

CROSTHWAITE AND LYTH PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 15 May 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Andrew Metcalfe (Chair of the Meeting), Mary Harkness, Matthew Dobson, Robert Sykes, Edward Sharp, Heather Young; W&F Cllr. Steve Bavin; Martin Curry (Clerk to the Council) and 8 members of the public.

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cllr. A Dobson, M. Richardson, David Stott, the Rev'd Michael Woodcock, Christine Gibson, Tom Smith, Matthew Jessop.

2. Welcome by the Chair of the Parish Council:

Cllr. Metcalfe welcomed fellow Councillors and parishioners to the Annual Parish Meeting of Crosthwaite and Lyth, the Agenda for which made provision for reports, updates from village organisations and contributions from members of the public. Cllr. Metcalfe extended a warm welcome to Cllr. Steve Bavin, representing the newly created Westmorland and Furness Council. In doing so he paid particular thanks ex-Councillors Jim Bland (from the former Cumbria County Council) and John Holmes (from the former South Lakeland District Council) for their long service (over 30 and 12 years respectively) to the locality and specifically for their help and advice with matters relating to the Parish.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in 2022: the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 03 May 2022, having been circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a correct record.

4. Report from the Chair of the Parish Council:

The Chairman firstly expressed his thanks to his fellow Parish Councillors and welcomed Cllr. Heather Young as the most recent member of the Council. He thanked Cllr. Mary Harkness for her help and advice as Vice-Chair over the past year and extended thanks to Martin Curry (Parish Clerk), Malcolm Richardson (Responsible Finance Officer) and Chris Smith (lengthsman) for their support to the Parish.

He then reflected on a busy year for the Parish Council during which it had worked on a wide range of issues and projects. These included:

The Neighbourhood Plan – Following a period of intensive work, the most recent draft (Draft 4) had been prepared by Louise Kirkup and the Parish Council was currently awaiting an informal meeting with the Lake District National Park Authority to discuss content - though he reflected some disappointment that locally supported policies are likely to be constrained by the LDNPA's own existing policies.

The Parish Council has dealt regularly with applications for planning consent and given feedback to the planning authority as appropriate. It was currently considering any consents that might be required for several sheds that had been erected recently in fields within the Parish. It had also attended meetings of the A590 Working Group and made particular comments on the poor quality of white lining in and around the dangerous junction at Gilpin Bridge. He gave particular thanks to Jim Bland for his efforts in getting the Toll Road bridge reopened.

He was pleased to report that the Parish Walkway was proving popular and thanked Chris Smith for installing a bench on the route. Roadside verges had been attended to by Alan Fawcett as and when required. The Parish Council had organised a new notice board at Bowland Bridge. Upgrades to the Parish Room had included surface safety-matting at the external entrance and new outside lighting. Plans were in hand to install a memorial bench to commemorate the life of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The creation of a Community Emergency Plan was progressing.

5. Update on the new Westmorland and Furness Council

Cllr. Steve Bavin was pleased to be able to represent the new Council and extended his thanks to Cllr. John Holmes, paying tribute to his experience. He acknowledged that he had much to learn but was already engaged in a wide range of issues and intended to do his best to represent Crosthwaite and Lyth. He was looking forward to learning about its priorities and tackling those as best he could - with a special mention of the 'temporary' traffic lights on the Lyth Valley Road and the issue of potholes. He confirmed that funds are in the budget for repair work on the A5074, but that an engineering solution was still required. He asked all present to communicate with him and let him know what other matters he could assist with.

6. A Presentation from the Landowners of Crosthwaite and Lyth (LC&L)

For the LC&L, Martin Casson reported that they had recently completed the purchase of 30 acres of land at the end of Whitbarrow Scar which completes a significant ownership bloc of approximately 650 acres in the locality. It is a very environmentally sensitive area and the newly acquired ground will be managed as wood pasture with ash and larch to be thinned together with some scrub reduction. An Environmental Stewardship Scheme has recently been achieved which will enable fencing off the land to prevent overgrazing and reduce the damage from off road vehicles. LDNPA had had some concerns about the fencing, but it is not intended to discourage access and there are plenty of stiles included in the scheme. Interestingly as part of a wide-ranging consultation required by LDNPA both the Trail Riders and 4X4 organisations had supported the fence. LDNPA has just given consent, although the work will be a tough task for a fencing contractor. LC&L acknowledge that future management will involve a delicate balance between public access and environmental enhancement.

On more general matters Mr Casson was able to report that the organisation was in good health with stability amongst its Trustees providing continuity and that it was in a position to make grants to parish benefit from surplus income. LC&L is looking at the possibility of becoming a Charitably Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

7. Updates from other Organisations within the Parish

- a) St Mary's Church – Rev'd. Michael Woodcock had tried to get a Report sent through by email but unfortunately it had not arrived. It will be placed on the website when received.
- b) The Recreation Field – John Holmes presented a report on behalf of David Stott, a written version of which will appear on the website. In brief he reported that:
 - During the year, improvements to the Tennis Court had cost in the order of £30,000.00 which has been funded by a combined contribution from the Tennis Club, The Landowners and the Recreational Field of £15,000.00.
 - Over the past two years the Bowling Club members have been extremely busy improving the boundaries of the Bowling Green and other areas.
 - There is to be an open evening on 18 June at 5.00 p.m. to showcase these improvements and future plans, which include a refurbishment of the children's play area.
 - The annual Strawberry Tea is to go ahead in July (date tbc).
 - It was noted that the grant of £500 from the Parish Council had not been received.
- c) The Snooker Club – In the absence of David Stott, John Holmes confirmed that the Club continued to thrive. Membership continues to be enthusiastic and steady, and the Club meets twice a week throughout the year. New Members and Visitors are always welcome. The Members would like to thank the Parish Council for allowing the use of the Parish Room for these meetings.
- d) First Responders – John Holmes has submitted a written report, and this will go on to the website. The number of volunteers is declining, and new ones would be welcomed.
- e) Village Hall – it was confirmed that the Art Club was thriving, and the annual pantomime remained a much-anticipated local event.
- f) Crosthwaite Exchange: Geraldine Wilson reported that after a post-Covid dip in numbers, attendance was increasing again. The two-course lunches were provided twice per month and were proving popular as were regular tea and cake sessions, the country market selling fresh local produce and the book exchange. The Coronation Dinner was a particular success. As always, new volunteers would be welcomed. The Chairman asked for a record of thanks to Geraldine and her team to be recorded in the Minutes.
- g) Matthew Jessop for the school had sent his apologies.
- h) W.I. – Geraldine Wilson reported on a wide range of activities embraced by the local group post lockdown including a good number of entries at the County Show, a successful Christmas Fair and various trips all pointing to a very busy local organisation.
- i) Playgroup: Katie Smith gave a very positive review of the activities of the Playgroup which is booming with up to 25 children on the books including a number from outside the area. Fundraising is going well and one of the Team was invited to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party the previous Tuesday.

8. Public Forum

The following observations were made:

- A Parishioner raised the question as to whether a grant of £500 has yet been paid by the Parish Council to the Recreation Field Committee. It was confirmed that it had as yet not been paid but that it was the intention to do so.
- Mr. Casson reported on the emergence of Japanese Knotweed at Hying Brow and proposed that Alan Fawcett be advised so as not to strim it with the risk of spreading it. Himalayan Balsam and hemlock were also noted and it was **Agreed** that the Parish Council should consider the question of invasives as a future Agenda item
- It was noted that there were a number of new families in the village and that some of their children were keen on skateboarding but that they were only able to do so on the local roads or footpaths. It was suggested that perhaps a skateboarding site might be established, and that fundraising could be undertaken to support this. Following discussion, the idea was supported with possibly a site on the Recreation Field to be considered. The Parish Council undertook to raise this with the Recreation Field and for the latter Mr. Holmes agreed to raise it at their committee meeting in a weeks' time. It was agreed that the Parish Council would consider this in more detail and put it on its July agenda for discussion.

9. Closing Remarks from the Chairman

Cllr. Metcalfe thanked everyone present for attending the meeting and hoped that it had provided all with an indication of the breadth and depth of local activity.

The meeting was closed at 8.40 p.m.