

Whitwell and Selside Parish Meeting

7.30 pm 18 September 2017 at the Memorial Hall

Draft Minutes

1. Welcome.

The chairman welcomed those present, thanking in particular the Revd. Nigel Davies for kindly having offered to attend.

Others present were Mary Harper, Carolyn Potter, Jimmy and Margaret Atkinson, Low Underbrow, and S. Elliott.

2. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Norman and Cathy Winter.

3. Approval of minutes of meeting of 6 March 2017.

No-one present had been at the meeting save the chairman, so this item was postponed.

4. Presentation on church finances by the Revd. Nigel Davies

Nigel began by saying it was generally well known that church attendance was declining nation-wide, and that it was increasingly difficult to find office holders willing to serve on PCCs. He said that St Thomas's finances were not robust and the savings were being eaten into annually, and that the Treasurer Mark Held supported by the PCC had recommended the situation should be made widely known locally. He referred to the general surprise expressed by the Longsleddale community upon hearing that their church faced closure. However it had become evident there that the community wished the church to continue, albeit in a different way, that is to say as a "Festival Church." He invited the Selside community to think about the future. He said that Longsleddale church was now managed by a "Friends Group" responsible for raising finance, that a parish offer of c. £3.5 k continued to be paid to the Diocese, and the church continued as a member of the Beacon Group. The diocesan parish would be united with its neighbours as "Burneside with Longsleddale", and overseen by the office holders of Burneside. He said that in regard to obtaining Gift Aid benefits there was a requirement for a minimum of six annual services – these would be likely to include Easter, Harvest, Christmas and marriages etc, as guided by the Friends Group, which had had much success in raising funds including in the wider community.

A general discussion followed, in which it emerged among other things that there had been no reduction in Longsleddale's parish offer despite the limited number of services now taking place. Margaret Atkinson drew attention to an important difference between Selside and Longsleddale in that the former had to raise funds for a school and a village hall, as well as a church. Jimmy questioned whether the PCC held enough fund raising events. Nigel wondered whether more joint fund raising activities might be possible. Simon observed that strong and capable leadership had come to the fore in Longsleddale and this was doubtless a factor in their initial successes. Nigel concluded by expressing the hope that a general

conversation would now begin to take place as to what it was the parish wanted in the mid to longer term.

5. **Matters arising.**

There were none.

6. **Highways matters.**

Carolyn said that her husband Alan Potter would like to see “No Access for HGVs” signs at the foot of Otter Bank and at Patton Bridge at the junction with the lane to Watchgate.

Margaret referred to the potholes on the public road adjacent to Little Mosergh which had been drawn to the attention of the Hotline. Simon said he would ask Norman Winter to take both these matters up with the Highways Authority.

Margaret asked what were the procedures that needed to be followed for a parish to take responsibility for the mowing of its own road verges. These had been explained at our last meeting but Simon said he would ask John Farmer if he or another would write a short article on this for Church and Community News.

Action: Norman, Simon

7. **AOB**

Margaret asked whether it was intended that the fibre optic cable would be extended beyond Watchgate. Simon said he would ask Norman to update her on this.

Action: Norman

8. **Date and place of next meeting.**

7.30 p m Monday 5 March 2018 at the Memorial Hall.