

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF SEDBERGH

Minutes of the monthly Meeting for the Parish Council of Sedbergh, held at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh on Thursday 9 November 2023.

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

The Chairman requested a moment of reflection for the life of the late Mel Mackie, former South Lakeland District Councillor for Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale Ward.

Part I

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs McPherson and accepted by Members.

2. Requests for Dispensations

There were no new requests for additional Dispensations at this meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

Item 10 Grants, Sedbergh Music Festival 2024 – Cllr Welti

4. Public Participation

Members welcomed representation from Broadacre Housing in respect of the ongoing housing development off Station Road. The Broadacres’ Development Manager gave Members an update on progression, implications of significant financial increases in the construction industry, response for the Section 106 Agreement (see previous planning minute, below), and potential road works/closure required for the foul water connection. Members reiterated the position of the Parish Council in respect of their recent planning response and the reasons; however, the Parish Council confirmed their support for the development and will continue to work with the developers for a sensible way forward. An invitation was extended to Members to visit the site and it was resolved that the Clerk would liaise further with a suitable date. There were no other members of the public present.

S/03/637A. Section 73 application for variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) of S/03/637 (Full planning permission for erection of 49 No.dwellings (15 open market, 17 affordable/social rented, 17 affordable share ownership), external works and landscaping) in respect of relocation of Electrical Substation; amendments to the Infiltration Basin; amended road surface colours within the Site; removal of stone window/door heads) to the rears of Plots 16 to 62; revised locations of Bat/Bird boxes and amendments to the landscape drawings. The application was determined in August, with a Section 106 Agreement. The developer has asked to speak further to Sedbergh Parish Council in respect of the Section 106 and the Chairman of the Planning Committee will liaise further

5. To adopt the Minutes of the normal monthly meeting, held Thursday 12 October 2023.

The Minutes of the monthly meeting held on 12th October 2023 were adopted, and signed by the Chairman, as a true record of the meeting.

6. Matters noted from the Minutes of 12 October 2023

Cllr Longlands advised that, following the Correspondence, Item 17 iii) B4RN will now use existing BT routes and would no longer be crossing the car parking area at St Andrew’s Church. There were no additional matters to note, all items included on the agenda.

7. Report/update from Westmorland and Furness Council

Cllr Hodgson advised her disappointment at the recent allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding, notably as there had been no direct awards in the area.

Sedbergh Parish Council had previously submitted an expression of interest in Public Realm investment for the town, but were unable to progress at the Second Call, as Public Realm funding had been removed. Members noted that Public Realm monies had been allocated directly to Westmorland and Furness Council led projects. The Clerk was requested to seek further clarification of funding from W&F Council. Cllr Hodgson additionally mentioned that there were ongoing discussions regarding transport/college transport, however, further disappointment was noted in respect of the replacement weekday bus service – as it is now known that a tender has still not been issued. Members were shocked that this had not been actioned and it was resolved that a letter should be sent to Westmorland and Furness Council and Tim Farron MP, seeking an urgent update on the situation with the replacement week day bus service. Cllr Hodgson also advised that there was a large-scale project in respect of ash die back on all A and B roads, with significant felling required in the coming years. Cllr Mitchell had sent apologies, and noted that he hopes to convene a Respect Meeting soon.

8. Planning

The Planning Committee had not met recently, Cllr Arnold hopes to convene a meeting soon to discuss latest applications. In addition, in respect of Correspondence Item 17 iv) Noise complaint/deliveries on Main Street, Sedbergh. Members discussed the correspondence from a long-standing trader on Main Street to the chairman concerning a complaint about noise pollution. Members gave their unanimous support for trader and resolved to delegate the response and all future matters of this nature to the Planning Committee. For reference, it was noted that application S/03/45H Rosebank, Brigflatts Lane Full planning permission for creation of vehicle parking area, associated track and turning area, had been withdrawn.

9. Finance

Members resolved to accept the minutes from the meeting held on 6 November 2023, which included approval of all payments recommended and amendment to Clerk salary which followed the recent national pay award (backdated to April 2023) and payment for the tree works recently completed at Queen's Garden and New Bridge (see also Part II)

- i) Draft Budget 2024/2025 and Precept consideration. Members discussed the revised Budget, noting an anticipated 8% increase on the Precept to align with expected expenditure. It was noted that confirmation of any council grant and tax base information was not yet available from Westmorland and Furness Council.

10. Grants

Sedbergh Music Festival 2024 - Members resolved to approve the application, for the sum of £250.00, recommended by the Finance Committee.

11. Amenities Committee

The Amenities Committee had not met since their meeting in October. It was noted that fertilizer had recently been applied to the football pitch at Howgill Lane, with sand due to be spread in the coming weeks. For reference - Members noted that the cost of these alone, exceeded the annual donation from the senior football club (which had now been received). In respect of the playground – Cllr Arnold noted that he had held a preliminary meeting with a contractor/designer in respect of future hopes for the play area, and hopes to convene further site visits with other contractors in due course.

12. Update on Projects

The following ongoing projects/matters were discussed.

- i) Update on EV charging points at Joss Lane car park/Loftus Hill car park.

Permits for working on the highway (for each connection) are now being made to Westmorland and Furness Council. Due to delays, the Clerk has written to all funders and advised of the unavoidable delay into 2024. It was noted that the grant from OZEV/ORCS administered by The Energy Saving Trust had warned that a delay into the next finance year could risk remaining funds. The Clerk will continue to liaise, with emphasis also on the contractor to plan final install/commissioning as swiftly as possible.

- ii) Parish lighting – it is still hoped that the contractor will commence the replacement project in November/December. Once complete, a new audit of the lights will be completed, to update the Council's Estimated Annual Consumption (EAC) for the unmetered supply.

13. Queen's Garden

Members had not met, but hope to convene a further meeting to discuss ongoing matters. It was noted that the tree work (no.1 x felling) had been completed.

14. Future parking

Cllrs Bromley and Arnold had met with Cllr Mitchell and representatives of Westmorland and Furness Council Street Scene Team. It was noted that several recycling containers had now been relocated to the Spar site, resulting in 1 x parking space being brought back into use at Joss Lane car park. In addition, Members had considered alternative locations for recycling, which will continue to be investigated. The proposal to consider coach parking at New Bridge was also discussed further and if the area deemed suitable/viable, W&F may be able to progress an application for permitted development. The Clerk is currently liaising with designers over indicative costs to produce a design, including a swept path analysis. Regarding future enhancement/improvement scheme at Joss Lane (see also Item 7 Report/Update from W&F Council) Members noted that all funding available in the latest round, under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for public realm improvements had been allocated to projects being led by W&F Council. Members noted, for example, that Kirkby Stephen had been allocated up to £285,000 to develop a Westmorland and Furness Council led scheme that will look to enhance the visitor, heritage, and cultural offer of Kirkby Stephen. As noted Members have, therefore, requested the Clerk to engage further with W&F and establish how Sedbergh might be considered for such an injection of funds for the town's public realm in the future.

15. Highways Matters

- i) It had been noted at the August meeting, following contact from Sedbergh School with Westmorland and Furness Highways, the continued hope to improve road safety/consider crossing points. A date, however, for a meeting is still awaited.
- ii) Section 106 monies (Highways) it was believed that the allocated monies may be utilised in support for a proposed crossing/improvements (as noted above). However, information remained outstanding from Highways (W&F Council) at this time.

16. Sedbergh Economic Partnership (SEP)

Members received the latest notes and heard an update from Cllr Lancaster in respect of the Partnerships rejection of the proposal for the SEP to work under the financial auspices of the Parish Council, to allow full transparency and accountability. It was further noted that the SEP had also rejected the notion to become a formally constituted group. Members were disappointed that the SEP did not want to engage further with the Parish Council as lead/financial vehicle and resolved, at this stage, to therefore suspend attendance at future SEP meetings until such time as a) a full financial breakdown was made publicly available in respect of funding b) an independent chair was appointed and c) meetings became open to the public. The latter might help to dispel the concern heard from the community about the SEP being viewed as strategically led behind closed doors. It was also agreed that all members of the SEP should be made aware of the Council's explanation/reasons.

Members did note that a new website was currently being constructed by the SEP, to become more transparent and visible in the community – however, it was not clear how this website would be promoted in the community and what level of detail (including finances) would be published.

It was noted, at this item, for reference, that following the appointment of Cllr Arnold to the Sedbergh Community Trust, Grants Committee – that he was unable to attend his first meeting in November and, therefore, it was agreed that Cllr Bromley should attend in his absence.

17. Correspondence

The attached Clerk's Correspondence list was noted by the meeting:

- i) Daily weekday bus service – further to the last meeting, it was now understood that a tender has not yet been issued – see also Item 7.
- ii) Consider provision of financial institutions for the town – Members noted recent correspondence in respect of a Building Society and the Clerk was asked to seek additional information/invite to a future meeting.
- iii) Request to consider additional food van/s – People's Hall car parking area. Following the resolution at the meeting in October, a further pizza van had made an enquiry to attend. Members agreed that it would not be viable for a second mobile pizza van to attend, not least due to the limited days of availability at the PH car parking area.
- iv) Consider response relating to noise complaint/deliveries on Main Street, Sedbergh – Members had been made aware of a complaint (noise) being highlighted for a business on Main Street. Members agreed that the continuation of deliveries was essential for the business to continue and it was resolved that the Cllr Arnold would draft a response, to Westmorland and Furness Council et al, which would additionally be circulated to Members for ongoing reference.
- v) Provisional notice of future works M6 Junction 37-38 (2026/2029) – Members noted advance warning of significant works to this stretch of the M6.
- vi) Parking concern raised for parking around Long Lane area during school pick up/drop off – the Clerk will again highlight the issue with the local PCSO.

18. Date and Time of next meeting – monthly meeting, to be held from 7.30pm on Thursday 14 December 2023 in the Committee Room, Sedbergh People's Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh

In accordance with Standing Orders, it was proposed and resolved that the public should be excluded from the meeting by reason of the confidential information to be discussed in relation to the following item

Part II

9. Finance

Members discussed correspondence received in respect of boundaries at the New Bridge/Rawthey site and the recent tree works completed.