



Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting

Wednesday 16 November 2022, 7pm at Skelsmergh Community Hall

Present:

Parish Councillors:

John Chapman (JC) – Chair
Freyja Burrill (FB)
Tim Maggs (TM)
Angela Brand-Barker (AB-B)
Mick Crozier (MC), *arrived for item 59/22*

SLDC Councillors

Hazel Hodgson, *arrived for item 64/22a2*

Apologies:

Pat Bell (PB)

Clerk:

Karen Little (KL)

Attendees:

Three members of the public (one resident; two owners of land in parish)

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

56/22 Welcome

The Chair warmly everyone and formally opened the meeting at 19.03. The meeting was quorate. Introductions were made.

57/22 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.

58/22 Open Forum

a. Building application advice

A brief discussion followed a request for advice on the application process for new residential building developments proposed for 'green land' in the parish. Councillors' advice was to contact SLDC Planning Officers and/or an architect for professional guidance through the process. Clarification was given that the PC's role in the process was part of the community consultation. Councillors diligently consider all building plans on their specific and individual merit, without prejudice to the process or applicant.

59/22 Minutes of the Last Meeting, paper MA

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 21.09.2022 were confirmed as a true

Signed:

J Chapman

Date:

25th January 2023

and complete record. The Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

60/22 Matters Arising from the Minutes, not an agenda item

a. Deed of Appointment - Custodian Trustee Skelsmergh Community Hall, paper MA

JC: Advised that the Charity Commission have been informed, [link](#); a formal deed is not required. The PC will remain a custodian trustee of the Community Hall for as long as the Diocesan lease for the Management Committee to have operational authority of the Hall continues.

RESOLVED: No further action or no legal documents are required. The Hall Management Committee will contact the PC as/when the PC's involvement as custodians is required.

b. Update on Westmorland and Furness (*Shadow*) Council (W&FC)

As the remote meeting CALC organised clashed with this meeting, Cllr Chapman has requested post meeting circulation of all information provided by Sam Plum (W&FC Chief Executive) and Jonathan Brook (W&FC Leader) on the local government reorganisation (LGR). In addition, Councillors now receive weekly LGR electronic newsletters and the shadow council's website ([Link](#)) was noted as a reference point. Representation by W&F Councillors is expected and welcomed at S&S PC meetings from May 2023 onwards.

c. Access to the S&S PC Members area

SLDC Councillor Hazel Hodgson has been given the password to access the Members Area (as resolved at the last meeting) on the basis that the information there is strictly confidential and can not be shared/discussed with anyone without relevant authority from the Parish Council Clerk.

d. SLDC representation

Following discussion and concerns raised at previous meetings, the Chair and Cllr Brand-Barker met with SLDC Cllr Ali Jama. Due to family commitments Cllr Jama apologised for not being able to attend any S&S PC meetings to date; he is, and will continue to remain, interested and informed about the PC's work

61/22 Formal Announcements by the Chair

A local resident was invited to attend the meeting as an observer in response to expressing an interest in the forthcoming vacant Clerk post.

62/22 Clerk Vacancy, [info on website](#)

RESOLVED: It was agreed that the closing date would be before Christmas (*post meeting – advertised as 21.12.2022*); applicants will be asked to provide a personal statement of how they meet the requirements of the job description and the person specification, and the skills they would bring to the role. A date will be set for early January (ideally, before the next PC meeting) for the shortlisting process and subsequent interviews. The recruitment panel should comprise two councillors (to be confirmed, dependent on who is available) and the Clerk.

Action: KL to ask for the vacancy poster to be readvertised in the local newsletter.

63/22 Grant Applications

No grant applications had been received.

64/22 Update Reports

a. Environment and Community Woodlands:

1. Litter pick event, Sunday 30.10.2022

JC: Nine people attended. The outcome was less prolific than previous events, which may relate to the restrictions that apply to the narrow verge sections of the A6. Mainly the litter is discarded 'take-away' food packaging. The bacon sandwiches served afterwards were very popular!

RESOLVED: The scheduled litter pick events may be reduced to one/year (currently two/year), depending on the litter intensity. A spring event will be held if there is an evident need for one. A

Signed: 

Date: 25.1.23

'thank you' was given to the volunteers who attended, also residents who regularly commit to removing waste items from parish roadsides - their ongoing efforts are much appreciated.

2. Plans for waymarking rights of way, MC – *in MA*

Cllr Crozier outlined the plans to address missing/damaged signage and/or obstruction on the 50 public rights of way across the parish. He has developed a questionnaire that volunteers will be asked to complete for each route, and a bespoke excel spreadsheet to record all the information received. Matters to be escalated will be reported to the Countryside Access Team, Cumbria County Council (W&F Council from April 2023). Cllr Crozier will provide progress reports at all ordinary PC meetings. Councillors thanked Cllr Crozier for his excellent work as the 'Footpath Champion'; all offers of help received from local residents are very welcomed, including canine contributions! It was noted that due to the County's recent lack of investment in maintaining public footpaths, this work may involve significant costs – remedial work is likely to be prioritised according to both risk and cost factors.

Action: MC to contact individual volunteers, to explain the plans for the Way-marking project.

3. Ash felling and chain-saw training, 09.11.2022 – *insurance on MA*

RESOLVED: Councillors noted and approved the ash tree felling undertaken last week. The Clerk had approved this request on receipt of a valid insurance certificate (expires August 2023). A large ash tree overhanging Joiners Lane (Garth Row) is being kept under close observation for signs of die-back. Action will be taken as/when required – significant costs will be incurred due to the position of this tree.

Action: JC to invite offers/sell the wood products generated from the chain-sawing training.

4. Authorisation of Parish woodlands for training purposes, *paper on MA*

JC: Proposed issuing a formal licence to permit ongoing use of the Parish woodlands for chain-saw training purposes (City and Guilds), providing certain criteria are met. This will be for a nominal consideration to recognise the benefits for the PC by providing maintenance work at no cost and the potential for additional income generation from the sale of by-products. Scott Elbourne is a very professional, competent and tidy worker.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to award Scott Elbourne (SE, Tree Skills Ltd) an annual contract to undertake ongoing chainsaw training opportunities in the parish woodland at Garth Row and Coldharbour Quarry, subject to specific conditions and appropriate valid insurance.

Action: Clerk to process the contract as proposed with SE.

b. **Highways and Transport:**

1. Local highway issues, *MA – Paddy Lane & Laverock Bridge & Meadowbank Business Park*

RESOLVED: Responses received from Highways were noted; there will be no quick fixes for Paddy Lane and Laverock Bridge. Councillors were very pleased with the Highway Management Officer's reassurance - the developer is required to relocate the parish sign as part of the Section 278 work for the new Meadowbank Business Park, Shap Road in due course.

TM: Raised the issue of grit bins in Garth Row – the uncertainty of whether and when grit will be provided during the winter has become a critical issue for residents. With 1 in 4 gradients on all routes, ice is a major concern, both in advance of and during freezing weather conditions. Is it that Garth Row is overlooked by the council gritting team, or is there a system error?

RESOLVED: The Clerk is requested to send a formal letter on behalf of the PC to Peter Hosking, to request confirmation that the grit piles will be reliably replenished on an annual basis (and on transfer to W&FC) at both entrance sites to Garth Row, and for full details on the schedule for grit provision across the parish.

c. **Communication:**

1. Website update: www.skelscalpc.org.uk, (hits data and community resources), *MA x2*

Councillors were informed that data on the hits for the PC website (total and a page by page breakdown) would not be available until after the website server has been changed (next year). Also, as PC websites are intended to comply with the '[Transparency Code for Parish Councils](#)';

Signed: 

Date: 25.1.23

social media is a better option for circulating events, local news and general miscellaneous information that residents may find useful. A discussion followed.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that the PC could 'do better' with communicating local news and information. Further discussion was needed – agenda item at the January PC meeting.

Action: MC to research suggestions to improve PC communications/raise the PC profile; AB-B to undertake social media training, 23.01.2022. Both to provide a report at the January meeting.

d. Community:

1. Plans for joint community quiz event – Friday 25 November, 7.30pm – CANCELLED.

RESOLVED: Noted that the event clashed with the FIFA's World Cup events; to be rescheduled next year – date to be agreed with the Skelsmergh Hall Management Committee.

2. Draft questionnaire

FB: The questionnaire from the last public consultation was not available. Instead contact has been made with Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT), [link](#) with a view to improving resilience, see next agenda item. ACT are looking for a number of pilot communities; my skills and experience as a District Nurse were recognised as being particularly helpful for their recruitment.

3. Community resilience, *paper in MA*

FB: Proposed completing the ACT risk assessments and to develop a draft plan to email to Councillors – for their feedback before the January meeting. The aim is that the Hall could be a central point for warmth, a base for rescue in an emergency situation and to access supplies, if relevant/as required. Will pursue help and support from ACT.

Action: FB to report back on developments and progress made at the January PC meeting.

4. First aid community event

AB-B: Discussed defibrillator/first aid training with two providers – one is gratis, linked to First Response training. Waiting to confirm details and dates to host joint event with the Hall Committee.

Proposed that the money committed to provide refreshments for the cancelled quiz event (£100) could be reallocated to this event, to finance refreshments and costs/donation, as applicable.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to support a joint community first aid/defibrillator training event with £100 (from the cancelled quiz event) to cover costs or towards a donation, as required.

Cllr Brand-Barker will confirm details of the event when agreed with Hall and provider – provisional date is early January 2023.

65/22 Finance

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

RESOLVED: To make the following payments:

Payee	Expenses/Services	Amount (£)
Karen Little	Clerk's salary 01.10.2022 to 30.11.2022	447.53
Cumbria Payroll Services	November 2022 payroll (includes VAT)	14.40
HMRC	Clerk's PAYE tax (November 2022)	1.40
	TOTAL	463.33
Income since last meeting: None		-

RESOLVED: To note and approve the NJC national salary award for 2022-2023, back dated to 01.04.2022 for the Clerk's salary (LC1, SCP 17; an increase from £12.95 to £13.95/hr). The new salary and back-dated pay will be included in the January 2023 salary payment.

b. **To receive and note the bank reconciliation and predicted year-end position, papers MA**

As discussed at the last meeting - orders need to be placed for replacement noticeboards/signs or other investment as agreed, asap. The transparency funds are committed for IT equipment required by the new Clerk (e.g. scanner & printer and laptop licences) to comply with the funding conditions. Grant applications continue to be encouraged. Plans to replace the notice boards were discussed for Garth Row, Dodding Green and Mealbank.

Signed: 

Date: 25.1.23

Action: Councillors are asked to seek alternative notice board providers, to discuss at the January PC meeting.

c. **To consider precept for 2023-2024, paper on MA.**

Adjustments to the forecasted year-end position were presented – these include an employment period for the outgoing Clerk to work alongside the new post-holder to provide a hand-over/ induction support and assumptions that agreed commitments, e.g. notice board upgrades, would be secured. Estimates of the basic running costs (for the PC to be compliant with statutory operational requirements) for 2023-2024 were made based on the current inflation increase. The data presented was discussed in great detail.

RESOLVED: The consensus was that a modest increase in next year's precept is required to cover the increased statutory council running costs due to inflation and cost of living rise. The actual precept amount will be formally set at the January meeting. With declining numbers in grant applications, it may be that aspirations and the precept can be restrained accordingly.

d. **Protocol for online payments**

Delays have been experienced with Barclays Bank processes; item deferred to the next meeting. Payments were made by cheque, as usual.

e. **New bank signatory (MC) process, paper MA**

Action: MC to complete the required paperwork and id checks. Report to next meeting.

f. **Employer's legal duty – pension enrolment, paper MA**

RESOLVED: Action noted, PC is compliant. The only salaried employee is not eligible for enrolment.

66/22 External Meetings

a. **CALC: Minutes AGM, 24.09.2022**

b. **District Association, minutes 21.09; next meeting 21.11.2022**

See the [CALC](#) website for minutes.

67/22 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**

68/22 Correspondence

a. **WW1 painting – Skelsmergh memorial, MA**

RESOLVED: Noted the interesting artefact, now sits with Tony Cousins to establish the history and connection between the owner, the named families and Skelsmergh.

b. **Footpath stopping up & diversion, Meadowbank Business Park, Shap Road, paper in MA**

RESOLVED: Noted the formal order has been sealed. The concerns raised and discussed at previous PC meetings have been addressed – reported under item 64/22b1.

c. **Boundary Commission for England 2023 consultation, <https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>**

RESOLVED: Parish Councillors and all residents are encouraged to note and respond to the Boundary Commission consultation.

69/22 Dates for Next Meetings (venue: Skelsmergh Community Hall, commencing 7pm):

Wednesday 25 January 2023 and Wednesday 22 March 2023.

JC: Thanked everyone for coming and for their contributions to the meeting. The meeting was formally closed at 21.20.

Signed.....



Date:.....

