

**MINUTES OF LOWCA PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2015
AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present:

Lowca Parish Councillors

Mr B Ennis
Mrs G Strickland
Mr J Crawford
Mr T Milligan
Mrs A Oliver
Miss M J Oliver
Mrs E Walker

Copeland Borough Councillor

Mr B Dixon

Cumbria County Councillor

Mrs S Hayman

Parish Clerk

Mr M Milner

Apologises

Mrs M Moore
Mr F Hollowell

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE, Karl Melville, Senior Manager, Cumbria County Council. Cllr Frank Morgan, CCC. Cllrs John and Jackie Bowman, Copeland BC. Chris Shaw Parton Parish Council Clerk. Cllr Kevin Young, Parton Parish Council Chairman. Other members of Parton, Moresby and Distington Parish Councils were also in attendance.

Meeting Opened:

The chairman declared the meeting opened at 7.30pm prompt.

070.00 Apologises.

Duly noted as above.

071.00 Declaration of Interests

None

072.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 18th December 2014, as a true record.

072.01 Cllr JC asked that at 064.02 it be recorded that he voted against the precept not as written abstaining. This was amended.

The minutes were then proposed as a true record by Cllr G.S and seconded by Cllr E.W. The vote by show of hands was unanimous for approval.

073.00 Presentation by Karl Melville in respect of proposed changes to A595 junctions at the exits from Lowca and Parton.

073.01 Karl Melville, with the aid of projected visual aids ran through the Cumbria County Council’s two preferred options for the road junction that exit’s Lowca on to the A595 and also the road junction that exit’s from Parton on to the A595. The presentation and discussions lasted for an hour and as these minutes are for Lowca reference, they will not record the discussions of potentially 7 problem junctions along the A595. They will however record though the more general financial comments which dominate the Lowca junction and considered on all other junction decision making.

073.02 Dealing specifically with Lowca’s junction, the proposal is to make it a left turn only on to the A595, directing all traffic to flow north initially to the traffic island that already exist at the end of the Distington dual carriage way by-pass, at which point traffic wishing to travel south towards Whitehaven could do so by using that traffic islands flow pattern. Karl M pointed out that for the meetings information a traffic island at a junction cost a ball park £2m and a controlled crossing, lights, costs approx £300k. Such sum are not currently available, hence these proposals as CCC keep up dialogue with the Highways Agency to consider larger projects to solve the problems.

073.03 Karl M displayed both recent photographs and CAD images of the proposed Lowca turn indicating in his judgement where HGV tyre tracks and their vehicle body work footprints would travel when using the junction. The photographs clearly show that currently large HGVs exiting the junction left are already running over the kerb, so that will have to be repositioned.

073.04 Since an earlier meeting with Cllr BE about the junction, at which Cllr BE had expressed the concern of vehicles from the south over taking traffic turning into the junction in front of them, Karl and team have decided that a pedestrian traffic island in the middle of the carriageway would remove that potential hazard and provide a refuge for pedestrians crossing the road, especially during busy traffic periods.

074.05 Cllr GS felt that it was possible 90% of Lowca traffic already made the left turn out of choice, to avoid the problems of crossing both lanes of busy rush hour traffic. It was not thought that Lowca residents would divert through Parton, using it as a rat run to escape the mandatory left turn. Karl M confirmed that traffic counters would be placed to check the traffic flows. Chris Shaw, Parton Clerk, did at one stage enquire if there was not an opportunity to perhaps just put up advisory road signage suggesting a left turn during busy periods?

074.05 continued, Karl M pointed out that there exists a code of approved road signage to which all authorities have to adhere. Such a sign as suggested, and he remarked a similar one was evident at Dunmail Retail Park, does not conform to approved rules and could actually in the event of an accident result in litigation to the sign's owner if it was shown to have been a contributor factor in the accident. Chris Shaw did say that tractor signs with times were used in various areas, so was there not some opportunity for manipulation of existing signs?

074.06 On a more general points discussed Cumbria County Councillor Sue Hayman, before she left the meeting at 8pm stated that her concern was that all the A595 issues over its full length were brought together to create a true bigger picture and show from traffic census the actual displacement of traffic.

074.07 Copeland B.C Jackie Bowman enquired about the cost of the two junctions compared to the figures mentioned for a proper solution, Karl M indicated that if the options were to become permanent changes, £8-10k would be the cost, considerably lower on their installation as temporary solutions, while the traffic was monitored.

074.08 Chris Shaw was of the opinion that the Parton junction could be resolved by just the addition of 4 bollards, 2 for a one way instruction and 2 for a no entry and that local representation would reject the option being viewed and as discussed by Parton PC at their last meeting. Karl M told the meeting that the HA approved the Parton option. Chris Shaw was concerned that the supposed public consultation was not therefore going to be listened too. Karl M at that point stressed that his department would take the consultation documents back to the CCC Highways committee who in turn will consider the officers' recommendations and the feedback from the public consultations and it will be the committee that then makes the decisions after considering all submissions, public consultation and his departments.

074.09 Copeland B.C Brian Dixon brought up controlled crossing works south of Whitehaven and how was that being funded. Karl M stated that those particular works had been deemed a "Pinch Point" by government, i.e. their implementation would create economic growth either by creating housing or commercial development for employment. He did say that because of the CCC input to the project they had created a two lane rather than one lane junction. So consultation with the HA had to be maintained for the benefit of the region. Karl M advised that with regard to new building developments where developers were creating finished roadways to connect to existing highways, developers had to sign up to a Section 278 agreement, which required them to pay for all the connections and their cost and also agree to an ongoing requirement to service and maintain the new works, usually for a period of a further 25 years. No small cost for developers.

074.10 Copeland B.C John Bowman voiced the opinion that "local input" should not just be public consultation, but that "local" parish councillors should be included at A595 Liaison meetings, as used to be the case. Lowca chair Cllr Brian Ennis reinforced that view and wanted to know why their representation had ever been stopped. Karl M implied it was probably at his suggestion as he felt it was CCC task to work closely with HA to get projects undertaken. However he did say that he would go back to the committee and voice the local concerns and consider making appropriate attendance changes, but not before the May 2015 elections.

074.11 Copeland B.C John Bowman noted the use of the word investment by Karl M and suggested that under what he would call a 106 agreement, the proposed Nuclear Industry development at Moreside would be of such a large scale that that industry should be bearing the brunt of the investment to improve the roads and CCC should be establishing this at the planning stage. Karl M noted his comment but pointed out that what he was proposing this night were changes to identified problem junction areas and that if the Lowca and Parton changes saved one accident and a life then that made the alterations a success.

Karl M finished his presentation and all present had asked questions and raised points that concerned them so Cllr Brian Ennis thanked Karl M for attending and also the members of other parishes.

At 8.30pm the meeting was suspended to allow those not involved with the Lowca meeting to leave.

Meeting reconvened at 8.35pm

074.12. For the sake of continuity of these minutes, recorded here is the decision of the Lowca PC concerning the changes to the Lowca junction, making it a left turn only, as shown in the presentation material earlier in the evening, with pedestrian reservations. This was discussed after the departure of Copeland B.C Brian Dixon and minute 077.04 was concluded.

Cllr E Walker proposed that the left turn be put in place, provided that CCC confirmed, in writing, that it was for a trial period of 3 months only and that traffic monitoring in surrounding areas was implemented to study traffic flow once it was in place. It was seconded by Cllr G.S and **it was resolved** unanimously by the councillors present to accept Cllr E Walker proposal.

075.00 Police Matters.

075.01 Going back to the agenda order, the clerk distributed the police report submitted by PCSO Sarah Marshall 5388. She had been called away to another duty otherwise should would have been in attendance. Cllr G.S stated that with regard to scrambler bikes, she had been nearly knocked over on the afternoon of Saturday 14th Feb’ by a bike racing at the rear of West Croft Terrace ridden by a local resident.

076.00 Planning Matters.

076.01 An application received from Copeland Planning department, concerning a planning proposal at Eden Garden, Howgate, CH/4/15/2021/OF1. No objections, clerk to confirm approval.

076.02 A retrospective planning application for the retention and continued use of three temporary residential caravans at Blomfields Ltd, Stamford Hill, Lowca, CH/4/15/2024/OF1. The council voted 4 to 3 against the application.

The clerk was instructed to advise Copeland Planning Department that the objection was on failure to comply with planning applications associated with Copeland B.C and on a regular basis submitting retrospective planning application, making a mockery of the spirit of the planning application procedures.

076.02 continued. The clerk is also to request answers to two questions, a) are the caravans subject to council tax if required for regular employee residential use and b) do the planning department class the business as agricultural or horticultural for planning purposes?

077.00 Matters concerning District and Ward Councillors.

077.01 Cllr B.E thanked Copeland B.C Brian Dixon for the splendid photograph of the poppy field that was created at the Tower of London to mark the 100th anniversary of commencement of World War One. All agreed that it should be presented to Lowca School to allow future generations to comprehend the importance of remembering those who have lost their lives serving monarch and country. Cllr Mercia J Oliver leaves the meeting at 9pm

077.02 BMX Track, Cllr B.E had spoken with Clinton Boyce, Copeland's solicitor, about the track which should have been a multipurpose use facility as the Rugby Club obtained lottery funding which included that in its grant submission. CB is checking out the lease agreement to establish if rugby club should be responsible. Cllr BE, once the war memorial has been landscaped, would like to see the BMX track turned into a large children and adult activity play area. Copeland B C Brian Dixon leaves the meeting 9.05pm. BMX Track to be on next agenda.

077.03 A discussion of the Copeland Plan took place. There was nothing in the plan that would affect Lowca. If the one housing area was to be developed of approx 25 properties then some concern was raised about the sewerage system. Other than that no objections to the Copeland plan 2013 to 2028.

077.04 The Cllrs Bowman's up date had been circulated and received by all.

078.00 Matters Arising from the last Minutes.

078.01 Clerk reported that he had been to Copeland and discussed the village precept and submitted the paperwork for the agreed figure.

078.02 Clerk has written to Government department concerning the Parish Poll changes that were being proposed.

079.00 Lowca War Memorial.

079.01 Cllr B.E read an email from Milburns Solicitors, saying that a problem with the lease concerning the head-lease had been resolved and it should be sorted out and completed in the month.

079.02 Designs are being considered for the landscape and perimeter fencing.

079.03 HSBC have reopened the bank account for the memorial and returned the funds which were held in a suspense account. The clerk has the cheque and paying books and will provide his services free and gratis in connection with all paperwork administration for the project.

080.00 Matters of Report

080.01 Clerk advised that he had followed up a report that the Methodist Chapel had in the past been subject to a Bats Preservation Order. Having spoken to the Bats Hotline organisation and spoken to the owner of the property he could confirm that the current property owner had employed the services of an approved Bat expert who advised no signs of Bats in the property at present, but it is hibernation time for Bats. Expert will return and monitor the building over the coming months and establish if bats are present and if so a breeding colony roost, or one used solely by males. The Bat hotline people are more than happy with actions taken by the property owners and the council's concerns.

080.02 Clerk has received an enquiry about having a bus shelter built in East Road, supported by a 62 signature petition. Clerk instructed to write initially to Stagecoach the bus company for their observations.

081.00 Correspondence

081.01 Local government electronic communication. Clerk advised that he was now able to circulate agendas via email and that all council agendas and minutes should be made available freely on a website. The clerk is developing the website so for the immediate future will continue to use the notice board to display all appropriate notices. However the council did discuss the circulation by email of agendas and unanimously agreed that the clerk should distribute agendas and minutes etc to themselves using Royal Mail.

081.02 Correspondence about Affordable Rural Housing. A practical guide for parish councils

081.03 Notification of Consultation on Draft Statement of Licensing Policy circulated by Copeland BC. Refers to centre of Whitehaven licensed premises.

081.04 Confirmation from HM Revenue & Customs that VAT refund claimed by the council has been made, £501.08, directly to PC bank account on 22nd Jan 2015. Bank statement confirms receipt.

081.05 Correspondence from EM Service Highway Services.

081.06 Quotation received from Copeland BC, John Davis, Parks Manager, confirming a price of £769.52 for 2015 as per a schedule provided. Lowca councillors were in agreement to accept the quotation. However they asked the clerk to write to JD and point out that 2 lights in the Millennium Garden were not working and certainly the brambles bordering the pathway were overgrown and needed cutting back.

081.07 Letter from National Grid acknowledging receipt of the councils letter about the possible new Grid Transmission route if Moreside is built and the removal of the old lines through Lowca which will become redundant.

081.08 Clerk has received details of briefing sessions for the forthcoming May elections and that he will attend one on 2nd March, to ensure he is up to speed on the procedures.

081.09 Received notification that the next Howgate Distington Partnership meeting was to take place Tuesday 24th Feb' at 7pm at the Moresby Rugby Clubhouse. There is to be a presentation by Copeland Planning Officer about the Copeland Local Plan (minute 077.03 refers)

081.09 continued. The clerk advised that all councillors were invited to attend as Copeland is not holding meetings with individual parish councils. Cllr BE and clerk confirmed their respective intentions to attend.

082.00 Cheques for signing

082.01 Cheque No 100303, £375.11 to clerk, £278.50 salary, expenses £96.61 for travel and office consumables.

082.02 Cheque No 100304 £69.80 to HM Customs & Revenue tax on clerks salary.

083.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 18th March 2015 at 7.30pm Lowca Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.55pm

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