

**Minutes of the Whitwell and Selside Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30 pm 12 October 2015
at Selside Memorial Hall**

Present: Terry and Anne Armitstead, Sandra Carradice, June Dixon, Claire Dixon, Carolyn Potter, John Tallon, Norman and Cathy Winter, Jen Duxbury, and Stan Collins (Cumbria County Councillor, Upper Kent).

Norman Winter passed on the apologies of Simon Elliott, Clerk and Chairman of the Parish Council, that he was unable to be present. He was willing for Norman Winter to chair the meeting in his absence. Those present expressed agreement to proceed.

1. Welcome

The chairman welcomed all present, mentioning in particular Stan Collins, attending for the first time.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Andrew and Jen Armitstead, Tony Dixon, and Margaret Dixon. Peter Thornton [SLDC Councillor, Whinfell] also sent apologies.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 9 March 2015

It was agreed by those present that the minutes of the Annual Meeting be approved by this half-year meeting. These were agreed to be a correct record and were commended to the Chairman for signature. CW offered to take notes of this meeting to assist the keeping of minutes.

4. Update on local matters by Peter Thornton

In his absence NW passed on news of two items from Peter Thornton:

1] Untidy site west of A6 at Watchgate: this had been discussed at the March meeting. PT assured the meeting that this matter was in hand and, though slow, progress was being made.

2] There had been significant work done on extending superfast broadband to Selside and Fibre-to-the-Cabinet broadband would soon be available to some residents through the new cabinet at the former site of the bus-stop in Watchgate.

5. Update on local matters by Stan Collins

Stan Collins spoke in some detail about his work on the County Council, mentioning matters of particular though not all necessarily direct local interest:

1] The Library Bus Service had come to an end due to a breakdown of the bus. A survey had shown little demand for it but new initiatives in the library service were being tried in some rural areas.

2] County budgets were under great pressure from the growth in responsibility for social care, only met in part by a transfer of NHS money.

3] There were attempts being made to improve Highways services with a new strategy, but there were some historic difficulties since some specialist knowledge had been lost over the years. Drains needed to be located and improved; potholes are being repaired but only with temporary solutions due to lack of money for permanent repairs; signs and lines markings needed maintenance and renewal.

4] He also spoke about schools and pensions.

6. Highways matters

1] Report on actions taken since March 2015:

SE and NW had met on-site at 4 locations with Glyn Wharton, Area Steward for Highways based at Kendal. Positive and in some cases immediate remedial action had been taken on the road to the school [passing place, edge reinforcement, and drainage], and on Poppy Farm Lane above High Thorn ponds [passing place resurfacing]. Parishioners were encouraged to use online reporting of road problems. NW commented that response to online reporting had at times of late proved both inadequate and slow.

2] Four Lane Ends

Margaret Dixon had joined SE and NW with Glyn Wharton on site. Solutions had been proposed for action [Give Way markings on the carriageway, subsequently done], additional warning signs on the priority road approaches to the crossings [these have not been put in place despite assurances], and the possibility of a mirror. Subsequently GW had communicated that a mirror could not be considered due to legal difficulties.

Following the instatement of Give Way lines, Margaret Dixon had expressed complete dissatisfaction with this as a solution to the dangers posed by the crossing, and SE had requested Glyn Wharton to advise on alternative solutions, like changed priority [maybe a mini-roundabout] or traffic calming. A number of months had now passed and no advice had been offered.

There was a discussion in which various parishioners spoke of their dissatisfaction with the actions taken so far, and the continuing danger posed by the crossing, especially to traffic travelling from the Whinfell direction pulling into a priority road with approaching traffic from the left [Patton] totally obscured. TA said the cheapest solution was for traffic from all directions to have to give way. The present situation was dangerous. SC said that traffic calming using narrowed lanes had been proven to work elsewhere. AA said all hedges and verges should be cut. SC responded that the situation with regard to verge and hedge cutting was unsatisfactory, since the whole Cumbria contract now lay with a single contractor. He favoured small and local. He would, as Councillor, now engage with the engineers and put pressure on to resolve the issue. CW said she thought the Council were obliged to take action if it was brought to their attention that there was a danger to public safety. TA, AA and Jen Duxbury all expressed willingness to meet on-site with SE, NW and SC to pursue this further.

Action: Norman

Verges and visibility: NW asked SC to elaborate on the present Council policy. Recent A6 clearance appeared completely inadequate even in rendering the complete width of the highway usable by HGVs and cyclists. SC said responsibility for hedges and trees lay with the relevant landowner, usually a farmer though sometimes the Council. The Council, when necessary, instruct farmers to trim as required.

Flooding: June Dixon mentioned sites between Rossil Bridge and Poppy Farm Lane where there is flooding. SC encouraged her to use online reporting.

SC added that we should keep him informed of any lapses in response to online reporting; he is prepared to work on our behalf to get action.

3] Proposed appointment of named parishioner as lead contact with Cumbria Highways

NW expressed willingness to take on this role on behalf of the Parish Meeting.

Action: Norman

7. Parish website and email communication

i) Report on email list.

NW said that there were now 30+ residents and friends being emailed regularly with Selside news, and that Jen Armitstead had set up a Facebook page which communicated with a further 50 or more people.

ii) Report on plans / progress on website

NW reported that he had been working on content and design, and had involved some other residents in checking material. There was nothing live as yet. The Memorial Hall had agreed to handle any financial matters at zero net cost or with any surplus going to the hall. A prime function of the site would be to give the newly-refurbished Hall a web presence.

Action: Norman

iii) Ideas for assistance in extending communication: social media, recruitment to email list
see item i) above.

8. Report on Local Area Partnership

NW and other parishioners had attended LAP meetings which had included discussions and updates on highways, broadband, rural economy, rights of way, and other useful matters. UKLAP had also been able to assist the Memorial Hall with a grant. It was a relationship worth continuing but there was great variation between the parishes [eg Staveley and Upper Kentmere]. Maintaining contact with Skelsmergh helped co-ordination with Selside on any shared A6 concerns.

9. Boundary issues: Situation regarding neighbouring parishes of Fawcett Forest and Whinfell:

NW proposed that Fawcett Forest residents be approached by SLDC to see if there was willingness to re-constitute our Parish Meeting as Selside and Whitwell and Fawcett Forest. Fawcett Forest and our parish would each retain its parish boundaries and conduct [as SC advised] its own brief

necessary annual business separately, but then share in the meetings as partners with a common agenda. It made sense to view Selside and Fawcett Forest as a community focused on the memorial Hall, with some parishioners of Whinfell also interested in attending as guests. The meeting concurred. SC advised that Clair Marsh and Chris Wood at SLDC be approached to assist.

Action: Chairman

10. Possible use of Memorial Hall for parish meetings

NW [who also served on the Memorial Hall Committee] had raised the issue of Parish Meetings being held at the Hall. The position of the Parish Meeting would be discussed at the Hall AGM in November. The cost of tonight's meeting had been met by donation.

Action: NW

11. Planning

None were raised.

12. Litter clearance

Clearance had been done on April 12th [despite wind and snow] and October 11th [in fair weather]. Around 12 people on each occasion; 2nd Sunday of the month meant church attenders were able to come at 10am. Mary Chapman at Skelsmergh led the organizing. On the most recent occasion [October] there appeared to have been SLDC workers doing clearance in the fortnight before; information should be sought.

Action: NW

SE [through NW] reported an offer of High Visibility Jackets at no cost carrying some appropriate wording such as Selside Community Volunteer. The meeting gratefully accepted. SC offered to assist in the matter of warning signs for motorists at northern and southern boundaries, with messages such as "Take Care", "Community Litter Clearance", and a sign for days following showing number of bags collected.

Action: NW, SE [with Skelsmergh]

13 A O B.

June Dixon raised an issue of a bridleway being used regularly by motor cycles. NW said signage was the responsibility of the Rights-of-Way Department. SC offered help.

Action: NW [with SC]

AA asked if anything could be done regarding the point to which satnavs would direct drivers when they used a postcode referring to a large area of properties. This affected business at Bowthwaite, since visitors were taken some distance further up the lane by satnavs. SC recommended approaching Royal Mail, who define postcodes.

Action: AA

17. Date of next meeting

This was fixed for Monday 7th March 2016 at the Memorial Hall.