

## Buttermere Parish Council

### Minutes of the extraordinary parish council meeting held on Tuesday 18th October 2022 in The Old School Room at 7.30pm.

The chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Y Kahane (chair), A McGuire, K Beard, H Fear Davies (vice chair), R Wilkinson, E Beard.

District and County Councillors: Cumberland Shadow Councillor J Perry.

Clerk: Mike Milner. Plus C Poate (chair Lorton Parish Council), P Poole (Blind--Bothel P.C)

Apologies for absence: J Temple (BPC), D Robinson (Loweswater P C Chair)  
Emma Moody (LDNP), Jane Saxon (NT).

Invited guest speakers, Tony Watson (LDNP), Bruce Hardy (NT) and Mark Astley (NT).

**321.00 Apologies.** As noted above.

**322.00 Buttermere Parish Council in conjunction with both Lorton and Loweswater Parish Councils, have invited members of the LDNP Authority, Emma Moody, Lead Strategy Adviser, Recreational and Sustainable Transport, and Tony Watson, Head of Visitor Services and Communications, Safer Lakes Team Leader, plus from National Trust, Jane Saxon NT General Manager, North and West Lakes, Bruce Hardy, NT Visitor Experience Team and Neil Winder NT Countryside Manager.**

**The objective is to discuss recent experiences covering "visitor management" and how looking to the future the visitor experience can be managed to accommodate visitor expectations, plus the routine of local residents, local businesses and transport services and very importantly access for emergency service vehicles for both local residents and visitors.**

**To facilitate the discussion topics, attached for the recipients of this agenda by email, was a document compiled by Buttermere Parish Council raising issues and problems, with locations where appropriate, perceived potential solutions and general comments.**

322.01 Unfortunately Emma Moody (LDNP), Jane Saxon (NT) and Neil Winder (NT), planned speakers were unavailable, Tony Watson (LDNP) was here with Bruce Hardy (NT) and they were joined by local NT Ranger Mark Astley.

322.02 Tony Watson took on the role of lead speaker and launched into a very detailed explanation of the team and its set up that he had at his disposal. He was well known to Buttermere councillors virtually as he was the main responder to the CVAlerts email used to report issues which arise, although none had met him in person previously.

322.03 Tony advised how the team was built from assorted personnel within LDNP and NT since the original Covid lockdown. He explained how it started as the lockdown was eased in its initial form and the problems generated by folk who had basically not been former countryside visitors, became visitors and they did not understand the countryside code for want of a better expression. His team members are known as Safer Lakes Officers and they operate from 6am until 11pm and are still operating even though it is no longer the holiday season currently. The officers include ex special service officers and ex police officers. They will attend to situations which the community raise concerns about and are not concerned about who the landowner is at the point of issue. He stated that since the system had been set up over three years ago, they had received over 11,500 CVAAlerts emails. Those present were concerned about his statement that the group could be disbanded next March. As the lockdown rules were eased so the Safer Lakes Officers had found their powers of enforcement reduced.

322.04 Tony was currently in discussion with all agencies for the continuation of the Tactical Visitor Management Group, as team were now known. As the powers were reduced though the NT team had lost staff to maintain their conservation commitment. As Bruce Hardy explained, Mark Astley as a NT Ranger, for example still had to maintain his conservation commitment and the problems experienced in the Buttermere valley and associated areas were also present in Wasdale and Borrowdale and NT North and West Lakes areas had now been combined. Mark's core purpose had at the worst period been just clearing up after folk. They had 1815 litter picking tools and since June of this year had needed and filled 62 skips of rubbish. There had been 1322 reported cases of fly tipping. All these are items of expenditure not budgeted for. All team officers had had to learn to be interactive with visitors and their anti-social actions. The vast majority of visitors when challenged did not realise that their actions were inappropriate. Sometimes the interaction with visitors could be very challenging, but by and large problem situations were defused and a safe resolution found.

322.05 All present listening were amazed and impressed to discover one method used when moving fly campers was to approach the individuals and actually ask them to move to a proper registered campsite and provide them with a voucher to cover the first nights camping fee. A major problem is that there is no criminal law of trespass, and civil remedies are untimely, so diplomacy was required and certainly when dealing with campervan owners there was likely to be an issue that the driver will have probably been consuming alcohol, so Safer Lakes Officers could not create a drink drive event.

322.06 As councillors listened to the information being relayed the question asked of Tony and his team, was whether Buttermere and other local parishes were being over reactive to the situations reported. There was a reassurance that the communication balance was fine. It was evident that visitors chose to vandalise signs, 11000 have been put up over the period and that more replacement cheap signs were being made available.

322.07 On the spreadsheet circulated to all prior to the meeting to enable the team to have answers to issues raised, toilets were a major problem. If portaloos are sited in certain areas, they attract complaints that they are not appropriate for the landscape. Or users find them filthy so go behind the facility anyway. Mark Astley also pointed out that at Fletchers Field the sheep fold is a favourite place for humans to use as a toilet. There are ongoing discussions about the use of more CCTV, actual and dummy cameras.

322.08 In hot spells of weather the visitor numbers are swollen by local visitors from the west coast and Carlisle. As Cllr A M pointed out to the meeting these local visitors did not tend to actually bring any monetary gain to the area. They often brought all their food and drink from supermarkets in their local areas, before descending on the lakes. He also pointed out the issue of the public toilets in Buttermere being a facility that charges, this unfortunately causes more problems for his and other local business owners who have visitors using their toilet facilities which are not connected to the mains. Could the charge at the public toilet not be removed, maybe by increase the parking charge? It was agreed that Tony Watson would raise the matter with appropriate LDNP officers and arrange a meeting with Buttermere chair Cllr Y K at a future date.

322.09 Parking was on the spreadsheet and Tony Watson advised he had a CCC contact who appeared to have the magic wand to get things done. He would arrange a meeting for the parishes with him and also the new local police chief. There were discussions about a recent transport seminar via Zoom concerning the control of traffic management in the Lake District. One speaker had pointed out that in the Snowdonia National Park, the authorities had resorted to towing all inappropriately parked vehicles, a ploy local councils wanted in the roads around the lakes, but Tony Watson didn't think that was operable in Cumbria as Snowdonia is in Wales and a different legislation, although it had proved very successful. He did state that Cumbria police were now officially trialling camera photography, which meant a police car could drive by and photograph all illegally parked vehicles and issue tickets at a later date. Not an immediate solution, but long-term may prove a deterrent especially once social media spread the possibility of such fines. It was said that the Enforcement teams were now attending earlier in the day and issuing tickets and using larger ticket envelopes so that passing motorist could see that tickets were being issued. There were discussions about creating new or extended car parking. NT had attempted to extend Lanthwaite car park (Scale Hill) some years ago, but that had been rejected from a planning perspective by LDNP. It was an acknowledged fact that people would often prefer to park badly and risk a ticket rather than use paid for parking facilities. Cllr A M raised the problem of coaches parking in Buttermere between the Buttermere Lodge Hotel and the Bridge Hotel. Mark Astley pointed out that the coaches should deposit their passengers and then use the old quarry, a designated coach park. He would take up the issue with coach operators.

322.10 The Cumberland Shadow councillor J P, has a meeting organised with the police in Penrith and she stressed that for issues requiring the police, including parking and obstruction the use of [101email@cumbria.police.uk](mailto:101email@cumbria.police.uk) was an efficient way to get a police response.

322.11 Local farmers were concerned about sheep worrying, and Tony said his team could provide more signage to put up. Other issues included gates being left open, but groups of walkers would approach a closed gate, the first person through would open the gate, but the last person tended to think it was an open gate they walked through so not close it. Human nature lack of understanding the countryside.

322.12 Councillors asked "Why promote the Lake District?" Tony explained some of the steps that were being taken around tourism promotion and social media. At 9.12pm Tony Watson left the meeting. The spreadsheet content was nearly completed. Issue with the local youth hostel and it using large coaches to ferry in those using the facility, and it was agreed that should be a local discussion. As Mark Astley pointed out a recent user was Lorton School. Cllr K B enquired about Bluebell time volunteers to assist with directing tourists at Rannerdale and additional temporary parking at Rannerdale as there was last year.

Also, a simple sign at Cinderdale saying Lake this Way, as visitors did not understand maps or where footpaths to Crummock Water were located so often ended up trespassing across fields to access it.

322.13 The chair thanked the guests and all councillors from Buttermere and other parish councils, for their attendance. It was to be hoped that the possible meetings with other agencies mentioned would be organised and that all could look forward to enhanced visitor management in 2023 and future years.

**323.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 6th December 7.30pm, at Old School Room, Buttermere.**

**Meeting closed 9.31pm**

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### **Buttermere Parish Council**

#### **Minutes of the extraordinary parish council meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February October 2022 in The Old School Room at 7.30pm.**

The chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Y Kahane (chair), A McGuire, K Beard, H Fear Davies (vice chair), L Kyle, J Temple

District and County Councillors: Cumberland Shadow Councillor J Perry.

Clerk: Mike Milner. Plus C Poate (chair Lorton Parish Council), 2 Buttermere Lodge Hotel representatives

Apologies for absence: D Robinson (Loweswater P C Chair) Emma Moody (LDNP), Jane Saxon (NT), Bruce Hardy (NT) J Houghton (CCC) R Wilkinson, E Beard.

Invited guest speaker, Tony Watson (LDNP).

**340.00 Apologies.** As noted above.

**341.00 Buttermere Parish Council in conjunction with both Lorton and Loweswater Parish Councils, have invited members of the LDNP Authority, plus members from National Trust. The objective is to discuss actions since the Oct' 2022 meeting covering "visitor management".**

341.01 The chair thanked all present for their attendance. The Buttermere Court Hotel had sent 2 representatives and with the exception of Tony Watson the invited speakers were unable to attend. He was invited to update what he had achieved since the last EGM in October.

341.02 Tony Watson started by confirming that the email alert system would continue again this year. The system would again work in response to emails sent to [help@lakedistrict.gov.uk](mailto:help@lakedistrict.gov.uk) but the original CVAalerts email address would also function. The

system was for reporting visitors who were doing damage, not to those who were just being annoying. Tony had wanted to involve the police in the meeting but the force is currently undergoing a restructuring in the area and although they are keen to meet the parish councils, not this meeting, hopefully by May, for that meeting. It was stressed that trespass as an excuse to call the police would not produce a presence, however they will attend for aggravated trespass, which includes when damage to trees is occurring.

341.03 The Highways contact James Houghton had sent his apologies for the meeting but he will supply an email of what he can do and it was his attention to get all faded or broken double yellow lines sorted prior to the holiday season starts. Provide him with problem issues, e.g. opposite the Bridge Hotel and he will resolve asap.

341.04 Based on experience gained over the past seasons, the Safer Lakes teams will only move on inappropriate camping and camper vans, sometimes offering vouchers to encourage them to move to a proper campsite, but the team will not move isolated small tents who are obviously seasoned and responsible visitors.

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341.05 Tony advised that in the height of the season there would be multi-agency nights in Buttermere, which would involve lots of visible police and other agency personnel so councillors would be welcome to join the patrols, in Hi-Viz jackets to experience the way the patrols are accepted or otherwise by the public.

341.06 Roles and actions were being shaped as the systems evolved, in Grasmere the volunteers were also litter picking. Last August bank holiday the parking enforcement team were in Buttermere early morning after doing the urban red route patches. The result was a much better controlled traffic management, parking tickets were visible from early morning. That system will apply for this coming year with enforcement teams coming to Buttermere before moving on to other areas such as Keswick.

341.07 The most efficient way to contact to the police is not ring 101, but use the following email [101@cumbria.police.uk](mailto:101@cumbria.police.uk) that inbox is constantly monitored.

341.08 There had been a discussion in October about the toilets in Buttermere and the charge for use and should they be free. Cllr A M had organised a local business meeting about the use of local business toilets as they were free. After an exchange about use, cleaning and options between Cllrs, Tony and also the representatives from Buttermere Court Hotel, it was finally decided to explore the option that at high visitor number times the local volunteers would have the authority to make the public toilets free to use. Tony would have to obtain approval for this.

341.09 During the various discussions concerning traffic management it was pointed out the local police were hoping to have the same facility as tested in other areas, including Windermere, that meant a police vehicle could patrol with a camera; illegally parked vehicles could be photographed and then issued with a ticket for their illegal activity in the post within the prescribed time.

341.10 It was agreed a meeting in May should be held, but Tony Watson was adamant that it required input and attendance by at least two other agencies. The chair thanked Tony, the guests and all councillors from Buttermere and other parish councils, for their attendance.

**342.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm, at Old School Room, Buttermere.**

Meeting closed 8.42pm

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