

Gosforth Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held online on Wednesday 13th January 2021 at 7pm

PRESENT

Mark Fussell (MF) – Chairman

Councillors

Rachel Rowe (RR) – Vice Chair

Paul Turner (PT)

David Gray (DG)

Mike McKinley (MM)

Graham Hutson (GH)

Others: Jacqueline Williams (Clerk), Cllr. Andy Pratt (Copeland BC) and one member of the public

001/21 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies be received from Cllrs. Pennington and Norman.

002/21 Declarations of Interest – none.

003/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2020, pages 93 to 96, be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

004/21 Public Participation

A member of the public updated the meeting regarding his request for the Parish Council to act as a legal entity for the purpose of signing a contract with Open Reach which would release funding to supply houses in Wellington with ultra-fast broadband. This would entail the Parish Council taking on the liability of a shortfall if households dropped out of the scheme however there were now 39 households which would provide an excess of funding to reduce the risk.

Councillors asked questions and the Clerk asked if the alternative scenario, posed by NALC (National Association of Local Councils) had been considered. The parishioner responded saying he had considered this option and had downloaded the model articles of association.

The Chairman thanked the parishioner for his input and proposed that Agenda item 8 be brought forward which was agreed.

004/21 Broadband

Councillors discussed the importance of good internet speed which had been highlighted during the pandemic. As requested at the last meeting of the Parish Council, the Clerk had contacted CALC for advice. CALC had no information on any other Councils in Cumbria who had entered into a similar contract and forwarded a document, setting out the legal position, supplied by NALC. The document noted that section 142 is only for the creation of a network for the distribution of local council information and suggested an alternative approach which involved the formation of a residents' group to register as a company limited by

guarantee. This would reduce the liability of directors of the company to £1 whereas, if the Parish Council were involved the liability could run into thousands.

Councillors discussed the merits of the scheme but noted that they had no powers or duties to sign a contract of this nature which came with a significant financial responsibility. The Chair summed up and offered any support the parishioner required to set up a company limited by guarantee but proposed that the Parish Council could not sign the Open Reach contract. This was reluctantly and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council supports the scheme in principle but is unable to act as the legal entity to sign the contract.

005/21 County Councillor and District Councillors' Reports

Cllr. Pratt reported on the 'Ways to Welfare' scheme which supports people in need of urgent help. There are grants available and he has circulated a flyer which he requested be put on facebook and on the Parish Council website.

Action: Clerk/RR

006/21 Planning Applications

Applications:

7/2020/4104 Whinnerah, CA20 1EB - Proposed covered yard and general purpose building -decision notice received 'Prior Approval Not Required'.

7/2020/4097 1 Ellerslie Terrace, CA20 1BA – Demolition of existing garage, greenhouse and lean-to building and replace with garage and sunroom with loft space for storage – no objections.

4/20/9005 Sellafeld – Land preparation for future waste development, including bulk excavation and reprofiling – no objections.

Decisions

7/2020/4104 Whinnerah – Prior approval not required.

Other Planning Matters

The following application was received after the Agenda was distributed:

7/2020/4102 Lara, CA20 1HZ – Extension and alterations – one email had been received from a neighbour which pointed out that the ecological report cited Park View as a holiday park rather than a permanent residential site as well as making comments regarding noise and disturbance to local residents. Councillors agreed this was probably a misconception of the consultant who produced the report but that it should be pointed out to LDNPA. Cllr. Hutson commented that United Utilities should be consulted regarding access to the Water Treatment Plant.

RESOLVED that the Clerk should respond with the comments and observations discussed above.

Action: Clerk

007/21 Financial Reports

RESOLVED that the Bank Reconciliation to 31st December 2021 be received and noted.

RESOLVED that the schedule of payments be approved for payment.

008/21 Public Toilets & Car Park

Cllr. Pratt had met with Barbara Vernon and solicitor, Clinton Boyce. Copeland are not willing to transfer the freehold to the Parish Council, however they propose a long lease. When pressed on the length of the lease, Cllr. Pratt believed it to be ninety-nine years. Copeland are willing to carry out the refurbishments described in the recent survey and to maintain the building and the car park surface. They will remain responsible for the surrounding grounds. The Parish Council could negotiate the operation of the car park and toilets to meet the needs of the village. Cllrs. agreed that a proposal in writing should be drawn up so that the Parish Council can consider the options available.

RESOLVED that Cllr. Pratt request that a written proposal be made to the Parish Council. **Action: AP**

009/21 Secondary School Allocations

Cllr. Turner reported that there had been some progress with the County Council recommending that dual-catchment should be reviewed for Gosforth and Seascale. Cllr. McKinley expressed his concern that the situation was still unfair for families in rural areas and that children face an early start to journey to Millom. Cllr. Rowe said that buses to Millom and Egremont leave at the same time. Cllr. Turner agreed to keep the Parish Council updated.

Action: PT

010/21 Telephone Box

Cllr. Rowe is continuing her efforts to engage an electrician. Cllr. Hutson proposed that the telephone kiosk be boarded up to prevent further degradation which was agreed. Cllr. Rowe offered to get quotes.

Action: RR

011/21 Grants to Churches

Cllr. Turner agreed to discuss with Seascale Cllr. Moore.

Action: PT

012/21 Tinkers Hill/Gravel Pit

Cllr. Gray had a phone conversation with the Land Registry and is continuing his work on this complicated process.

Action: DG

013/21 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

A short discussion took place regarding charging points in the car park and other potential sites. It was decided to await the outcome of negotiations with Copeland.

014/21 Hollybank Lease

The Clerk received an email from the buyer's solicitors requesting contact details of our solicitors. The Clerk responded stating that the Parish Council was willing to have the lease assigned to their client and also that free parking is available a short walk from Hollybank. Bleasdales solicitors have informed the seller that they were unable to complete the change to the lease within the time requested as their office was closed and they had staff shortages.

015/21 Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk had attended a virtual training course on Neighbourhood Planning and had circulated the presentation. The Clerk pointed out that it was a complex process which required expertise in Planning Policy although there was funding available to cover the cost of consultants. A Neighbourhood Plan would, if approved, become a legal policy document to be used alongside local planning authority policies. Cllr. McKinley commented that he felt it was beyond the expertise of the Parish Council. Cllr. Fussell said that we should continue with a community-led plan and a sub-committee should be created to take this forward. Although originally planned with public meetings in mind, Cllr. Fussell said there were other ways to carry out consultations and these should be explored.

016/21 Geological Disposal Facility

Cllr. Pratt reported that the first meeting of the steering group has been organised and he is representing all Copeland Parish Councils on the committee. He will be able to report back at the next meeting. Cllr. Hutson recommended monitoring this closely.

017/21 Councillor Administration

The Clerk confirmed there had been no applicants for the two vacancies.

018/21 Meetings

Cllrs. Fussell and Turner have attended meetings on Rural Transport and local provision to identify problems, solutions and potential suppliers.

019/21 Councillor Matters

Cllr. McKinley - brought up the subject of the government reorganisation and the unitary bid, which involved a new status for Parish and Town Councils. It was agreed to place this on the Agenda for the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

Cllr. Hutson – said there were no plans for vaccination centres between Whitehaven and Barrow and asked Cllr. Turner to bring this to the attention of our MP.

Action: PT

Cllr. Gray – has completed and installed the updated information board.

Cllr. Turner – thanked Cllr. Gray for his work on dropped kerbs for the village which has been submitted for approval.

020/21 Item in Camera – none.

021/21 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 10th February 2021 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Chairman.....Date:.....