

**Minutes of Claife Annual Parish Meeting
held at The Braithwaite Hall on Monday 24th May 2021 at 7.00pm**

Present: Parish Councillors A Brodie, S Hilton, M Lennon, J Whitworth & M Wyburn. Parish Clerk L Prescott.

In attendance: 3 members of the public

1 Acting Chairman

Councillor Brodie proposed and Councillor Wyburn seconded Councillor Lennon as Acting Chair for this meeting.

Resolved To appoint Councillor Lennon as Acting Chair for this meeting.

2 Welcome

Councillor Lennon welcomed the Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.

3 Approval of Minutes

Resolved The council approved the minutes of the last Annual Meeting held on 14th May 2019.

4 Chair's report

Councillor Lennon read the report prepared by the Acting Chairs Councillors Brodie, Hilton and Lennon:

Your Parish Council underwent significant changes through 2020. The holding of virtual meetings online and three councillors stepped down, including the Chairman, Jimmy Mallett. Jimmy gave many years of service to our community. His local knowledge, common sense, and straightforward approach, was much valued. It was agreed to alternate the chair until after elections in May 2021. After an uncontested election, the Upper Ward is now represented by Pat Lennon, Jim Whitworth and Mary Wyburn. The Lower Ward by Anne Brodie and Simon Hilton with one vacancy remaining to be filled by co-option. Another change is the appointment of a new Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, Lyn Prescott, as Joanne Heather stepped down earlier this month. We thank Joanne for dealing so capably with Parish Council business during the challenging period of her office and we extend a warm welcome to Lyn. During the whole period your Council has looked at numerous planning applications, consulted and sent in its recommendations and decisions after debate. Councillors continue to report deteriorating road surfaces, pot holes and blocked gullies. The Council supports payment of a private contractor to grit icy roads in the parish that are not covered by Cumbria County Council gritters. A lengthsman is contracted to remove roadside saplings, clean road signs, and monitor drains and gullies. Trees, on land that the parish council is responsible for, beside Esthwaite Water and at Ash Landing, have been crown raised and felled. Additionally, trees commemorating Sawrey parishioners who died in active service during the two 20th century World Wars have been crown raised to prevent damage from passing high vehicles. Our thanks to Bryerswood Estate for agreeing to Parish Council signs being installed on gates on the steep track from Moss Eccles Tarn into Stones Lane, Near Sawrey, to alert mountain bikers to the presence of pedestrians with the aim of encouraging a reduction in the speed of the cyclists descent. And a special thank you to Pandora Signs for the generous donation of a solar powered speed warning sign at High Wray. The council have donated to, and sought additional funding for, the maintenance of defibrillators at Near and Far Sawrey. Thanks are due to District Cllr Coward and Buckle Yeat's Mr. MacGregor fund, for their contributions. Key local concerns are the service failures of the Windermere Ferry that continue to frustrate parishioners, visitors and businesses, and littering in the parish. The lake shore of Windermere, at Ash Landing, Harrowslack, and the Red Nab track and car park have attracted an influx of extra visitors during the pandemic period. With few or no facilities, and limited parking available, littering and inconsiderate parking have resulted. The Parish Council appreciates the work of volunteers, and the National Trust, who have rallied to clear up the mess left on a daily basis during the busiest periods. No doubt in the coming holiday season, with foreign travel restrictions likely still in place, similar problems may be expected. The Council thanks the parishioners who informally do their bit to remove litter as they go on their regular walks. Bringing hyper fast broadband fibre to Claife was a key ambition set out in the Claife Community Led Plan of 2013 and now it is in sight! Your Councillors are working with

B4RN (Broadband for the Rural North) to persuade landowners to grant free wayleaves that will allow fibre to reach all premises in Claife and Hawkshead. We encourage all residents and businesses to sign up for this exceptional service of which city dwellers can only dream.

5 Representative's reports

a) The Braithwaite Hall

Councillor Hilton reported that the past year has seen all the main local events including May Queen, Marrow Show and Children's' Christmas Party cancelled due to the Covid restrictions, however at the times when visitors were allowed to travel the voluntary contributions made in the car park honesty boxes have stood up remarkably well. They have over a number of years been spending very carefully and this has allowed them to save for some much needed upgrades that they have planned, these include a storage shed for which planning permission has now been applied for and refurbishment of the showers and toilets, this will include 10.5kw instant heat showers as the existing ones are totally inadequate when groups visit, this in turn means they are having to install a three phase electricity supply to cope. Electricity North West should be connecting them imminently. The Covid grants mean these projects can be completed to a high standard and they can continue with their never ending programs of building maintenance and improvement.

b) Hawkshead Market Hall Trust

Councillor Hilton reported that the constitution of the Hawkshead Market Hall Trust requires that various local organisations provide a representative, one of which is from Claife Parish Council. The hall itself has seen little usage over the last year due to Covid however the small cottage adjoining the hall has continued to be let providing much needed income and this combined with the Covid related grants and the forward bookings now that restrictions are being eased means that the ongoing refurbishments and improvements can continue, these include external joinery repairs, followed by a full repaint and following consultation with structural engineers, works to allow the removal of the pillars in the lower assembly room, which have blighted many a film or slide show. Work that has been completed includes the refinishing of the assembly room floor, the floor of the stage and repainting the stage area. Two officer posts on the committee do need to be filled, firstly that of secretary which is currently vacant and their treasurer is also having to stand down due to business commitments.

c) Hawkshead Grammar School

Mr Bonham reported that they have had an interesting year and he is up for re-election to the Committee this week. The School has been severely affected by Covid, it is now open for tours but numbers are diminished. There are plans to raise the profile of the Library as a research facility for students and universities. Twelve children benefited from education grants towards their studies and transport and £15,000 has been set aside again this year. They have an ongoing maintenance schedule which had fallen behind in previous years but there is now major investment being undertaken in maintenance for the cottages and houses. They are interviewing tomorrow for the last vacant property at the Lakeland Housing Trust, where there were a large number of applicants. They now have outline planning permission for Sawrey Knotts, Covid has delayed this project however they plan to build 6 properties at a cost of £1 million.

d) Windermere Ferry Advisory Group

Councillor Brodie reported that the ferry advisory group has no power to make decisions, it can only advise. It usually meets in September and March. The members of the group are Cumbria County Council Highways and Transport Officers, County Councillors and District councillors from South Lakeland, a Councillor representing the Parishes of Claife and Hawkshead, and a Councillor representing Windermere and Bowness Town Council. As a result of Covid 19 government restrictions we saw numerous changes in practice. The Ferry Advisory Group meetings were held remotely on Microsoft Teams in September 2020 and March 2021 rather than face to face and this did limit the effectiveness of the group as members struggled to access the meetings due to technical and digital issues. To meet the health and safety challenges, new systems of passenger management and ticketing procedures were adopted such as contactless payments only, mask wearing, and social distancing for pedestrians and cyclists. Access to the

pedestrian undercover area was much missed in wet weather when it became reserved for staff access only. Unfortunately, due to adjustments being made to service practice in the first Covid 19 lockdown and various mechanical breakdowns the ferry was out of service on numerous occasions over the year. Cumbria County Council support the procurement of a new ferry and assert that a technical expert will be appointed to support the Council throughout the process. She looks forward to hearing that such a critical appointment has been made to avert concerns over the competence of Cumbria County Council to make the right decisions about design and build of a marine asset. Positive developments lobbied for by her as your representative are that new electronic signs are to be put in place which will offer alternative route information when the ferry is out of service. Also, emergency service vehicles will no longer be required to be acting in emergency, and showing blue lights, in order to get free passage on the ferry. This should shorten journey times, and cut costs, for ambulances transporting patients with non urgent conditions to and from hospitals, and police patrol cars from Bowness and Windermere if they are needed to supplement the service out of Ulverston.

e) **Claife Community Led Plan**

Councillor Brodie reported that improvement in broadband connection and speeds for Claife was a key goal set by the Plan in 2013. This has been achieved for most properties along the east side of Esthwaite Water and within the main part of the village of Near Sawrey, however the quality of this service is variable and BT did not have the capability to connect all properties. Now there is the prospect of connection to hyper fast broadband, provided by B4RN (Broadband for the Rural North), for all properties in Claife. This connection could transform the economic and demographic future of Claife as it would support learning and working from home and support and attract small businesses. A retrograde step has been the reduction in transport options due to Covid restrictions on travel and social distancing rules. Minibus and water transport services were curtailed. Until these services are resumed it is expected that there will be an increase in road motor vehicle traffic and illegal or inconsiderate car parking. Many of the goals set by the plan for the Parish Council have been achieved but a formal review is now due.

6 **Public Participation**

A resident advised that the Ferry was busy at the weekend and had reduced space due to a maintenance vehicle being stored on the Ferry. The Ferry was running at 20 minute intervals, though it can run at 15 minute intervals allowing increased capacity. Councillor Lennon reported that a District Nurse had difficulty obtaining a receipt for her journey recently. Councillor Brodie will raise these issues at the next Ferry Group meeting and with Cumbria County Council.

Acting Chairman Lennon thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Signed by Chair: _____ Dated _____