

MELMERBY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Melmerby Parish Council held on Wednesday 27th November 2024 at Melmerby Village Hall.

Present: Cllr David Bardsley, Cllr Chris Jones, Cllr Gary Fletcher, Cllr Bill Burford and Claire Rankin, Parish Clerk.

Eight members of the public were present.

2024/082 **Apologies for absence – RESOLVED** that apologies were received from Cllr Dougie Bell.

2024/083 **Declarations of Interest – RESOLVED** that there were no declarations of interest.

2024/084 **Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd October 2024 – RESOLVED** that Cllr Chris Jones was authorised to sign the minutes as a correct record.

2024/085 **Exclusion of Press and Public (Public bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960) - RESOLVED** that there were no items on the agenda that required this exclusion.

2024/086 **Public Participation - RESOLVED** that the Chairman of the Parish Council opened the meeting for members of the public to speak and also asked members of the public to speak at the start of the relevant agenda item.

2024/087 **Horse Fair management update – RESOLVED** that the update and positive actions in terms of the horse fair management for 2025 be noted.

Steph Cordon, Emma Brass and Richard Scoffham from Westmorland and Furness Council and Mo Bibby from Cumbria Police were welcomed to the meeting. Cllr Bardsley gave a summary of the response submitted from the parish council in July to Westmorland and Furness Council in terms of management and operation of the horse fair in 2024. Emma Brass agreed to speak to the contractor regarding the location of the toilets and chemical waste facilities for 2025 and also agreed to ensure the signage for 2025 includes times as well as dates for suggested stopovers. Mo Bibby also responded regarding police presence in the village in 2024 and took on board the issue of congestion and hazardous traffic and road conditions at the western end of the village green in 2024.

Mo Bibby agreed to attend a further parish council meeting in the spring to discuss the arrangements for 2025. It was emphasised that the police are usually present in the village in the first three days of the stopover in Melmerby. Mo will write to the parish council in January to confirm attendance. Mo highlighted the measures that were taken in 2024 including ceasing and lifting caravans involved in illegal activity.

It was reported that neither the police or Westmorland and Furness Council have any control over the numbers arriving in the village or the length of time the travellers stay in the village as the village green is privately owned. The police and Westmorland and Furness Council's key contact is the land agent for the owners of the village green. In terms of village contacts, the village green management group receives the information from the organisations involved. Emma Brass agreed to speak to the land agent and Richard Scoffham agreed to facilitate contact between individual villagers and the land agent.

Every year online forms are available for any member of the community to give feedback and comments during the horse fair period. These are reviewed on a daily basis by the operation teams.

2024/088 **Westmorland and Furness Council RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

Cllr Hanley reported on the scrutiny committee which has identified the need for a further 120% increase in housing across the WaFC area with 450 possible sites. There are plans to build additional council owned properties. The Locality Board has £2.2 million available for additional electric vehicle charging points. The Alston and Fellside Place Action Group met for the second time on 26th November. Two major projects were discussed, the Nenthead Community Pub project (Miners Arms) and the Croglin Education and Interpretation Centre (utilising a derelict church). Project visits will take place on 12th December and Cllr Robinson would be interested to hear about any further project ideas in the pipeline. The Melmerby Play Area project was highlighted.

2024/089 **20 mph speed limit RESOLVED** that the position in terms of the submission for Melmerby be noted.

Cllr Bardsley summarised the process whereby parishes were encouraged to apply for 20 mph limits through WaFC. Melmerby Parish Council submitted a bid following local consultation in January 2024 which showed 76% of those attending were in support of the application. WaFC as the highways authority were required to carry out their own further consultation. The consultation was carried out on a different scheme for the 20 mph limit which would result in increased signage in the village. There were 73 responses to the WaFC consultation with 53% against the 20 mph scheme. Therefore WaFC is recommending abandonment of the proposal. Cllr Jones spoke about his frustration and disappointment with the process. It was emphasised that if the 20 mph speed limit is not what is wanted in the village, that is completely fine. However the consultation carried out by the parish council in January 2024 gave a clear mandate to proceed with the application. Cllr Robinson raised some concerns regarding the methodology for the WaFC consultation and suggested the parish council contact Laura Mc Clellan and Kate Clement at WaFC to discuss.

2024/089 **Restore Outreach Van RESOLVED** that the information be noted. Information has been received regarding the Restore Outreach Van which has a range of activities and craft materials. Cllr Bardsley reported that the village hall committee has received the same email and felt it may be more appropriate for the village hall to pursue.

2024/090 **Waste Collection Review RESOLVED** that the information regarding the review be noted and the link for comments be circulated.

2024/091 **Polling Station Review RESOLVED** that the information regarding the review be noted and the link for comments be circulated.

2024/092 **Clerk's salary and overheads RESOLVED** that the clerk's salary be increased in line with the nationally agreed pay rates and the back pay (to 1st April 2024) be paid. It was also agreed that the office overheads be increased from £15 per month to £20 per month. The increases were proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Burford.

2024/093 **Budget and Precept RESOLVED** that the draft budget for 2025/26 be accepted and the precept be approved for submission to WaFC. The draft budget for 2025/26 totals £5920 which was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Fletcher. The precept level was agreed to be set at £5800. The precept level was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Burford.

2024/094 **Finance RESOLVED** that the financial report be approved. This was proposed by Cllr Bardsley and seconded by Cllr Fletcher.

2024/095 **Proposed playground update RESOLVED** that the update be noted and a parish council working party (consisting of all 5 parish councillors) be established to liaise with the playground project leaders. It was reported that the playground project leaders have received consent from the landowners to increase play provision on the village green. The next steps include the project leaders meeting with play equipment providers in the New Year. Richard Scoffham, WaFC agreed to share his knowledge of playground project planning.

2024/096 **Highways RESOLVED** that no issues were reported.

2024/097 **Progress list RESOLVED** that a progress list with ongoing parish council issues or projects will be developed and reported at each meeting.

2024/098 **Correspondence RESOLVED** that the correspondence register be noted.

2024/099 **Date and time of next meeting** – The next meeting will take place on 22nd January 2025, 7.30 p.m. at Melmerby Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.