

Buttermere Parish Council

Minutes of the Buttermere Annual Parish Meeting immediately followed by the ordinary parish council meeting held on Tuesday 7th March 2023 in The Old School Room at 7.30pm.

The chairman declared the parish meeting open at 7.30pm

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

District and County Councillors: None present

Clerk: Mike Milner.

Apologies for absence: E Beard (BPC) A Bowness (CCC) J Perry Cumberland shadow Cllr.

343.00 Apologies. As noted above.

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

Parish meeting closed at 7.38pm.

345.00 The chair declared the parish council meeting open at 7.39pm.

346.00 Apologies for absence as recorded above.

347.00 Declaration of Interest. None.

348.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last Buttermere parish council meeting held on Tuesday 7th December 2022 as a true record. Also approve the minutes of the extra ordinary meeting 21st February 2023.

348.01 Both minutes were approved by councillors present and duly signed.

349.01 Public participation, none present.

350.00 Police Matters.

350.01 Clerk had as normal circulated the police e newsletters as they were issued. It was hoped that for the next meeting a representative of the police would attend.

351.00 Development applications.

351.01 Clerk advised that Hope Farm Barn, 7/2022/2269 considered at the December meeting, which the council had objected to, had been withdrawn and the resident who had attended the parish council meeting had actually written to the clerk on Christmas Day thanking the council on their support.

351.02 The clerk had submitted the majority decision to LDNP planning office, confirming support for the Gatesgarth Mast.

351.03 Gatesgarth Farm 7/2023/2018, this was an application advising of windows, roof lights, flue and doors as demanded by application 7/2020/2055. There was no consultation required, it was a condition formality.

352.00 District and County Councillors Reports. Neither present.

353.00 Update on Crummock Water weir removal. Submission made to LDNP.

353.01 Cllr H F-D advised that she had made the report to the LDNP Planning Officer pointing out the 3 parishes concerns. She had attended the recent public meeting in Cockermouth organised by UU. She was pleased to see that other consultees had also pointed out the need for additional car parking at Scale Hill as the work was undertaken. UU had noted the swimming issues and water levels and sudden changes in water level as the level was reduced, there would be no gradual beach slope. She was already compiling a further list of questions as all Cllrs across the 3 parishes considered the material now available. One question is where are UU defining the base water line for all their possible scenarios? Cllr H F-D had spoken at length with an English Nature representative and they were excited at the proposals. An important factor is that UU always anticipated a reduced potential flooding risk in Cockermouth, but the improvement has risen from 10% to 25%.
353.02 Cllr L K did focus all Cllrs minds when he asked why in this time of potential water shortages and drought due to climate change was the weir being removed? There were concerns that the wildlife had taken decades to adapt to the higher water level and it would take a similar time to adapt to a lower level. After a constructive discussion it was agreed that Cllrs could consider the options about removal between now and the next parish council meeting. As Cllr H F-D pointed out no one wanted the responsibility of maintaining the structure, UU did not have the funds and neither did the EA, there was an insurance aspect to be considered in case the worst case scenario occurred.

354.00 Actions since visitor management EGM and May 2023 parish council meeting content.

354.01 Clerk had circulated the email about traffic proposals and what could be expected. Other than that, in the short space of time since the last EGM nothing more to report. Except the Big Screen project had been cancelled. There may well be no emergency parking for the Bluebells at Rannerdale this year.

354.02 Cllrs all agreed that due to the serious nature of this visitor management project and they all wished a maximum attendance of agency personnel at the next meeting. With Cllrs late lambing commitments, the proposed next meeting which was scheduled for 30th May, immediately after a bank holiday should, to remove potential holiday commitment clashes with other agency employees, should be rescheduled for Tuesday 6th June. Unanimously agreed.

355.00 Latest broadband and 4G/5G developments.

355.01 Clerk had circulated a recent media cutting which indicated that parts of The Lake District were being prioritized for broadband and mobile and signal availability.

355.02 Various Cllrs had noticed that there was a commercial broadband installation company in the Buttermere area and valley surveying the area. The same company is actively installing pulling cables and then fibre lines in other local suburban areas in Cumbria. No further information from the Cumbria County Council broadband team.

356.00 Coronation celebrations plans.

356.01 There are no plans in Buttermere to hold a specific Coronation celebration event, however the Loweswater Hall Committee were holding an event for anyone inclined to join in.

357.00 Progress reports, clerk.

357.01 clerk had managed to get the parish laptop to embrace Windows 10 and its 22H2 software update, so now currently operating in a useable and semi speedy fashion.

357.02 Precept figure as per minute 333.01 requested £2500.00.

357.03 Highways still being chased for the repair to the drain and gully which goes under the road to the beck, outside Cllr L K property entrance opposite Old School Room.

357.04 Clerk is currently communicating with FOL Dark Skies team, about property brightly lit in Buttermere.

357.05 Clerk sought guidance from Cllrs about the proposed Finger Post at the Rannerdale car parks, offering guidance to Crummock Water. It was decided that the one proposed post was insufficient and two required. Clerk to contact NT.

358.00 Councillors reports.

358.01 apart from the comments by the chair in her annual report about the progress of the Hydro project no other reports.

359.00 Correspondence.

359.01 Email of thanks from a local residence for assistance with recent planning submission at Hope Farm Barn.

359.02 Exchange of emails about the proposed Outdoor Picture Palace with NT. The proposal has now been withdrawn.

359.03 UU employee Paul Wheadon had asked for assistance in promoting the latest public meetings and clerk had inserted a promo in the Link, which was thought to have increased local footfall to the Cockermouth venue.

359.04 The recent planning application concerning the Gatesgarth mobile 4G mast had seen the clerks email inbox full of emails on the topic.

359.05 The local Mountain Rescue team are celebrating 70 years this year as a volunteer group and would like to use the Old School Room to promote the anniversary and also perhaps attend a parish council meeting for a brief presentation.

359.06 Clerk had received numerous emails and phone calls from a non-resident, who had a tie to the area and read out a couple of paragraphs of the latest email and advised that he responded in an appropriate manner. Chair and vice-chair were fully aware of the exchanges.

359.07 Clerk was finally able to produce an HMRC Notice of Penalty cancellation letter dated 10th February, for two implied default periods in 2022, July to September.

359.08 UU have advised that for the next public meeting sessions, September 2023, they will consider a local venue. Possibly Loweswater village hall.

360.00 Payments for Approval

Intpay79, M Milner, £107.80, salary Dec paid 31/1/2023

Intpay80, HMRC, PAYE, £27.00, Dec paid 31/1/2023

Intpay81, M Milner, Salary £107.80 Jan 2023, paid 1/2/2023

Intpay82, HMRC, PAYE, £27.00, Jan 2023 PAYE

Intpay83, M Milner £140.40 Feb salary £108.00 expenses Dec – Feb £32.40

Intpay 84, HMRC PAYE £26.80, February.

HSBC Bank Charges £8 per month up to and including December to February, £24.00

All approved

339.00 Date and time of the next meeting. Tuesday 6th June 7.30pm, at Old School Room, Buttermere.

Meeting closed 8.18pm

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of 4) Chairman.....6th June 2023

Buttermere Parish Council Chair's Report 7th March 2023

Buttermere Parish Council (BPC) have had a very busy year since my last report.

Corona Virus has still been with us but we have had no more lockdowns and all meetings have been in person.

Perhaps most importantly we held Extraordinary Meetings in May, October and February, to discuss Visitor Management with representatives from Loweswater, Blindbothele and Lorton Parish Councils together with invited representatives from The Lake District National Parks Authority(LDNP) and the National Trust. This cooperative and proactive approach to problems has been helpful. We have too many times felt overwhelmed with thoughtless parking, littering, fly-camping, sheep worrying and just too many people, cars and motorhomes. However teams are doing their best to mitigate against and solve the problems and we are very grateful to LDNP's Tony Watson and his Safer Lakes Officers together with NT wardens who have on many occasions responded rapidly and effectively to requests for help via the email (help@lakedistrict.gov.uk) and we are relieved to hear their work will continue this coming year. We want to enable visitors to enjoy this beautiful valley whilst allowing lives of residents, especially working farmers, to be as little interrupted as possible. Not easy! Working together is definitely the way forward and plans are evolving for this coming year.

We have been in communication with Cumbria County Council Traffic management who have taken on board comments from us and enforcement officers will be patrolling earlier in the day as we have shown that to be effective.

The roads themselves are constantly needing edge and pothole repair and we continue to report and be in communication.

We have not had many planning applications but all have been carefully scrutinised.

Briefly;

We objected to the conversion of a rural barn into a 5 bedroomed dwelling and that application has been withdrawn.

A planning application for the installation of a 45KW micro hydroelectric scheme on Mill Beck was supported by the council and the project moves forward, slowly! The directors are hopeful of getting all the necessary permissions through very soon and of starting work this year.

Although not a planning application we were invited to comment on a scoping document (217 pages) from United Utilities who are planning to remove the dam at the bottom of Crummock Water. Councillors and our clerk did many hours of work on our response to LDNPA, including having direct communication with United Utilities. We are very aware that the removal of the dam and subsequent lowering of the level of Crummock water will have impact to a greater or lesser extent on the environment generally, landscape, wildlife, and on farming, residents and visitors. This will by no means all be negative. Returning the lake to a more natural state will have benefits but we have tried to ensure that sufficient thought and weight is given to all points we felt to be Important. The construction phase will no doubt cause some difficulties but we have tried to ensure that negative impacts, including availability of visitor parking which in itself affects all of us, are recognised and mitigated.

Another important application to come our way was for installation of a 25m. communications mast at Gatesgarth, primarily to support the emergency services but also to enable mobile phone coverage. Buttermere Parish Council have supported this application with a majority but not unanimous decision. Telecommunications in Buttermere valley are poor. mobile phone signals weak, patchy, often non-existent and the fixed infrastructure old and prone to faults and outages

The need to improve communications, foremost for the emergency services themselves and to improve the ability of residents and visitors to call the emergency services in the first place, was the driving factor for those of us who supported the application. All councillors, including supporters, are very mindful of the detrimental effect it will have on the landscape.

We have been in communication with the Connecting Cumbria team at Cumbria County Council with currently no news of initiatives which will help Buttermere have faster and more reliable Broadband. We are waiting to hear if we will be included in the Fibrus Project Gigabit project. Their contractors, Viberoptics have been surveying locally.

Not a planning issue but we felt the NT's proposal to use of the quiet fields by Crummock Water at Rannerdale for an 'outdoor Cinema Experience' to be totally inappropriate and the idea has been dropped.

BPC continues to support the Dark Skies Initiative and visitors and residents alike comment on the beauty of night sky and it is so important for wildlife.

The number of athletic events, including swimming, road and trail races seems to increase and we hope to be given more information about them before they take place this year.

The makeup of BPC remains the same but in May, due to work pressures, Edward Beard stood down as Vice Chair, remaining a councillor, and Councillor Harriet Fear Davies was elected in his place. Our clerk, Mike Milner, continues his hard work with, and on behalf of us. In April this year Cumberland Shadow Council will take over from the existing District and County Councils as the new Unitary Authority. County Councillor Alan Bowness did not stand for election to the shadow Council and we said goodbye to him in May, thanking him for his contributions over 8 years and we welcomed Shadow Cumberland Councillor Jill Perry to our meetings.

I would like to thank, sincerely, all councillors for not only attending and contributing to meetings but working behind the scenes. I extend particular thanks to Mike, our clerk, for his invaluable help and efforts on our behalf and Councillor Fear Davies, our Vice Chair. I think I speak for all of us in saying we care deeply about Buttermere and will continue to work hard to do our best for those living and working here and for those who come to enjoy it, respectfully.

Thank you, Yvette Kahane