

LPC

LAZONBY PARISH COUNCIL

THE ANNUAL OPEN PARISH MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

held on Wednesday 5th May 2021, starting at 7 p.m, via Zoom due to the Covid19 pandemic.

Present: Chair Councillor Chris West.

Councillors Gill Sharples, Tim Wright, John Judson, Peter Foley, Gordon Nicolson, Steve Craig and Andrew Miller.

Also in attendance: the Clerk to the Council Rebecca Wyatt, Treasurer to the Council Chris Hoy, County Councillor Hilary Carrick and one parishioner.

ITEM / MINUTE No.	ITEM	BUSINESS
1.	Apologies for absence.	RESOLVED that it be noted that apologies for absence were received from Councillor Angie Miller
2.	Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 15th May 2019.	<p>The Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 15th May 2019 were considered. Please note that due to the Coronavirus pandemic there was no Annual Open Parish Meeting in May 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 15th May 2019 be approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.</p>
3.	<p style="text-align: center;">Chair's Report for the Period May 2019 - 2021</p> <p>Welcome to the Annual Lazonby Parish Council Meeting. Thank you for your attendance and I look forward to your comments in the open session following my report.</p> <p>It has been an interesting two years which has had its challenges and successes. I would like to thank all those Parishioners who have contributed towards the running of the Parish Council and participated when we, as the Council have promoted events. Learning to use the facility of Zoom to promote safe meetings throughout the Covid year has presented its challenges, but thanks to everyone involved, it has allowed us to conduct our business in a safe way. Your comments have ensured that we have maintained a high standard of governance and accountability. I hope you will continue to support me and the other Councillors in the coming year.</p> <p>The Covid pandemic presented many problems for some of our Parishioners and as Chair of the Parish Council, I established a volunteers what's app site with 70 Parishioners offering help to those in the village who were vulnerable or needed help. This consisted of people wanting shopping done, picking up prescriptions, walking dogs, taking people to medical or dental appointments and just giving reassurance. I would like to thank all those who helped with individual requests, particularly with the fruit and vegetable delivery.</p> <p>As the Pandemic restriction become more stringent and people were feeling hemmed in, a businessman in the Penrith approached the Parish Council about coming to Lazonby his Fish and Chip Van and using the Eden Bridge Car Park to sell Fish and Chips on a Thursday evening. After much debate, it was agreed he could do this, and it was a real weekly treat for many Parishioners. He has given support to a</p>	

number of the village's charity events throughout this time.

For the smooth running, and financial security and effectiveness of the Parish Council I would like to thank Beccy Wyatt and Chris Hoy who have worked with dedication which has made my job easier. I thank them for their professional and tireless efforts. I would also like to thank Gill for being the deputy chair and my fellow Councillors for their willingness to give up their time to take part in various projects to benefit the parish.

District Councillor Gordon Nicolson and County Councillor Hilary Carrick deserve a big thank you for the time they spend on parish matters. Other people that have worked exceedingly hard for us and deserve a thank you are; - Shaun Bunting for his work on the LPC website, Geoff and Jennifer Wilson for their continuing work on the upkeep of the recycling centre, and for the work they do with Rob Simm on keeping the Village Green looking so good, Dick Nellis for the repairs he has done, the grass-cutting volunteers who keep the village looking tidy and the school staff and parents who deliver the newsletter.

Over the last two years, we have welcomed a number of new Councillors Andy Sharples, Angie Miller, Steve Craig and Andrew Miller. Sadly, Lynn Whitely and Andy Sharples decided to withdraw from the Council. I would like to thank them both for the contribution they made while Councillors. We now have a full Council Membership with ten Councillors. I thank them for coming forward to take up these positions. As a sign of our respect and gratitude, the Council planted a tree on the village green to commemorate Councillor Chris Hill's service to the Parish Council and the other organisations in the village she supported.

Every month there are issues which recur as they are general 'housekeeping' matters. Topics which continue to cause problems are traffic, dog fouling, dogs running freely in fields of sheep, general litter, weeds and people dumping inappropriate material at the recycling centre. To deal with the litter problem we were hoping to organise a number of litter-picking events but as a result of Covid, we only managed to hold 2 events over the last two years. I would like to thank all the Parishioners who have, on their daily exercise, collected litter and managed to keep our village looking tidy.

The traffic problem continues to be a big issue and although we have had consultations with the Highways Department and listened to villagers' concerns, there is a limited amount to what can be done. The yellow lines are now in places which were identified at the consultation meeting. As a Council, we are initiating a footpath, which is much needed between the swimming pool and the Bridge, for the safety and enjoyment of our community. A plan has now been drawn and estimates for the work are being calculated.

John Judson has continued to take responsibility for issues with the Highways and has succeeded to have repairs carried out in the village and surrounding roads when necessary. He has built up a good relationship with the Highways Department.

Perhaps the biggest project the Council has been involved in recently is the redevelopment of the Egg Packing Factory site. Councillors Gordon Nicholson and Peter Foley have been tireless in their work to find ways to drive this forward. This is still an ongoing project.

Phillip Whitehead took the initiative to plant 100 plus trees in the Recreation field with the support of the School. Every child in the school planted their own tree. This was assisted by the School staff, Phillip Whitehead, John Judson and myself. We all had great fun and achieved the aim.

As a Council, we have continued to support organisations in the Parish through the grants we award. The following amounts over the accounting Years 20/21 were distributed as follows:-

Great Air Ambulance	£200
Fellrunner	£249
Lazonby PCC	£250
Lazonby Village Hall	£2,200

Also, the following amounts over accounting years 21/22 were distributed as follows:-

Great North Air Ambulance	£200
The Fellrunner	£315.70

Lazonby & District Swimming Pool £500

We derive some of our revenue from the recycling site and our fishing licences. Both of these have reduced over the last few years. Although the recycling site has been heavily used throughout lockdown, the fishing licences have been on a local sale only basis, so has only brought in nominal revenue

There have been other issues that have required much discussion and persistence to reach a good conclusion, for example, the train timetable for Lazonby, the result being an increase in the number of trains stopping at our station.

Broadband is another issue, which is being discussed by The Council and there are a number of Councillors who are championing B4RN in the Parish. This would benefit Parishioners by increasing the broadband speed. For this to proceed, volunteers are needed to forward this initiative.

We have seen the completion of the Meadows and the Blossom development and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new Parishioners. Both estates have had their problems which now seem to have been addressed. The path leading from the Meadows to Scaur Lane was opened up with some intervention from the Parish Council and Parishioner Geoff Wilson. The footpath to Garthfold has been reopened and maintenance work was completed by a number of Parishioners who I would like to thank.

Finally, I would like to welcome everyone who has moved into the Parish this year. We would welcome your input in helping the Parish Council to run a successful and happy parish and encourage you to join us on the Parish Council as and when vacancies become available. Please continue to read the notices that are put up on the parish notice boards and keep up to date with the planning applications and other parish matters through our website (www.lazonbyparishcouncil.org), as we can only represent the people of the parish if we know your views. Meanwhile, everyone is very welcome to attend our meetings, which are held on the first Wednesday each month at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Councillor Chris West
Chair, Lazonby Parish Council

4. Treasurer's Financial Report and Accounts.

The Treasurer presented the financial report and accounts for 2019 - 2021 (please see attached), which were issued to all those present after which questions were invited. The following report was given.

The impact of Coronavirus prevented an Open Meeting from being held in May 2020 and whilst no report was made available at that time the ability to hold internet meetings later in the year has provided the opportunity to present an update that will cover the financial differences and corresponding basic explanations over two years instead of just one year.

Total Reserves held at yearend 2020/21 were £54498.16.

The external auditors strongly recommend that the maximum reserves should not exceed twice the precept amount. The precept for the year is £13350. Therefore the maximum reserve balance would equate to £26700. Reserves were substantially above this threshold by £27798.16. The explanation for such an increase is attributed to the Parish Council instigating an affordable housing project on the site of the old Egg Packing Station. Two grants totalling £61000 from Eden District Council of which I will explain later in the report. Parish Reserves less remaining grant £20,498.16.

In January 2021 the Council agreed that the Precept should remain unchanged from the previous year, £13350. Since 2018/19 the Precept had been raised £3000 to cover the costs of adopting the footway lights from Eden DC. A strong reserve of over £15000 has been projected over many years, coupled with a possible grant to cover the costs of the remaining un-adopted lights and the impact on parishioners' finances during the Covid crises that led to this decision. Early projections on costing the implication of inheriting the footway lights showed a preliminary increase of £6000 over four years; this is now believed to be unnecessary.

		<p>Reviewing the total income there is a difference of £63556 more between the accounts of 2018/19 through to 2020/21. The main examples of this increase in income derive from the following, though first I would like to point out a couple of revenue falls.</p> <p>Fishing Permits were down £56, partly Covid and weather conditions when out of lockdown although a few fishermen are now paying online. Recycling Credits were down £64 with kerbside collections and no plastic recycling facility.</p> <p>Rents were up £643 partly the increase in the insurance costs for Croglin Ltd use of the Old School which I cost as a rent but the majority is derived from Foundry 34 Chip Van at the Recycling Centre Car Park. Grants received as I mentioned earlier up to £61000 will eventually be offset as Project expenditure. Miscellaneous income is up £655 in part from a donation from a parishioner for a bench purchased and installed along the top end of Fiddlers Lane at the Railway Bridge and the reversal of errors by Midshires in overcharging print use. Footway lights Grant down £1633 a decreasing yearly allocation from Eden DC to help absorb the initial costs of inheriting the lights. One final tranche is payable for 2021/22.</p> <p>Reviewing the total expenditure there is a difference of £33029 more between the accounts 2018/19 through to 2020/21. Staff Salaries were up £1351 linked to a local government employee pay rise, promotion to a new scale for both employees and an increase in the Clerk's weekly hours to cover the increasing Clerk's workload. The Treasurers' hours remained unchanged. Staff expenses were down £420 due to Covid restrictions preventing the Clerk from travelling to Lazonby with stationary costs at a low through lack of printing necessary documents. Local grants were up £1492 with more applicants requiring funding for local projects. Maintenance was up £1593 mainly due to the tree surgery undertaken at the Old School and Will Pool and remedial work on the War Memorial. Operating Costs were up £406, partly due to the registration of Parish land behind the Old School and initial set up fees for the new printer.</p> <p>Capital/Project expenditure was up £27878, this being the cost of surveys and plans associated with the development of the Egg Packing site and includes VAT which completes Phase 1. Footway lights expenses were down £301 as electricity costs negotiated by Eden DC and passed onto the Parish were reduced by the supplier annually, once fully adopted the council could explore long term deals to save costs. Miscellaneous expenses were up £1175 due to the purchase and installation of a park bench being fully funded by a parishioner and overpaid fees by Midshires in error for print use having now been refunded.</p> <p>Finally, the Budget for 2021/22 has projected a net deficit of £5924 projecting Reserves as at 31/03/2022 of £15450. This includes the expected cost of approximately £3000 to recommission the remaining 6 streetlights that are inoperative at present. A grant to cover the costs has been applied for and should this be successful then the Reserves will increase accordingly.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the financial report and accounts submitted by the Treasurer be noted and approved and that the Treasurer be thanked for his report.</p>
5.	Open Forum – Parishioners' Questions & Suggestions.	<p>The Chair opened the Meeting to the floor and invited those present for their contributions for debate.</p> <p>RESOLVED that there were no issues raised by anyone present or received by Email or any other form of contact.</p>
<p>There being no further items raised for discussion the Chair concluded the meeting by thanking all Parishioners for their attendance and closed the meeting at approximately 7.15 pm.</p>		