

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF SEDBERGH

Minutes of the monthly Meeting of the Parish Council of Sedbergh held virtually via Zoom at 7.30 pm on Thursday 8th April 2021

Present: Councillors Lancaster, Welti, McPherson, Cowperthwaite, Longlands, Brooks and Arnold.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sedgwick and Bromley and accepted by the meeting. Cllr Capstick had joined the meeting, however, due to a technical issue (beyond his control) was unable to participate. One Casual Vacancy.

2. Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Sedbergh Town Twinning

The Sedbergh Town Twinning group gave a short presentation to Members. Representatives advised that more volunteers were needed in order to keep the Group going at this critical time. Whilst there were still a core number of people involved, the Group felt that younger members were now required, also hopeful that further support could be sought via the local schools. All Members were encouraged to think of ways to support the Group and ensure its longevity for the town (and perhaps surrounding areas) for the future.

5. Public Participation, including presentation by Stephenson Halliday (Baliol Site)

A short update was given to Members in regard to ongoing plans/proposals at the former Baliol School site. Members had previously been advised that there was a planning application due to be submitted to Yorkshire Dales National Park for mixed use of the former school site, which would see permission sought for some 20 dwellings (seeing a variety of affordable and market value housing) including apartments, houses and accessible (one level) living. Also included would be employment space/units, home working spaces and potential space for a nursery and scope for expanding businesses already existing in the town. Additionally, fledgling business and potential startups, where space would be available for use. It was anticipated that existing habitat/trees, where possible, would also be maintained. Members raised the notion of ‘assisted living/sheltered’ housing, though were advised that currently Cumbria County Council had not identified a need in the area. There were no other members of the Public present at the meeting.

6. Coronavirus Covid 19 – update on relevant information, including any urgent matters

(See additionally, Sedbergh Parish Council Finance Committee 5th April 2021 Item 4). Members discussed the legislation (allowing virtual meetings), noting the expiry date and, therefore, the need to return to face to face meetings in May. Given that legislation would not permit an indoor meeting (in a public Hall) prior to the 17th May, Members agreed that both annual meetings and the normal monthly meeting would be scheduled for Thursday 27th May 2021 (in the People’s Hall, main Hall). This would allow Members (that wished to) to meet face to face and carry out various requirements of the Council at that time. Including, but not exclusively, to elect a Chairman and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in the prescribed times. The next full council meeting would then be scheduled for Thursday 8th July 2021 (after the Governments current road map date of 21st June 2021 (at the earliest), when various other restrictive measures would be lifted. Given the new dates, agreed, Members additionally resolved that any payments required during May and June respectively, would be considered and authorized by the Finance Committee who would continue to meet.

Members did discuss other options that were potentially available, such as delegation of authority to the Clerk or continuing to meet online, but acknowledged that the latter could be deemed ultra vires. Acknowledging that these new dates, would allow the Council to act as lawfully as possible in the current situation. Members further acknowledged that some Members may not be able to attend a face-to-face meeting, for varying reasons, and this was completely beyond their control and understandable. Finally, Members noted that if it were possible to allow Members to join the physical meeting, virtually, then attempts would be made to facilitate this. Cllr Welti confirmed that the Covid Support Group telephone continues, mainly used for prescription collections at this time.

7. Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council 11th March 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2021 were adopted and will be signed by the Chairman, Cllr Lancaster, when reasonable.

8. Matters noted from the Minutes of 11th March 2021

Item 20 ii) Correspondence, wild flowers. Cllr McPherson advised Members that he had contacted Yorkshire Dales National Park and that it was understood that Friends of the Dales had recently launched a Roadside Verges campaign, focusing on the Yorkshire Dales. Being guided by Plantlife's advice, they are currently in discussion with authorities responsible for verge cutting. There were no other matters to note, all ongoing items were included on the Agenda.

9. Report/update from District/County Council

Apologies were received from County Cllr Cotton and Pye; Cllr Mitchell did not attend. Cllr Kevin Lancaster was able to advise the closing date for the Unitary Authority Bids is 19th April 2021, an update would follow thereafter in respect of potential new proposals.

10. Casual Vacancy

An advert had been placed in the April Lookaround, Members agreed that it was difficult to appoint at this, as most people were restricting contact.

11. Planning

The Planning Committee had not met, and the Clerk was requested to schedule a Zoom meeting for Wednesday 14th April at 7pm. A further meeting would then be anticipated on Wednesday 5th May 2021 (prior to the expiration date of virtual meetings) so that future arrangements for meetings could be discussed for the period between then, and the easing of Lockdown measures in June (should a meeting be required).

12. Finance

Members received the minutes from the meeting held on Monday 5th April 2021 and resolved to adopt them, also resolving to approve the list of payments included and (attached) and the annual review of the Asset Register and the Risk Assessment. Members noted that financial matters in relation to the Annual Returns, would be considered at the meetings scheduled for 27th May 2021.

13. Grants

There were no grant applications in March 2021.

15. Amenities Committee

The Amenities Committee had not met; however, the playground inspection report had just been received for the play park at Howgill Lane. The Clerk was asked to circulate the report to Members of the Committee, so that measures could be put in place to carry out (or plan) for any repairs required. It was also noted that a bench at Ghylas picnic site had been reported as damaged and Cllr Arnold advised this could be considered as a Sedbergh School Challenge Week project (along with any other suitable works needed in the area). Finally, it was noted, that Sedbergh School were progressing seed/verti drain work at the playing field and that Sedbergh and Dent United were playing all remaining home matches at Dent, to allow this additional work at the pitch.

16. Update on Projects

Maryfell Street sign, the winning design drafts were awaited following delays due to furlough.

Joss Lane car park – no progress to report in regard to resurfacing at this time. However, Members noted a request from a resident north of the car park in connection with improvements to sewerage works being investigated at the area of Low Langstaffe. This might include looking at ways of joining existing drains/sewers already located under Joss Lane car park and Members agreed that a further approach could be made when more information was known. If any improvements works could coincide in the future, then Members would consider further at that time and try and accommodate where possible.

Loftus Hill car park – the Clerk has requested an update on the lease, with Sedbergh School, from the Solicitors.

Jubilee Fountain – delayed due to Covid restrictions/availability of United Utilities.

B4RN – an update on the outline proposals is awaited from B4RN in connection with planned routes at Queen's Garden and the playing field.

Electric Vehicle Charging – (see also Finance - Item 8) SLDC had now been in contact in connection with the consent required for an installation, however, the formal letter of consent was still awaited.

17. Queen's Garden

Members of the Committee and the Friends of Queen's Garden confirmed the trees has now been planted, with huge thanks to Sedbergh School's grounds team and Friends of Queen's Garden. It was resolved that tree labels should now be commissioned (Cllr Arnold advised that he would be content to make these, if Sedbergh Parish Council paid for the materials) and this kind offer was agreed by Members. The Clerk was requested to liaise directly in regard to potential designs, as previously indicated by the Friends of Queen's Garden. It was additionally resolved that a significant number of crocus bulbs could be purchased, say 1000+, and Cllr Arnold advised that this could be another project for Sedbergh School Challenge week later this year. It was also highlighted that bird boxes and squirrel boxes could be considered as part of a project at the garden. Further noted was a recent asbestos report requested for the shed roof situated at the bowling green car parking area and the need for the Committee to consider a tree safety survey during 2021. The Clerk advised that the previous arboriculturalist (who had completed a Tree Safety Survey in 2018) was now retiring and a new contractor would need to be identified to carry out an inspection.

18. Sedbergh Economic Partnership – Sedbergh Growth Framework, Members to consider adoption and priorities within the Framework

Following the presentation in March, Members resolved to adopt the Sedbergh Growth Framework. However, given the number of priorities highlighted in the document, agreed that consideration to this should be given at a future meeting. In the interim, Members would consider their own priorities within the lists and reach a consensus at a future meeting. Members were also mindful that each group represented on the Sedbergh Economic Partnership would also be doing the same in the coming weeks/months. Finally, it was noted for reference, that this document (and other recent substantial documents for the Sedbergh Economic Partnership) were currently being prepared by a Consultant that was employed by Sedbergh School.

19. Highways Matters

Members received an update on outstanding matters (attached) which included the completion of works at Crosedale Beck and planned works at other areas – including Cautley Road and Busk Lane. Particular concern had been raised for the current roadworks around Hebblethwaite Hall/Fox hound lane. Members further noted that CCC Highways had acknowledged the missing road/place name sign at Dowbiggin, but had advised that other road signs were a priority (such as warning signs). Cllrs Lancaster and McPherson (and the Clerk) had recently met informally with County Cllr Nick Cotton to discuss these issues, and the proposed path at Howgill Lane (see Item 19). **Additionally, Members were advised that an initial (and exploratory only) meeting was proposed with Cllr Nick Cotton, YDNPA and Cllr McPherson to discuss potential enhancements to a path at the river, to consider improved access for limited mobility users.

Given the low priority of the indicative place name signs by CCC Highways, Members discussed whether Sedbergh Parish Council could consider purchasing signs for some key areas throughout the Parish in the future. For example, Dowbiggin, Row Lane and Bluecaster Lane. The Clerk was asked to liaise with CCC Highways over necessary permissions that would be required for such signs, erected in the highway/verge, and potential costs.

Also discussed, was the attendance by the Chair Cllr Lancaster, along with Cllrs Capstick and McPherson (and the Clerk) to an informal Sedbergh Road Safety meeting recently held with several members of the Community and District Cllr Suzie Pye, where safer routes to school were discussed. This had included the ongoing concerns raised in regard to white lining/requirement of additional yellow lining around Long Lane/Castlegarth (and Station Road) and improvements required at the pedestrian crossings, previously highlighted by Sedbergh Parish Council. The Clerk will attend a meeting with District Cllr Suzie Pye, and representation from CCC Highways, in the near future - giving particular attention to the common routes to schools.

19. Havera to Highfield Villas – playing field path

Members discussed the potential for a path within the boundary of the playing field, alongside Howgill Lane, allowing a route (off the highway) to/from Woodside (north), Havera and the footpath to the fell. Members agreed that Cllr Arnold would approach a contractor to obtain an informal estimate of costs, for two potential routes - including joining directly to the path off Woodside, over the watercourse and/or installation of a slope from Howgill Lane down to the level of the playing field - and liaise further with the Clerk and the County Cllr Nick Cotton. Cllr Nick Cotton has already spoken to Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Management Committee at the People's Hall, further to the informal meeting noted above (Item 18 Highways Matters), to obtain their support for a potential project.

20. Correspondence

The attached Clerk's Report was considered by the meeting:

- i) Dog Fouling – District Cllr Suzie Pye was pursuing this with South Lakeland District Council in partnership with the Council and a new bin had been requested along with potential enforcement patrol.
- ii) Paved area at The Dalesman – Members noted concerns raised by residents in regard to the paved area, which was currently not accessible to pedestrians. However, Members had been informed by CCC Highways previously that the area was private curtilage and therefore, the area noted was private property.
- iii) Council Tax query – The Clerk had been informed that some council tax (as identified on annual council tax bills) in the area of Brigflatts had been incorrectly allocated to Dent Parish Council, the Clerk has raised the discrepancy with South Lakeland District Council and is awaiting an update.
- iv) Epic Events – running event scheduled on 9th May 2021, commencing at the playing field at Howgill Lane. The Council were advised that all appropriate measures were in place due to current Covid restrictions.
- v) CCC Highways – Members agreed that the Clerk should pursue consent for a planter at the corner of Joss Lane/Main Street.
- vi) Bridleway at Toll Bar – Members noted the enquiry about the bridleway and the obstructions at the eastern end of the route (at Guldrey), however, it was not within the remit of the Parish Council to assist further. It was noted, however, that the bridleway (where accessible) was open to walkers/bicycles and horse riders, YDNPA confirming that anyone using the bridleway must adhere strictly to the designated route.
- vii) Former BT phone box at Millthorp – Members had received an enquiry for further support at the former phone box (adopted by Sedbergh Parish Council) and resolved to agree financial support of £200 to purchase items (directly) required to enhance the former phone box and adjacent area.

- viii) Langstone Fell – Members noted that overnight campers had recently used the car parking area fly tipped waste upon their departure. The issue had been reported to South Lakeland District Council.
- ix) Epic Events running event (9th May 2021) and Coast2Coast Cycling event (26th June 2021)
- x) Chamber of Trade Committee – Members noted recent correspondence in regard to the notice boards at Joss Lane and Loftus Hill car parks, Late Night Opening and ideas raised (by others) in regard to the closure of Main Street to allow outside trading during April/May. Members agreed that the closure of Main Street was not practical, and would impact on other businesses in the town, they also noted that Late Night Opening was a promotional business event and should be run by those directly involved/benefiting from the event. Finally, it was resolved that Members would look at the current condition of the notice boards, agreeing that the information within them was no longer visible (as erected by The Chamber or Trade/Information Centre). It is understood that the Information Centre hold the keys for access and the faded posters should be removed as soon as practical. Members noted that they would assess the condition of the notice boards themselves, and see if they were salvageable.

21. Date and Time of next meeting – The Annual Parish Meeting, the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the normal monthly meeting were scheduled for Thursday 27th May 2021, commencing 7.00pm – in the Main Hall – Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh