

# Levens Parish Council

**MINUTES of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 14 May 2024 in Levens Methodist Church commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs. R. Atfield, H. Burrow, J. Battye (and as W&F Councillor), K. Holmes, R. Mason, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy

**In Attendance:** M. R. Curry (Clerk).

**1/24 Chair of the Parish Council 2024-25:** Having indicated a willingness to stand, Cllr. Atfield was proposed as Chair of Levens Parish Council by Cllr. Mason, seconded by Cllr. Burrow. There being no other nominations, Cllr. Atfield was elected unanimously and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**2/24 Apologies for Absence:** All Councillors were in attendance and no other apologies had been received.

**3/24 Vice-Chair 2024-25:** Having indicated a willingness to stand, Cllr. Mason was proposed as Vice-Chair of the Parish Council by Cllr. Burrow, seconded by Cllr. Battye. There being no other nominations, Cllr. Mason was elected unanimously and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**4/24 Parish Councillors:** Councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office. Declarations of Election Expenses and Financial / Other Interests were also completed for return to W&FC.

**5/24 Minutes:** It was **Resolved** that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 16 April 2024 as a true record.

**6/24 Declarations of Interest:** The following Declarations of Interest were noted:

- a) Cllrs Atfield, Battye and Holmes in respect of any matters to do with the Levens Playing Fields

**7/24 Appointment of Representatives:**

The following appointments to positions or as representatives on external bodies were confirmed:

Position	Representative(s)
a) Highwayman	Cllr. M Willacy
b) Village Institute	Cllr. D. Rogerson
c) Levens Playing Fields	Cllr. K. Holmes
d) Woodlands Officer	Cllr. K. Holmes
e) Levens Charity Appointed Trustees	Cllrs. R. Atfield, H. Burrow, R. Mason
f) Footpath Officer	Cllr. J. Battye
g) Land Registry	Cllr. R. Mason
h) CALC	Cllrs. R. Atfield, D. Rogerson
i) Allotments	Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
j) Maintenance Working Group	Cllrs. H. Burrow, K. Holmes
k) A590 Working Group	Cllrs. H. Burrow, K. Holmes
l) Levens Community Project	Cllrs. H. Burrow, R. Mason
m) Levens Traffic Management Group	Cllrs. H. Burrow, D. Rogerson, M. Willacy
n) Greening Campaign Coordinator	Cllr. J. Battye
o) Community Emergency Plan	Cllrs. J. Battye, H. Burrow, K. Holmes
p) Website Working Group	Cllrs. R. Atfield, H. Burrow, D. Rogerson

**8/24 Meeting Dates 2024-25:** The following meeting dates were **Agreed**:

**2024:** 11 June; 09 July; 10 September; 08 October; 12 November

**2025:** 14 January; 11 February; 11 March; 08 April; 13 May.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 18 March.

It was confirmed that the informal village tour would take place on 11 June immediately after a brief formal meeting to be convened at 7.00 p.m. to sign off the Annual Report (AGAR).

**09/24 Public Participation:** No matters were raised by the public.

**10/24 Reports:**

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

- i. Cllr. Battye had attended an on-line training event on planning on 20 April which had been useful.

b) **Westmorland & Furness Council (W&FC):** Cllr Battye reported as follows:

- i. The W&FC AGM had been held in the previous week and she was now Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

- ii. She reported that the Locality Boards have had funding levels confirmed to include up to £1,000 available as Member Grants to be applied to appropriate initiatives in their area.
- iii. The Council has had a solid first year and is now looking at the efficiency gains to be made in the future use and ownership of Council-owned buildings.
- c) **Police:** Recent incidents of vandalism were noted, and concern was expressed that liaison with the local PCSO was less strong than in the past. It was acknowledged that PCSO Park makes weekly visits to the village and often bases herself at the shop. This is not well known however, and efforts should be made to publicise this more widely. More generally it was regretted that visits to Parish Council meetings had been cut and it was **Agreed** to write to the new Police and Crime Commissioner to explore if these could be reinstated.

## 11/24 Finance

- a) **Receipts** – Councillors noted the following receipts for the period 01 – 30 April 2024:

i. 05/04/2024: D. Rogerson: Christmas Event	£ 760.80
ii. 17/04/2024: Tenant (Allotment Rent)	£ 20.00
iii. 22/04/2024: W&FC: CIL Payment	£ 2,062.03
iv. 26/04/2024: W&FC: Precept 2024-25	£ 14,700.00
v. 29/04/2024: Tenant (Allotment Rent)	£ 20.00
vi. 29/04/2024: Tenant (Allotment Rent)	£ 40.00
vii. 29/04/2024: Tenant (Allotment Rent)	£ 20.00
viii. 29/04/2024: Tenant (Allotment Rent)	£ 20.00

The receipt of CIL money was noted and it was confirmed that this must be spent on local infrastructure projects. The CIL fund will be ring-fenced.

- b) **Payments:** The following payments were **Approved**:

- i. M R Curry: Salary – April 2024: (PC: £260.90; Project: £325.96; Charity: £65.24; mileage: £10.80; postage: £7.95): It was noted that these were estimated figures and appropriate adjustments would be made in May: £ 670.85
- ii. Adam Kirk: Woodland work (Underhill £705.00; Cotes £2,460.00) £ 3,165.00

- c) **Bank Reconciliation** and report on Ring-Fenced Funds at 30 April 2024: The bank reconciliation at 30 April showing a balance of £30,657.69 was noted and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. A cheque for £50.00 to the Playgroup remains unpresented and is now out of time. The ring-fenced funds held by the Parish Council remain at £2,100 for woodland and at £2,142.06 for the Christmas event (following the receipt of £760.80 from the 2023 event).

- d) **Annual Governance and Accounting Report (AGAR) 2023-24:** The Clerk reported that arrangements for the completion of the AGAR were in hand and that the Internal Audit was due to take place on 20 May. The sign-off of the AGAR is scheduled for 11 June at a short formal meeting before the annual village tour. The following documents were reviewed and **Approved**:
  - i. The Asset Register
  - ii. The Risk Register

- e) **Levens Art Group:** The Clerk reported that the Art Group had been advised to make an application for grant to Levens Charity.

## 12/24 Levens Community Project

- a) **Levens Community Project Advisory Group (PAG):** Following a meeting of PAG on 07 May, Cllr. Mason reported as follows:
  - i. **Sale of Plots:** Plot 1, Cotes: The sale was completed on 02 May with a net receipt of £161,576.00. Councillors noted that all plots at Cotes are now sold. Plot 3 at Church Road remains on the market and there will be discussions with the agents about promoting its sale.
  - ii. **Underhill:** The electricity quote of £42,092.11 + VAT (total £50,510.53) has been paid and receipt acknowledged. The sum will be reclaimed from Infrastructure Grant. Discussions are underway to confirm the precise route for the cable.
  - iii. **New Village Hall:** Electricity and water supply to site has been completed, though it is to be checked that the water supply has actually been connected. The sale of stone continues, and a schedule of sales is being maintained.
  - iv. **Tenders:** The contractors submitting the three lowest tenders have been asked to 'value engineer' proposals and re-submit revised tenders by 21 May. Once received, the tenders will be evaluated, and contractors asked to attend interviews in order to identify the preferred bid.
  - v. **Project Management and Review of Finance:** There will be a further report on the strategic forecast for the Project when the tenders have been fully evaluated.

- vi. **Community Ownership Fund:** Work continues on a bid to the fund when it re-opens at the end of May (date to be confirmed). Bids to other funding sources are under consideration.
- vii. **Cash Reserves** and Funds held in HSBC current account:
  - HSBC Current Account: The bank reconciliation at 23 April showing a balance of £16,606.96.
  - Investment (Deposit) Account: Funds at 31 April 2024 were £1,264,108.08 (£50,510.53 is to be reclaimed from Infrastructure Grant and VAT refund)
- b) **Payments Required:** The following payments **were Approved:**
  - i. Tim Thacker - break up of stone for sale on new village hall site: £ 984.00
  - ii. Armstrong Watson – Accountancy fee Q4 2023-24 VAT Return £ 150.00

### 13/24 Planning Applications:

- a) **Schedule of Planning Applications:** Updates to the Planning Schedule on 14 May had been circulated and the following were noted:

PC Ref	Application No.	Location	Proposal	Status
43	SL/2022/0074	Levens Lane	Footpath	Under review
6	SL/2023/0351	Plot 3 Cotes	Single dwelling	ACON 13/05/24
28	2024/0046/FPA	1 Low Pastures	Internal / external alterations	PC Objection. Decision pending
29	24/0232/FPA	Lakesway Holiday Homes	Spa facility and associated infrastructure	PC Objection. Decision pending
In respect of Ref. No's 28 & 29, Councillors noted that the planning portal still shows these as for Officer decision despite the objections from the Parish Council meaning that they should go to Planning Committee. Cllr. Battye will check the status of these applications				
34	2024/0563/NMA	8, The Green, Levens	Non-material amendment (side extension)	No objection
35	2024/0667/FPA	Plot 1 Cotes	Variations of conditions	No objection

- b) **Other Planning Matters:** There are currently no other planning matters under consideration.

### 14/24 Levens Charity:

- a) **Next meeting of the Trustees:** The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Appointed Trustees to receive the Financial Report is to be arranged.
- b) **Levens Playing Fields Grant:** Following the receipt of additional information, the application will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Appointed Trustees.

### 15/24 Open Actions Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda

- a) **Levens Traffic Management:** The following reports were noted:
  - i. Levens Lane footpath: Cllr. Battye reported a meeting with Highways is still to be held as part of the feasibility study.
  - ii. Traffic Management within the village: Engagement with Highways on their previous commitments for improvements to traffic management within the village is to be followed-up. Cllr. Battye asked to be copied into any communication with Highways on this.
  - iii. 20-m.p.h. Initiative: Councillors noted that Levens has not been included in the first tranche of villages to be considered for a 20-m.p.h. zone. Cllr. Battye confirmed that this will be a 3-year rolling programme with the opportunity for further consideration of the case by W&FC. A question remains as to the likely costs required from the Parish Council, which could be significant as well as the need for evidence of public consultation. Cllr. Battye will monitor this initiative and report back.
  - iv. Bus Service Improvement Plan – It was confirmed that the service to Kirkby Lonsdale had been removed from the timetable. Cllr. Battye undertook to find out the reason.
- b) **Woodland management:** The following reports were noted:
  - i. Cllr. Mason reported that saleable timber from recent woodland operations will be parcelled and stored securely for disposal by an appropriate process to include VAT on the sale price.
  - ii. Tree Health and Safety - Update Survey: Treescapes Consultancy are yet to commence the survey work.
- c) **Parish Assets and Land:**
  - i) Brigsteer Road Site: Cllr. Mason is confirming the final specifications for the walling work.
  - ii) Jubilee Orchard: The application to the Coronation Community Orchard Fund has been successful subject to some final amendments to the specifications which are to be provided.
  - iii) Request to site a memorial bench on Parish Land – Cllr. Battye will follow up this enquiry.
  - iv) Maintenance work required: Cllr. Holmes will liaise with Andy Brayshaw for strimming and other maintenance work required around the village and at the Brigsteer Road site. It was noted that road signs could do with cleaning and road markings re-painting.

- d) Parish Website: It was **Agreed** to offer a payment of £60 now. The Chair will ask Tom to log hours of work over the next few weeks to establish what would be an acceptable payment to recognise a fair balance between voluntary input and work that requires additional input.
- e) Allotments and land rents: Invoices for 2024-25 are to be sent out. Cllr. Mason is considering a request that the car-park might be made slightly bigger and to explore the best way of supplying allotments with additional water standpipes.
- f) Levens Greening Campaign: Cllr. Battye confirmed that in addition to recent events, plans for the Great Big Green Week in early June were developing.
- g) Parish Emergency Plan: Cllr. Battye agreed to try and find some local leadership from within the community in order to take this forward.

**16/24 Correspondence:** In addition to the routine circulation of matters from CALC and other Agencies, a Schedule of Correspondence had been circulated and the following items (not otherwise dealt with in the meeting) were noted:

- a) 20/04/2024: An enquiry about affordable housing. The enquirer has been advised that she will be added to the list
- b) 04/05/2024: Applications to go on the Allotment waiting list from two local people were noted
- c) 13/05/2024: Neil Munro: Advising about the Lake District Charity Challenge Event - 100km walking event over 2 days 08-09 June to pass through Levens.  
Details at: <https://www.ultrachallenge.com/lake-district-challenge/>.

**17/24 Future Agenda Items:**

- a) Matters that might be advised prior to the next meeting; otherwise, follow-up to the current Agenda items.

**18/24 Date of the Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be a brief formal meeting to commence at 7.00 p.m. in the Methodist Church on 11 June to sign off the Annual Report (AGAR). Thereafter the informal annual village tour will take place. The next Ordinary Meeting following will take place on 09 July at 7.30 p.m. in the Methodist Church.

The meeting closed at 9.46 p.m.

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