

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF SEDBERGH

Minutes of the Meeting for the Parish Council of Sedbergh, held in the Committee Room, Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh at 7.30pm on Thursday 20th January 2022.

Present: Councillors Lancaster (Chair), Longlands, Capstick, Arnold, Sedgwick, Welti, Brooks, Bromley and Cowperthwaite.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr McPherson (Covid/health concerns) and accepted by the meeting. One Vacancy.

2. Declarations of Interest

There was no declaration of interest.

3. Finance

Members resolved to adopt the notes from the meeting held on 10th January 2022, including payments that were made, all anticipated/within budget. i) **Precept, South Lakeland District Council (attached), consider the recommended Precept of £41,160.14.** Members resolved to approve the recommended Precept request (alongside SLDC’s grant of £1772.74). The Chairman and Vice Chairman signed the formal request, with the Clerk. The Clerk will submit to South Lakeland District Council, prior to 31st January 2022, as required.

4. Planning Committee

i) To consider application S/03/55F Baliol House, Baliol School Site, Cautley Road, Sedbergh, LA10 5LQ. Hybrid planning permission comprising: i) outline planning application for new vehicular access and employment and community development (Reserved Matters: appearance of development only, with all other matters provided in detail) and ii) Full planning application for access, provision of a home-working hub for residents, residential development comprising the conversion of Baliol House to 9 dwellings and the construction of 12 new build dwellings, a site wide landscape and ecological enhancement scheme, provision of linked pedestrian and cycle access to the public rights of way network, cycle parking and the installation of all site utilities, renewable energy power supplies, sustainable drainage infrastructure and amenity infrastructure.

Comments by Sedbergh Parish Council. This application was considered by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 20th January 2022 and by unanimous vote wish to strongly object to the above application.

Members felt that the site was the only one in Sedbergh earmarked for commercial development and as such is important to the future health and prosperity of the town. Without viable locations for small businesses and light industrial units existing businesses in the town cannot grow nor are there any existing available properties for new businesses to locate in. The effect on employment opportunities is obvious and Sedbergh risks becoming a dormitory town for Kendal and other areas outside the YDNP. This is particularly true with the development of 50 new properties on the western edge of the town and numerous infill developments being proposed.

Members felt that the application was in effect just a housing development with the commercial element being largely tokenism and a gross under use of the commercial potential of the site. It was felt that the justifications presented as to the viability of the site had been compiled from the outset with the end goal of maximising the residential use and that they lacked rigor or merit.

The home/work hub was particularly highlighted. Sedbergh has had a similar venture on the Main Street in the old Udale building which was very underutilised and serves as proof that locally this idea has little value or traction. If there is one thing the pandemic has proven it is that nationally working from home is easily possible without the need for a ‘Hub’.

Whilst nursery provision is much needed in the town it was questioned if this was the right site on which to locate it, it appears also not to be backed up by a service provider wishing to operate there.

The council accepts that some residential development will be necessary to ensure the viability of the site but has previously supported a scheme that was rejected by the YDNP which had a much greater commercial balance along with specific businesses wishing to locate in the premises proposed. We consider it would represent a considerable inconsistency on behalf of the Park for that application to have been rejected, in part on the grounds of insufficient proportion of commercial use, and for a housing development then to be approved.

The council reserves comment on all other matters pertaining to the application and would continue to object to any revision to the current plans unless they represented a substantial increase in the proportion of light industrial, commercial, or business uses.

5. To consider urgent and ongoing matters concerning the Football Club and use of the Football Pitch on the Playing Field. Representatives from the Club are invited.

The Clerk confirmed that the Club had written to confirm they will reinstate the fence and sign in due course. It was noted that the donation had still not been received and that the Club were discussing payment of the donation at their next meeting. No Members of the Club attended, therefore, Members of the Parish Council resolved again to invite representatives of the Football Club to a Parish Council meeting to discuss any ongoing/outstanding issues in respect of the enhanced works. Members also noted that the enhanced works continue at the playing field, whilst acknowledging the Club’s previous additional donations, the Council confirm that costs for the playing field maintenance/enhancement attribute to some 10% of the annual precept for Sedbergh Parish. Additionally, it was noted that the Club have acknowledged that the pitch ‘is the best it has been in a lot of years’. The Clerk will write to the Club again, inviting them to attend a meeting of the Parish Council.

6. Correspondence

Receive any urgent items of correspondence and additionally consider items for the Agenda in February 2022. In addition to the Football Club, it was noted that B4RN hoped to attend to discuss their updated plans and that the Sedbergh Economic Partnership Economic Development Advisor, also hoped to attend in due course.

7. Date and Time of next meeting, monthly meeting is scheduled for Thursday 10th February 2022, commencing at 7.30pm in Committee Room, Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh.