

### **c) Police:** The local Police Newsletters have been circulated as published. PCSO Park has written about the parking at Gilpin Bridge situation advising that no police action is to be considered at this stage. It

was **Agreed** to consider a joint letter from both Levens and Crosthwaite and Lyth PC which has also expressed concern about the situation.

## 127/25 Finance

a) **Receipts and Payments:** Receipts and payments for the period 01-31 March 2026 were noted on the bank reconciliation (circulated). Receipts were £1,394.88 being salary refunds to the PC from Levens Charity for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

b) **Payments Required:**

The following payments made between meetings were **Ratified**:

i) Printing Plus – Spring Newsletter:	£ 161.00
ii) D. Rogerson – Reimburse Annual Webhosting fee	£ 204.00
iii) D. Forshaw - Reimburse costs of LEAP equipment (from CF Grant)	£ 1,104.42

The following payments were **Approved**:

iv) M R Curry – Salary March 2026 (PC: £464.71; LCP: £112.58; Charity: £41.93; Mileage: £27.00):

**Total:** £ 646.21

v) HMRC - PAYE/NI etc Mths 10-12 2025-26: £ 601.24

vi) D. Rogerson – Refund expenses website database, email system etc (\$45): £ 35.18

vii) CALC – Annual subscription (CALC: £252.42 / NALC: £82.51): £ 334.93

c) **Payments due since publishing this Agenda:** None required

d) **Bank Reconciliation and Ring-Fenced Funds:** The following reports were noted:

i) **Bank Reconciliation:** The bank reconciliation at 31 March (previously circulated) showed a balance of £26,242.20 as evidenced by the bank statement. Unpresented cheques were £1,469.42 leaving a net balance of £24,772.78. The Chairman was **Authorised** to sign the bank statement.

ii) **Ring-fenced funds:** R-F funds are £8,174.04 being: Christmas event funds (£3,166.43); woodland management (£2,200), CIL funds (£2,240.03) and LEAP Grant (£567.58).

e) **Bank Mandate:** The Chair continues to try to secure electronic banking for the PC.

f) **Audit Procedure 2025-26:** The date for the Internal Audit has been set for 29 April.

i) **Governance: Approval of Policy Documents:** The following policy documents were reviewed and **Approved**:

- Model Publication Scheme / Document Retention and Destruction / Equal Opportunities / Infectious Diseases

## 128/25 Levens Community Project:

a) **Levens Project Advisory Group:** Cllr. Mason reported on the Project Advisory Group meeting held on 07/04/2026 as follows:

Three representatives from ACS, including John Sharples, had been present at the meeting and had shown positivity and enthusiasm for progressing the Project

i) **Church Hill:** Investigations into undergrounding the electricity powerline over Plot 3 are to be re-visited via one of the ACS team and efforts to sell the plot via Armitstead Barnett are to be stepped up. There was reference to a request for temporary use of the garden area by a neighbour, but this was declined in view of a potential focus on sale of the site.

ii) **Underhill:** A third quote for the foundation slab is still awaited. Cllr. Willacy expressed concern about the length of time being taken to get the third quote, though it was noted that confirmation of whether Tony Hills (TH) had secured Building Regulations is required. Cllr Mason will follow-up on this.

iii) **New Village Hall:** ACS have made a proposal for them to pursue the Building Regulations (BRs) issue and quoted £3,620 + VAT to get this done. In considering this, Cllr. Willacy expressed his strong view that BRs should be procured on a re-design of the building to a single storey to increase the likelihood of bringing it in within the available budget. There was considerable debate on the pros and cons of this approach and agreement that reduction to a single story is a significant option. It was **Agreed** however that costs for the original design, modified to ACS's specifications, should be secured as a bench-mark for a final decision and that they be commissioned at the price quoted. Cllr. Mason will phone TH to advise him of this development.

b) **Finance Report:** The bank statement at 23 March 2026 showed funds-in-hand in the current account of £12,905.02. Funds in the Deposit Account at 31 March were £1,511,260.36. No invoices were due for payment.

## 129/25 Planning Applications:

a) **Schedule of Applications:** The Planning Schedule to 14/04/2026 had been circulated. There were no substantive updates to applications still under consideration. Cllrs noted that funding for the Levens Lane footpath was included as a priority on W&FC's capital list. Cllr Mason had advised Cllr. Battye that she needed to discuss updates with Levens Hall.

The following new planning applications were considered:

4, Low Pastures, Lowgate LA8 8QH	Works to sycamore and elm	2026/0626/TPO	<b>Resolved</b> to submit No Objection
11, The Green, LA8 8NH	Single storey wrap round extension to front and side elevations; replace utility room	2026/0598/HOU	Cllr. Willacy declared an interest. <b>Resolved</b> to submit No Objection
6&7 Greengate Gardens LA8 8QL	Works to Yew Trees	2026/0673/TPO	Cllr. Atfield declared an interest. <b>Resolved</b> to submit No Objection

**b) Other planning matters:**

- i) Greengate, Levens: This matter had been dealt with under Minute 125/25.
- ii) Nanny Pie Lane: There has been no update on Case Number ENF/2025/0322

**130/25 Annual Parish Meeting (APM):** It had been **Agreed** that the Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 19 May 2026. The usual Notice and invitations will be issued nearer the time. Further ideas for the format of the meeting were discussed but final details will be confirmed at the May meeting of the Parish Council.

**131/25 Levens Websites:** The Clerk reported that a meeting had been held on 31 March involving Cllrs Atfield, Burrow, and Rogerson (the 'Web Team') with Andrew Read of A2A present. The meeting was to bring Cllr. Rogerson up to speed with the decision at the March meeting of the PC to go ahead with a stand-alone website for the PC that would meet accessibility requirements. Andrew Read confirmed some of the technical issues required and the decision to go ahead was endorsed. There had also been discussion about the Community website which will continue in its own right. Cllr Rogerson will look at means of supporting this with local volunteers. It was **Confirmed** that the PC will go ahead as planned to meet the requirements of Assertion 10 and **Agreed** that it will continue to support the costs of maintaining the Community website.

**132/25 Parish Council Logo:** Cllr. Forshaw introduced his proposal for a PC logo and produced a design based on an oak tree. His proposal was welcomed and it was **Agreed** to adopt the logo as designed.

**133/25 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda**

**a) Levens Traffic Management:** The following reports were noted:

- i) **Levens Lane footpath:** Previously discussed (see Minute 129/25(a)).
- ii) **Traffic Management in the village:** It is anticipated that the white lining at the top of Levens Lane will be in place by June after resurfacing of the road.
- iii) **20-m.p.h. Initiative:** Implementation in expected soon after the turn of the financial year.

**b) Other Highways Matters:** No other highways matters were raised.

**c) Defibrillator:** Developments await the outcome of the 90-day consultation period.

**d) Levens Emergency Action Plan (LEAP):** Following the receipt of grant from the Cumbria Foundation, Cllr. Forshaw has now purchased much of the emergency kit and he brought along a selection of the equipment purchased. Cllrs. thanked Cllr. Forshaw for this work and expressed their appreciation for his efforts. Details will be published on the new website and in other places.

**e) Spring Newsletter:** The Chair confirmed that this had been received from the printers and distributed. He thanked all involved for contributions to the edition.

**f) Parish Assets and Land**

- i) Community Orchard: Cllr Mason confirmed that the final trees had been planted by the end of March and invoices submitted for payment against the grant received. The Clerk will conclude the final requirements of grant administration. Work on the roadside boundary will commence when contractors are available. Cllr. Holmes was thanked for his attention to a willow tree growing over the dyke at the bridge.
- ii) Allotments: Arrangements for the renewal of tenancy agreements and invoicing are in hand.
- iii) Brigsteer Road Picnic Site: see Minute 126/25(b)(i) above.

**134/25 Correspondence Received:** The Clerk reported that other than the forwarding of routine communications from CALC / regional agencies etc., which had been circulated as appropriate, there were no items of correspondence to report.

**135/25 Future Agenda Items:** The following items were noted:

- a) Feedback from the Internal Working Group (see Minute 123/25(d))
- b) The Old Carpet Shop
- c) Revision of the Parish Plan

**136/25 Date of the Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be its Annual Parish Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 12 May 2026 in the Methodist Church, Levens.

The meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.

Signed ..... (Chairman)      Date.....