

**minutes OF A MEETING OF ARTHURET PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.00 p.m. AT LONGTOWN MEMORIAL HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE**

<p><b><u>Present Minute No 373</u></b></p>	<p>Cllrs. Sir JFS Graham (Chair), G Routledge (Vice Chair) M Gunson, C Adams, C Johannsen and Cumberland Cllr. T Pickstone</p>
<p><b><u>Apologies Minute No 374</u></b></p>	<p>Apologies and reasons for absence were received from Cllrs. R Graham and L Mason.</p>
<p><b><u>Declaration of Interest Minute No 375</u></b></p>	<p>Cllr M Gunson allotments</p>
<p><b><u>Members of the public Minute No 376</u></b></p>	<p>The chairman welcomed 7 members of the public to the meeting, who were invited to speak on parish issues.</p> <p>Resident 1 Lochinvar playing field maintenance</p> <p>The manager of Longtown Football Club informed the council that the Football Club were no longer in a position to cut the grass at the playing fields as they could not afford to purchase a new lawnmower and storage was a problem. It had been decided to outsource the work, a contractor had been agreed by them, at a cost of £1,500 per annum, insurance was included within the cost. It was noted there was as shortfall of £200 to that allocated in the parish council budget for the 2024 season. It was suggested that the football club apply for a grant from the Beckburn Windfarm Community Pot, administered by the parish council. to make up the shortfall, This would be discussed at the meeting in March.</p> <p>Residents 2 and 3 intimated they were attending, as residents, to observe the meeting.</p> <p>Resident 4,</p> <p>The following concerns were raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the excessive speed of vehicles, that the footways on Netherby Road and Graham Street were considered a safety issue . This was agreed, with Cllr M Gunson also raising the ongoing problems with Netherby Road footpath needing cleaning and widening, beyond the houses, leading to The Peth. This was a longstanding issue that, to date, was still to be addressed by Highways.</li> <li>• As requested, the resident was given an update on the current situation to install the Speed Indication Devices at the following locations. A7 Carlisle Road, A6071 Brampton Road, Moore Road and Netherby Road. The clerk confirmed the speed devices have been delivered, an update from Cumberland Council on the cost and proposed dates for installation was awaited. Cumberland Cllr T Pickstone, who had been asked to assist in getting this work carried out, had spoken with, and provided the clerk the contact details, for the Assistant Director of Highways, who was aware</li> </ul>

of the issue and could hopefully move things forward. It was agreed the resident would be kept updated through the clerk.

- It was agreed that Dog fouling remained a big problem, although suggested the provision of dog fouling bins in the parish could alleviate the problem, the clerk explained this had been looked into over the years. Although it was acceptable to place dog waste in litter bins, once they were placed in designated bins these had to be disposed of in a more costly way. The clerk was asked to check if this was still the policy for disposal.
- Litter bins at the riverside need replaced, and the lifebuoy casing was not secure. In addition, concern was raised that, due to vandalism, lifesaving equipment was being removed. It was confirmed a grant to purchase new bins and address the issues with the lifesaving equipment had been successful.

It was suggested by Cumberland Cllr T Pickstone that Cumberland Council could be asked to look at other ways to reduce speeding.

Resident 5 Multi Use Games Area

The resident asked to be kept updated on any decisions taken regarding the MUGA installation. Clerk to keep resident informed of progress.

Resident 6

- As a tenant on the Allotments voiced concerns that lumps of fat were being thrown onto his plot, Cllr M Gunson acknowledged the allotment committee were aware and it was hopeful that once CCTV cameras were in place, this was in the pipeline, security would improve.
- Referred to the Terms and Conditions, agreed and signed by all tenants, and asked for confirmation that prior permission from the Allotment Committee was needed before placing a cabin on a plot? This was confirmed by Cllr M Gunson. Councillors were made aware of a tenant who was putting in hardcore and using machinery to place at the front of the plot when it was stated any cabins/sheds needed to be placed to the back. Cllr M Gunson confirmed the Allotment Committee were aware of this and had spoken with the tenant and it was considered there would not be so much light blocked if sited at the front.
- Cllr. M Gunson confirmed that the 3-year end of office for the current committee would take effect in April when nominations would be invited from all tenants for committee members.

Resident 7.

As a tenant on the allotments the resident raised the following.

- Reiterated the points raised by the previous resident, he was also experiencing the same problems.
- Asked the council to consider reimbursement for the cost of vermin control on his plot. Although there were 2 appointed tenants who had attended training and carried out vermin control, the person carrying it out refused to go onto this tenant's plot. No decision was taken, this needed to be considered further by the council.

On behalf of residents Cllr M Gunson reported that the road sign

	Carlisle Road needs reinstated.
<b><u>Police matters</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 377</u></b>	<p>No police were in attendance, no update received.</p> <p>The clerk reported on correspondence received from a Riverside Housing officer that a resident of Lochinvar Close had caused extensive damage to the grassed area to access the rear of their property. Ownership of the damaged area was part Parish Council and part Riverside Housing. This has resulted in the land being more hazardous for other residents and a substantial cost for repair.</p> <p>It was agreed that the clerk would obtain costs for repairs to the area owned by the Parish Council and ask the resident reimburse these.</p>
<b><u>Cumberland Cllrs report</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 378</u></b>	<p>Cumberland Cllr T Pickstone reported the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumberland Council would be taking a decision on the 13<sup>th</sup> February on the future financial year's budget support that would impact Community Centres. This had now been delegated to The Community Panels, covering a massive area. The Clerk, asked for clarification, and it was confirmed, there was no guarantee that Community Centres would receive their current funding, this would take effect, and impact, in the next financial year. Currently Longtown receives the largest budget in the area. An update to be given at the meeting in March.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Representatives on other bodies</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 379</u></b>	<p><b><u>Community Centre Management Committee</u></b></p> <p>Cumberland Cllr T Pickstone highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Thursday Lunch Club was closing at the end of February. The Board of Trustees were hoping to continue this, a grant application to the Beckburn Community Pot was to be submitted Short term it was suggested the parish council to support .</li> <li>• Under the new Manager, the Community was busier with lots of future plans.</li> <li>• External grant funding of £46,000 had been secured for renovation work to the entrance area making it more accessible to users.</li> <li>• Plans were progressing to commemorate the Centenary of The Longtown Memorial Hall with the following events.</li> <li>• Open Day in September, a grant for refreshments had been submitted to the Cumbria Community Foundation Beckburn Windfarm.</li> <li>• A community lunch following the Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial.</li> <li>• An Easter event for children.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Allotment Committee</u></b></p> <p>Cllr. M Gunson confirmed the dates to collect the annual rents.</p> <p><b><u>CAP Initiative</u></b></p> <p>Cllr C Johannsen reported that despite e-mails requesting an update, no information was forthcoming from the police.</p> <p><b><u>Borderlands Initiative</u></b></p> <p>Cllr T Pickstone reported that one or two larger projects could be</p>

		concentrated on rather than the current 5 or 6 projects being looked at. One of the areas being looked at was assessing the use of derelict buildings and whether they are viable and meet the priorities of the Borderland funding and needs of the people of Longtown.
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<b><u>Minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> December</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 380</u></b>		The minutes of the meeting held on the 4 <sup>th</sup> December were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
<b><u>Minutes of Finance</u></b> <b><u>8<sup>th</sup> January</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 381</u></b>		The minutes of the Finance meeting held on the 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
<b><u>To receive External Auditors Report</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 382</u></b>		<p>The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was read out and the following brought to the attention of the Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General reserves appear to be held at too low a level at the year end, The council should keep this under review and ensure that they have at least .5% times the precept as a minimum. These cannot include ring fenced funds and should avoid including funds which are designated for another purpose.</li> <li>2. Noted the current account balances would be overdrawn at the year end if all outstanding cheques had been presentable. It is presumed that the Business Premium Accounts would be used to rebalance the accounts, this is the case.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Precept 2024/2025</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 383</u></b>		Councillors agreed to accept the recommended increase of 6% in the precept to £75,671, as itemised in the Financial Draft.
<b><u>Willingness to work in community</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 384</u></b>		Cllr C Johannsen had requested this as an agenda item, that the council consider holding sessions to engage with residents. Following discussion, it was agreed it could be beneficial to reinstate the Partnership Group with all agencies working together for the benefit of the parish. Agreed this would be considered further on a future agenda.
<b><u>Lighting column on Esk bridge</u></b> <b><u>Minute No 385</u></b>		Correspondence from a resident of the parish expressing concern that the lighting column on the Esk Bridge was not repaired or replaced. It was noted that Cumberland Council had been asked to reinstate the lighting column to reflect this is Grade 2 listed and replace existing top to that which is aesthetically pleasing. Cumberland Council had, to date, insisted this was a Parish Council issue. It was noted that the problem with this lighting column started when the works to the bridge following damage to the wall and subsequent temporary closure was carried out. It was agreed that Arthuret Parish Council request Cumberland Council reinstate to its former state pre the damage to the bridge.
<b><u>Multi Use Games</u></b>		Following consideration, the council agreed they defer the decision to

<u>Area Minute No 386</u>	accept a quote for the provision and installation of a Multi-Use Games Area, land between Old Road and Lochinvar Close, to the meeting of the 4 <sup>th</sup> March. Plans to be displayed at the meeting with a date agreed when these would be displayed to the public for information.
<u>Date of next meeting Minute No 387</u>	Date of next meeting Monday 4th March at 7.00pm. at Longtown Memorial Hall Community Centre.
<u>Planning Minute No 388</u>	<b>PROPOSAL</b> <b>Appn Ref 24/0069</b> Demolition of existing farmhouse and extension of replacement dwelling. White close Rigg, Longtown Supported, bearing in mind this is an old building would suggest that the heritage be looked at. <b>Appn Ref 24/0042</b> Roofing over an existing silage pit. Randalinton Farm, Longtown Supported
<u>Correspondence Minute No 389</u>	1. CALC event training 2. CALC update 3. NALC Chief Executives bulleting 4. NALC newsletter 5. Rural Services Network Bulletin 6. NALC events 7. Longtown newsletter 8. NALC Chief Executives bulletin on abuse and intimidation in the workplace 9. Temporary Road Closure C1004

#### ACCOUNTS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

The following accounts were approved and authorised for payment.

Cheque	Rec	To whom paid	Amount
		January 2024	
705529		Longtown Primary School PTA for Christmas party from Beckburn Windfarm Community Pot	380.00
705530		Murray's printers - raffle tickets Christmas party	38.82
705531		Sycamore Tree Café to cater for Senior citizens Christmas lunch	1,044.00
705532		K Johnson - clerk salary	2,010.33
705532		retained	
705533		D Beattie riverside cleaning, check parks	414.00
705534		HMRC - Income tax, N.I. and pension	817.62
705535		K Johnson - Clerk salary	2,133.00
705536		Clerk working from home allowance 8 weeks	48.00
705537		To be issued to clerk, reimbursements to be confirmed	
705538		G Routledge - reimbursed for Christmas displays	64.37
		February	

705539		Plant scape - solar powered Christmas lights	4,174.20
705540		retained	
705541		A Warwick - fix showers changing rooms	90.00
705542		Whitesyke Garden Centre - provide 4 Christmas trees for centre of Longtown	159.96
705543		P Kirkup - Cleaner changing rooms	62.46
705544		Clerk salary	2,133.00
705545		HMRC - Income Tax, N.I. Pension	817.62
		February	
705546		D Beattie - Riverside cleaner, check parks	414.00
705547		N Mossop - deliver, install and remove Christmas Crib	150.00
705548		Moore - External Audit fee	378.00
705549		Correction to mis spell cheque no. 705547	
705550		Murray's printers for allotment letters	48.00
705551		K Murchison to collect and dispose 4 Christmas trees	144.00
705552		Longtown Community Centre room hire parish meetings	246.50
705553		HMRC owed to July 2023	681.33

## CONFIDENTIAL

### PART B

Arthuret Parish Council may discuss, as confidential issues, relating to the early stages of potential legal disputes, terms of employment, and items considered to be of a sensitive nature. Please note this broader but in this case the above applies.

The Council must formally agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting whilst the confidential item is discussed.

Any resolution made under Confidential matters will be recorded in the minutes of the main meeting whilst preserving the confidentiality.

To note, the following was discussed and decision taken,

#### **Complaint received from a resident of the parish stating Non-Compliance.**

#### **The following were response noted.**

Minute No 390

- Minutes of the meetings are up to date on the website.  
Arthuret does not fall under the Transparency Code, but, as good practise, follows the recommendations. Agendas are displayed on the notice board at Sandysike and Council Rooms window.
- Website problems, clerk had contacted the ICO in relation to the website who had confirmed the Council had taken all reasonable steps to make this information accessible to residents, and no recommendations have been breached.
- Disconcerting that resident intimates the Parish Clerks home address is publicised and made freely available to all residents of Arthuret Parish and should be the access point to residents. The clerk stated this is a safety issue, access to the clerk has never before been raised as a problem. If requested, a meeting is arranged at an alternative venue.
- Arthuret Parish Councillors personal details, other than their names, are not available on the website, they have agreed the point of contact is through the Parish Clerk.

### **Complaint regarding the minutes and website.**

- It was agreed the website is not accessible on a mobile device and minutes are posted as PDF files. Agreed this would be addressed with the website providers.
- Minutes of meetings are not verbatim but include salient points and decision taken on agenda items.
- Personal and derogatory comments towards the clerk were noted, this is addressed below.
- The criticism of the use of Comic Sans noted, this is a font that is recommended to use as it is reader friendly for those with dyslexia.

### **Complaint of clerk's unprofessional behaviour in response to item 2.**

It was agreed unanimously, that the clerk had acted in a professional manner, the Chairman stated that this had been the case throughout her years as the parish clerk. The clerk expressed concern of this residents' persistent personal attacks, over a lengthy period and raised, in particular, the derogatory comments that were circulated not only to the Chairman and Vice Chairman but copied to our elected Cumberland Councillor. Councillors were made aware of the correspondence the clerk had sent to the resident.

It was accepted that the clerk had responded to the resident specifically relating to the personal comments.

Amendment to the minutes, of the previous paragraph to read, as agreed at the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

To

Reference to the letter of complaint to the clerk's unprofessional behaviour relating to correspondence sent by the clerk on the 8<sup>th</sup> February, The clerk informed the council this was sent and signed to the resident on a personal level in response to those personal comments towards the clerk in Paragraphs 7 and 9 of the correspondence,

Copies of this was made apparent in the correspondence sent to the resident.

Copies of the correspondence sent were made available to all at the meeting, as personal, and collected at the end of the meeting., this was for background information only.

### **Response**

It was accepted this a personal response, not as the parish clerk, in response to paragraphs 7 and 9.

The chairman stated that,, in his opinion, the parish clerk had always acted in a professional manner as the parish clerk.

Further noted that all councillors in attendance were in agreement that the clerk had responded in a personal capacity to personal comments aimed against her and for that reason this was not a parish council issue.

Agreed unanimously no action to be taken towards the clerk.