

**DEAN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE KIRKSTILE, DEAN ON**  
**MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 AT 7 PM**

Present: Mr. Hayman (in the Chair) Mrs. Holmes, Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Agnew, Mr. Chittenden, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Pallister. Rev'd. Morgan (Clerk). Two members of the public were also present.

**01/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Haslam, Mr. Worsley, and Mr. Smith. Cumberland Councillor Mr. Andrew Semple.

**02/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were approved – proposed by Mr. Ferguson and seconded by Mr. Chittenden.

**03/24 MATTERS ARISING – NONE**

**04/24 PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS**

Copies of the accounts, prepared by outgoing clerk Mrs. Lamb, had previously been circulated to members. The accounts were accepted – proposed by Mrs. Pallister and seconded by Mrs. Holmes. It was noted that the preparation of the Annual Accounts was Mrs. Lamb's final act on behalf of the council.

**05/24 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

**1. Dean Parish Council changes**

The administrative year began with the election of a new council – the first time an election had been required for many years – with 15 candidates for 12 places. We said farewell and thank you for their service to Jim Parker and Brenda McMullen, who had decided to retire from the council, and to Ray Perry, who was not re-elected.

We welcomed Sue Holmes, Barry Johnson and Thomas Scott to the council in their place. The new council elected Ross Hayman as Chairman and Tim Chittenden as Vice Chairman.

Mr Johnson later resigned from the council because of time pressures, and with parishioners not requesting a by-election within the statutory period, the council co-opted Mike Smith on to the council to fill the vacancy.

During the year we also said farewell and thank you to our long-serving Parish Clerk, Mrs Barbara Lamb, and welcomed her replacement, Rev Judith Morgan, to the role.

**2. Dean Moor Solar Farm**

During the year we responded to two rounds of public consultation on plans by Firma Energy and ib vogt for a 150MW solar farm with 100MW of battery storage – a project requiring national government consent, and the largest development proposed for the parish since the days of the mining industry.

The development would include the installation of arrays of solar photovoltaic panels and battery units on 279 hectares of land between the Dean Cross Road and Wythemoor, taking in the area around the Potato Pot wind turbines and stretching from Branthwaite Edge to Gilgarran (which sits within Distington Parish).

Dean Parish Council does not object to the proposals in principle. However, the solar farm project would have a transformational effect on the landscape for the next 40 years, and Dean Parish Council believes such a development should, therefore, also have a transformational effect on the local communities which host it.

To that end we set up a joint working group with Distington Parish Council to discuss the issues and opportunities and submitted a joint position statement and then a coordinated response to the consultation setting out our aspirations for community benefit and our views on protection and enhancement of the environment, safety, traffic and public access to the site. Thanks to councillors Jeff Ferguson and Mike Smith for leading on this work.

We look forward to continuing open and constructive dialogue with the developers during the consenting process over the coming months.

### **3. Sewage pollution in our water courses**

The publication of a national Sewage Map by the Rivers Trust led us to discover that untreated sewage is being discharged into watercourses in our parish from storm overflows, including into Black Beck (spilling from Pardshaw treatment works), Near Stock Beck (from Dean waste water pumping station), River Marron (from Branthwaite pumping station), Far Stock Beck (from Deanscales pumping station) and Dubbs Gutter (from Eaglesfield waste water treatment works).

By far the largest discharges were occurring from Eaglesfield and Deanscales, and Dean Parish Council asked United Utilities what action they would be taking to reduce this unacceptable level of sewage pollution. Representatives from the company attended a council meeting to describe improvement works at Eaglesfield and Deanscales that were planned for coming months.

Dean Parish Council awaits an update from United Utilities on progress.

### **4. Reg's Round footpath**

Following the kind gift of land by the Powley family to Dean Parish Council to create a new footpath in Eaglesfield in memory of local farmer Reg Powley, work by Eaglesfield parishioners continued during the year to make Reg's Round a reality.

Thanks to funding from the Allerdale GDF Community Partnership, support from the rights of way team at Cumberland Council, and much hard work by villagers and Eaglesfield Village Hall Committee, the path is now nearing completion. Signposts and an interpretation board have been put up, and a bench is to be installed in memory of Sue Cumella.

The project has been a great success and will provide a footpath to be enjoyed by residents and visitors for many years to come.

### **5. Parish sports day**

The first ever Dean Parish Council sports day was held in Eaglesfield following a suggestion by Councillor Barry Johnson, who went on to organise it with support from parish council colleagues, Eaglesfield Village Hall Committee and local residents, to raise funds towards the continued provision and upkeep of life-saving defibrillators across the parish.

The sports day was a great success and there are plans to make it an annual event, potentially coinciding with the village's John Dalton Day celebrations.

Residents of Deanscales also held a fund-raising event to help towards the provision of a new defibrillator for the village, to be installed at the Old Posting House pub following their kind agreement to host it.

## **6. 217 bus service**

The Wednesday bus service through the parish finally came to an end when the operator's licence was not renewed. A people-carrier vehicle replaced the bus as a temporary measure, but was not a satisfactory solution.

Rural bus services are a lifeline for villages without shops, pharmacies or public services, and it is shocking that there is now not even a weekly recognised service for our parish, particularly after years of hard work and commitment by Councillor Gillian Moore and the 217 Bus Group to keep it going.

Cumberland Council is now exploring how it can reinstate bus services in areas without provision. Dean Parish Council has asked for the reinstatement of the 217 route as a priority, and we hope that a bus will soon be available once again for our residents.

## **7. Broadband**

Dean Parish Council continues to work with the authorities and providers to try to facilitate the connection of a modern broadband service to a number of more remote properties that are outside the existing area for superfast broadband connection. We hope that the impending rollout of the full fibre network will resolve this issue, but we continue to make representations for a fully inclusive service for local people.

### **6/24 Report from County Councillor Andrew Semple.**

*Clerk's Note: Mr. Semple was not present to give his report and he later emailed his apologies as he had been kept late at another meeting. It was agreed with the Chairman that the report could be minuted here:*

I'm really sorry I missed the Parish Meeting as I was involved in our Labour Group meeting, and I was elected by my colleagues to be the Chair of Cumberland Council. The AGM of Cumberland Council is this Wednesday 15 May in Carlisle, and it is a huge honour to represent Dean Parish and Cumberland – but of course I never assume anything as until the AGM I am merely a candidate!

The 217 bus route – a tender has gone out for an operator and we await the result and it's all being done as quickly as possible with the aim of having the service reinstated by July.

Lakes to Sea Community Panel – there was a lot of interest and subsequent applications from people who are keen to join us as independent members, co-opted to the Community Panel. We interviewed six people, and we can choose to appoint up to three people. Having independent members alongside should, we expect, really help us in developing our strategy and delivery for community involvement and investment over the next two years.

Solar Farm – My meeting with the developers has proved difficult to schedule but we now have a date of the afternoon of 22 May. It was incredibly helpful to see the impressive joint report with Distington and I will report back once I've had my meeting.

### **7/24 Open Forum**

One member of the public reported that Fibrus had erected a number of telegraph poles in Lamplugh Parish without any notification being given to Lamplugh Parish Council. There was some discussion of planning conditions around the erection of telegraph poles and it was felt that there ought to be some notice before poles were put up, including some kind of nominal notification to the relevant Parish Council. Mr. Chittenden and Mr. Agnew observed that there was already a new pole in Dean. Mr. Hayman recounted an encounter with Fibrus personnel two months or so ago in which they had informed him that they would be erecting poles on land alongside the River Marron. Mr. Hayman had explained that the land in question belonged to him and was a SSSI, as a result, Fibrus was now looking at siting the poles in the grass verges. Mr. Chittenden reported that he had written to Fibrus two or three weeks ago about road closures in the villages. It was understood that Cumberland Council has only one clerk working on road closure applications so they all get a positive response.

It was further noted that Cllr Haslam is looking at the superfast broadband supply to local villages but it would probably be a year or two before this comes to fruition.

Mr. Agnew reported that Ullock British Legion had offered to donate four metal soldiers to the Parish Council. He asked if two could be placed in Dean, one in Ullock and one in Branthwaite. It was felt that Ullock and Dean Churches may be prepared to display them on their land, in which case it would be a matter for the Parochial Church Councils. It was agreed that the matter be placed on the Agenda for the Parish Council meeting in July, to allow councillors to give some thought to the most appropriate sites.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Signed as a true and correct record.....

Date.....