

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 - Thursday 13 February 2025

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

It was proposed and agreed, by Members, that Item 8 Co-Option, would be delayed to follow Item 9 Planning and 10 Finance. This would allow Members the opportunity to consider Item 9 Planning, ahead of Co-Option, as it had been noted that one of the candidates for Co-Option additionally had a current planning application. And, Item 10 Finance, for the Co-Option Policy recommendation.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Welti (One vacancy. Cllr Bromley arrived at Item 6)

2. Any new requests for Dispensations

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

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. Public Participation

There were two members of the public present as observers only.

5. To adopt the minutes of Sedbergh Parish Council monthly meeting, dated 9 January 2025

Following previous circulation of the draft minutes for the meeting held on 9 January 2025, Members resolved they were a true record and they were signed by the Chairman, Cllr Arnold.

6. Matters to note from the Minutes of 9 January 2025 not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

None, all relevant matters were included on the agenda.

7. Report/Update from Westmorland and Furness Council

Cllrs Hodgson and Mitchell did not attend. Cllr Hodgson had forwarded recent correspondence from Lizzi Collinge MP in respect of Banking Hubs (in response to the recent announcement relating to the Post Office (Item 14ii) and **i) any update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan, referred to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Inc. UK Parliament Transport Committee Inquiry ‘Buses Connecting Communities’** Cllr Hodgson is hoping to convene a meeting to discuss the buses with Westmorland and Furness Council following various correspondence from the Parish Council. Some late correspondence had been received, this evening, from WFC which still did not answer the query of allocation of funding. It was additionally noted, by the Clerk, that the referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (November 2024) had not yet been allocated. It was further noted that the Transport Committee ‘Buses Connecting Communities’ had recently published Sedbergh Parish Council’s response to their inquiry **ii) Drains, Sedbergh, inc. catchpit at Guldrey/Spar** - Cllr Mitchell has advised the Clerk he is hoping to meet with Westmorland and Furness Council later this month. The Clerk has asked to be advised when the meeting is taking place, so a Parish Council representative may attend.

8. Co-Option Vacancies. Members to receive applications from qualifying candidates, for the current Casual Vacancy, to include a vote to select an eligible candidate (consider draft Co-Option Policy)

As resolved at the commencement of this meeting, this Item was taken after Item 10 Finance.

Members were pleased to receive three applications for the Co-Option vacancy, from eligible candidates. They were Douglas Thomson, Ian McPherson, and Sarah Singleton. Following a vote on each candidate, Douglas Thomson received a majority of votes and was declared successful by the Chairman and, therefore, duly elected. The Clerk was asked to contact the successful applicant and complete the necessary administration ahead of the next meeting, including the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Clerk was additionally asked to write to both unsuccessful candidates and thank them for their applications. (Members of the public were asked to leave briefly to allow any specific questions relating to application forms).

9. Planning

Members had not met since 19 December 2024; the following applications were discussed at the meeting. Cllr Sedgwick will review any other current applications that require comment and liaise with the Planning Committee as soon as practicable.

S/03/77B Greenmantle, Marthwaite, Sedbergh Householder planning permission for erection of timber-built garden store and animal shelter/stable on gravel base - no objections.

S/03/653A Honey Pot Cottages, Joss Lane, Sedbergh Full planning permission for change of use of land to create garden areas for two properties – objection. Members note the addition of some trees to the amended plan, however, referred to previous responses/comments (2020/2024). Members believe that the trees do not mitigate the previous matters raised around urbanisation of the adjacent pathway to the fell. It had, for example, also been noted in August 2024 that the properties already have a grassed curtilage providing amenity and there had been several other objections noted. Members also refer to comments in 2020, whereby they would not want to see the creation of a formal curtilage. **i) Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan – consultation on draft objectives.** The Clerk had circulated the full consultation to all Members for their reference. It was agreed, at the meeting that the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman, should draft a response for circulation to all Members. Once agreed, any response would be submitted to Yorkshire Dales. It was noted that the Management Plan is reviewed every five years. It was further noted that the response should include reference to the lack of employment opportunities.

10. Finance

Members resolved to accept the minutes from the meeting held on 10 February 2025, which included the requests for payments (attached). Members additionally considered two policies recommended for approval. Investment Policy (attached), Members resolved to adopt this policy. Co-Option Policy (see also Item 8). Cllr Lancaster wished it to be noted that he dissents from the National Association of Local Council guidance on some aspects of the Co-Option policy and therefore voted against adoption. However, all remaining Members resolved to approve and the policy was adopted. Finally, following recommendation from the Finance Committee, it was resolved to accept Tender C in respect of the recent tree tender/quote (See also Items 11 Amenities and Item 13 Queen's Garden).

11. Amenities Committee

Members of the Committee had not met. However, some correspondence had recently been received in respect of Main Street toilet doors (see Item 12iii). In addition, i) tree works tender. The successful contractor will be contacted by the Clerk for the works at New Bridge and ii) consider draft Memorial Bench Policy. Members discussed the policy and, with one minor amendment, Members resolved to adopt the Policy. The Clerk was, therefore, asked to liaise with a recent applicant, for a memorial bench further and report to the Amenities Committee as required.

12. Update on Projects

i) Playground Proposal – any update on pre-application advise with Yorkshire Dales National Park, to include proposed car parking area, Electric Vehicle point/s and disabled access pathway to the gym. The Chairman advised that there had been a further unavoidable delay with submission, however, hopes to progress this as soon as possible.

ii) New Bridge layby proposal – an update from Westmorland and Furness Council. Members to consider progress to pre-application advice from Yorkshire Dales National Park. Members heard from Westmorland and Furness Council, who had now confirmed their initial support for the proposal, along with estimated costs to resurface and line the layby should the project progress. Whilst cost was a significant factor to consider, potential increased income at Joss Lane car park, by removal of coach parking, would assist to recoup expense. Therefore, Members resolved to make a pre-application to Yorkshire Dales National Park, to allow the Council to establish their formal response. (Cllr Longlands abstained).

iii) Main Street toilet door replacement – update from Amenities, following information from Westmorland and Furness Council. Members had been disappointed that Westmorland and Furness Council were not being more proactive and supportive in Sedbergh Parish Council's hopes to make improvements to the access for the disabled user toilet and replacement doors (premises rented from Westmorland and Furness Council). Westmorland and Furness Council had recently advised that scaled drawings/plans would now be required to allow their Asset team (and Building Regulations) to make a formal decision on consent. This had not been previously requested, despite several months of correspondence. They also advised they would require feedback/observations from Yorkshire Dales National Park in respect of any potential planning implications. Members resolved, therefore, to engage a local consultant to complete the necessary drawings to progress further. It was noted that if, eventually, the Parish Council was successful in gaining consent from Westmorland and Furness Council, Members would make an application to them for financial assistance.

13. Queens Garden

Members of the Committee have not met; however, it was understood that the wall collapse on the western boundary had recently been repaired. **i) tree works tender, Queen's Garden** – the successful contractor will be contacted to establish a date for the works (see Item 10 Finance) and **ii) request Members to consider provision of a general waste bin in/close to the garden.** The Clerk advised that had been a recent request for Members to consider an additional waste bin, for the garden, not least due to increased footfall in recent months and following the completion of Showfield Gardens. It was resolved that the Clerk should investigate further with Westmorland and Furness Council.

14. Correspondence

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

- i) Westmorland and Furness Council – Cabinet meeting 3 June 2025 (People's Hall).** For information only, it was noted that WFC were due to host their June meeting in Sedbergh.
- ii) Sedbergh Post Office – concerns raised over plans to relocate the Post Office to Spar (Station Road).** Members noted the recent correspondence/consultation in respect of the proposed move to Spar. This followed Royal Mail's decision to close the sorting office in Sedbergh and the subsequent announcement of the retirement of the current Post Masters. Whilst Members noted that this was indeed unfortunate for the Main Street of Sedbergh, there was nothing that could be done to prevent the move at this stage. And by maintaining a Post Office counter at Spar, albeit away from the Main Street, this was preferable to losing Post Office facilities in the town altogether. Following various other correspondence, Members requested the Clerk to investigate and report further, at a future meeting, the potential provision of A N Other financial institution for the town. For example, a banking hub or building society.
- iii) Sedbergh Economic Partnership (SEP) – notes from recent meeting. Members to consider any review of attendance with SEP/Chairman's position (see Minutes from July/August/October 2024)** – Members resolved that the Parish Council should show their initiative to the Economic Partnership, in respect of the current hiatus, as there had been no recent communication from them in respect of previous matters. Members resolved, therefore, that the Clerk seek an update on their intent to resolve outstanding issues raised. Whilst it was noted that transparency had improved via their website, there remained limitations on public attendance and there had been no direct update regarding the current chairmanship.

- iv) **Resident – concern raised for pedestrian safety on Dent Road (Loftus Hill/Akay to Millthrop).** Members noted the correspondence around speed of vehicles, and heard the Clerk had also spoken with the local Police for guidance. It was hoped that a Speed Indicator Device could be placed in the future, by Cumbria Police, to collect some data. Members acknowledged that this was a difficult stretch of road, with no footway, and no verge for refuge.
- v) **Lincoln’s Inn Bridge Closure – essential works proposed w/c 7 April 2025.** The Clerk updated Members in respect of the full road closure that would be necessary to repair the parapets at Lincoln’s Inn Bridge. It was further noted that works to repair Straight Bridge, should follow thereafter.
- vi) **BT Telephone kiosks** – it was noted that posters had recently been displayed in the two remaining BT phone kiosks, in Sedbergh, advising that the equipment was scheduled for removal. BT advise that formal consultation should be forwarded by Westmorland in Furness Council soon, in respect of the potential future removal or adoption of the kiosks themselves. Members might consider this as a future Agenda item
- vii) **Cumbria Neighbourhood Policing Team** – it was noted that there was intent to hold twice yearly area meetings, in the future, with representation invited for Parish/Town Councils. Further details to follow in due course.
- viii) **Resident** – suggestion that Sedbergh should consider a Men in Shed type project for the town. Members agreed it was a good suggestion, and wished them well in any future development of the project.
- ix) **Sedbergh in Bloom** – it was noted that there was a request for Sedbergh in Bloom to present at a future meeting.

15. Date and Time of next meeting. The normal monthly meeting was scheduled for 7.30pm on **Thursday 13 March 2025** and will be held, as normal, in the Committee Room, Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh.