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LAZONBY PARISH COUNCIL

THE ANNUAL OPEN PARISH MEETING **of the** **PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes

held on Wednesday 1st May 2024, starting at 7 p.m, in Lazonby Village Hall.

Present: Chair Councillor Craig Wilkinson

Councillors Andrew Miller, Peter Foley and Maralyn Wade.

Also in attendance: County Councillor Hilary Carrick, Clerk to the Council Rebecca Wyatt , Treasurer to the Council Chris Hoy and 8 parishioners.

ITEM / MINUTE No.	ITEM	BUSINESS
1.	Apologies for absence.	RESOLVED that the apologies received from Parish Councillors Tim Wright, Phillip Whitehead and Ruth Hookway be accepted and noted.
2.	Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 10th May 2023.	The Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 10 th May 2023 were considered. RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 10 th May 2023 be approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.
3.	Reports from the Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 10th May 2023.	RESOLVED that there were no reports from the Minutes of the last Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 10 th May 2023.
4.	The Parish Council's Annual Report for the period May 2023 to May 2024. Welcome to Lazonby Parish Council's Annual Open Meeting. Thank you for your attendance and we look forward to any of your questions or comments in the open session following this report. It's been yet another year of challenges and successes for the Parish Council. Especially, with the loss of so many experienced Councillors last year, and the Member numbers remaining low for a few months, which to a degree impacted the work of the Parish Council. However, thankfully we were able to bring our numbers up again over the last 6 months. The Parish Council would like to thank those Parishioners who have contributed towards the running of the Parish Council and kept an eye on the way we conduct parish business to ensure we maintain a high standard of governance and accountability. We hope you will continue to	

support the Council and its members in the coming year. As volunteers, Council Member give their time for free and have achieved great results for the parish, but more can always be done and support from the local community is always welcome.

For the continued smooth running, and financial security and effectiveness of the Parish Council we would like to thank Beccy Wyatt in her role as Clerk, and Chris Hoy in his role as Treasurer. They have worked with continued dedication which has made all the Parish Councillors jobs easier, especially as there has been no elected Chair since September 2023. The Parish Council thank them again this year for their professional and tireless efforts.

Westmorland & Furness Councillor Hilary Carrick always deserves a big thank you for the time that she spends on parish matters, especially regarding Highways issues. Other people that have worked exceedingly hard for us and deserve a thank you are: Shaun Bunting for his work maintaining the Parish Council 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; and the grass-cutting volunteers who keep the village looking tidy; and the school staff and pupils who deliver the Parish Council newsletter through Lazonby Lines.

Since, the last annual report the Council has lost four more Councillors who have sadly resigned from the Council. The Parish Council's long standing Chair Chris West who retired after over 13 years of being a dedicated hard working member of the Council; Angie Miller who had given several years of her time to work for the community on behalf of the Parish Council; and Andrew Bates and Colin Bryce who both gave their valuable time to help the local community. The Parish Council would like to thank them all for their dedicated time serving the local community. However, the Parish Council were happy to welcome back Councillor Peter Foley to the Parish Council, as well as new Council Members Maralyn Wade and Craig Wilkinson, who have both been very active in Parish Council work already. This has left us with three vacant seats in the Parish Council which is hoped will be filled in the near future, as it is so important that the Parish has a grass roots organisation like the Parish Council to ensure the Parish is well maintained and represented.

This past year saw the Local Government Reorganisation being implemented, with the creation of Westmorland & Furness Council covering Eden, Barrow and South Lakeland, taking over from the old authority Eden District Council. This was a huge change for many and has seen its own challenges but thankfully most services have run smoothly during the changeover.

There are always reoccurring issues that the Parish Council deal with such as potholes, dog fouling and dog control, traffic and speeding issues, footway lighting, litter, weeds, flytipping at the recycling centre and other parts of the parish. The Parish Council would like to thank all the Parishioners who have continued to collect litter, weed and keep our village looking tidy on a regular basis. Also, a thank you to the parishioners, who report problems in the parish so that the Parish Council can look to resolve them.

Over the last year several new developments in the parish have been introduced through the planning application process some of which has caused concern for parishioners. The Parish Council have tried to support concerned parishioners, and have referred to the Lazonby Neighbourhood plan to ensure that these developments are carefully considered with regards to being granted planning permission.

The Egg Packing Housing factory site is still presenting the Council with a lot of work, due to the change in local Council structures and delays in funding etc. Gordon Nicholson, while a Parish Councillor, was very instrumental in the projects progression, however although he is now

retired from the Parish Council, he has been given the permission to work on behalf of the Parish Council in progressing the project, alongside Councillor Peter Foley and Westmorland & Furness Councillor Hilary Carrick. They have continued to work tirelessly to see this housing project through. The Coast and Castles Housing Association are still very happy to work with the Parish Council in making this project happen.

The Parish Council continues to work on conservation matters in the Parish and have been looking at projects that could be funded by local initiatives. There is also hope that more hedging and trees can be put in areas such as at Eden Bridge Car Park in the future.

The Parish Council continues to receive revenue from the recycling site and fishing licences. The Parish Council also continues to look at visitors contributing to the parking/picnic area by the recycling centre by voluntarily contributing to parking there but this has also come with its own problems about how to collect the donations, but there may be light at the end of the tunnel now with the possible construction of an honesty box. However, this still has to be considered further. The Parish Council are also looking to resolve the annual issue of the damage to the surface of Eden Bridge Car Park due to flooding from the river. This year the flooding caused a major clear up situation, which Councillors and volunteers kindly undertook. It has left the usual issues with potholes in the surface. The Parish Council are going to see if there is more of a long term solution to this.

The Parish Council are also discussing ways to deal with the annual flooding issues in the parish, working alongside external agencies, Westmorland & Furness Councillor Hilary Carrick and parishioners to resolve these issues. Officers from the Local Lead Flood Authority and Highways are currently working together to produce a comprehensive report on potential solutions for consideration by the Parish Council, with the hope that the first draft is ready to share with the Parish Council towards the end of May.

The Parish Council have now been in discussions with an Angling Club for over a year, which has regularly been recorded in the Parish Council minutes, to see if they would be happy to take over the management and balliffing of the fishing in the parish. However, this does not mean that they will own the fishing rights, as they will always belong to the Parish. It just means that the Parish Council will receive more revenue from the fishing and all the responsibilities of managing that stretch of the river will be that of the angling club. There will be no changes to parishioners fishing rights and there will be day and annual permits available to local anglers.

Westmorland & Furness have taken the decision to waiver the footway lighting costs to Parish Council for last financial year and this financial year which has made the parish a considerable saving. They are now assessing what to do with the footway lighting costs in the future, so the Parish Council are waiting to hear what will happen with this.

As a Council, we have continued to support organisations in the Parish or organisations that benefit the parish, through the grants we award. There was only one request for financial support from a local service in the parish for 2024/2025 which was from the Fellrunner who were awarded £810 to provide a scheduled local bus service for parishioners.

Finally, the Parish Council would like to welcome everyone who has moved into the Parish over the last year. They would also welcome any parishioner input in helping the Parish Council to run a successful and happy parish, and encourage people to join the Parish Council especially as there are several vacancies open. Please continue to read the notices that are put up on the parish notice boards and Parish Council website and also 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. The Parish Council is also in the process of setting up a social media page so please look out for that in the future too.

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, with no scheduled meetings for January or August. We look forward to seeing you then.

Lazonby Parish Council, - May 2024.

RESOLVED that the Chairs Report be noted with thanks to the Chair Craig Wilkinson..

ALSO RESOLVED that the Parish Council would like to thank the Vice-Chair Tim Wright for the work he has carried out on behalf of the Parish Council over the past year.

5. **Treasurer's Financial Report and Accounts.**

The Treasurer presented the financial report and the Income and Expenditure Accounts for 2023 - 2024 (please see attached), which were issued to all those present after which questions were invited. The following report was given.

Total Reserves held at yearend 2023/24 were £46053

The External Auditors strongly recommend that the maximum reserves should not exceed twice the Precept amount. The Precept for the year stood at £14350. Therefore the maximum Reserve balance would equate to £28700. Reserves were substantially above this threshold by £17353. 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. The grant from the former Eden DC for affordable housing was paid in two phases, firstly £27000 and secondly £34000, the first phase has been spent and the second only partially, with £28839 remaining.

Therefore Parish Reserves less the remaining unspent grant were £17214, inside the recommended reserve threshold. Parish Reserves were expected to be lower, however Westmoreland and Furness Council decided not to charge the Parish Council for annual costs of our street lighting at the last minute and this will extend into 2024/25, a saving of £7500 over the two financial years at current prices. A decision by W & F Council to either continue with the policy or repatriate the lights will be made by the autumn.

The PC agreed that the Precept should remain unchanged at £14350 for 2024/25. This was in recognition of the effects of the living cost crisis on parishioners and adequate reserves to cover expected costs in 2024/25.

A full audit externally is not necessary (this will be discussed later after the open meeting) because of the turnover thresholds not breaching the £25k limit of either income and expenditure. Greater detail will be available on the Parish website after the June meeting in accordance with the guidelines set by the external auditors under self – certification/ full review of our accounts. However, I have provided some basic detail in the variances between the accounts of 2022/23 and present day 2023/24.

Fishing Permits DOWN £235 - The Parish Council has fishing rights on a stretch of the River Eden and sells permits to non parishioners to fish. The current economic concerns in Britain are quite probably reflecting reduced interest in visitor numbers.

Recycling Credits DOWN £749 – In 2022/23 the Parish received three payments, two for the shortfall in 2021/22 and the third for the first half of 2022/23 in total £995. The merger of the Councils may still be having an impact on how the new authority is processing the credit as we only received one payment of £246.

Rents UP £576 - Whilst the donations from the Angel Lane Chip Van remain the same and the rental of the Old school from Bud Designs, the insurance paid by Bud Designs on the property increased and two new operators in Barugh foods and Smoke n' Steel donated for the use of the car park.

Grants Received DOWN £8500 - The PC were in receipt of numerous grants in 2022/23, Cumbria CC for the 6 unadopted footway lights requiring new heads, and the Footway to the bridge from Eden DC against a smaller grant of £500 to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles as a village fun day in 2023/24.

Bank Interest UP £528 - The result of a reasonable balance on deposit predominately belonging to the former Eden DC as a grant for the Egg Packing Station Project. HSBC had increased its rates marginally, if not awash with money it would be paying proper market rates and the amount would have doubled. This has partly offset the previous costs of having to pay for full external audit reviews over the last few years compounded by the high reserves and transactions pertaining to them.

Staff Salaries UP £604 - due to a substantial increase in wages under local authority guidelines. Over time this will impact the precept decision making if inflation remains higher.

Staff Expenses UP £376 - The Clerk did not submit her final financial year end expenses in 2022/23 and these were carried over to 2023/23 costing £283. The remaining difference was due to the Clerk having to make extra journeys claiming fuel allowance to place Parish Notices in the village with increasing numbers of planning applications coupled with the general inflationary cost in stationary.

Local grants DOWN £4741 - A reduction in grant applicants locally, just Eden Valley Players for £1200 as opposed to eight applications covering general applications, Queens Jubilee and Ukrainian Appeal in 2022/23.

Maintenance DOWN £1174 – In 2022/23 the largest amount paid out was £2000 to GDS Garage Doors to replace the doors at the storehouse by the school with general maintenance of another £422. In 2023/24 £1248 was spent in total from the car park surface repairs £116, Rod Pattinson for rendering of the Garage Doors £85, Nicol Landscapes £648 for tree surgery to make safer and other general maintenance of £399.

Operating Costs UP £2142 - The main costs were from the purchase of a new lap top for the Clerk £463, councillors retirement parties £542, Lazonby Pool Service Agreement an extra £236, External Audit Fees an extra £138 and an HMRC NI Tax Charge of £28 as an employer due to backvalued pay for the Clerk who works the longest hours.

Capital/Project expenditure DOWN £38920 - The costs of £38920 from 2022/23 were derived from three projects, the Affordable Housing Project (at the site of the former Egg Packing Station), Footway Lights and village Footway. The former and latter have been completed, however the Affordable Housing Project is still live and unfinished at present, no work was undertaken on this project in 2023/24 resulting in no costs. This has resulted in the grant allocated to scope the Egg Packing Station site for Affordable Housing now at £28839 remaining on deposit with the PC until further notice.

Chris Hoy
Treasurer to the Council
May 2024

RESOLVED that the financial report and accounts submitted for 2023 to 2024 by the Treasurer be noted and approved and that the Treasurer be thanked for his report.

6.	Planning Application Comments.	<p>The Council discussed any recent planning applications in the parish, and parishioners were also allowed to give representation on this matter.</p> <p>Several parishioners expressed again their continued concerns about Planning Application Ref No. 2023/1105/FPA. They believe that the new transport strategy and transport statement had noted concerns but not solved them with the vehicle movement not being correctly assessed. Parishioners also talked of the noisy fans, 24 hour transport for staff, and the noisy metal roof when it rained. They were also concerned with drainage and being near a SSI. The Ecologist Survey did not cover points like the Beck and Swallows nesting. They were also concerned about the Old Oak tree being removed so ask the Council to support a Tree Preservation Order. The parishioners believed that as it was a large development it was therefore not compatible with what was said in the Lazonby's Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
		<p>RESOLVED that the Parish Council note the comments of the parishioners when considering the response to Planning Application Ref.No: 2023/1105/FPA.</p>
7.	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 further comments or issues raised by parishioner's.</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 7.54 pm.</p>		