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LAZONBY PARISH COUNCIL

THE ANNUAL OPEN PARISH MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes

held on Wednesday 10th May 2017, starting at 7 p.m, in the Jubilee Rooms,
Lazonby Village Hall.

Present: Acting Chair Councillor Gordon Nicolson

Councillors Christine Hill, Chris West, John Nicol, John Judson, Peter Minihan and Virginia Minihan.

Also in attendance: 1 parishioner, Treasurer Chris Hoy and the Parish Council Clerk Rebecca Wyatt, County Councillor Hilary Carrick and Broad band Champion Brian Smythe.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Wright and Christine Chamberlain.

ITEM / MINUTE No.	ITEM	BUSINESS
1.	Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 4th May 2016.	<p>The Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 4th May 2016 were considered.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the date be corrected to 2015 - 2016 on Minute 4 - Treasurer's Financial Report.</p> <p>ALSO RESOLVED that subject to the above amendments the Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 4th May 2016 be approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.</p>
2.	Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 4th May 2016.	<p>Any matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held on the 4th May 2016 were considered.</p> <p>RESOLVED that it be noted that all matters were dealt with at the following meetings of the Parish Council after the May 2016 meeting of the Parish Council.</p>
3.	<p>Chair's Report for the period May 2016 - May 2017</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>As Acting Chair I am pleased to present this report of the Parish Council activities over the last year. The Parish Council has an extensive agenda and has tackled many projects and questions from parishioners over the last year.</p> <p>The pace of activity is like the tide. It ebbs and flows. The report will demonstrate the commitment and determination of your Parish Councillors and the interest taken by residents in local matters. Over the year, Lazonby Parish Council has been very well served by its officers – Clerk Rebecca Wyatt and Treasurer Chris Hoy. I would like to thank them for their support and hard work.</p>	

Parish Council Membership

The Parish Council now has its full quota of Councillors. Over the year, I was pleased to welcome John Nicol and Carole Taylor to our ranks. Both bring new skills to the table and both have set about their new roles with great enthusiasm.

All Parish Councillors attend meetings regularly, contribute to the discussions and willingly take on board the business of the Council. I would like to thank them for their support and for the work they do. This is voluntary.

Parish Council Meetings

Ten meetings were held between May 2016 and April 2017. [The Council does not meet in January and August.] In addition the Planning Committee used e mails twice to review and determine the Parish Council response to planning applications received out with the cycle of Council meetings. The Finance & Budget Committee met in November 2016 to consider the grant applications and the budget for 2017/2018.

Public participation is an important part of the monthly meetings. Residents have raised a number of matters including damage to grass verges, maintaining public footpaths and rights of way, traffic and parking issues, litter and dog fouling. Parish Councillors work closely with District and County Councillors where appropriate to deal with the matters raised by residents. The Council website www.lazonbyparishcouncil.org has an important role in keeping residents informed. I would like to thank Geoff Bennett for his work as webmaster.

Parish Council Projects

The Parish Council has worked closely with the **Neighbourhood Plan** Group and has acted as the accountable body for grants received to fund this work. In 2016/17 two grants totalling over £4,000 were received. This paid for meeting costs, printing costs and a professional assessment of the draft Plan. The draft Plan and supporting documents have now been produced and it is hoped to submit the Plan for formal consideration and consultation in July 2017. Thanks go to parishioners Gordon Malcolm, Roger Campbell and Neil Kennedy and to Councillors Chris Hill, John Judson, Peter and Virginia Minihan for their sterling work in getting the Plan to this stage.

The **Scaur Close Green** project is nearing completion. Regular reports on progress have been provided in the monthly newsletter. Thanks to Geoff Wilson and Rob Sim for making the idea a reality.

At last **a handrail has been provided at the steps to the station access**. This shows what perseverance can do. Trust Inns were eventually persuaded to do something and they have paid for a high quality professional job. The absence of a handrail has been raised by parishioners over many years.

Also in the "at long last" category are the **new signs for Bartondale**, courtesy of Story Homes, opportunism and perseverance.

Thanks go to Councillor Virginia Minihan for a comprehensive job **on registering all land owned by the Parish Council in the Parish**. This has been a time consuming and complex job. Well done Virginia and thanks.

Your Parish Council encourages all residents to take pride in the appearance of the area. In March, **a litter pick** was organised and over 20 residents took part. 20 bags were collected.

Now that we are in the growing season, **the volunteer grass cutting scheme** has restarted. Thanks to Councillor John Judson for organising this work and to our volunteer grass cutters who give up their time.

Geoff and Jennifer Wilson continue to keep the recycling centre tidy. As noted below irresponsible and lazy people dump rubbish at the recycling centre and others put unfolded boxes in the bins. What can we do to stop this? At the very least we can thank Geoff and Jennifer for their hard work but it should not be necessary.

Running the Parish Council means contending with bureaucracy. The Parish Council is obliged to have and maintain many policies and regulations governing its activities. There is a requirement to review and update them on a regular basis. This year the financial regulations and standing orders have been reviewed and policies on complaints, data protection, equal opportunities, freedom of information, health and safety, press and media, recording and filming Council meetings, retention of documents and risk management have all been reviewed and any amendments approved. Thanks to Clerk Rebecca Wyatt for wading through this sea of paper and producing documents for consideration and approval.

Working with Lazonby Community Organisations

Lazonby is very fortunate in having a number of thriving clubs and societies and a superb village hall. One of the ways the Parish Council supports local organisations is to offer an annual grants programme this has continued over the past year and grants totalling £2656 were awarded to the Great North Air Ambulance, the Parish Church of St. Nicholas, The Fellrunner Bus Service, Lazonby Village Hall and Lazonby & District First Responders.

Your Council agreed to make a substantial grant to Lazonby Swimming Pool Committee to cover some of the running costs of Lazonby Community Park. Had we not done this the future of both the Pool and the Community Park would have been at risk. Both are very good examples of facilities run by volunteers and enjoyed by local residents.

Conclusions

It has been a busy and challenging year for the Council. Much has been achieved much remains to be done. There are a number of matters that keep coming back. For example, traffic congestion, damage to the pedestrian barrier at Station Road, dog fouling around the village and fly tipping at the recycling site. Perhaps there will be solutions to these problems in the future. There is also unfinished business. The threat of removal of the public telephone box is real and must be resisted; we must also keep pursuing provision of high speed broadband in the outlying area of the Parish.

In this report, I have thanked many people but there is always the risk of omitting someone. My apologies if you feel you have been omitted. The Parish Council exists with the support of many people and is here for the benefit of residents.

Councillor Gordon Nicolson
Acting Chair, Lazonby Parish Council

<p>4.</p>	<p>Treasurer's Financial Report 2016 - 2017.</p>	<p>The Treasurer presented the Financial Statement (please see attached), which was issued to all those present after which questions were invited. The following report was given.</p> <p>The amount of reserves held at end of year were £20,223.37, the external auditing body strongly recommend that the maximum reserves should not exceed twice the precept amount. In the case of the Parish Council that would equate to a balance of £27,700. Therefore indicating safe threshold of £3000 below that being recommended.</p> <p>In November 2015, at the meeting of the Finance and Budget Committee meeting for the year 2016-2017, it was agreed by the Committee, from the information provided by the Treasurer, to leave the precept unchanged at £11850.00. With the precept agreed a provision in the budget had been allocated for street lighting for £3000; the Scaur Green Project for £2000 between the years 2015 and 2017; the final bill for maintaining the community playground before the transfer to the Lazonby & District Swimming Pool Committee for £1000; a summer ground worker for £1500; and tree surgery on the old copper beach tree near the old school for £500.</p> <p>The higher than expected year end reserves were contributed by an under spend on street lighting by £2100, which has now been removed from the new budget of 2017-2018.</p>
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The Scaur Green project is nearing completion and will under spend by £500. The final bill for the community playground maintenance is still outstanding and is expected to be £700 and the Parish Council resolved not to pursue a summer ground worker so this is no also removed from the current budget 2017-2018. The Tree works was completed on budget.

The income difference between 2016 and 2017 provides clues to the future of some of our sources of additional income.

Fishing Permits were down £161, economic reasons and flooding may have added to this reduction; however the Council has attempted to address this by offering annual season tickets over the calendar year.

Recycling credits were down £245, which could be attributed to the increase of parishioners using kerbside collections.

VAT Recovery was down £1195, since the various grant awards received were not fully utilised which resulted in returning some unspent funding, unlike the fully spent grants during the first phase of the Neighbourhood Plan the previous year.

Rents were up £88 as the Parish playing/sports field yielded two incomes by dividing the field between two tenants compared to the usual single tenant. However, building insurance did increase for the Old School by index linking but was met by the Tenant as part of the rental agreement.

Grants received were up to £2397 due to applying for more funding to complete the next phase of the Neighbourhood Plan and the arranging of a pre-health check before submission.

The expenditure between 2015-2017 shows that staff salaries increased

by £63 due to a 1% pay rise and this was partly offset by a reduction in staff expenses by £36.

Local community grant awards also increased by £2713 and staff training by £30.

Maintenance was down by £701, affected mainly by the delay in the final bill for the community playground and a reduction in the servicing and fuelling of the parish grass cutting equipment. The previous year the grass cutting equipment was serviced earlier than usual and this added expense in the same year's accounts, this has now corrected itself and the serving is preformed at the start of each calendar.

Operating costs were down £1400 with a reduction in the use of the village hall; printer costs were considerably lower after the initial start up costs and the cancellation of the original photocopier supplier; fishing permit commission; external audit fees, parish election fees were notably lower or no existent. Other works which were commissioned the previous year such as remedial work carried out on the parish notice boards and the replacement fishing sign were not deemed necessary for 2016 – 2017.

Capital/Project expenditure was down £7484. The previous year the land registry fees were paid in full, the Will Pool project was completed; two new street lights procured for use at the Village Hall junction and phase one of the Neighbourhood Plan. In 2016/2017 expenditure was allocated to the Scaur Close Project and the next phases of the Neighbourhood Plan and its pre-health check resulting in significant difference in spending.

Miscellaneous expenses were up £2735. Two grants were received for phase 2

		<p>and 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan but these were not fully spent resulting in returning the remainder of the two grants to the funding bodies which totalled £2735, being the residue balance. The payments were recorded as miscellaneous expenses.</p>
		<p>RESOLVED that the Financial statement submitted by the Treasurer be noted and approved, and that the Treasurer be thanked for his report.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Open Forum – Parishioners’ Questions & Suggestions.</p>	<p>The Chair opened the Meeting to the floor and invited those present for their contributions for debate.</p> <p>A parishioner made the Parish Council aware of an increase in dog fouling, dogs off leads and misuse of the footpath on land near the river Eden, which they were now renting even though originally they were not going to because of these problems. Councillor Chris West explained that she had been monitoring the use of the field and the dog fouling, had been clearing dog mess up if needed, had issued dog mess bags and put notices up to advice people, having discussed and resolved it with the Council at a previous meeting. Councillor West also said that she believed that the problem had reduced since doing this.</p> <p>RESOLVED that it be noted the issue of dog fouling and use of the land near the river Eden is being monitored by the Parish Council, who wish to thank those who have used and continue to use the land responsibly.</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 7.30 pm.</p>		