



Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Wednesday 25 January 2023, 7pm at Skelsmergh Community Hall

Present:

Parish Councillors:

John Chapman (JC) – Chair

Tim Maggs (TM)

Angela Brand-Barker (AB-B)

Apologies:

Mick Crozier (MC) and Freyja Burrill (FB)

SLDC Councillors:

Hazel Hodgson (HH) and Pat Bell (PB)

Clerk:

Karen Little (KL)

Attendees:

Tony Cousins (TC) - resident

(KEY: MA = papers are uploaded to the Members Area of the PC website: <http://www.skelscalpc.org.uk/Members/?Home&normal>)

70/22 Welcome

The Chair warmly welcomed everyone and formally opened the meeting at 19.07. The meeting was quorate. The apologies were accepted.

71/22 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Chapman declared that both he and his spouse (who is also the Chair of the Skelsmergh Hall Management Committee) are Trustees of the Skelsmergh Community Hall. Cllr Brand Barker declared her role as Trustee of the Skelsmergh Community Hall. There were no other declarations, either to personal interests or prejudicial interest in any agenda item.

72/22 Open Forum

a. World War 1 painting

TC: Numerous efforts have been made to trace the origins and history of the painting discussed at the November PC meeting (minute 68/22a). The painting is by A. Whitehouse, dated November 1930 (handwritten on the back), and is a roll of honour in memory of the men from Skelsmergh who lost their lives in the first world war. Seventeen names are listed, with their rank, who died between 1916 and 1918. The painting has been in the Whitehouse family home, hidden away, near Malvern. The grandson got in touch via the PC website – he is not aware of any family connection with Cumbria – the mystery is why his grandad had painted it. Research to date has confirmed two brothers Albert and Harold Whitehouse had lived in a local children's home (St Marks Waifs and Strays Home, Natland, Kendal) before being called up in 1916. Both returned to this area after the war ended. There are no military records for either of the brothers, but Alfred's death in a road accident is in local archives, and Harold's recovery from a shot through the heart was publicly reported, probably because survival from such an injury was very unusual at the time. More

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research is planned to uncover the gaps, and the full findings will be published in due course.

Cllrs: It was kind of the grandson (Mr Simon Whitehouse) to contact the PC, local families may be interested in the painting and back story. The challenge is that local knowledge/memories of the 1920s may have receded now and the gaps will be difficult to confirm.

Q. Do the names of honour on the painting match those on the memorial cross at St John's?

AC: No, but these names may need to be added to the cross – if this is confirmed.

Cllrs: Thanked Mr Cousins for his work to research historical facts of local interest and relevance.

b. Westmorland and Furness Council consultation – council tax, [Link](#)

SLDC Cllrs HH and PB strongly recommended Parish Councillors and all residents to respond to the new unitary council's proposed plans for the 2023/24 council tax. As the plan is to set a consistent council tax rate (leveling-up) across the Westmorland and Furness area, South Lakeland residents will experience an increase. The consultation closing date is 13.02 2023. The final 2023/24 budget needs to be agreed by the beginning of March 2023.

RESOLVED: Parish councillors will respond to the consultation as individual residents.

73/22 Minutes of the Last Meeting, paper MA

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 16.11.2022 were confirmed as a true and complete record. The Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

74/22 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a. Grit bins, letter & response on MA

TM: Councillor Maggs thanked the PC for correspondence sent to Highways re the issue raised at the November PC meeting (minute number 64/22b1). Reported that a large pile of grit was recently delivered to Garth Row in response; very timely for the subsequent sub-zero conditions. In addition, Councillors noted the information received from Peter Hosking, Local Area Network Manager for South Lakes Highway Delivery. Local priority 1 and 2 gritting routes are published on the [Priority gritting routes, Cumbria County Council site](#). Information regarding proposed winter road maintenance and gritting is uploaded each day to this site – usually by 14.00hrs. Priority 3 roads are treated once the priority 1 and 2s are deemed safe, and if resources are available. Locally these are covered by Tractor 1 and the Millness 2 gritter. Grit can be replenished by phoning 0300 3032992 or by using the [Highways web portal](#), both contact options are expected to remain the same and operational under the new Westmorland and Furness Council.

Action : KL to formally thank Mr Hosking for his information and helpful response, and also to upload the pdfs of the local priority 3 roads onto the Parish website, with a link to the CCC gritting site.

b. Formal use of parish woodlands for training (use of chain saw)

Noted the signed agreement with Scott Elbourne (Tree Skills Ltd) to access the parish woodlands for chain-saw training purposes – renewal date November 2023.

75/22 Formal Announcements by the Chair

a. Parish Council elections - Thursday 4 May 2023, information on MA

Noted: The Shadow Cabinet for Westmorland and Furness Council has approved funding support for the elections on a one-off basis – this is to encourage Parish councils to make arrangements that enable a greater number of parish councillors to be democratically elected.

RESOLVED: To promote interest and motivate new eligible candidates to stand in the elections, it was agreed to produce attractive posters based on the NALC message: [Make a change – become a councillor](#). The posters promote the benefits of taking on the role of councillor and the eligibility criteria for the role. Currently the PC is without representation from Scalthwaiterigg ward. The Clerk is to have a petty cash kitty of £200.00 to source these before the next meeting.

Action : KL to edit bespoke Councillor election campaign posters for the PC website and print six copies for all the PC noticeboards (using petty cash).

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76/22 Clerk Vacancy, [info on website](#)

The Clerk outlined the details of the competitive interviews that were held earlier today. The interview panel (JC, FB & AB-B) unanimously voted for one candidate as the best fit with the required person specifications and recommended that this person is appointed on the LC1 NJC salary scale, point 13 to 17, working 4 hours/week. Start date to be confirmed within the handover process with the current clerk.

RESOLVED: It was agreed unanimously to accept and appoint the interview panel's recommendation and instruct the Clerk to inform the successful candidate and arrange a handover programme.

Action : The Chair to announce the appointment of a new Clerk in the local community newsletter.

77/22 Grant Applications

a. St John the Baptist Parochial Church Council, Skelsmergh.

Mr Ian Bamford, Church Warden requested £200 to support maintenance of the churchyard and surrounding hedges. The grant money will help towards alleviating the impact from increasing fuel costs, whilst trying to keep the site in good order for those visiting loved ones buried there and in particular, to prepare for the King's coronation in May, when the flagpole will be in use again.

RESOLVED: To award £200 to the St John the Baptist PCC for maintenance work.

b. Planters – Skelsmergh Community Hall

JC: Asked if Councillors would be interested in considering a grant for planters to provide a floral display outside the Hall as a one-off investment; the benefits would be appreciated by both residents passing by and hall users.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that such an application could be considered; discussion will focus on whether the investment is suitable in these times of austerity.

78/22 Finance

a. To consider payments to be made as per Clerk's report, papers MA

KL: Outlined two insurance options offering comparable cover to consider: either to continue with the Hiscox product (recommended by Gallagher Brokers - premium quote £465.83 (06.01.2023), later reduced to £405.94 (13.01.2023)) or to switch to the Zurich product (premium quote £241), recommended by many colleagues in the CALC network. The latter is an online package that includes cover for statutory risks specifically designed for smaller Parish Councils (precepts <£30k) who do not own buildings, memorials, monuments/statues, or playground equipment. A discussion followed on the risk management strategy for the woodland shed (Garth Row); purchase cost was £650 in 2011.

RESOLVED: It was decided that the woodland shed could be replaced, if the need arose, through 'matched funding' with a community grant (for example). The shed did not constitute a building, that needed specific cover within the policy - it was not worth additional premium. The Zurich policy was agreed unanimously as the preferred insurance product for 2023-2024 – the cost savings are welcomed in these austere times.

RESOLVED: To make the following payments:

Payee	Expenses/Services	Amount (£)
Karen Little	Clerk's salary 01.12.2022 to 31 01.2023, 483.69	Total 586.63
	Back pay (01.04.2022 to 30.11.2022), 139.04	
	Minus tax £36.20 (<i>Pay rise approved, minute 65/22a</i>)	
Cumbria Payroll Services	January 2023 payroll (<i>includes VAT</i>)	14.40
HMRC	Clerk's PAYE tax (January 2023)	36.20
Karen Little	Money for Petty Cash (Kitty) – <i>minute 75/22a.</i>	200.00
Zurich Municipal	Insurance 14.02.2023 to 13.02.2024	241.00
Tree Skills Ltd	One day chain-sawing – Council woodlands, 20.12.2022	180.00

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CALC	Social media training, Cllr Brand-Barker, 23.01.2023	30.00
A2A Advertising Ltd	Website hosting & SSL certificate, 2023-2024	138.00
Kendal First Responders	Donation - First aid training provided, 13.01.2023	100.00
Payment from the kitty	Replacement defibrillator pads (<i>includes VAT</i>)	63.59
Grant – St Johns PCC	Churchyard and hedge maintenance	200.00
	TOTAL	1,789.82
Income since last meeting:		
Sale of woodland produce: £40 received, and commitment of £30 to follow	TOTAL	70.00

Post meeting notes: All payments, except the HMRC, were paid by BACS using Barclays online services. Correspondence received from Gallaghers re the insurance policy renewal was circulated to all Councillors. No action was required.

- b. **To receive and note the bank reconciliation and predicted year-end position, papers MA**
The proposed discussion on replacing noticeboards was deferred until the next meeting, to enable all Councillors to contribute. Although £1k has been allocated for a replacement noticeboard, project completion will not be achieved before 31.03.2023. The predicted year-end position, to include all the above payments and unrealised commitments, is therefore a carry forward of ~2k.
RESOLVED: KL will discuss IT equipment required by the new Clerk; the PC laptop and case will be handed on. The Transparency grant funding (~£407) is ring-fenced to provide Microsoft licence, security products, scanner and/or printer, as appropriate. The petty cash allocation will enable purchases to be made for the new Clerk to be suitably kitted out before commencing in the role.
Action: KL to have all PC documents available (on a memory stick) to hand-over to the new Clerk.
- c. **To consider precept for 2023-2024, paper on MA.**
Councillors continued the detailed and extensive discussion started in November on the data options presented to set next year's precept. Councillors were mindful of the impact on parishioners from the current rising cost of living, but also the need to provide adequate funding for the Parish Council administrative costs as well as 'step-up investments' to support local causes for the year ahead.
RESOLVED: The consensus was that a modest rise to next year's precept is required – a 5% increase was finally unanimously agreed, amounting to an average rise of £1.16 per property.
Action : KL to inform SLDC that the PC formally request a precept of £5,265.89 along with a grant of £74.92, the total amount for 2023-2024 is £5,340.81.
- d. **Protocol for online payments**
Cllrs TM and JC had brought their Barclays signing-in gadgets; however, once logged in to the account, the process was not as straight forward as expected. It was agreed for the Clerk to progress payments outside of the meeting, and ask TM & JC (via email) to log-in and authorise when requested. It was noted that Barclays support to implement the new process was very poor – no advice or helpful literature has been made available.
RESOLVED: To agree a protocol for online authorisation of payments at the next meeting.
- e. **New bank signatory, paper MA**
KL has received formal notification that MC is now a recognised new signatory for the PC account.
Action: MC to confirm his access/authorisation status at the next meeting.
- f. **Notice of external auditor appointment, paper MA**
RESOLVED: It was noted that the PC's external auditor is Moore, Rutland House, Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6PZ. Email: east.midlands@moore.co.uk. Tel. 01733 397300. The year-end accounts, governance process and all reports remain the same as previously. Moore will provide electronic copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return forms (there is a charge for paper copies). Mrs Lynda Barron was approved as the internal auditor, to undertake the same scrutiny as on previous years.
Action: KL to liaise with Mrs Barron, to commission her audit services in April.

79/22 Update Reports

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Date: 22.3.23

a. Environment and Community Woodlands:

1. Income - sale of woodland products

Clearance from ash die-back in the woodland resulted in sales (reported under item 78/22a) to a chairmaker and firewood supplies for locals.

2. Next litter pick event, *date if needed*.

RESOLVED: No urgency to set a date, item deferred to the July PC meeting for autumn event, to allow time for the details to be published in the community newsletter.

3. Progress with rights of way project

RESOLVED: In MC's absence, this item is deferred to the March PC meeting.

4. Sprint Mill - collapsed gate

A gate on the Dalesway at Sprint Mill has been replaced.

5. Oakbank - replacement stile

Materials have been delivered to replace a stile at Oakbank Mill

b. Highways and Transport:

It was reported that stabilisation works on Paddy Lane have begun but that the road remains closed.

c. Communication

1. Suggestions for website improvements, www.skelscalpc.org.uk

RESOLVED: Further development of the website is on hold until the arrival of the new clerk. Suggestions from MC and AB-B (from her social media training) are very welcome.

d. Community

1. Reschedule of joint community quiz event

New date noted, 10.02.2023, Councillors encouraged to attend and join/bring a team.

2. Community First Aid training, 13.01.2023

AB-B: Recommended the PC considered making a donation to Kendal First Responders, for the professional first aid and use of the defibrillator training they provided at the community event on 13.01.2023. It was well attended and an enjoyable event. 12 people attended, feedback was that the training helped them to feel more confident about managing an emergency situation.

3. Community resilience

RESOLVED: In FB's absence, this item is deferred to the March PC meeting.

80/22 External Meetings, [CALC website](#)

a. District Association meeting, 21.11.2022, minutes on MA

b. South Lakeland District Association, next meeting: Thursday 26.01.2023, 7pm, zoom, on MA
JC will attend.

81/22 Planning Applications

a. [PN/2022/0130](#), Jenkin Cragg Farm, Fowl Ing Lane, KENDAL. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed telecommunications mast, antennas and ancillary development - Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A. PC: no objection. SLDC; prior approval is required and refused - damage to existing tree roots.

b. [SL/2023/0009](#), Plot A, Holme House Farm, Skelsmergh, KENDAL. Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval SL/2019/1032 (Demolition of existing buildings and erection of five dwellings and shared use buildings) & access, appearance, landscaping, layout & scale of plot A. PC no objection – plain and unobtrusive design.

c. [SL/2022/1142](#), Thorneyslack Farm, Garth Row, KENDAL. Change of use from a dwelling with an agricultural worker restriction and an aged persons' annexe to an unrestricted dwelling. PC – no objection.

d. [SL/2022/1116](#), Benson Hall, Scalthwaiterigg, KENDAL. Formation of concrete slurry tank, partially submerged with floating cover. PC – no objection.

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82/22 Correspondence: To consider correspondence highlighted by the Clerk
a. Information is uploaded to the Members site on the training events run or recommended by CALC. Councillors and the new Clerk are encouraged to book/attend any events for areas of interest or knowledge gaps to upskill on. The PC budget has a training allowance commitment.

83/22 Dates for Next Meetings, venue: Skelsmergh Community Hall, commencing 7pm.

- Wednesday 22 March 2023
- Wednesday 24th May 2023

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Date: 22.3.23