# Underskiddaw Parish Council Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of Underskiddaw Parish Council held in a virtual meeting room on Tuesday 23rd March 2021

**Present:** Jim Wilson (in the Chair), Jan Boniface, Ian Hall, Dave Lake, Tony Gibbs

**In Attendance:** Becx Carter (Clerk), 4 members of the public, John Hayes (Village Hall Committee),

**Apologies**: David Horsburgh (Work Commitments)

With 5 councillors present the meeting was quorate.

# 12/21 Apologies for absence

**Resolved** that apologies and reasons for absence were received and accepted from the above-mentioned persons

# 13/21 Request for Dispensations & Declarations of Interest

None received

# 14/21 Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on the 19th January 2021

All members had received a copy of the minutes to read.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th January 2021 were confirmed as a true & accurate record, the Chair was authorised to sign the minutes.

**Action: Clerk to upload the minutes to the website.**

# 15/21 Public Participation

In compliance with the Underskiddaw Parish Council Revision to Standing Orders to allow for Digital Meetings S.5.6 the Council will only receive written questions under this section of the agenda. Two such questions have been raised for Councillor consideration:

**Q1**: Will the Parish Council commit to applying continuing pressure to CCC Highways Department until the dangerous water leak on Applethwaite Bridge first reported to them by a member of the public on 22nd March 2020 is repaired, and keeping residents informed about progress?

**A**: The Clerk confirmed that she had raised this matter with the CCC Highways Information Management System which is the only mechanism that Parish Councils (and members of the public) have for reporting highways faults.

The Clerk will chase this report up after 4 weeks if no response has been received.

Cllr J Wilson as Chair of Underskiddaw Parish Council noted that in the experience of the Parish Council the more reports that are made to the Cumbria County Council Highways Information Management System the greater the likelihood there is of action being taken.

**Action: Clerk to continue to put pressure on Cumbria County Council regarding this matter.**

**Action: Clerk to circulate details of the Cumbria County Council Highways Information Management System with the Underskiddaw Parish Council distribution list and encourage all parishoners to report problems on the Highway even if they have already been reported.**

**Action: Clerk to raise this with C/CC A Bowness.**

**Q2:** Please explain the 9.3% increase in Council Tax for Underskiddaw Parish for 21/22

**A:** The Clerk noted to all councillors that a number of very similarly worded queries had been received over a period of about 10 days.

At the request of the Chair the Clerk provided the below response to the query (this has also been circulated on the 22nd March 2021 to the entire Underskiddaw Parish Council mailing list and a copy has been passed to the editor of the Underskiddaw Insider and it has been requested that the below information is included in the forthcoming edition of the Underskiddaw Insider).

1) Parish Council Reserve- As per S.5.32 Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioners Guide 2020 which supports the statutory audit process that all Parish Councils must go through:

*'General Reserve-The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authorities General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months Net Revenue Expenditure...*

*The reason for the wide range (3 to 12months) is to cater for the large variation in sizes of individual authorities. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12months Net Revenue Expenditure.'*

For information a larger authority is classed as one with an NRE in excess of £200,000. Underskiddaw Parish Council is at the very opposite end of the scale and therefore should as good practice have 12months NRE as reserve.  So, for the financial year that is currently just coming to end this figure should be approximately £6,727. To have an insufficient reserve would be a red flag for the internal auditor, and this could result in the Parish Council being required to undergo a full external audit process at a minimum cost of circa £250 (plus additional staff time).

Based on the expenditure that will be accrued at today’s meeting the actual figure will be in the region of £9,300.

There is also pending expenditure of circa £1000-£1300 for the replacement of the cast iron 'Applethwaite' Finger on the Applethwaite Fingerpost that is currently in the process of being replaced.

Please note the Fingerpost itself is being replaced by the insurance company of the driver who hit it and destroyed it last year, however the Applethwaite Finger had been destroyed some months before this with no liable party located or identified. The Parish Council resolved to incur this expenditure to preserve this piece of local heritage.

So the end of year reserve will be approximately £8,000. So slightly higher than a year reserve but not significantly.

2) The rise of precept for Underskiddaw Parish Council was approved at the January 2021 meeting of the Underskiddaw Parish Council. All Parish Councils submit their precept demands to the precepting authority (Allerdale Borough Council) in monetary terms, the % alteration is a calculation that the Clerk provides as councillors often find that information to be beneficial.

For Underskiddaw Parish Council the actual amounts are:

-Precept for 20/21- £6,727

-Precept for 21/22- £7,063

A difference of £336 across the whole parish.

This equates to approximately £4.16 per annum extra on the average Band D Property, (or 8p per week).

In terms of the difference between the 5% and 9% on your invoice received from ABC the Council Tax Base figures alter on a month by month basis depending on how many properties are on the Full Council Tax Register at the point of the Council Tax Demand being issued (and how many are on council tax relief/reduced council tax rates for whatever reason).   So for the 21/22 council tax year Allerdale Borough Council have confirmed that the number of band D equivalent properties in the Underskiddaw Area was 4% lower than the tax base for 20/21. This is NOT something that the Parish Council have any control over.

Below is a copy of the calculation from Allerdale Borough Council for Underskiddaw Parish Council.



For further information on the calculation of the Council Tax Base you can refer to the Allerdale Borough Council Calculation of Council Tax Base Report for 2021/22 that was approved by the Allerdale Borough Council at their 27th January 2021.  *(Avaliable from the Clerk on request)*

Also there is a detailed Calculation of tax base for Underskiddaw Parish for 21/22 which is a supporting document to the aforementioned Allerdale Borough Council, Council Tax Base Report. *(Available from the Clerk on request)*

3) Rise of precept of other authorities, the Cumbria County Council rise for the 21/22 year is 3.9% (made up of a 2% precept rise and 1.99% additional rise for adult social care).

The CCC increase on a Band D property works out as approximately £28.67 per annum on a Band D Property or 0.55p per week.  Approved at the full Cumbria County Council meeting held on the 18th February 2021.

4) Justification for increase.  The Parish Council continues to move towards being a revenue neutral council (to cover all its ongoing revenue and expected costs through its income generated via precept, to protect and preserve the required reserve amount).

Additionally the costs of Parish Maintenance has been increased due to the ongoing need for Parish Councils to take on more responsibility for this type of activity as CCC reduce the amount of works they are doing down to the statutory minimum.

Further there is an expectation/realisation that there may well be increased administration and potentially work as the County moves through the Unitary Authority Process.

**Q3-** Does Andrew Wilson have a programme of works? A recent working group undertook some works and the group want to ensure that they don’t overlap on the works of the contractor.

1. He does have a schedule of works and it doesn’t include all drains.

Cllr J Wilson noted that he going to do a walk around the Parish with Mr Wilson to define more narrowly the areas of responsibility. Cllr T Gibbs noted that the drain approximately 100m west of Applethwaite Bridge needs to be kept flowing freely to prevent flooding of a residential dwelling.

**Action: Cllr J Wilson to note this Andrew Wilson during his work around.**

**Action: Clerk to publicise the area of works for the parish maintenance contractor to the distribution list for information and to reflect that all requests for work come through the Parish Clerk.**

It was noted that it would be useful to have a map of all drains/gullies and culverts so they could be monitored.

The Clerk confirmed that these maps have only been produced by volunteers in individual parishes.

**Action: Clerk to ask CCC again to confirm if there is such a map.**

# 16/21 Update from other bodies

None present

# 17/21 Clerks Report

**Resolved** by all present that the Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting be noted as received.

## MP Mark Jenkinson Planning Reforms Presentation

The Clerk notified all present that an email had been received from MP Mark Jenkinson offering the opportunity for him to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss planning reform, in particular to discuss the opportunities that new reform will present to Parish Councils with regard to design & infrastructure.

**Resolved** by all present that the Parish Council don’t feel that such a presentation is required at this stage, but maybe more prudent after the outcomes of the recent consultation on planning reform is known.

## Underskiddaw Insider

It was noted that articles in this electronic newsletter distributed to many residents make reference to the Parish Council.

**Resolved** by all present that after each Underskiddaw Parish Council meeting the Clerk & the Chair send a brief report to the editor of this newsletter for inclusion. This will ensure that the information contained within this publication is accurate.

**Action: Cllr J Wilson & the Clerk to produce these reports within 1 week of each Underskiddaw Parish Council meeting.**

**Action: Cllr J Wilson & Clerk to provide a report on months even when there are not Parish Council meetings informing residents of when the next Parish Council meeting is.**

## Sustainability Charge

Mr T Lywood had asked that an agenda item be formed to canvas the initial feelings of Underskiddaw Parish Council relating to the trial of Lake District Wide ‘Sustainability Charge’ which would charge visitors for entering the Lake District (but not locals). The funding raised would be used to make the Lake District more sustainable as a visitor destination.

**Resolved** by all present that in principle this appears to be a good idea, but the administration and costs of it maybe very challenging but the Parish Council would be interested to hear further.

It was noted that Venice has a bed night charge and this might be a simpler way of administrating this rather than physical gateways to the Lake District.

## Local Government Reorganisation Consultation

The Clerk had circulated the consultation documents to all councillors prior to the meeting, and encouraged all councillors to submit a personal response, and make parishoners aware of the consultation.

Cllr I Hall proposed that Underskiddaw Parish Council support the North South proposal, seconded by Cllr J Boniface all present in favour.

**Resolved** by all present that Underskiddaw Parish Council support the North South Proposal

**Action: Clerk to submit these comments.**

## Allerdale Climate Change Action Plan

The document has been circulated to all councilors in advance of the meeting.

**Resolved** by all present that Underskiddaw Parish Council fully support this plan

**Action: Clerk to submit this letter of support.**

## Underskiddaw Grass Cutting/Parish Maintenance

It was noted that there have been some recent issues regarding the issuing of directions for work to the Underskiddaw Parish Council Parish Maintenance Contractor, and the excessive cutting back that has been done of hedges as part of this.

**Resolved** by all present that the only directions for work for the contractor should be issued by Underskiddaw Parish Council either via Cllr J Wilson or via the Clerk. Any requests for other works should be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration. Where works impact on a specific property or properties then landowner consent should be sought.

**Action: Clerk to write to the Parish Maintenance/Grass Cutting Contractor to confirm that ALL directions for work will be issued via Cllr J Wilson or the Clerk, and to confirm the standard areas for work.**

**Action: Clerk to include in the forthcoming Underskiddaw Insider article that all requests for Parish Maintenance to be submitted in writing to the Parish Council.**

# 18/21 Finance & Accounts

## To receive note of the Bank Balances

**Resolved** by all present that the bank balance be noted as:

Current Account £10,590.57 at 4th March 2021

**Action: Clerk to evidence to the Bank Statement to Cllr J Wilson.**

## Invoices for approval

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **To** | **For** | **Amount** |
| Becx Carter | Salary Qtr 4 (Via SO) | £441.72 |
| HMRC | PAYE  | £110.40 |
| Andrew Wilson | Parish Maintenance Nov-March | £729.11 |

**Resolved** by all present that these invoices be paid.

**Action: Clerk to upload the invoices to the Bank Account and seek authorization from Cllr’s Wilson & Boniface**

## Approval & Signing of Bank Reconciliation

**Resolved** by all present that this be noted as a true and accurate record.

# 19/21 Lake District National Park Authority

## Decisions

**Resolved** by all present that the below decisions be noted as received:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref** | **Location** | **Proposal** | **Decision** |
| 7/2020/2307 | High Gale, Applethwaite, Keswick | Replacement Dwelling | Approved with conditions  |
| 7/2021/2036 | Lonscale Farm, Threlkeld, Keswick | Roof over sheep pens | Prior approval not required  |
| 7/2019/2305 | Keswick Garden Centre, Underskiddaw | Demolition of existing garden centre buildings; erection of 11 new dwellings and conversion of holiday let to dwelling units in total (6 affordable, 6 local occupancy) | Approved with conditions |
| 7/2021/2004 | Crosthwaite Conference Centre | Operation of temporary self catering campsite for 3 weeks in conjunction with Keswick Convention 2021 | Approved with conditions  |

## Planning Applications for Consideration

**Ref: 7/2021/2072**

Location: Field View, Applethwaite, Keswick

Proposal: Amendment to Condition 2 (plans) to planning application 7/2019/2051 (single storey extension to the rear, creation of porch, Juliette balcony, and marginal increase in ridge & eaves height)- Gable to reconstructed using natural stone facing and change to the size and position of the roof lights.

It was noted that when works were commenced on this property there was some serious issues that require additional works and this planning application is to regularize this, and to finish the building in natural stone which is in keeping with the surrounding vernacular.

**Resolved** by all present that the Parish Council fully support this proposal

**Action: Clerk to submit these comments to the LDNPA.**

# 20/21 Members Reports

Village Hall- The Allerdale Borough Council and Police & Crime Commissioner elections will take place on the 6th May 2021 in the Village Hall.

All present thanked John Hayes for regularly attending the meeting.

# 21/21 Dates of next meeting

The Clerk informed all present that despite the ongoing lobbying of Clerks, CALC & NALC as it stands at the moment the legislation that allows for Parish Councils to meet virtually will expire in early May. However it may still not be legally possible to meet physical given the Covid 19 laws.

**Action: Clerk to keep councilors informed regarding this matter, and to confirm if an Annual Parish Meeting is (or is not) a requirement for 2021.**

**Resolved** that the meeting dates for 2021 be set as:

25th May 2021 14:00- Venue TBC

27th July 2021 14:00- Venue TBC

28th September 2021 14:00- Venue TBC

30th November 2021 14:00- Venue TBC

25th January 2022 14:00- Venue TBC

Signed……………………………………………………………………………. (Dated) ………………………….

Meeting Closed 14:45