

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 10 October 2024

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

Part I

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lancaster and Welti. Following the meeting in September 2024 (Item 15) Members noted i) **the implications of the Local Government Act 1972, noting s.85 (1) of the 1972 Act and the vacation of office by failure to attend meetings.** With regret, therefore, Members resolved to formally note the vacancy due to non-attendance by Cllr McPherson. The Clerk was, therefore, asked to notify Westmorland and Furness Council of the vacated seat, due to ill health. This would allow an appropriate formal notice to be completed and displayed (attached) in respect of a ‘Vacancy for a Councillor’ and potential future Co-Option/or Election request. Members wished to sincerely thank Cllr McPherson for all his years of service to the Parish and, previously, to South Lakeland District Council and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

2. Requests for Dispensations

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

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Arnold and Sedgwick – Item 8 Planning (Sedbergh School Technology Centre)

4. Public Participation

One member of the public was present, but did not wish to speak.

5. To adopt the minutes of Sedbergh Parish Council monthly meeting, dated 12 September 2024

Members resolved to adopt the normal monthly minutes, dated 12 September 2024, and they were signed by the Chairman, Cllr Arnold.

6. Matters to note from the Minutes of 12 September 2024 not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

None, all relevant matters were to be discussed on the agenda.

7. Report/Update from Westmorland and Furness Council

Cllr Hodgson advised that there was no news on the current tender, Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+), for the Sedbergh area. On the ongoing issue of J37, M6, it was noted that temporary stop signs have now been erected on the north exit along with cones, bringing the exit to one lane. Members noted that they hope a permanent solution can be found. It is also understood that the junction is due to be monitored in the coming months. Members additionally warned that the reported issue of Satnav, which has had some significant influence on the junction previously, should not be used to conflate judgement for all other safety issues raised. Whilst it is acknowledged that there has been an issue with Satnav (which has been updated on some major mapping providers, but will likely remain out of date on many others as not all Satnav is live data). Cllr Hodgson was reminded that the flyover has a long history of incidents reported, and certainly for many years prior to Satnav. It was additionally noted that WFC had also recently responded to a request from Tim Farron MP in respect of a speed limit reduction, advising that the request to reduce the speed limit has been listed for consideration of funding in line with other local priorities for a review to be carried out. Cllr Mitchell did not attend

i) **any update in respect of BSIP+ review and ongoing procurement following the Parish Council’s complaint to WFC.** Members noted Cllr Hodgson’s update on current procurement for the Bus Service Improvement Plan, and were disappointed that WFC were not able to release any information on tenders, or, even if any had been received. Advising that this was of particular concern as the current Stagecoach service is due to cease 3 November 2024. In addition, and following the resolution of the Council in September, a formal complaint had been submitted on behalf of Sedbergh Parish Council and a response received (attached). Members agreed that the response was unsatisfactory and resolved that Cllr Bromley, in conjunction with the Clerk, should urgently seek to meet with the Transport Manager for WFC to discuss further and/or escalate the Complaint. Members additionally resolving to seek advice from The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen as required. Particularly as Members remain extremely concerned about timing, with procurement decisions currently being made, and, that the significant issues previously raised had not been addressed.

8. Planning

Members resolved to accept the minutes from the Planning meeting held on 2 October 2024. As indicated, the following application was referred to Council. **S/03/730E Sedbergh School Technology Centre Section 73 application to vary Condition 2 (amended plans) of S/03/730 (Full planning permission for erection of a Technology Centre (use Class F1) to the north of Sedbergh School; creation of a replacement car parking area and demolition of existing toilet block) in respect of alterations to plans to allow phased delivery of the scheme.** Members were concerned that a phased delivery would leave an unattractive/blank western elevation. And, whilst it was accepted that this was implied as temporary, there was no timescale indicated for the final phase to be completed. **Overall Members resolved, no objection.** (Cllr Sedgwick remained, but did not speak or vote, with Vice Chair Cllr Longlands temporarily taking the Chair as Cllr Arnold left the room for the duration of the discussion/vote).

i) **Local Plan Consultation No7 – Preferred sites for Housing Development.** Members noted the four sites identified by the Consultation and were disappointed to note that a site west of the recent development at Station Road had not been included. Members were also concerned that the infill site, to the rear of Spar/Sedbergh Medical Centre/Woodside Avenue/Sycamore, may add to the already highlighted clear water drainage issue that had previously caused flooding at Guldrey. Finally, it was noted that ‘Kings Yard’ was included as a preferred site, yet had already received planning permission. Members also noted their hope for United Utilities to be able to adapt and improve their sewage treatment facilities for any new developments. Not least, as Members believe that ‘storm overflows’ continue to be pumped into the river regularly. (In 2023, for example, it is reported online that the sewer storm overflow spilled **64** times for a total of **1,491.00** hours, into the River Rawthey Permit No. 017270009).

9. Finance

Members resolved to accept the minutes from the meeting held on 7 October 2024, which included approval of all payments recommended (attached) along with VAT £3519.06.

i) **Recycling Amenity, Spar site, Station Road – site owner requests Council’s decision on contribution for repair works.** See Part II

10. Amenities Committee

No Amenities meeting had taken place. Members noted that now indicative quotes had been received in relation to widening the disabled access door, to minimum standard, a request should be made to Westmorland and Furness Council to consider a contribution. i) tree inspection report (New Bridge). Members noted the original inspection, with works highlighted being within ‘tolerable’ risk. Reinspection’s were recommended on three trees, (including Queen’s Garden) and the Clerk will progress. Once up to date information is made available, a scheme of works will be agreed to complete all recommended works in line with the inspection.

11. Update on Projects

i) **Playground proposal – Howgill Lane and consider any ongoing maintenance at current site?**

CLr Arnold hopes to progress discussions/pre-application with Yorkshire Dales National Park in respect of future planning requirements for the project. No current maintenance was discussed.

12. Queens Garden

Members of the Committee had not met. **i) tree inspection report (including recent branch shed at west boundary) and consider additional maintenance (Parish handyman).** In the absence of the Chairman of the Committee, there was nothing to report. (See Item 10 in respect of tree reinspection required).

13. Future Parking/Highways

There was no update on the parking strategy, it is understood that WFC are carrying out a survey in the coming months. **i) New Bridge layby proposal, feasibility study and any update on yellow lining/white lining refresh.** A further apology had been received from WFC, stating no updates were available. Members were particularly concerned about the lack of progress for the mini roundabout at Back Lane/Finkle Street/Loftus Hill – which was now entirely faded and first reported in June 2023.

ii) Yorkshire Dales National Park – feedback on consideration to amend speed limit at Cross Keys. Members discussed YDNPA's informal inquiry into a possible application/request for a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph in the area of The Cross Keys Hotel, Cautley. Members resolved no objections to the notion of YDNPA applying for a reduction in the speed limit. CLr Hodgson advised that the Parish Council may become liable for any costs associated with a change in the speed limit, therefore, Members resolved to add the caveat that Sedbergh Parish Council did not have any funds to support a financial contribution. Finally, Members added that if a reduction in speed is considered, the area should span Low Haygarth to Rawthey Bridge.

13. Correspondence

Receive items of correspondence (late items to be tabled at the meeting) and additionally consider any items for future Agenda.

- i) **Members to consider hedge cutting required, including playing field.** Members resolved to request the hedge at the playing field, Howgill Lane, be cut as previously, along with Ghyllas lay-by.
- ii) **Westmorland and Furness Council – update on future proposals to build a framework to empower Parish/Town Councils to undertake minor tasks to maintain the (adopted) highway.** Members resolved to await further information and consultation in the new year, noting that many details were still unknown, including financial burden and legal liabilities.
- iii) **Invitation to events.** Yorkshire Dales National Park Parish Forum, Members nominated CLrs Lancaster and Welti (if able to attend). Settlebeck School Awards, CLrs Sedgwick and Cowperthwaite. Cumbria Association of Local Council AGM, the Clerk hopes to attend and Sedbergh CIO (Community Trust AGM), the Clerk had attended.
- iv) **Tree inspection report** – see Items 10 and 12
- v) **Sedbergh Economic Partnership (SEP)** – notes circulated for recent SEP meeting. Members noted that the current Chairman had issued an email to Members of the SEP in response to Sedbergh Parish Council's current non-attendance. However, Members resolved that the fundamental reasons previously stated for the Parish Council's non-attendance remained unresolved. And, until these have been sufficiently addressed the Parish Council will not be returning. These included as an example, financial transparency, after noting receipt of approx. £19,000 from SLDC/CCC/WFC. Finally, it was noted that a recent request had been made by the Project Coordinator for the SEP, to seek feedback on their current Tourism Bid and Members suggest this can be a future Agenda item.

- vi) **Late correspondence.** Members noted an email in respect of historical ownership of Lupton Field, Sedbergh. Stating, that it had previously been known as ‘Dolly’s Field’ and was donated to ‘the people of Sedbergh.’ Members had not heard of the field being referred to as Dolly’s Field and suggested that they perhaps pursue the matter with Sedbergh and District History Society and/or Land Registry.

14. Date and Time of next meetings. The normal monthly meeting, commencing 7.30pm 14 November 2024 in the Committee Room, Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh.

Part II

It was resolved and agreed that the public should be excluded from the meeting for reason of the confidential legal information to be discussed.

9. Finance

- i) **Recycling Amenity, Spar site, Station Road – site owner requests Council’s decision on contribution for repair works.** Members discussed recent legal advice received from their Solicitor and it was resolved that the Parish Council will not contribute for the repair works completed earlier this year. In conclusion, Sedbergh Parish Council will advise that Westmorland and Furness Council may be willing to consider the invoice, but they would require a full audit trail.