

**MINUTES OF LOWCA PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th DECEMBER 2015
AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present:

Lowca Parish Councillors

Miss M J Oliver vice-chairman
Mr J Crawford
Mr H Thinnesen
Mrs V Stafford
Mrs A Oliver
Mr T Milligan

Parish Clerk

Mr M Milner

Copeland District and Cumbria County Councillors

Gillian Troughton CBC & CCC
Jackie Bowman CBC
John Bowman CBC

Apologises

Mrs M Moore
Mrs E Walker

Meeting Opened:

The vice chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm. The clerk advised that although the minutes for the previous meeting showed that Cllr M.M had resigned verbally during the last meeting as the resignation had not been put in writing she was still a councillor. She had offered her apologies for this meeting.

206.00 Apologises.

Duly noted as above.

207.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 18th November, as a true record.

The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr V.S and seconded by Cllr H.T. The vote by show of hands was unanimous for approval, by those who were at November meeting.

208.00 Election of Parish Council Chairman.

208.01 Cllr M.O advised that the first business was to elect a chairman for the parish council and that she was prepared to take on the task if proposed. Cllr V.S proposed that Cllr M.O be elected chairman and Cllr H.T seconded the proposal. Cllr J.C clarified that it was a permanent appointment not just for that meeting. There were no other nominations so a unanimous show of hands confirmed Cllr M.O as Lowca’s new chairman.

208.02 The new chairman asked for proposals for a vice-chairman. Cllr M.O proposed Cllr Violet Stafford for vice-chair and Cllr J.C seconded it, again a unanimous show of hands confirmed the appointment.

208.03 Cllr J.C asked that the council write to Brian Ennis and thank him on behalf of the parish council for his service and contribution to Lowca over the past 23 years. Cllr M.O, as chair, requested that the clerk write the letter and all Cllrs present acknowledged the appropriateness of such a letter.

209.00 Police Matters.

209.01 Police Community Support Officer Hollie Dennis was present and made her report for November 2015. There was nothing significant in the report.

209.02 Cllr A.O asked about road flooding and police involvement. Hollie advised that it was a Cumbria County Council matter, however if there was flooding problem of the highways, the police could be contacted and they would make the appropriate representations to CCC Highways Dept’ to resolve safety concerns.

Hollie left the meeting at 7.45pm and Cllr Gillian Troughton CBC & CCC joined the meeting

210.00 Applications for Development.

None

211.00 County and District Councillors Reports

211.01 Cllr John B advised that there had a succession of briefings with NuGen, Electricity North West and United Utilities, but due to the recent flooding as a result of Storm Desmond on 4th December, meetings with Cumbria Highways Department had been cancelled due to the pressure of the flooding situation in the county.

211.02 Cllr Jackie B advised that United Utilities would be submitting their planning application enabling the plan to supply Copeland with water from Thirlmere and not Ennerdale as at present. There will be local public consultations during May to October 2016 and that the UU team would, if requested, come to Lowca to talk to the parish council or at a public meeting. The work is due to commence March 2017 and be completed by March 2022.

211.03 Cllr G.T confirmed that Copeland’s collection of cardboard waste from households would resume prior to Christmas.

That concluded the session with the CBC & CCC councillors, but all three opted to remain for the rest of the meeting with the chairman’s approval.

212.00 Budget and Precept for 2016/17

212.01 The clerk circulated his budget up date for 2015/16 and his forecast budget for 2016/17. He went through the budget item by item highlighting where there could be possible savings. The budget for 2015/16 would balance with the forecasts made 12 months ago. Despite numerous requests to Copeland's finance department he had been unable to confirm what funding would be available or possible grants. Cllr G.T CBC confirmed that at numerous recent parish council meetings all clerks were reporting the same lack of information. The government had not yet made the final financial decision known. Cllr G.T agreed with the clerk that she doubted that parish councils would be capped.

212.02 The clerk concluded his report with a recommendation that at the least Lowca retained its request for a £6000 precept as per last year.

212.03 Councillors discussed plans in the pipeline for the parish and one of the most likely immediate projects for completion would be a bus shelter in East Road by the parish notice board in the area where there had been a previous bus shelter. The area currently used for waste recycling bins. The clerk advised of likely bus shelter cost and ground works costs, which could be variable depending on the final location of the shelter.

212.04 Cllr J.C proposed that Lowca, in light of the discussions at 212.03 a precept figure of £7000 should be requested for 2016/17 and that was seconded by Cllr A.O and passed unanimously by the council on a show of hands.

213.00 Bus Shelter costings and project approval.

213.01 Clerk advised where he was with costings for the bus shelter. Basically a cantilever shelter with no sides would be £2550 ex VAT and that fitting could be as high as £3000 ex VAT. He had spoken to Simon Blacker in Copeland planning office and confirmed no planning permission required. He had spoken to Copeland's property department about the land where the shelter could be placed and he had received that afternoon a map from Copeland's property dept' requesting confirmation of their understanding of the shelter's location. The map was circulated and councillors all agreed that the map was correct. Clerk had also spoken to Cumbria County Council Highways department, who would arrange a site visit with the clerk to advise on requirements.

213.02 Councillors agreed that the clerk should continue with the project. Cllr G.T CCC asked to be advised of the site visit timing so she if possible could attend.

213.03 Cllr J.C suggested that a shelter with sides should if possible be fitted as the rain at its proposed location could be very ferocious with a wind behind it.

214.00 Progress report, clerk.

214.01 Lowca Lowdown, December 2015 edition had been printed and distributed. It had had a front and rear external colour cover, which highlighted the Remembrance Day photo on the front and had provided the opportunity for three colour pictures of Lowca village school children and their projects. The colour cover had increased the cost for 350 copies from £120 in black and white to £155. The chairman Cllr M.O to arrange a distribution team between the councillors for the March 2016 edition.

214.02 The minutes of Lowca Parish Council (198.01 refers) covering the period June 1985 to December 2014, inclusive, have been deposited with Cumbria County Council records office in Whitehaven. The clerk remarked that his appearance with so much material left a few frowns and he had not yet had the official notification of their receipt, but the records office were probably still cataloguing them.

214.03 Clerk has completed the application forms (198.02 refers) for hopefully reimbursement of all Lowca website development costs and the purchase of a Lowca Parish Council laptop and printer. Total claim £649.00.

214.04 HSBC has sent email confirming Lowca Parish Council's initial access codes to set up internet banking for the parish bank account. (198.01 refers) Other document in the post and clerk has the banks equipment to make and confirm payments.

215.00 Councillors reports

215.01 Cllrs T.M and H.T had been to a meeting on 26th November held at Egremont Market Hall which had various guest speakers covering Sellafield, parking in Whitehaven and also the local major road infrastructure and the potential impact of the new power facility at Moorside. Cllr T.M was of the opinion that the speakers were using well rehearsed scripts and that nothing constructive was achieved by attending such meetings. Cllr G.T CCC who was still present advised the PC meeting that she recalled the meeting and agreed with Cllr T.M and his description of the meeting. However it was important that parish councillors did attend such meetings and voice their concerns, because when the CBC and CCC councillors were involved in official meetings with the officials it meant that they could remind the officials that the views had been aired to them already and they ought to be taking these views into consideration.

215.02 Cllr G.T CCC did say that there was to have been a meeting about the A595 in the Lowca area, but the flood problems had cancelled all meetings as Cumbria CC used all its resources to get the county roads fully open.

215.03 Cllr M.O told the meeting that she and the clerk had attended a Copeland North Coastal Community Team meeting at Haig Museum on 7th December. They had presented a project to see the coastal pathway through Lowca across Lowca Brow being tarmaced and so fit for wheelchair and pushchair use. The pathway is 2km in length and they had obtained a budget price of £150k to tarmac it. The clerk had been in touch with pathway team personnel from Lakes National Park and also Copeland's development officer. The next meeting is to be early January 2016 and the parish council will wait for further details of the conclusion of the Coastal pathway team at the January meeting.

215.04 Cllr M.O said there was a fund to help the flood victims and that other parish councils in the area, although not physically damaged by the storm had made a financial donation. After a short discussion Cllr J.C proposed that Lowca parish council make a donation of £200 which was seconded by Cllr V.S and on a show of hands a unanimous vote confirmed the donation. Clerk to organise.

216.00 Correspondence

216.01 Request from Great North Ambulance for a donation to their cause. Cllr J.C said it was normal practice that Lowca donated £50 and he proposed they did again this year, his proposal was seconded by Cllr A.O and other councillors confirmed unanimously to make the £50 donation. Clerk to organise.

216.02 Quotation received from Copeland Parks Department for the contract to provide their Landscape Service Delivery for 2016. The quote is for £769.52. Cllr J.C proposed acceptance of the quote and that was seconded by Cllr A.O and again unanimously accepted by the other councillors. The clerk was asked to contact John Davis the Parks Manager and enquire if the contract could run for 3 years as a fixed price contract, rather than renewable annually?

216.03 Following the resignation of Brian Ennis from the council there is a vacancy, which will be advertised in the parish notice board, but the clerk had already had a letter from a local resident detailing their qualifications and expressing a desire to be considered for co-option to the council.

216.04 Invoice received from Printpoint covering the printing and production of the December 2015 Lowca Lowdown. Invoice value £155. Approved for payment.

217.00 Payments approved for payment via internet banking.

Intpay 1, Great North Air Ambulance. £50

Intpay 2, M Milner, clerk. £376.16, salary £312.55 and travel/office exp £63.61

Intpay3, HMRC clerks PAYE £58.40

Intpay4, Printpoint, £155.00 Lowca Lowdown December 2015 edition

Meeting closed 9.15pm

218.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 20th January 2016 at 7.30pm Lowca Village Hall.