

## **CALDBECK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Caldbeck Parish Hall on Monday 13 May 2019 at 7:05pm.**

Cllrs Present: Tim Cartmell (Chairman), Norman Atkinson, Angela Glendinning, Alan Tyson  
Also Present: Mike Johnson (County Councillor), Simon Smith (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

Apologies were received from John Brown, Paul Doherty, Alastair MacFadzean, Ian Shaw and Tony Annison (Allerdale Borough Councillor)

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 May 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

### **CHAIRMANS REPORT**

The Chairman presented his report (copy attached below), with main points summarised. As regards the footpath the Chairman reported that the Information Commissioner had ordered the County Council to release a copy of the original report prepared by the independent reviewer. The Parish Council remained committed to the project and was working with Mike Johnson, County Councillor, to see how best to proceed. Progress was expected on purchasing the National Park's surplus land - the Hesket Newmarket green and the various car parks in the two villages. Allerdale Borough Council has awarded the Parish Council a grant for pre-planning advice for self build affordable family housing.

### **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

The Clerk highlighted the key figures in the accounts, with balances increasing by £1,500 to £123,500. The bulk of these were for the footpath, with earmarked reserves to fund improvements in street lighting, winter gritting, benches and elections. The Parish Council is budgeting to fund street lighting when Allerdale Borough Council ends the service in March 2021. The Internal Audit report was pleasing, with internal controls well established.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & OPEN DISCUSSION**

In discussion it was confirmed the Parish Council would in time be responsible for all street lighting in the Parish, with the vast majority of lights in Caldbeck. Concerns were raised about the need for white lines to be repainted in Hesket Newmarket following the recent repairs to the road. There had been two very near misses and the motor cycle weekend was fast approaching. The Clerk was asked to contact Highways as a matter of urgency. A discussion took place about the recycling facilities and the need for larger bins/more regular emptying and whether the Parish Council was due any income.

The Meeting closed at 7:30pm and was followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

## **Chairman's Annual Report**

### **Welcome and thanks**

Welcome to all. In particular welcome to Mike Johnson.

Mike replaces Duncan Fairbairn who sadly died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 as Cllor for Thursby Division on Cumbria County Council. Tony Annison who has sent his apologies, replaces Duncan on Allerdale Borough Council as Cllor for Warnell Ward. Both of them have already been helping us.

Norman Atkinson retired as Chairman this time last year having served as Chairman for 4 years. He did a good job, and I would like to thank him on behalf of the Parish. I am not as good as he is but I now fulfil that role. I am delighted Norman continues on the Parish Council and seems to give as much time and attention to the job as he did when he was Chairman.

We have had a resignation from Christina Coulhard from Fellside. I am sorry that she has left because of other commitments on her time. I hope she will return one day. It was an election year this year – Richard Hellon and Colin Smithson did not stand again, both on account of their work commitments. Richard has been a Cllor since 2015 and has been a great asset. In particular he organised with Carol and others the Caldbeck boundary walk in August 2016, and latterly has helped with signpost renovation. Colin has been a Cllor since 2007 and his long contribution and attendance on Council matters and meetings is much appreciated.

We welcome a new Cllor John Brown from Hesket Newmarket. He has had to give his apologies tonight. We are short of two Councillors and we hope to co-opt 2 willing people at the next Parish Council meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> June. If you know anyone who may be interested please tell Simon our clerk.

Simon Smith has been our clerk for nearly 2 years. As an ex Cumbria County Council officer formerly working in the treasurer's department he is invaluable – he now knows the workings of the Parish Council and he knows how the County Council works. We thank him for what he does – and what he does is a good deal more in terms of hours and commitment than he need.

**The footpath.** This time last year the Parish Council at last received the answer from the Assistant Director Dan Barton appointed by the Chief Executive to review the officer decision not to assist the Parish Council by making a Footpath Creation Order. His answer was that the Officer decision had followed due process. His report stated that he was instructed not to look at the merits of the decision, which we had asked to be reviewed. As he had come to look at the proposed footpath and meet Councillors in early February and had assured us that his report would look at the merits, and as he had sent our Clerk an email at the end of February to say he had completed his report and had sent it to the Chief Executive, and we were sent nothing for over 2 months, we made a Freedom of Information request for a copy of his report dated 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018. The County Council declined our request on the grounds that his report dated 21<sup>st</sup> February

was a draft and did not have to be disclosed. We then appealed to the Information Commissioner who directed the Council to disclose the report. The Council did not appeal that direction and then did not comply with the time limit for the disclosure, but we have now received the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 report by Dan Barton which concludes with the words “the reviewer recommends that the Chief Executive review the decision not to proceed, and proceeds with the Footpath Creation Order as detailed.” The disclosure was accompanied by a note from the County Council solicitor explaining that the review of our complaint under the Council’s Constitution could only look at process not the merits of the officer decision not to help us. So the County Council clearly buried the report on the merits. The footpath working group still consists of Cllors Atkinson Tyson and myself aided by Simon Smith and we are considering with Mike Johnson how now to get the officer decision reversed. We remain committed to delivering the footpath the community requested. I personally now have 1,625 emails on my footpath file which is 50 less than the number of people who supported our on line petition.

The Parish Council perceives there is a need in the villages to provide **affordable homes** for local occupancy, ideally with workshop facilities for trades. We need houses for the younger members of our community to buy or build, as otherwise they move away, to the detriment of the school and the village. We have secured a grant from Allerdale to fund the appointment of an architect to look at potential sites where the landowner may be willing to sell, and make an assessment for the National Park planners, who at present reject our suggestions and label only the site around the field barn between Caldbeck centre and the Upton near the school which the landowner does not presently wish to sell, and which the Parish Council is not keen on as a development site. We are consulted and the views we express are disregarded by the planners.

So it is also with Allerdale **planners**. The Parish Council supported an application by a young couple with young children for a new build in Friar Row Caldbeck which is outside the National Park. The planning officers recommended its refusal citing impact on the listed buildings in the area (although English Heritage had no objection) and a Tree Preservation Order they promptly served on a tree which had to come down to enable the development. The Parish Council were hugely assisted by Hesket Newmarket resident Paul Graham of Cumbria Tree Services who scored the tree as unsuitable for a tree Preservation Order and took the time and trouble to attend the Allerdale Planning meeting when the TPO was recommended by the planning officers for confirmation. The officers buried the objections from the Parish Council and Paul Graham’s figures with the result that the TPO has been confirmed.

### **LDNPA Land sale to the PC**

Another consultation will soon be instigated by the National Park on the proposal that they sell the Parish Council lands which they own in Caldbeck and Hesket Newmarket villages. The land in question includes the car parks in both villages the Hesket front green and back green, the Caldbeck Old Map Shop triangle and the triangular area outside the Caldbeck pub both of which are also used for car parking. The price we hope has been settled now (but we await confirmation) at £10,000, down from the National Park starting figure of £25,000. Whether you are consulted or not you may express your views and we

hope you will support the National Park disposal to bring ownership and responsibility of these areas to the local community. We will then be able to look at extending the car parking at Hesket in particular. The disposal is held up by the need for the National Park to obtain Treasury consent as the land was transferred to the government in lieu of death duties by the Egremont family as Lords of the Manor, before being transferred to the National Park to look after. Don't worry it is not the present intention of the Parish Council to start charging for car parking, though donations may be welcomed. And we will be seeking donations and grants to help pay the price.

## **General**

We continue to work with Cath Johnson Area Ranger for the National Park on other issues as they arise which fall to her team – such as footpath and stile repairs, and we thank her for her usual positive response.

The Parish Council continues to lobby hard for road improvements and repairs. A considerable amount of work has been done by highways in the Parish, and we are grateful to Matt Bish of County Council Highways for listening to us and visiting our concerns and actioning our requests. These items usually take up a good slice of our Council meeting time.

In an ideal world we would employ a lengthman in the Parish to keep the place clean drained and tidy, but our income will not cover that. We budget £2,900 this year for grass cutting as it is. So we have to rely upon volunteers to help. We thank those who do such things in both villages. Another 2 signposts have been renovated and repainted in Hesket Newmarket by the signpost volunteer team, of which Colin Smithson was a main contributor on the painting front. Bench repairs will be on the menu soon in Hesket Newmarket. Paul Graham, again, has helped take out fallen or part fallen trees over the river near Hesket Bridge which could otherwise cause problems.

I close with thanks to my fellow Councillors half of whom are here and half of whom are absent. They give their time without any financial reward to help the community we represent. We don't do party politics – we normally agree on matters before us, and we try and make things better or maintain them as they should be.