

LOWCA PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Wednesday 20th May 2020

Which commenced with parish council AGM

For future public record, this parish council meeting was held using the Zoom video conferencing facility. In March 2020 following a pandemic outbreak of Coronavirus, officially named Corvid 19, the UK government had on 23rd March announced a national lockdown on UK citizens with far reaching restrictions. One of which was to ban public meetings of more than 2 people and those participants must maintain a social distancing of 2mt between them. The government in early April brought in legislation which permitted local authorities, including parish councils, to meet using a video conferencing facility. The parish clerk studied the options from readily available Skype, Microsoft Team, and others before settling on a paid for monthly subscription using Zoom. This system will continue in use until such time as the government allows the return of public gatherings and meetings in community buildings.

Video link Meeting opened: - The chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Miss M Oliver(chair), H Thinnesen, Mrs R Barwise, Miss K Thinnesen. D Wrench.

Copeland Borough and Cumbria County Councillors: Cllr Martin Barbour (CCC)

Clerk: Mike Milner

Members of the public, none via video link.

914.00 Apologises for Absence. Mrs A Oliver

915.00 To appoint a chairman and a vice-chairman for the coming year.

915.01 Clerk confirmed that Cllr M O was prepared to stand again as chair. Cllr K T proposed Cllr M O and was seconded by Cllr H T, no other nominations, Cllr M O returned as chair.

915.02 Clerk advised that there was no current vice chair, it was decided that a vice chair would be elected when normal parish meetings were resumed and a full attendance of councillors in attendance.

916.00 To approve and accept the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 19th February 2020, as a true record.

916.01 Resolved by Cllrs present at the meeting in February to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record.

916.02 As a video meeting chair could not physically sign the true copy. Clerk had confirmed with Calc by email, that with councillor's approval, for the duration of the use of video meetings it was appropriate for clerk to sign all approved minutes pp on chairs behalf. It was resolved that for duration of video meetings that would be acceptable.

917.00 Standing Order amendment include use of virtual meeting medium.

917.01 Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting a copy of the amendment that required adding to cover how video meetings would be conducted. He had added the amendment into the section 2 headed General meeting. Councillors resolved to accept the amendment and its insertion into the parish standing orders.

918.00 To approve the co-option of David Wrench, 7 Croft Head View, Lowca as a councillor for Lowca Parish.

918.01 Clerk had established that D W complied with the requirements of becoming a parish councillor for Lowca. He had been interviewed by Cllrs M O and D B and would have been co-opted at the March meeting, but that had been postponed due to Coronavirus pandemic.

918.02 Cllrs duly resolved to co-opt D W. Clerk advised that once a physical meeting was permissible, he would get the declaration of acceptance of office form signed and provide the new Cllr with a copy of the Good Councillors Guide.

919.00 Public Participation.

919.01 Following all the arrangements as per minute 907.00 the clerk had cancelled the war memorial centenary celebrations with H D and stopped printing of the celebratory booklet, plus the Lowca Lowdown. Also contacted the grandson of the Thomas Crellin who had been a driving force behind the original war memorial fund, advising Don Crellin of the ceremony's cancellation.

919.02 Clerk had paid an initial £50 deposit to the lady who was to do the catering for the ceremony, as instructed by Cllrs, minute 907.05 refers, this was non-refundable, but clerk would discuss the position if the same caterer was used next year.

919.03 No members of the public attending by video link.

920.00 Police Matters.

920.01 Clerk advised that the Cumbria Police website at Area Map option came up with Error 404 code. Obviously due to Corvid 19, website not being maintained.

921.00 County and District Councillors Reports

921.01 Cllr M B (CCC) was available by video link and up dated the Council on how the various agencies had worked together with individual community groups. It has been deemed a great success in Cumbria and Copeland and Cumbria praised the manner community groups had responded.

921.02 After the initial round of "where was the next meal coming from," those issues had been replaced with how could the recovery be moved forward within the constraints of the social distancing. He enquired how had Lowca faired and were there any problems he could assist with.

921.03 Chair advised that Lowca Facebook group now over 300 members and Cllr R B had with the local vicar arranged for lockdown services to be accessed by the group if they required. A jigsaw group created; jigsaws were passed on after a 72-hour quarantine period between recipients. Cllr L T-H had been instrumental in organising a local delivery of fresh milk and eggs into Lowca and Cllr K T with friends had encouraged residents to decorate their houses for the V E Day celebrations. Photographs had been taken and money had been raised amounting to just over £284 which had been donated to the British Legion.

921.04 Clerk suggested that as the restrictions were lifted perhaps a bumper edition of the Lowca Lowdown should be created for distribution to show the locals what they had achieved in a lockdown situation. Cllr M B invited to stay at the meeting, which he accepted.

922.00 Applications for Development.

922.01 Clerk reported that there were no new applications to consider, however he had completed the submission to the planners in relation to the glasshouse extension. 25 hours of input by clerk.

923.00 Receive and approve the parish council accounts for financial year 2019/20. Internal auditors report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statement for the year all to be resolved. Bank reconciliation and variance report.

923.01 Clerk advised that he had only been advised on evening of Wednesday 29th April that it was acceptable for the parish council's internal auditor, to provide an internal auditor's report based on historical fact of having completed a previous end of year assessment of the manner the parish accounting system had operated plus the auditor had also completed a physical examination of the accounts after September 2019 half year accounting period. Signed documentary evidence of that audit and they had been accepted by council. Minute note 834.02 October 2019 confirms that criteria, 2018/19 auditors report confirms same auditor as 2019/20. All relevant documentation and accounts had been scanned and forwarded to the auditor, plus all ledger files had been provided. All this material on return had been provided to the councillors.

923.02 Certificate of Exemption, AGAR 2019/20 Part 2. This confirms that the parish has neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25k. Inspected by councillors and to be signed by clerk and chair, social distancing meeting to be arranged for wet signature.

923.03 clerk had circulated the signed Annual Internal Audit Report. Internal audit had taken place 11/10/19 and 20/05/20. All boxes correctly ticked, and no issues or recommendations raised.

923.04 Annual Governance Statement. Councillors had read the content of the 9 boxes on the form and at each statement to be ticked Yes box with Cllrs approval. Form then to be receive wet signature by chair and clerk, per 923.02.

923.05 Finally the accounting statement, which had been circulated was approved by councillors and again will be duly receive wet signature as 923.02 by RFO and chair.

923.06 Clerk confirmed that he would make the appropriate returns to the external government auditor, placing necessary document required for the appropriate periods on the parish council website pages. Display in noticeboard would be dictated by government legislation about necessary journey by vehicle.

924.00 Parish council renewal, Zurich Insurance

924.01 Clerk had received the renewal documentation from the insurer. The premium was £610.04, an increase of £10.04 from last year. Clerk had also established that this year the footbridge insurance between Lowca and Parton was £206.27 of the total premium and he had written to the new Parton Parish Clerk requesting payment of £103.13.

925.00 Progress reports, clerk

925.01 Clerk explained that the meeting was being supported on the Zoom platform, he had investigated numerous options including Microsoft Team, Skype and the like but opted for the paid for Zoom system. £14.89 per month and set up on the Lorton Parish Council laptop, with 5 parishes sharing the cost it was £2.88 per parish per month. Not sure how long video format would need to be used before a return to a physical meeting, however the village hall management team would be responsible for ensuring all social distancing and safety measures were in place before the hall could be reused.

925.02 As March meeting had been suspended by Coronavirus lockdown, clerk had made final payments to complete 2019/20 accounts correctly, Intpay 164 M Milner £434.06, salary £382.40, expenses 351.66, included 25 hours for Blomfield submission, Intpay 165, HMRC PAYE £75.80 and Intpay 166 Calc £3.00 a Good Councillor Guide.

925.03 End of year accountancy documentation and arrangements not received until 24th April, due to Coronavirus and implementation of government policy. Usually received mid-March. The past 4 weeks had been busy sorting video platform and resolving accountancy issues concerning audit and presentation, plus requirement for a wet signature.

926.00 Lowca Councillors Reports

926.01 Cllr H T advised he had been made aware of vehicles racing behind West Croft Terrace. This is not a parish council matter, but complainant had been told how to report the public nuisance.

926.02 Cllr R B raised concerns about an inadequately covered manhole cover by the entrance to the Lowca Holiday village entrance. Cllr M B (CCC) still at the meeting said he would look at the problem after the meeting and report to Highways.

926.03 Cllr R B also questioned if the entrance to Lowca by the speed humps should not have a Lowca sign, did it ever have one? Cllr M B (CCC) to investigate.

926.04 Chair Cllr M O advised she would have to be contacting the local paragliding club about them resuming their sport from Lowca headland. Clerk advised that if she told the club that provided its members followed government legislation and advice on resumption and that they followed government social distancing guidance, then the parish council supported it resumption. However, if the club and members contravened any guidance then the parish council on grounds of safety to the community of Lowca and pressure on emergency services would withdraw the parish council's support.

926.05 Cllr R B requested that the chair also request the club members did not obstruct public footpaths on the headland with their equipment, as many local residents were using the area for their daily exercise regime. Comment noted.

926.06 Cllr K T brought up fly tipping issues. Cllr M O to request the areas were cleared. Cllr M B (CCC) suggested Copeland officials should be notified to step up surveillance.

927.00 Correspondence.

927.01 Howgate annual report received from Chris Shaw.

927.02 Clerk to renew Lowca's Pension Regulator's mandatory registration.

927.03 West Croft Terrace resident had queried cones in the road, without explanation. Clerk had responded that utility companies and Highways had no obligation to advise of works unless a road closure.

927.04 Calc had sent their annual subscription letter £192.23, last year £184.48 payment approved.

927.05 Clerk had received numerous emails and phone calls about Coronavirus, emails circulated where appropriate.

927.06 Letter of resignation from Cllr D B, who had moved house. Clerk to put appropriate vacancy notice in noticeboard.

928.00 Payments for approval

IntPay 167 M Milner, clerk, £262.89, salary £244.53p 2 months and expenses £18.36p.

IntPay 168 HMRC clerk's PAYE £21.80p.

IntPay 169/A Zurich Insurance £499.00 and £111.04 Total £610.04 parish insurance

IntPay 170 Calc £192.23 annual subscription

All approved

929.00 Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 17th June 2019 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed 8.17pm