

Buttermere Parish Council

Minutes of the annual parish meeting of Buttermere Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd March 2022 at Old School Room, Buttermere at 7.30pm followed by March parish council meeting.

Present: Cllrs Y Kahane (chair), J Temple, E Beard (vice-chair), L Kyle, H Fear Davies, K Beard. Also present the chair of Lorton Parish Council Mrs C Poate and also the chair of Loweswater Parish Council, David Robinson.

Before the actual meeting opened Buttermere Parish Council had invited **Jane Saxon, General Manager, North and West Lakes, National Trust**, to update all present with the plans the NT, LDNP and other agencies have for this coming year's holiday season and arrangements for dealing with visitors to the National Park and specific issues that would involve Buttermere, Lorton and Loweswater parishes.

Jane Saxon started by apologising that her colleague Bruce Hardy who would be responsible for the immediate area could not attend, but he had a prior engagement. Basically, Jane explained that the agencies were in the process of completing the Management Action Plan which she would provide to the clerk to circulate. It would have all the relevant contact names, email and phone numbers for all agencies. There was, like last year, one central emergency email contact, which last year had been Cvalerts@lakedistrict.gov.uk but was being changed for this year. Councillors were surprised at that decision. Jane explained that this year the planning extensions that had applied last year, 56 days, for emergency parking and camping areas had not been continued by government so it was back to the 28-day rule. The various agencies were trying to co-ordinate the facilities so that they did not all choose the same 28 day periods. She had already been in contact with councillor J T about one of his fields being available for parking during the Rannerdale bluebell display and the influx of visitors that attracts.

The shuttle buses that ran last year, provided by Stagecoach, from Cockermouth would be in place this year, and depending on the frequency of the service it will cost between £14.5k to £28k. Last year it was free but this year there was to be a token charge of £2 for adults, but children and concessionaires would be free. The shuttle bus route was proposed to extend its route to encompass Loweswater and perhaps Fangs Brow. Stagecoach will be using 22–27-seater vehicles.

There was a brief Q&A session, when it was confirmed that the only licensed mobile vendor at Cinderdale was the Moon & Sixpence based in Cockermouth. The idea was not to take trade away from local businesses by licensing too many such vehicles. The chair Y K thanked Jane for her attendance, invited her and the chair for Lorton and Loweswater if they wished to remain, but all three left the room.

The chairman declared the parish meeting open at 8.04 pm

Present: Cllrs Y Kahane (chair), J Temple, E Beard (vice-chair), L Kyle, H Fear Davies, K Beard.

District and County Councillors: Neither present.

Clerk: Mike Milner.

Apologies for absence: Cllr A M.

The chair Y K read her annual report. No other organisation present to make a report, chair closed the Parish meeting. (A transcript of Chair's report can be found after these minutes.)

Parish council meeting opened at 8.13pm.

274.00 Apologies. As noted above.

275.00 Declaration of Interest. None

276.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Buttermere parish council meeting held on Tuesday 7th December 2021 as a true record.

276.01 Cllrs unanimously resolved to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 7th December 2021.

277.00 Police Matters.

277.01 Clerk had circulated police e-newsletters when received.

278.00 Applications for development. None.

279.00 District and County Councillors Reports. Neither present to make reports.

280.00 Confirm and approve the transfer of bequest from the late Robert Ponsonby made to Buttermere Parish Council be transferred to St James Church, Buttermere, for repair of the church organ.

280.01 prior to meeting the clerk had circulated various email exchanges between himself, the executors of Robert Ponsonby's estate and St James Church, Buttermere. It was evident from the moment the bequest was brought to the clerk's attention that the £2k bequest was specifically intended for the repair of St James church organ.

280.02 legislation states that parish councils cannot make a donation from parish finances for repairs to church property, however on this occasion the clerk was more than happy to request the councillors of Buttermere to authorise the transfer of the funds. Cllr H F-D observed that the parish council was actually just a temporary custodian of the funds.

280.03 Councillors resolved unanimously to approve the transfer of the funds from the bequest. (Clerk will attached to the signed True Copy of these minutes a copy of the email of explanation dated 22nd Jan 2022 sent to St James and the response of the same date from the church confirming the specific use of the funds for the organ repair.)

280/B.00 Queens Platinum Jubilee update.

280/B.01 it was agreed that the parish council would not be organising any celebration of this year's Platinum Jubilee.

281.00 Progress reports, clerk.

281.01 Letter sent to Ofcom as per minute 266.02. Reply received and circulated to all Cllrs on 22nd December 2021. Cllr H F-D to continue pushing the cause by applying as a private individual for high-speed broadband and continue liaising with Cumbria CC.

281.02 United Utilities have finally resolved the issue with the two raised manhole covers on the hill out of the village towards Lorton, by the Grit Bin, minute 269.04 refers.

281.03 As per minute 269.01 Jane Saxon had attended earlier that evening.

281.04 Further to minute 271.01 clerk had responded to the Honister Green Energy Plan. Copy of that email circulated to Cllrs and to Borrowdale parish clerk. Response has been non-supportive due to lack of detail.

281.05 Clerk had submitted the precept request as per 263.01 – 06 for £2220.00.

281.06 Clerk brought to Cllrs attention that the long-blocked drain opposite Old School Room was to be further investigated by Highways, when funds were available next financial year. Cllr L S suggested the only adequate repair will involve digging the road up and replace the current gully.

282.00 Buttermere Councillors reports,

282.01 Cllr H F-D raised the issue of 2 Passing Place signs that are being erected along the B5289. Clerk to investigate criteria for their installation, as no penalty for parking in them.

282.02 Chair Cllr Y K updated the council on the hydroelectric proposal, a full copy of the report can be found after these minutes.

282.03 Chair Cllr Y K also reported that she had been involved with a Dark Skies engineer and a member of management at was formerly The Fish Hotel, to resolve the constant lighting issue at the property. It was understood suitable lighting had been discussed and ordered.

282.04 Cllr E B reported that the 6'6" road width warning sign at the junction where the Buttermere road joins the Loweswater to Lorton road is missing. The sign post is in the direction of Scales Hill. Clerk to report.

283.00 Correspondence

283.01 Numerous email exchanges in connection with Robert Ponsonby bequest.

283.02 New Calc chief is Sonia Hutchinson, who was formerly her deputy.

283.03 Allerdale had acknowledged the precept request, queried if the amount was correct and confirmed no cap.

283.04 Parish council are aware of a parking issue at St James Church, Buttermere, which is stopping members of the congregation from parking in close proximity for the weekly services. Elderly members of the congregation with mobility issues are particularly inconvenienced. Land ownership maps are being sort for clarification purposes before pursuing further action. Cllr L K did advise that there used to be a reserved area for the vicar.

283.05 All relevant emails about 3 tier meetings and Underground Nuclear Storage and Unitary council were circulated.

283.06 Allerdale Borough Cllr Carmel Bell has advised she had resigned from the Conservative Party and would represent the parish as an independent candidate.

283.07 Numerous emails from Allerdale BC, CCC and Police about recent storms.

283.08 Phone call from BBC One Show, clerk had advised them to contact owner of Bridge Hotel as it was their land and provided owners contact details.

283.09 Numerous emails offering Platinum Jubilee merchandise at "Special Prices."

284.00 Payments for Approval

Intpay63, M Milner, 271.14 salary 3 months Jan to March £234.96, Exp' £36.18

Intpay64, HMRC, PAYE, £58.50 3 months

Intpay65, St James Church £2000, see minute 280.00 this meeting

All approved

285.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 31st May 2022 at 7.30pm at Old School Room, Buttermere.

Meeting closed 8.57pm

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Buttermere Parish Council Chairman's Report 1st March 2022

The effects of the Coronavirus pandemic have featured large here in Buttermere, as elsewhere, and we continued to hold meetings remotely via zoom until September. The first lockdown came into effect in March 2020 and we in England had all restrictions removed last week, almost 2 years later. Some residents have been unwell and or been isolated but the vulnerable amongst us have been known about and well supported by family and friends. An advantage of a small community.

Our hospitality businesses suffered from complete lack of visitors during lockdowns and by being almost overrun when lockdowns eased but travel abroad was not allowed. They also suffered from staff shortages whether as a result of Brexit, coronavirus or other reasons.

Being overrun with visitors with consequent thoughtless parking, littering, fly-camping and just too many cars and motorhomes made life very difficult for many, especially farmers and people trying to go about their ordinary business. I would like to pay tribute to The Parks Authority, the Police, The National Trust, Allerdale Borough Council, the Highways Authority, individual councillors and our clerk, for working cooperatively with implementation of the Tactical Visitor Management Plan to address many of the issues. The one stop reporting system, cvalerts, worked well and in some cases very quickly when problems were reported. We will have a presentation from the National Trust and Parks Authority this evening to hear of plans for visitor management this coming season and I hope this cooperative way of working will continue.

As well as pestilence we have had extreme weather conditions with some damaging storms and even some weeks of drought but we seem perhaps to have suffered less than other areas in Cumbria. We mostly kept our electricity supply but some residents and businesses lost telephone and internet connection which proved extremely difficult. A letter from the Parish Council has been sent to Dame Melanie Hawes, CEO of Ofcom, explaining that we need urgent investment in our digital infrastructure. We have at least 30 businesses and receive thousands of visitors a year but have unreliable internet and telephone services and no, or very poor, mobile signal. Prolonged torrential rainfall this year caused flooding in at least one property and Hydrosacs obtained from the Melbreak Communities Emergency Plan were deployed in a few other with effect.

Councillors have scrutinised planning applications and none have been particularly contentious apart from BT's plan to remove our Public Telephone Kiosk which is vital for visitors to call emergency services. Our objections were taken note of and it's still with us! We look forward to Buttermere Camp Site having accommodation on site for the owners having got planning permission for a house there.

Our roads have suffered from extreme use and extreme weather. Potholes and broken edges are a persistent problem, likewise rainwater gullies. The recently introduced Highways fault reporting website and phone number makes reporting faults much easier and some longstanding problems have been addressed. Problems are constant though and serious money needs to be spent on resurfacing long stretches rather than constant filling and refilling. The hot tar patches have been a little more successful.

Mill Beck Hydro-electricity project.

Work continues to develop the project thanks to further grant funding from the Rural Communities Energy fund. The aim is to produce renewable energy from Mill Beck as a step towards decarbonising Buttermere. The project is being run by Melbreak Renewable Energy Community Interest Company, of which I am one of the directors, and it is hoped that in future as well as supplying renewable energy locally there will be some profit to be shared among the Melbreak Communities, which of course includes us.

Dark Skies

Buttermere Parish Council have been supporting the Dark Skies Initiative which aims to reduce light pollution, damaging to wildlife and which stops us seeing the stars. We fortunately have no street lights and came off extremely well in a lighting audit carried out by The Friends of the Lake District. The mantra is to have the right lighting in the right place at the right time. Fortunately, the one business which was causing problems are taking steps to resolve the issues and I thank them.

Council Members.

Back in May 2020 Councillors Mark Richardson and Alan Beard resigned and I would like to thank them for their work over the years.

Also then, Councillor Raymond Beard stood down as Chairman but thankfully remained as a council member. I know you would want me to pay special tribute to the nearly 40 years of service to our council and community, for 19 years of which he was chairman of Buttermere Parish Council and send our good wishes and thanks to him. He resigned fully from the council in May this last year.

Adrian McGuire, owner of The Bridge Hotel was co-opted and welcomed to the council in September 2020 and this last September we welcomed Katherine Beard, Raymond's daughter, and Harriet Fear Davies as new councillors. I believe we have a good representative mix of councillors with diverse skills and knowledge and we are fortunate to have our clerk, Mike Milner who works so hard on our behalf. Huge thanks to you, Mike!

From 1st April 2023 Allerdale district Council and Cumbria County Council will be no more and instead we will be part of Cumberland Unitary Authority. We will have to wait and see what all the upheaval will mean for Buttermere Parish Council and are grateful to CALC (Association of Local Councils) for their continued information and advice.

Buttermere is a farming community and farmers and farming vital to its continuing rich heritage. Recently signed Trade Agreements with Australia and New Zealand will increase the challenges to

sheep farmers but more people are recognising the many benefits of good quality, locally produced food of which we should be proud, and lamb prices have held up this year.

We are a tourist hot-spot and while we want to continue to welcome visitors and the businesses that support them, we must not become overrun. I think I speak for all councillors in saying we care deeply about this place. Who knows what is in store but I'm sure if we all work together, we can make things the best they can be?

Thank you all,

Yvette Kahane

Chair, Buttermere Parish Council 1st March 2022