

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 March 2025

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

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Sedgwick and Brooks.

2. Any new requests for Dispensations

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

3. Declarations of Interest

Item 7 Report/Update from Westmorland and Furness Council – Cllr Lancaster

Item 8 Planning – Cllrs Arnold and Capstick

Item 12 Queen’s Garden – Cllrs Bromley, Douglas, Longlands, and Hutt

4. Public Participation

Members welcomed a representative from Sedbergh in Bloom, to the meeting, to give a presentation. The history of how Sedbergh in Bloom had evolved from Cumbria in Bloom, originally founded in the 1990’s, was outlined to Members. This had included the construction of several flower beds in the town, including each raised bed on Main Street, and the beds at the entrance and exit of Main Street. These works had been completed with the support of Sedbergh Parish Council, Cumbria County Council and Yorkshire Dales National Park, as well as local Schools, at the time. Regrettably, some 30 years later, Sedbergh in Bloom advise this will be their final year of caring for all the areas they have developed and maintained throughout three decades. Volunteer numbers have dwindled in recent years, and despite a push for additional help a few years ago, the number currently involved is just three. The Chairman expressed the sincerest thanks to all those that have contributed over the years, also congratulating their longest serving volunteer for some 30 years committed service to the local community. The Chairman requested the Clerk to formally write to Sedbergh in Bloom thanking them for all they have done in this time. He will now hope to liaise with the Chair of the Amenities Committee over how the Parish Council might establish a new group of volunteers/support, from within the community, to maintain the work of Sedbergh in Bloom.

5. To adopt the minutes of Sedbergh Parish Council monthly meeting, dated 13 February 2025

Following previous circulation of the draft minutes for the meeting held on 13 February 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 13 February 2025 not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

Members took the opportunity to welcome Councillor Thomson to Sedbergh Parish Council.

7. Report/Update from Westmorland and Furness Council

Cllrs Hodgson and Mitchell did not attend. Members believed it had been over 12 months since Cllr Mitchell had attended, and six months since Cllr Hodgson had attended. The Clerk was asked to write to Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC), Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale Ward Members Mitchell and Hodgson regarding attendance, and request their presence at a future meeting. Not least due to the significant consultations currently taking place as part of the Community Governance Reviews (see iii and iv). Additionally, Members asked the Clerk to write to Libby Bateman, Parish Representative to Yorkshire Dales National Park, and invite her to a future meeting.

i) any update/progress in respect of bus services. The Clerk advised that their recent referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman had been declined. This was due to the Council not being eligible to seek their support, as a public body. Members were very disappointed with this update, as they had gone to the Ombudsman on the advice of WFC.

The Clerk has been in contact with WFC to advise them of this outcome, and they advise they will now conduct a process review regarding the incorrect advice/procedure given to Sedbergh Parish Council. Cllr Bromley advised that, along with the Clerk, they had attended an online meeting with WFC to discuss the ongoing disappointment in the community regarding the replacement bus service. The meeting had been called following representation made by a local resident, officers, and Councillors from WFC were also in attendance. Various questions had been further raised, and a response had been received from WFC earlier today. This gave a breakdown of allocated Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding, including contracts awarded more than £600k to Kirkby Stephen/Appleby/Penrith/Greystoke areas. The response also outlined ‘average’ passenger numbers for the existing 563 Penrith to Kendal (via Sedbergh) bus. However, Members felt there was a significant lack of detail in how these figures had been determined as they do not appear to demonstrate the evidence received from regular existing users of the bus. Where anecdotal data would suggest a significant number of journeys where the capacity had exceeded 16 (the maximum capacity of the new service). Members were advised that there are now plans, suggested by a group of residents, to host a Public Transport/Bus Action Group in Sedbergh later this month. The aim of this meeting is to establish local support and gather momentum to work toward an improved service, and connectivity, for residents and visitors in the future. Currently, Members agreed that they feel the lack of support for public transport, from WFC, is currently preventative to Sedbergh’s future economy and sustainability as a community. Cllr Bromley and the Clerk will attend the meeting on the 27 March **ii) Drains Sedbergh, inc. catchpit at Guldrey/Spar.** Members received an update, from the Clerk, recently received from WFC, and this will be circulated to all Members. It was resolved that there was no more the Parish Council could do. They hope that WFC will now continue to maintain and inspect the catch pit, which had originally been proposed and completed, following Storm Desmond. **iii) Local Government Boundary Commission Review.** Cllr Mitchell had sent a summary of his thoughts on the current consultation. In addition, Members discussed the potential options being considered, noting that one option puts them with Tebay (two Member ward) with another potential proposal being to place Sedbergh, Dent and Garsdale together as a one Member ward. Members resolved their preferred option is for the latter, noting that there is no existing geographical link with Tebay and, therefore, that a one Member ward for just Sedbergh, Dent and Garsdale would be preferable. And, likely give an increased possibility of a resident, living within the community, representing the area **iv) Electoral Review of Westmorland and Furness Council.** Members noted that the current consultation for the electoral review, would see Sedbergh Parish Council elections delayed to 2027. This would align with Westmorland and Furness Council election year and parishes. Members resolved their support.

8. Planning

Members had not met; the following applications were discussed at the meeting. In Cllr Sedgwick’s absence, the Chairman led discussions on current planning applications.

S/03/647C Beehive Cottage, Joss Lane, Sedbergh Full planning permission for demolition of existing sheds and erection of new buildings on the same footprint and site – **objection.** Members observed that the plans for the replacement sheds have the appearance of shepherd’s huts and this does not appear to match the intended use and could, potentially, imply a future commercial objective. This was also evidenced by the creation of parking spaces adjacent to the sheds. If, like for like (in good repair) sheds/storage had been proposed, Members may have been inclined to consider further.

S/03//772 4 Showfield Gardens, Sedbergh Householder planning permission for relocation and extension to existing fence on the west elevation; installation of patio doors and install an awning cassette – **no objection**

S/03/27G High Birks Barn, Birks Lane, Sedbergh Full planning permission for change of use of existing annex to annex/holiday let – **objection.** Members are aware of the current Section 106 Agreement and feel that removal of this could set a precedent for the removal of other similar S106 Agreements.

S/03/729A/GPDO Castle Rigg Farm, Fox Hole Rigg Lane, Cautley Prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 6 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) (England) 2015 for a proposed general purpose portal frame agricultural building – **no objection**

S/03/730E/DIS1 Sedbergh School, Station Road, Sedbergh Approval of details reserved by Condition 18 (Construction Method Statement – demolition of the toilet block) of S/03/730E – **no objection** (Cllr Arnold took no part in discussion)

S/03/770 25 Main Street Gallery, Main Street, Sedbergh Full planning permission for change of use of west part of Main Street Gallery at basement and ground floor to be a dwelling – **objection**. Whilst Members empathise with the current owner, and acknowledge that the retail unit has been for sale for some time, they believe that a change of use would potentially leave the remaining retail space no longer viable for the future.

Members requested that the Clerk additionally seek general opinion/policy, from YDNPA, on requests for change of use from retail to residential/holiday amid fears that there is, or could be, a general creep in requests of this nature. Noting that the current fragility of Main Street, already recognised. Evidenced by existing empty units, as well as the soon to be vacated spaces (including the units occupied by the Post Office). Members would, therefore, welcome some feedback from Yorkshire Dales National Park planning department.

9. Finance

Members resolved to accept the minutes from the meeting held on 10 March 2025, which included the requests for payments (attached). Members additionally resolved to adopt the updated Risk Assessment (Item 6i) in preparation for the Annual Governance and Accounting Statement 2024/2025

10. Amenities Committee

Members of the Committee had not met and Cllr Brooks was not present. The Clerk did note that the memorial bench, agreed in February, was now in place on Main Street. In addition, the Clerk advised that Radio 4 are hoping to include Sedbergh's recent streetlighting improvement project as part of a program they are producing in 2025.

11. 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 application is due to be submitted in the next few days.

ii) New Bridge layby proposal – any update from Yorkshire Dales National Park. The Clerk advised that the proposal was currently being considered by a Planning Officer.

iii) Main Street toilet door replacement – any update in respect of sketch/drawings required by Westmorland and Furness Council. Members agreed to progress the drawings that have now been requested by Westmorland and Furness Council, asset and building control teams, to allow them to consider the project further.

12. Queens Garden

Members of the Committee have not met. **i) request from Spellbound Theatre for Halloween event** Members were pleased to hear of the proposal from Spellbound and give their support to an event being hosted in the garden. Cllr Arnold advised that he hoped Sedbergh School Challenge week might also support the event and, potentially, assist with prop making etc. **ii) an update in respect of a general waste bin** The Clerk will follow up the request with WFC.

13. Correspondence

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

i) Sedbergh Bus (public transport) User Group. (See also Item 7). Cllr Bromley and the Clerk hope to attend the inaugural meeting planned on 27 March 2025.

ii) BT Telephone kiosks – the Clerk advised that she had requested WFC to engage with BT and confirm the dates for the consultation.

iii) Sedbergh Economic Partnership (SEP) – any update following correspondence agreed at the February meeting. Member were advised that the letter, agreed at the last meeting, has now been sent, and that a response was awaited. It is understood the SEP are due to meet again on 21 March 2025.

- iv) **Sedbergh Young Farmers** – Members had been approached by Sedbergh YFC to assist with a community project. Members agreed that they could lend some support to Queen’s Garden, and the Clerk was asked to liaise with the parish handyman.
- v) **Sedbergh Tennis Club** – Members had received notes from their recent AGM, which included reference to a recent decline in their membership.
- vi) **Sedbergh Main Street and former Udales Building** - Members noted recent correspondence from a shop owner and resident, advising of their opinion of the ‘disgusting and filthy’ condition of Sedbergh Main Street. Issues raised were largely WFC responsibility and, therefore, the Clerk was asked to report to WFC Highways, and request a road sweeper. Further concerns raised were regarding the condition of the former Udales premises on Main Street, and a recent response from YDNPA. Members noted this, too, was beyond their control. And that the Parish Council had, previously, corresponded with various people/authorities over the premises, and believed there was nothing more they could do. Members also noted the authors concerns for the safety of surfaces in various alley ways/ginnels and paths leading off Main Street, however, again these were not the responsibility of Sedbergh Parish Council. Members noted that YDNPA had undertaken a large project of improvement works on these areas in the 1990s, but since that time, Cumbria County Council (now WFC) and YDNPA had declined to take any further actions/maintenance responsibilities.
- vii) **Lune Valley Community Land Trust** – Members noted recent correspondence from the Trust, and the Clerk was asked to invite them along to a future meeting to give a presentation on their successful development in Halton.
- viii) **Sedbergh Information Centre (CIC)** – late correspondence had been received asking Members to consider support to investigate the potential to install a power supply in the town centre. Members noted that they had no objection to the proposal, but did not have the capacity to take on another project at this time. Also noting, for example, that future consideration to ongoing responsibility, standing charges etc would need to be considered.
- ix) **Sedbergh CIC** – a further general enquiry had been made in respect of a grant toward a project they are developing for the Sedgwick Trail. The Chairman advised that this project may be something that Sedbergh School Challenge Week could support (as previously) and would, therefore, welcome further information. Also, confirmation would be required to confirm that YDNPA would be lead/supporting the project and that all land owner consent was in place.
- x) **Sedbergh School Wilson Run** – Members noted the rolling road closure for the Wilson Run on Tuesday 25 March 2025.
- xi) **Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority** – Members noted an upcoming Planning webinar available to Members and a provisional date for the Spring Parish Forum (April 2025).

14. Date and Time of next meeting. The normal monthly meeting was scheduled for 7.30pm on Thursday 10 April 2025 and will be held, as normal, in the Committee Room, Sedbergh People’s Hall, Howgill Lane, Sedbergh.