

BRIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Brigham Parish 2023

1. Chairpersons' report

Chairperson Light thanked the Councillors for all their hard work over the past year and summarised their actions.

2. Clerks report

Clerk Holliday agreed with Chairperson Lights report and confirmed it had been another busy year with lots of issues being dealt with.

3. Working parties and sub-committee's report

Planning/Flooding

The Swales at Butterfields continue to work well and are maturing in fauna and, since the outlet from the St. Bridget's estate pond is clear, The Cut seems to be working too. Currently, the water in the Holiday Park side (west) of the Quarry is very low and it may be that the water has found a new route towards The Cut. We've made no new efforts with Cumbria CC over the water from High Rigg draining into the East Quarry via the pipes opposite the old Shop but this remains an issue and could be taken up with the new Cumberland Council Authority which has come into effect in 2023.

The water running down Hotchberry Road has been reduced by the input of larger gullies, but the maintenance remains in hand through the actions of one resident whose house is on High Brigham and vulnerable to large-scale surface flows. Similarly, we're waiting for Cumberland's action on the large tree off the bottom of Gratone's garden which seems to sit on no man's land, but the residents have cleared the blockage from the pipe egressing into Spout Trough and the local flooding has alleviated.

Planning Applications have mostly been minor – with support offered at Mancroft Cottages and Hotchberry Road. We are powerless at Scales Farm because Allerdale rode roughshod over their own policies (and recorded that in their own officers' report) and yet still granted permissions to aid development of a new hamlet in the countryside between Brigham and Cockermouth. The main surprise though, was the granting of permission, despite two previous Government Inspector refusals of a single dwelling, unrelated to the settlement or its boundary, in Field 0005 behind Ellerbeck Brow. This has been hugely disappointing given the material planning arguments we put forward and the support we had from the Planning Inspectorate. It was suggested it might have been a last action to clear the backlog of applications by Allerdale before Cumberland was formed but even if this was untrue, it was a shock. Local residents, some still suffering with an illegal spite fence erected by the applicant (reported to Allerdale and not acted upon), are similarly infuriated.

We have made no progress with Cumbria (now Cumberland) over the continued flouting by traffic of the Old Greysouthen Road cul-de-sac which has been opened for traffic illegally. This has run on for over 18 months but they remain unconcerned.

The Built Environment

The Quarry is in new ownership with CW Civils (Penrith) and wall repairs have been made but the intended use of the Quarry remains unknown. The trees around the Memorial Hall and those backing onto

Cockermouth Lonning have been complained about by the Hall Committee and residents, but action is promised but undelivered.

Grit Bins are still not delivered to St. Bridget's estate as it's officially unadopted from Genesis by Cumberland.

Hotchberry Road has also seen a few long lorries not being able to turn into the village as Sat' Nav' misdirects them along unsuitable roads to a tight junction. We have reported these, along with residents, and, as yet no Highways action has resulted although we're aware, after repeated damage to householder's wall, that CCC are looking at what might be done with signage in Eaglesfield, and a formal job has been raised for them to look at it.

We have tried to consult with the believed chair of the Broughton Cross Recreation Field Trustees to get the Charity up and running again in the near future and there is interest from Broughton Cross, but the committee needs to be formally dissolved before it can re-form. Trustees have indicated that they're wanting to resign but emailing may not be sufficient – a formal meeting may be needed.

The A66 roundabout is not now necessarily coming but is in the 5-years spending plan for Highways – we remain supportive of our MP and Cumberland Councillor's efforts on this.

We have begun use of the speed awareness monitor and display sign at Tollbar Rise but there are calls from the community to put it at Ellerbeck Brow and along the Low Road between St. Bridget's estate and School Brow where the new 60 mph section has been replaced by a 30mph limit.

The Jet Patcher (road repairer) seems to be a very poor solution and the potholes return, worse, in most cases in about 12 months. The condition of the roads is poor, and Cumbria seem to rely on residents reporting holes and then only patching what's reported without looking at the wider picture across the roads; it's short-sighted in our view but, again, we're powerless to influence County-policy.

Communication

We have used our own Facebook pages to inform the community of local, short-term, issues, e.g., road works and also events in the Parish e.g., the Big Lunch for the Coronation but the response is mixed. We followed national guidance for displaying the late Queen's portrait following her death in 2022.

Our minute books have started to be digitised and two are now on the website.

The flier remains popular and only two households have decided not to want to receive it. We print around 550 copies to reach each household and business. We have had 4 complaints over 51 issues. This year we were grateful for 6 households offering to bolster our core 6 deliverers and so the rounds have reduced in numbers making them more manageable. There was one dog bite incident in delivering it. Parishioners asked for more well-being articles, and we've been responding to that. We have focussed, among other things, on the nature recovery and climate action plan this year – including a land survey.

The Emergency Plan is being updated and a Cascade Plan for communication has been drafted. This includes a procedure to follow for safe operation of the newly installed Solar Panels on the Memorial Hall, which is our place of refuge. The Panels were installed via a GDF Grant and are generating the electricity needs of the Hall in the Spring of 2023 with two batteries in the system.

The Christmas Lights Competition was, as ever, popular in 2022.

We have supported the Brigham 10k running road race again with help and a litter pick. It continues to be organised by the school as it raises money for them.

Our email traffic remains high and our Clerk deals with many issues through her role as Clerk and as parishioner and with the experience as a former Chair of the Parish Council. There is currently an amicable review of her salary ongoing.

The meetings on the 16th of May 2023 will be the 111th assembly meeting of the parish, the 128th AGM of the parish council and the 709th parish council meeting.

We are benefitting from having representation on the CALC committee through our deputy Chair.

An informal catch-up meeting, un-recorded, of the councillors able to attend on a weekday, has been happening (for 'presence' as well) at the monthly Book & Brew event at the Hall. This helps promote delivery of actions and allows some consideration of strategy.

Finance

We remain in the black and after having taken the 2022 opportunity to increase our precept to around £11,000 due to the new houses at Butterfields and St Bridget's without increasing the percentage contribution per household at anywhere near the current rate of inflation, we have made another below-inflation increase again for 2023. This is so we can support Parish improvements, for example, the children's play park with new swings.

4. County Councillor report

Cllr Kennon sent his final report to the Council. There was no further information applicable to our Parish.

5. District Councillor's report

Cllrs Farebrother and Cockburn sent their final reports to the Council. There was no further information applicable to our Parish.

6. Members of the public invited to speak

None

7. Members of the Council invited to speak

No further comments

8. Broughton Cross Recreational Area Annual General Meeting

There were no attendees.

Clerk Holliday informed the Council that two Trustees had given their apologies and asked that their resignation letters were read out at the meeting.

Cllr Myers and Simcox discussed that the Chairperson had given the official documents to a resident of Broughton Cross and that plans were in place for a new Chairperson.

Clerk Holliday to document the information discussed at the meeting

9. Date of next meeting: 21st May 2024