

STAINTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 25 March 2024 in Stainton Institute at 7:00pm

(Held in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972)

Present: Councillors Julie Knowles (Chair), John Stott, Geoff Wilson, Hilary Waterhouse and Ryan Whipp; Westmorland & Furness Cllr. Doug Rathbone; the Clerk and 9 members of the public

1. Apologies were received from Westmorland & Furness Cllr. Jonathan Brook and Linda Fletcher.

2. Minutes: It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. Discussion regarding speeding and speed limits in the village

The Chair summarised the position with regard to the parish not being able to apply for a reduction in the village speed limits to 20 mph. The Clerk confirmed that a request had been made to Westmorland & Furness Council (W&FC) for a reduction from the current 60 mph to 30 mph as that was the deemed necessary first step. A discussion followed regarding the speeding taking place and the way forward.

4. Chair's Report

Cllr. Julie Knowles presented her report with regard to the activities of the Parish Council during 2023/24. She thanked everyone who had supported her throughout the year including her husband, the Clerk, the Vice-Chair, the other parish councillors and the two W&FC councillors. She then listed the numerous success stories that had been achieved in the years that she has been a councillor and then Chair, which included the two stone bus shelters, registration of and improvements at Underhelm Wood, relieving flooding in several areas, the road safety mirror at Millbridge Lane, new picnic tables and benches, 50mph on the A65 and slow rumble strips outside the school and the vicarage. She also expressed the Council's thanks to her husband for the regular work that he does in mowing verges throughout the parish, any building or rebuilding that might be necessary and the upkeep of Underhelm Wood.

5. Westmorland & Furness Councillors' Report

W&FC Cllr. Doug Rathbone reported on the first year of the new council and listed its priorities for that year, which included the delivery of statutory services; stabilising the finances and continuing prudent capital funding; and setting up locality boards for the three separate areas. He drew attention to the use of HIAMS (Highways Information Asset Management System) by parishioners to report potholes and other road issues.

6. Report from Crosscrake School

The report from Linda Fletcher, the Head of Crosscrake C of E Primary School, was read by the Clerk and is attached to these minutes.

7. Report from Stainton Institute

Geoff Wilson, as chair of the Institute committee, stated that their annual meeting had not yet been held but he subsequently forwarded a copy of his report to that meeting and that is attached to these minutes

8. Public Participation

Attention was drawn to there being numerous occurrences of dog poo not being picked up and poo bags being left in hedgerows.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

**Crosscrake C of E Primary School March 2023-24 Report to St Thomas' PCC,
Sedgwick Parish Council & Stainton Parish Council.**

On 1st March 2023, Crosscrake CE School had an Ofsted inspection (1 day & 2 inspectors). As with all inspections, it was a robust & rigorous process culminating in the judgement that Crosscrake CE 'continues to be a good school'. The report highlights the commitment of staff, governors & parents to ensure children learn & 'thrive in the caring environment'. Our curriculum was commended and the only action point for improvement, was one which we had already identified as school in our school development plan- to ensure children have the key vocabulary to allow them to achieve equally well in all subjects. Whether, this need is a consequence of the pandemic, we can't state for certain; however, we have also implemented an 'Early Talk Boost' project to support language development for our youngest pupils.

The Ofsted report highlighted the quality of the work of our Governing Body – I am truly grateful to have such a dynamic team! The work of Church members in supporting the school through leading collective worship, helping in class, making Christingles, welcoming us to Church for our services is amazing & greatly valued. We also have an incredibly supportive PTFA who arrange a variety of fundraising & social events. Thanks to their generosity, we have been able to install new swing bars in the playground. The local community is an essential part of our identity and we are just beginning an intergenerational project with Kendal Window on Arts & the Canal Trust volunteers- watch out for our exhibition scheduled for the County Show in September 😊

The year has flown by, with all the usual events like the Brewery Arts Dance Platform, Science workshop about the water cycle, Big Questions with Rev Terry, Coronation celebrations, Wildlife Oasis trip, Residential to Coniston, visits by Sedgwick Toddlers group, a visit to St George's Church & the Kendal climbing wall, Lancaster Butterfly House, Chorister day, a visit to the Houses of Parliament, theatre visit to see The Gingerbread Man & a Lego robotics workshop!

Some may wonder where the children find time to learn the 'basics', but rest assured our assessment results are very good! As a School we value & prioritise a broad, vibrant curriculum for all children, which builds the enjoyment and an eagerness to learn.

Sport continues to be important, with all children given the opportunity to take part in both Sport's day & inter-school competitions. The children continue to delight us with their musical performances- especially the recorder players under the expert tuition of Ruth Wilcock.

Courageous advocacy, or giving the children the skills to become agents of change is central to our Church school ethos. We have an active School Council, which is currently working to increase bio-diversity in the school grounds along with reducing single use plastic. I continue to organise the South Lakeland Pupil Parliament for member schools in the Milnthorpe Consortium. Last week they asked Mil Vasic, the new Director of Children's Services, lots of questions & took part in debates, following drama workshops on self-presentation. In School, the older children have worked with powerful materials from Anti-Racist Cumbria, called 'The Fell We Climb'.

September 2023 saw a significant change in school, when we began accepting 2 year-olds into our Nursery. The hard work to re-design the room to include sleeping & changing facilities & also a

major upgrade to the external play area, has been worthwhile! As a school, we now also offer childcare to fill the gaps in local provision.

Reading- basic skills and reading for pleasure-is a high priority. The School continues to commit money to provide intervention for children needing support, high quality reading scheme books and participation in events like Spellbinding, World Book Day & the Library reading challenges which promote a love of reading.

The period of this report ends with another inspection of the School on 6th March 2024- this time SIAMS- the Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools. Until we receive the formal report I am not allowed to share the judgement, but I am allowed to say I was smiling after the verbal feedback! The report will continue the many strengths the inspector saw, along with a few areas for development, which were already on our School Development Plan – a good place to be!

Stainton Institute : Charity 1125601

Chairmans Report Year Ending 31st December 2023

Chairman Geoff Wilson reported that , despite facing many financial challenges throughout the year; including huge rises in energy costs starting in October 2023 into winter months and escalating maintenance costs throughout the whole of the year ;

Stainton Institute made a major leap forward as a “micro business charity” by successfully installing a car parking area in the rear field behind the community building in May 2023.

A long term business plan objective has finally been achieved and as Chairman of Stainton Institute **I am extremely grateful to everyone involved in its fruition.**

Special thanks must go to land owners Mr and Mrs R. Kelly of Stainton for their generosity and continued support , to committee member Sarah Kitching for her liaison skills , to secretary Carol Wilson who has worked relentlessly to secure sufficient grant funding for the project and to Solicitor John Cooke for his knowledge, communication expertise and his patience!

This new development will guarantee extended rear parking for up to 12 cars whenever needed and will eventually link into the existing disabled ramp access via ambulant steps when contractor Lowther & Dawson can confirm a start date and weather conditions allow.

The need for safe *off the road car parking* has frequently been identified by potential hirers of the building as essential for hiring the community building which is situated in the rural Parish of Stainton in South Lakeland and has no access to any public transport.

A mutual legal lease agreement was signed on 1st February 2023 between the land owners of the rear field Mr and Mrs R Kelly of Stainton and Stainton Institute Charity 1125601 ; enabling the release of restricted grant funding for the project and allowing planned work to begin “in earnest.” In May a volunteer working group consisting of committee members , residents of Stainton Parish and contractor Ryan Whipp Ltd prepared the ground, installed a plastic mesh support system and replanted field grass to ensure that the new car parking area retained the look of a natural rural field. **A big thank you to everyone that worked tirelessly together in order to achieve this much needed project**

The committee held 8 meetings throughout the year and the AGM held in March .

Two new committee members Mr Tony Butterfield and Mrs Amanda Butterfield joined us in June (welcome aboard both) The committee organised three successful fund-raising events throughout the year and a Stainton residents festive party on 21st December ; raising £3, 185 towards unrestricted funding.

We purchased 60 very comfortable folding chairs in August which arrived just in time for a seated cheese and wine evening in September and proved very popular especially for those people still remaining seated late in the evening ! A good time was had by all and £1,110 income was raised ; many grateful thanks to everyone for their generosity.

On behalf of the whole committee, I express my gratitude to everyone involved in planning and supporting fund-raising events including the residents of Stainton Parish and nearby Parishes of South Lakeland.

I also applaud the support given again by many local business who provided raffle prizes and vouchers and discounts on goods used ; including E H Booths Milnthorpe, Low Sizergh Barn , The Crooklands Hotel , The Punch Bowl @ Barrows Green and Woodlands Nurseries Crooklands ; especially as many are also coping with escalating business costs due to the current economic recession.

I fully endorse the comments made by Treasurer Charlotte Huck in her financial report saying ;

“ I am very grateful for the generous support we were fortunate to receive during 2023 from our grant and trust funders.”

I am most grateful for the support and encouragement of the Trustees and Committee of Stainton Institute in my role as Chairman throughout 2023 .

As a founder committee member of Stainton Institute Charity : obtained in August in 2008 and as Chairman of Stainton Institute since 2018 ; it has been a long and rewarding personal journey.

I look forward to a less challenging year ahead in 2024 ; hopefully not another winter of discontent, but “yet again” culminating in another solid and profitable financial report from the Treasurer , and above all the continued support and appreciation for this beautifully restored grade two listed building from everyone who steps inside and uses it.

Geoff Wilson : Chairman of Stainton Institute