

**MINUTES OF LOWCA PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2014  
AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:**

**Lowca Parish Councillors**

Mr B Ennis  
Mrs G Strickland  
Mr J Crawford  
Mr F Hollowell  
Mr T Milligan  
Mrs M Moore  
Mrs E Walker  
Mrs A Oliver

**Copeland Borough Councillor:**

Mr B Dixon

**Cumbria County Councillor**

Mrs S Hayman

**Parish Clerk**

Mr M Milner

**Apologises:**

Miss M J Oliver

**Meeting Opened:**

The chairman opened the meeting at 7.34pm. In attendance were also David Monk Home Group's Customer Service Partner plus two members of the public, Mr Peter Doran and Natalie Jones. As the fourth item of the agenda concerned the invited guest David Monk the chairman advised the meeting that he would start with that item before the normal business of the meeting.

**036.00**

**Home Group Matters, with David Monk, Home Group Customer Service Partner.**

036.01. Cllr Gillian Strickland advised David Monk that it was she who had requested he attend the meeting. She then read out a list of problem properties on West Croft Terrace and asked him for his comments. He stated that the properties as they became available were advertised via Cumbria Watch. They would go on the system on a Wednesday and remain available for potential tenants to apply until the following Wednesday. He advised how the properties would be allocated and the checks made on potential tenants.

036.01 continued. In respect of police checks those were carried out by his line manager and it was individuals above him who actually approved and allocated the tenants. When pressed on particular properties that were concerning locals he pointed out that he could not discuss individual cases in a public meeting, but would be prepared to talk to Cllr Strickland on a one to one basis to resolve some of her queries. However on a general point about properties being used for drug growing or sale, CBC was dependent on the police obtaining a conviction before they could act on the tenant. In respect of general repairs there had been a survey about "stock condition" for insurance purposes and other surveys about damp, roofing and internal condition. He was not currently making empty properties available to rent because when repairs on other properties were sanctioned, but not in this financial year, he may need empty properties to temporarily rehouse tenants. The question was raised about running a business from Home Group properties. Mr Monk was quite adamant that no one could run a business from a Home Group property without their permission. C.B.C Brian Dixon pointed out that even if the individual had that permission the property would have to be reassessed for rates as a business premises.

The chairman raised the question of prior knowledge of tenants, but that was deemed a non-starter, the parish council could have no say on that matter.

Mr Doran said his problem was with a street lamp, which had been partially removed and never replaced. The matter was obviously a C.B.C matter and C.B.C Brian Dixon took Mr Doran's contact details and would make contact with him and get the matter resolved. The members of the public and David Monk left the meeting at 8.02pm and the meeting resumed according to the agenda at 8.05pm.

### **037.00**

#### **Declaration of Interest**

None

### **038.00**

#### **To approve and accept the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014, as a true record.**

038.01. Cllr Milligan requested clarification that minute 028.03 did not imply he had any input with the building of the shelter or its use. The clerk clarified that the wording only confirmed that Cllr Milligan had stated the shelter was erected as a result of consultation within the crem' liaison group, which included clergy and funeral directors.

With that clarification, the minutes were proposed by Cllr G Strickland, seconded by Cllr M Moore and voted for unanimously.

### **039.00**

#### **Police matters.**

039.01. Although there was no police presence the clerk read out a summary of police actions in September. This included positive action in connection with the misuse of the BMX track.

039.01 continued. It would appear that C.B.C could not give permission for the use of any powered vehicles to use the track, so the police legal team would request that notices to ban the use of such machines on the track would be erected, so making the task of the police enforcing that simpler.

039.02. The clerk had an accident collision report history for the A595 and the Parton/Lowca junctions if any councillor was interested in viewing it.

## **040.00**

### **Planning Matters.**

040.01. The clerk confirmed there were none and confirmed that following the last meeting he had emailed the planning department about the time the parish council had to make comment to any applications. He was still waiting for a reply and would chase it up.

## **041.00**

### **Matters concerning District and Ward Councillors.**

041.01. The long promised name plaque for Croft Terrace has still not been erected. C.B.C Brian Dixon and C.C.C Susan Hayman are to apply pressure to get the plaque problem resolved.

041.02. Cllr John Crawford wanted to know who was responsible for the fencing at the bottom of West Croft Terrace, because there had been horses lose around his property in the night. C.B.C Dixon would contact the appropriate council department first thing Thursday morning.

041.03. Cllr Hollowell confirmed with C.C.C Hayman that the bus route affected by cut backs which he enquired about was route number 22. She would investigate the matter further. Concrete details should be available by end of October.

041.04. Cllr Strickland raised the question about Ghyll Grove which has recently been resurfaced. In recent rain, properties 35 to 40 were subject to rain water going over the pavement and running down their steps. It looks as if a drain has been surfaced over. C.C.C Hayman had a Highways working group Thursday morning so would raise the matter.

8.26pm Cllr Frank Hollowell leaves the meeting.

041.05. C.C.C Hayman produced copies of the National Grid Feedback form. She requested that representations were made about the dismantling of the existing National Grid power line and pylon, if the new higher voltage line is erected along the proposed green route on page 12 section B1 map. The clerk confirmed he would write on behalf of the parish council and villagers who could not attend any of the consultation meetings and request that the old pylons and lines be removed.

041.06. The report from Cllrs Bowman was circulated.

## **042.00**

### **Matters arising from the last minutes**

042.01. Village notice board is up and erected. The chairman advised that the clerk would hold one key and Cllr M Moore the other. All agreed. No unauthorised use.

042.02. The bridge between Parton and Lowca is the council's responsibility to insure, Cumbria County Council do not accept it as part of the costal pathway and so not their responsibility.

**043.00**

**Resolution, Lowca parish Councillors authorise their chairman and one other councillor to sign on their behalf a legal deed transferring from Copeland Borough Council to Lowca Parish Council the land the War Memorial stands, at (location of the area), as per Parish Standing Orders Note 22, section b, and duly witnessed by the proper officer and acceptance of the terms in that document.**

043.01. The council agreed unanimously that the chairman Brian Ennis and Cllr John Crawford should be the two councillors who signed the legal document. If one or other could not make the appointment, then another councillor could take their place.

**044.00**

**Clerks Hours and Financial statement and budget for remainder of the current financial year and for financial year 2015.16.**

044.01. The topic started with the clerk's hours but as the financial implications of the clerks hours and other financial matters were all being discussed agenda items 9 and 10 were combined with the chairman's approval. The clerk acknowledged that he had been a sharp learning curve with both current and past council business. With time he would undoubtedly become more efficient with his time, but the past two meetings he had to report on had been exceptionally long. Not only that he had to resolve audit issues which were not of his making. Thankfully the clerk in 2004 had been comprehensive with her written notes and so he was able to resolve the sale of the radar gun to the total satisfaction of the government's external audit.

The chairman stated it was not a case of the clerk becoming more efficient, he was that, it was the fact he was clearing up many outstanding items, but as they were resolved so the hours worked would decrease. The clerk explained that he sent the minutes out within a week of the meeting to allow councillors chance to read and take whatever action that was agreed by them. The agenda had to be sent with 3 clear working days, but could not always be sent early because items for inclusion were not known.

The clerk's hours would eventually be in line with the 23.5hours CALC estimated that a clerk for a similar parish should be doing. A document showing that figure had been circulated so councillors could see that the hours currently being worked were excessive. The hourly rate being paid was the lowest rate for the job, but one the clerk was happy to accept when interviewed for the position. Cllr Strickland had prior to the interview checked with CALC the pay rates and advised that the rate could be substantially more. The previous clerk had worked for a peppercorn monthly salary which was his choice. If he had worked for a proper hourly rate and correctly applied the HMRC rules in 2011, this anomaly would have come to light earlier, more to the point as the chairman acknowledged, it would have made the council make regular appropriate annual adjustments to the precept.

044.01. Continued. The clerk stressed that all he was endeavouring to do was bring the whole council finances back to a more appropriate precept income and provide accounts that were transparent to all the councillors. Cllr Crawford was happy with the clerk's work ethics, but still felt his costs were prohibitive. Cllr A Oliver stated that it was obvious that it was evident the parish council should have made regular precept increases in earlier years.

Meeting temporarily suspended 9.08pm

Meeting resumed 9.14pm

## **044.00**

### **Matters of Report**

044.01, Cllr A Oliver had been to Lowca School to see the work they have done in respect of the costal pathway and their involvement with a recent TV item done on that subject.

044.02, As the school had been mentioned the chairman read out a letter he had received from Let's Play School thanking the parish council for their £500 donation towards the safety matting.

044.03, the clerk reported to he had been to the Connecting Cumbria forum and Lowca residents access to fibre optic broadband should be completed by March '15.

044.04. In the new notice board the clerk is putting a notice inviting locals to contact him or one of their local parish councillors about possible community projects. A similar notice will be in the next edition of the Lowca Lowdown.

044.05. The chairman advised that in response to projects he had two that would be promoting, one concerned the War Memorial and the other was more long term but still as significant, a refurbished children's play area. Two possible sites for a new play area could be part of the Wreck or the BMX track, but the land must be owned by C.B.C.

## **045.00**

### **Correspondence**

045.01. A request from Great North Air Ambulance for a donation towards their annual running costs. The clerk advised that in past years the council normally donated £50. Cllr M Moore proposed a £50 donation for this year and that was seconded by Cllr G Strickland. Vote in favour was unanimous.

045.02. The clerk advised that he had received confirmation that the parish councils annual external audit report had been received and all was in order.

045.02. Annual Cumbria Review, help the aged leaflets and the like.

045.03. Annual rough sleeper count.

## **046.00**

### **Cheques for payment**

100293: Great North Air Ambulance, £50

100294: Clerk, salary £375.35(3 month balance), Expenses £23.43, Total £398.78

100295: HMRC, clerks PAYE payment for 3 months £161.20

## **047.00**

### **Date and time of next meeting.**

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm Lowca Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.30pm