

Arnside Parish Assembly 7th April 2022

Minutes: of the Annual Parish Assembly for the Civil Parish of Arnside held in the WI Hall Orchard Rd, Arnside at 7pm on Thursday 7th April 2022.

Present: Chair, Cllr Peter Smillie, Arnside Parish Council Clerk, Michelle Thear, 30 members of the public including Parish Councillors, Mike Mann, Clive Christensen, Keith Halford, Steve Porter, Rebecca Kennington, Neil Punnett, Parish/District Councillor Helen Chaffey, County/District Councillor Rupert Audland, County/District Councillor Pete McSweeney and guest speakers, Ann Kitchen, and Dougie Watson AONB.

- 1. Welcome and Introduction:** The Chair thanked all for attending, introduced the speakers and acknowledged that due to the pandemic it was the first meeting since 2019.
- 2. Apologies for absence:** None
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Annual Parish Meeting:** The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the WI Hall, Orchard Road, Arnside on Thursday 19th April 2019 were circulated, approved and signed by the Chair.
- 4. Annual Report of the Parish Council:** Cllr Peter Smillie, Chairman of Arnside Parish Council, opened the meeting by thanking Brenda Brockbank for the refreshments and the Clerk for organising the event and to Ann Kitchen and Dougie Watts for kindly attending to present at the meeting. Simon Worrell was recognised for setting up the amazingly successful Arnside volunteer group and who did so much to help the vulnerable and the shielding during lockdown. Also, the Albion for providing hot meals for the volunteers to deliver and to the shops for organising grocery deliveries for those in need. Cllr Smillie continued by thanking the Parish Councillors for their work before presenting a summary of council activity and achievements over the last year including the following:
 - a)** Successfully getting the Traffic Regulation Order to stop camper vans and caravans parking overnight on the promenade between the hours of 9 pm and 8 am this has been generally very popular.
 - b)** The refurbishment of the public toilets and conversion to contactless payment which has resulted in a big drop in vandalism and also has ended the petty theft of the entrance money. Cllr Smillie thanked Cllr Mann for all his hard work. Cllr Mann also negotiated a new contract for the maintenance and cleaning of the toilets which has saved the council taxpayers significant money. The toilets are now self-financing and no longer need taxpayers money to keep them open.
 - c)** Many thanks to Councillor Clive Christensen for the refurbishment work on the railings between the water memorial fountain and the pier. Cllr Christensen has also organised the new handrail on the seawall near Ash Meadow, overseen the repair of the post at the end of the Pier and also arranged for the garage door to be replaced on the garage on the playing fields.
 - d)** Another thank you to counsellors Steve Porter and Helen Chaffey for taking the lead on the collaborative project of rewilding the verge near the level Crossing and planting the hedge at the recycling point. This project would not have happened if it were not for the input by Paul Barnes, providing both labour and plants, and also the advice and help of Dougie from the AONB. This collaborative group are now looking at two potential future projects to assess their

feasibility. These are the verge on Sandside road and Beechwood, both of which would benefit from rewilding.

- e) Storm Arwen caused catastrophic damage when 4 very large pine trees came down damaging Mitjorn and the parkland at Beachwood. A further eight smaller trees came down at the cemetery resulting in associated wall damage. Following the fifth tree falling at Beachwood during a subsequent storm the council collectively decided to apply for the removal of the tree protection order on tree 545 which the council considered was in danger of injuring people in the neighbouring houses or damaging property. The council are very pleased to report that the permission has recently been granted. The tree can now be removed and so will crack on and allow for the replanting of the area with smaller native trees.
- f) The 18% rise in the parish council element of the council tax bills is directly linked to this storm damage. It was unfortunately necessary to increase beyond inflation to cover some of the cost of the clean-up post storms. It will cover some of the known cost of this clear up, but the final cost will be much greater.
- g) The most recent project is thanks to two of our newest councillors, Neil Punnet and Rebecca Kennington. With collaboration from many of the other councillors they have produced the first edition of the Arnside Parish Council newsletter. The newsletter is available on the Parish Council website but also in hardcopy at Londis the Topshop and Arnside chippy. The plan is to publish this twice yearly with one edition in late March or early April and the second edition in late September or early October with the possibility of extra issues for any major news.

The chair also recognised the amazing job the Arnside Voluntary Group had done to help pull the community together and keep the village going throughout lockdown.

Comments were taken from the public concerning insurance claims for the devastation caused by storm Arwen, and the cost of producing the newsletter.

- 5. **Statement on the Parish Council Accounts:** The Chair presented a provisional statement by the RFO on the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022. Full accounts will be published on the web site and available for public viewing in June.
- 6. **County and District Report from Councillor Pete McSweeney:** Councillor McSweeney outlined the structural changes to be expected following the Government decision that Cumbria is to be a Unitary Authority. Council elections are to be held on 5th May 2022 and the number of council seats for the Kent Estuary Ward is being reduced from four to two. From May 17th 2022 a new shadow council will start to be built and this shadow authority will work alongside the existing authorities for ten months until 31st March 2023 when the old council will cease to exist. A new CEO and new senior officers will be appointed from May 17th 2022. There will be public meetings and forums during the ten months providing the opportunity for consultations as currently happens.
- 7. Comments and questions from the public covered the following matters; where will the CCC Head Office be based and whether the fire service will be split, both of which are still to be decided

8. Speakers from local organisations: - brief presentations were given by representatives of local organisations as follows;

- **Ann Kitchen** – Ann Kitchen was inspirational talking about the Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company (BCCIC). The Bittern school sustainability programme has focussed on involving school children and educating the next generation on a variety of sustainability issues. Projects have included fuel poverty, avoiding energy waste, reducing our carbon footprint, using LED lighting in schools, forest school visits, school swap shops for uniforms and moving away from a disposable society.
- **Dougie Watson** – Dougie was brilliant in bringing to life what the AONB do, including their involvement in the wild flower verge project, explaining how sites were selected and baselined right through to the collection, harvesting, drying and sowing of the seed. Volunteers play a key part of the work the AONB do, working on projects such as Beachwood Park, woodland management, Dobshall woods, wildflower verges, and being involved in the general upkeep of the village eg, litter picks. Arnside hosted the Annual Westmoreland Hedge Laying Competition in 2021 with 18 participants entering on the day helping to keep this heritage skill alive.

9. Matters raised by the public:

- Sluice gates regularly blocking up with silt
- Pot holes
- Access to the bridlepath from the playing fields
- 20 mph sign in dip on Red Hills Road
- Problems with Black Dyke Road flooding
- The implementation of CCCs road improvement scheme in relation to the S bend
- Parking space designations on Red Hills Road

10. Close. There being no further matters or questions the meeting closed at 8:30 pm