

SEDGWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7:30pm at The Village Hall.

Present: Cllr B Holmes (Chair), Cllr B Tanham (Vice Chair), Cllr G Stoker, Cllr V Macconnell, Mrs Rachel Harrison (Parish Clerk), Westmorland & Furness Cllr D Rathbone.

- 61/23 Apologies:** It was resolved for apologies with reasons given that were accepted by Sedgwick Parish Council Cllr A Holmes –Unwell. Cllr W Burrow did not attend or send apologies on this occasion.
- 62/23 Minutes:** It was resolved for the Chairperson to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2023 as a true record.
- 63/23 Declarations of Interest / Dispensation Requests:**
Cllr B Tanham declared that as she is the owner of a part of the canal towpath, she can take part in discussion regarding the Canal but cannot vote on any decisions.
- 64/23 Public Participation:**
- The “Village Green” was discussed following an enquiry from a member of the public. It was agreed that the Clerk will contact the land owner to obtain written permission to enable the Parish Council to continue to do the grass cutting on this piece of land.
- 65/23 Reports**
- Police Report:** The Council are receiving a monthly community newsletter however it was noted that it does not mention three crimes (2 burglaries and vandalism) reported in the parish. It was agreed that a more detailed and localised report would be more advantageous to the Parish. The Clerk will contact the PCSO to find out if this can be obtained.
- Westmorland & Furness Council Cllr D Rathbone** reported about the following items;
- The road from Sedgwick to Natland will be closed for 4-5 days and the council advised him the diversion put in place is not suitable.
 - The transfer to W&F Council is ongoing, progress is being made and long-term plans are now in process.
 - The potential for a paid system for the Green Bin Collection was brought up and it was reported W&F Council are considering all options and no decision has been made.
 - Cllr Rathbone will report back on a phone number for the Safeguarding team.
 - The Proxy & Postal vote system is changing.
- Village Hall Report** –A report was received from the Village Hall Committee & can be seen on the website.
- 66/23 Planning Application submitted/received:** NONE
- 67/23 Highways/Footpaths**
- Cllr A Holmes was not present to make her usually Highways report, however it was noted that repairs needed had been reported to W&F Council, including the streetlamp near the village hall. It was reported to Cllr Rathbone that no progress is being made with regards to repairs after they have been reported.
 - The 20mph Zone was discussed. It was reported we are on the list for the 20mph zone and the Parish Council agreed we do not have the expertise or knowledge of legislation to decide on the exact location. It was advised by Cllr Rathbone that it needs to be realistic in area.
 - The quote from Cllr J Brook re. SID’s were discussed and are not financially feasible. It may be the case that Natland Parish Council have one that could be borrowed if needed.
- 68/23 Playground /Millennium Field**
- Monthly Safety Report- by Cllr Stoker reported that he carried out the monthly inspection early in the week and said the field has been extremely well used. The rubbish bins emptied, and equipment checked over.
 - The Annual ROSPA report was received on 20th October 2023 and discussed, Cllr Holmes & Cllr Stoker have reviewed the report at a site inspection and prepared a to do list. Repairs will take place in the Winter and Spring, nothing is urgent. A request to residents for help with maintenance will be made in the next newsletter. A request will be made to Playdale for an inspection and advice.

69/23 Fundraising & Events

- a) An report was provided by Cllr V Macconnell. It was reported also that residents are concerned why we need a new slide & why we need to fundraise for it. There will be more explanation about this in the next newsletter.
- b) The options for funding and play equipment sent by Cllr J Brook were discussed and Cllr Holmes will make contact with Cllr Burrow to see if any progress has been made.

70/23 Training

- a) Cllr B Holmes participated in the Chairs Forum Course which was very useful and reassuring that we are in a similar position to other Parishes.
- b) It was reported that the Clerk will attend the Clerks Forum on 25/01/2024 at 1.30 and is booked onto CALC finance training on 11/12/23 at 6.30pm.
- c) The Clerks induction was discussed and Cllr B Holmes reported a meeting had taken place with herself and the Clerk, they are monitoring workload and are thrilled with the Clerks work.
- d) The new Government pay scales were presented to the Parish Council for the Clerk and it was approved that the Clerk will now be on the new pay scale which will also be back dated from April.

71/23 Canal

- a) Monthly report by Cllr B Holmes. A full report available on the website and in the cabinet.
- b) Monitoring the use of the Canal Path – busy especially at weekends and it was noted cyclists are still seen on the path.
- c) Cllr Holmes & Cllr Tanham had met with the LCRP to discuss the Feasibility Study and issues regarding the canal. There are no current plans in place involving our area but the overall objective remains for a wide fully accessible path from Kendal to Lancaster. The rebranding project continues.
- d) CRT installation of the artwork was discussed after Cllr Holmes & Cllr Tanham had a meeting & walked the path with the CRT. They proposed that a sign will be placed next to The Stoker Seat & aqueduct. The negatives of increased footfall were noted but will occur because of the new signage at the aqueduct. The CRT have advised they will complete installation work and maintain the sign. A vote took place and it was unanimously agreed on that the signs can be installed. Cllr Holmes will inform them.
- e) Canal Management Plan. The following was discussed and agreed upon by all;
 - We are not in favour of widening the footpath for the following reasons: adverse effect on the natural look of the area, inappropriate urbanisation, loss of habitat, and a wider path -even if it remained a footpath will encourage more cycle use. Increased use will adversely effect the tranquil nature of the existing wildlife area and the village does not have the necessary infrastructure (parking, litter, toilets) to support the increased number of visitors.
 - We are not in favour of opening and surfacing the footpath on the opposite side. It would overlook private property, there would be a significant loss of habitat including mature trees and it would require two obtrusive access points to be built spanning the canal – it would only create a 200m loop because of the embankment.
 - It was agreed that the provision of additional access from ramps built on adjacent land, would improve accessibility up onto the 450m elevated section of the canal. However, gates at either end of the section and the width of the path, would still limit access beyond a single point, raising questions about feasibility.
 - In 10 years' time it is hoped that that our conservation continues and the wildlife area has increased in diversity and that any felled trees are replaced with native species. It was agreed that no significant changes are desired as all feedback is that residents wish the area to remain a tranquil and peaceful sanctuary away from traffic. It was also agreed that decisions must take into account any future financial burden on the council in the future. These points will be added to the Canal management Plan.
- f) The Openreach Exposed Cable was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Stoker will speak to the engineers at the next available opportunity. Cllr Stoker has also now reported it to BT Openreach TPO/2212088406.
- g) The Dog Poo signs were discussed and the Clerk will order some from Amazon approved by the Councillors.
- h) Stone wall repairs were discussed and it was decided that we are not eligible for Countryside Stewardship Funding. Vandalism of the wall has been reported to Cumbria Police – Ref CRI00198642. A letter received from Mr Simpson has confirmed he will make some repairs to the fence and wall which was grateful received. The Clerk will write back to him to thank him.
- i) Safeguarding was also discussed after a couple of incidents on the Canal Path, that have been reported to the Parish Council, concerning a dog that was not under control. A reminder will be added to the newsletter that all dogs should be under control at all times.

72/23 Website/social media

- a) Cllr B Holmes reported that the website has been updated with meeting minutes and agenda.
- b) Facebook posts have been made and is seeing more usage.

73/23 Policies & Procedures

- a) Code of Conduct received from CALC was adopted and will be updated on the website.

74/23 Finance

- a) Bank balance noted as of 29/09/23 Current = £11185.22 Reserve = £tbc
- b) Payments approved for: Treescapes Consultancy Ltd. £61.62, CALC Training £5.00, Parish Clerks Salary Aug/Sept/Oct £614.18, Parish Clerks Expenses £116.35, HMRC PAYE £154.72, ROSPA £127.80, Sedgwick Village Hall Hire Charge £69.00 (May, July x2, Sept) Increase of £3 per meeting, James Park £1030.00, Continental Landscapes (grass cutting) £499.20. The Clerk has requested a quote for grass cutting for 2024.
- c) Payments agreed on 13th September 2023 cleared the bank account., signed and agreed.
- d) Six Month budget Review has taken place and it was reported by Cllr Holmes that everything is on track.

75/23 Winter Newsletter

- a) Newsletter topics confirmed for the next edition to be sent in early December.

76/23 D-Day Event Planning

- a) An update was provided on correspondence from Stainton and it has been confirmed that there will be no D-Day Event in the village.

77/23 Items for consideration for a future agenda

- a) The Parish Precept for 2024/2025. Cllr Rathbone will advise if he receives any update.
- b) Safeguarding as an Agenda Item every meeting.

78/23 Correspondence: All the documents have been received and circulated to the Councillors.

79/23 Open Action

- a) The potential merger of Crosscrake Church was discussed and Cllr D Rathbone was informed of the situation.
- b) It was reported there will be Parish Council Elections on Thursday 2nd May 2024.

80/23 Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next Parish Meeting will be on **Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7.30 pm in Sedgwick Village Hall.**

The meeting closed at 9: 30 pm

Signed:..... (Chairperson) Date: 10th January 2024