

CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 3 MAY 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Mary Harkness (Chair), Matthew Dobson, Robert Sykes, Andrew Metcalfe and Edward Sharp; County Cllr. Jim Bland; District Cllr. John Holmes, the acting Clerk and 20 members of the public

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. Angela Dobson and Malcolm Richardson (the Clerk). The Chair welcomed Martin Curry (Clerk to Levens Parish Council) who was standing in for Malcolm Richardson.

2. Welcome by the Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr. Harkness welcomed fellow Councillors and parishioners to the Annual Parish Meeting of Crosthwaite and Lyth Parish which had made provision for reports, updates from village organisations and contributions from members of the public

3. Report from the Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr. Harkness presented her Report (a copy of the full report can be obtained from the Parish Clerk)

Cllr. Metcalf added an update on progress with a number of maintenance initiatives including work on trees and hedges, a review of Parish Council noticeboards, the operation of speed restriction devices and help provided with issues on the A5074 at the bottom of the Lyth Valley

4. Report from District Cllr. John Holmes

Cllr. Holmes reported on a number of matters including:

- a) Progress with local government reorganisation and the elections to the 'shadow' Westmorland and Furness Council to be held on Thursday 5 May. Vesting Day, when the new Council will come live, is 1 April 2023 when it will take on key areas including highways, education and social care. The police and emergency services will be coordinated by the Police and Crime Commissioner
- b) Local highway matters including continuing efforts to make safety improvements on the A590. Implementation of improvements at Gilpin Bridge, including a possible roundabout and better access into the Lyth Valley, is likely to be part of a later phase of the improvement programme, finances permitting
- c) Long awaited legislation to enable an Internal Drainage Board for the Lyth Valley has been approved by Parliament.
- d) The South Westmorland Village Maintenance Association has, regrettably, been wound up due to difficulties in finding a suitably approved contractor willing to take on the work of winter gritting. Refunds of balances held by the Association have been made to participating parishes

5. Updates from Organisations within the Parish

- a) The Village Hall: A report was presented and the Parish Council responded with its thanks to the Village Hall Committee
- b) St Mary's Church: The Vicar reported that though the last two years have been difficult for all, the Church is now fully back in action. Summer walks were initiated in 2021 and are being repeated in 2022 and a special Church service will be held as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. St Mary's has become part of the 2 Valleys Mission Community which includes 8 Churches in 7 parishes. He paid tribute to John Holmes who has retired as Church Warden He said that the Church is feeling the effect of changing attitudes with congregations becoming smaller and older. This raises questions about sustainability – particularly in relation to the fabric of the building. He made a plea to the wider community to consider what it could do to help maintain this important part of community fabric
- c) Landowners: On behalf of Martin Casson who had apologised for being unable to attend, Robert Sykes reported for the Landowners and confirmed that they had bought a new piece of land on Whitbarrow. They are now seeking a grant from Natural England to develop an area of wood pasture in the woodland above the track. A three-mile guided walk to see the site is being organised as part of the Queen's Jubilee weekend celebrations
- d) Crosthwaite School: Cllr. Holmes presented a report on behalf of the school
- e) First Responder Group: Cllr Holmes reported on limited activity during Covid and in a drop-off in members which had once included 22 volunteers from five local parishes, but now stood at just seven. Part of the problem stemmed from higher health and safety criteria now required from individuals and the associated commitment to training. The Ambulance Service has recognised this and there are moves to try and revert to a more basic level of competence. Cllr. Holmes remains Secretary and Treasurer
- f) Snooker Club: A report was presented. The current membership was 12 and the Club had been promoted to the first division
- g) Recreation Field: There has been no fundraising for the past two years but an event is to be held on 10 July which it is hoped will be a financial success. A project to improve borders around the grounds has been finished; a current project is to improve the playground

6. Contributions from Members of the Public

Referring to the earlier Report from the Chair, a parishioner wished to offer an alternative viewpoint on the process relating to the management of the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst welcoming the call for working together he wished to record his disappointment about the speed of progress. He had given a significant amount of time over the past three years but felt that the Parish Council has started/paused/re-started and paused again. Supporting the spirit of reconciliation and welcoming the new Terms of Reference for the Steering Group he wished that the dissemination of misinformation should stop and called on the Parish Council to utilise the knowledge and skill of those with experience. A number of further contributions were made on the same topic raising questions on what information had been passed to whom and when and regretting the perception given by the Parish Council that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been responsible for slowing the process down. For the Parish Council, Cllr. Harkness said that this was not the case and supported the view that information must be shared openly. It was agreed that, with the new Terms of Reference and a commitment to working together from here on, work should continue on the Plan.

7. Closing Remarks from the Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr. Harkness welcomed the conclusion of the previous item on a positive note. She thanked all present for attending, contributors to the evening and particularly those who had presented reports on the activities of village organisations.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm