

GREYSOUTHEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL IN
THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 17th JUNE 2024 AT
7 PM

Action

Present: Jennifer West, Helen Davies, Ewan Roberts
Joan Postlethwaite, Lisa Clark, Andy Proctor, John Howcroft

48/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dawn Watson and Angie Sims

49/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2024 were agreed as a true record – proposed by John Howcroft, seconded by Lisa Clark and unanimously agreed.

50/24 MATTERS ARISING

John Howcroft said he had received a breakdown of costs for the Village Show which he would forward to all Councillors. A decision would be made regarding future funding at the July meeting

51/24 DECLARATION OF INTEREST – none

52/24 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR, ANDREW SEMPLE

Councillor Semple reported on the following:

- Lakes to Sea Community Panel to meet on Wednesday 19th June at Bridgefoot
- Two new members to be co-opted to the panel – Janet Farebrother and Sarah Williamson as non voting members
- Out of budget of £60,000, £44,000 has been pledged.
- Projects under £1500 can be approved by the Chairman and Senior Council officers.

53/24 X4/X5 BUS SERVICE

Councillor Semple reported on the recent meeting held with Tom Waterhouse (Stagecoach) together with representatives from Greysouthen and Little Clifton Parish Councils.

The minutes of the meeting are as below:

The principal reason for calling the meeting was to review the X4/X5 bus service as a particular 'ask' of the Greysouthen Councillor.

Cllr. Semple chaired the meeting.

The Councillor from Greysouthen began by outlining the issue:

The request is for the X4 to come through the three villages (Bridgefoot, Broughton Cross, Low Brigham) to give parity of service with other villages along the route. This would increase revenue for Stagecoach, increase the frequency of service, increase the time for shopping in Cockermouth or Workington due to increased flexibility, and increase the connectivity with other services. In addition: climate change, decreased car usage, allowance for late departures and delays at the A66 Brigham Church junction

In response – Stagecoach / Tom Waterhouse:

There is an issue over reliability. Timetable changes have led to an extra service to make it more reliable, but there is no capacity to divert the X4 through Bridgefoot to Brigham. Additional resources, e.g. Drivers and vehicle availability, lead to additional expense. There is no available subsidy. The A66 junction is very challenging for reliability, but the majority of people who use the service do so from the major hubs at either end, i.e. Workington >>> Cockermouth >>> Keswick >>> Penrith.

Bridgefoot Resident (Regular bus user):

Major issue with the reliability of the X5. It is an hourly service, but there are frequent breakdowns. It is an unreliable service. There is a 'rule' that if the X5 service misses the next X4 would be diverted along the Bridgefoot to Brigham route, but, as the lady described, there are frequent instances of when the drivers are not informed of this change by the Inspector and drivers have been known to refuse the request and also be verbally abusive, though it was pointed out that passengers can be verbally abusive too! The lady did go on to describe a particular instance in detail.

Stagecoach:

The issue of reliability is down to two important factors:

1. Maintaining an aging fleet. The average age of the 280 vehicles is expected to be 8½ years though it is now 10½ years, hence more breakdowns. There was a serious loss of funding from passenger fares in the COVID years. The DfT said it would underwrite the loss, but this was not for capital investment. Stagecoach have received no Local Authority or Govt. funding. They have to operate on a purely commercial basis. Cumbria County Council did not pass on the DfT funding and was the only county not to do so. Only now can Stagecoach start to invest in new vehicles.
2. Sellafield – It takes local skilled labour especially mechanics hence Stagecoach is short-staffed. Every vehicle is serviced, in some way, every 28 days. The labour shortage is an important reason for poor vehicle reliability. They have recently recruited 4 mechanics from Zimbabwe to work at the Lillyhall depot under a Govt. scheme for legal migration (proper title for this needed).

They will also prioritise on frequency in that an hourly service will receive more attention than one which runs more frequently.

The lady from Bridgefoot had details on how the money from HS2 was supposed to be diverted to improving transport services nationally and also of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) – see gov.uk for details. She was basically questioning where this money had gone. In response, it goes to Councils and Cumberland is currently going through tendering. She was, however, most insistent on the operation of the X4/X5 rule, as described previously. The service would be greatly improved if this rule was followed. Mr Waterhouse agreed to follow this up.

Cllr. Semple stated that Cumberland has not yet received the HS2 funding. Stagecoach is in a better place with Cumberland Council but the LA has no idea of national funding for next year and then there is the question of the outcome of the General Election.

I mentioned the fact that people from Broughton are prepared to walk over to Brigham to catch the X5 and, possibly, more would do so if the service was more reliable. I stated that changes to the timetable were known to have caused issue with the connection to Carlisle with the X5 arriving in Cockermouth 2 minutes after the service to Carlisle departs. I also asked the Stagecoach reps if they would be prepared to lobby over the issue of the roundabout. They agreed to lend their support.

Stagecoach Timetable – the hourly X5

There were significant changes to the service in March. Every service now goes to Penrith so more time has been allowed to get to Penrith. No need to change at Keswick. The X5 goes down the west side of Bassenthwaite Lake, the X4 down the east side. If the X4 went through Bridgefoot – Brigham there would need to be an extra vehicle in service which would not be offset by fares. He considered it a very good service when compared to other places (he cited Millom). It is a commercial service – the cost of operation must be covered.

It was finally agreed that poor communication is the crux of the problem and that it is important to ensure that the X4/X5 rule is followed, that passengers are more readily informed of short-term changes to the service, and that the Inspectors in the office at Workington bus station are more 'proactive' with both drivers and passengers.

John Howcroft said this was a good summary of the meeting. He said Stagecoach were not fully prepared for the meeting and in his opinion had already made their minds up to say No to any alterations to the route. John Howcroft had done much more research into timings of the services and reached the conclusion that there would not be any additional costs for Stagecoach. He said Stagecoach

were very negative in their approach.

Action

It was unanimously agreed John Howcroft prepare a response to Stagecoach which would be circulated to members before submission.

John Howcroft

John Howcroft referred to the 217 Bus Service run by Dean Parish Council. The Clerk said, she had previously been the Clerk to Dean Parish Council and the 217 service was funded by three Parish Councils and the cost was quite high to the Parishes and since Hobans lost their PSV licence the contract with Hobans was for a 12 seater minibus which ran each Wednesday and was full on every occasion.

54/24 CLIMATE CHANGE

Andy Proctor gave the following report:

Last week was the Big Green Week (an event led by The Climate Coalition which is group of over 130 organisations — including the National Trust, Women's Institute, Oxfam, and RSPB).

I attended two events, one organised by Cockermouth Rotary and a smaller event in Lorton Village Hall. There were speakers on a range of topics: Composting, Community Food Growing, SLOW cooking as well as large scale items such as Household waste and UK and global policy. I took lots of notes and will use those to promote all the good stuff going on via our Facebook page.

Two items of particular interest was the Cockermouth-CAN group who are newly formed yet have done a lot over the last year. They have also engaged with the farmer community better than we did so will speak with them about that. The Greysouthen group will get involved more closely with them, supporting their activities and sharing news and details of events/initiatives. We may achieve more working with a larger group. It's all part of rejuvenating the Greysouthen climate group - changing the focus and getting more people involved.

The other item which I found really interesting was learning about what goes on with our waste after it is collected. Did you know nothing in Cumbria goes to landfill? For other equally sad people like myself I may try to organise a tour of the MRF (Material Recycling Facility) in Carlisle (Hespin Wood).

Finally, two of us (Adrian and I) are signed up for the Climate Fresk event at Rheged and will report back after that.

Andy Proctor

55/24 GREYSOUTHEN GOSSIP

The Clerk reported the cost of producing 320 copies of the Gossip was £116.67 and these had been delivered to Gwyn Lloyd for distribution.

John Howcroft said the next production was due in late July/early August. John Howcroft to liaise with the Clerk regarding timings as the Clerk was due to go on holiday.

Action
John Howcroft
Clerk

56/24 PLAYING FIELD

The Clerk reported the monthly inspection had thrown up a problem with the ropes on the climbing frame. It was agreed the Clerk contact Mr. Nicholson to ask if he could give an estimate for the work.

Clerk

Ewan Roberts to fix the fence during the summer months.

Ewan Roberts

CALC are running a course for playground inspections in September. John Howcroft agreed to enrol on the course. Clerk to arrange with CALC

Clerk

57/24 ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk reported only one payment was outstanding. It was agreed to write asking for payment or relinquishment of the allotment. The Annual Inspection is to following the end of the meeting.

Clerk

58/24 FINANCIAL ISSUES

The balances were reported as –
Current Account £13189.49
Deposit Account £7607.26

Jennifer West reported on difficulties with bank transfers with the Cumberland Building Society. It was proposed by John Howcroft, seconded by Helen Davies and unanimously agreed the Clerk approach Nat West bank in Workington to make arrangements to open an account with them and to close the account with Cumberland Building Society.

Clerk

The following payments were agreed

Clerks salary – June	£231.20
Tax on salary	£ 57.80
Clerks expenses	£ 31.17
M. Robinson- internal audit	£100.00
Clerk – Gossip printing	£116.67

59/24 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – NONE

60/24 PLANNING DECISIONS

WTPO /2024/0014 – removal of sycamore tree, Wentwood, Greysouthen – approved by Cumberland Council on 20th May 2024.

61/24 CORRESPONDENCE

E-mail from Trustees of the village hall inviting Parish Councillors to attend an event to meet the Harris family with refreshments in the hall followed by a walk round the village on 19th June from 1 -3 pm. Andy Proctor to attend.

Andy Proctor

62/24 BUSES SPEEDING THROUGH VILLAGE

John Howcroft reported school buses speeding through the village. It was agreed the Clerk write to Eaglesfield/Paddle, Cockermouth and Keswick schools asking them to inform the relevant bus companies.

Action

Clerk

It was agreed the Clerk start the process for 20mph throughout the village.

Clerk

63/24 DIVERSION SIGNS

John Howcroft raised the problems caused when diversion signs are not removed following completion of works. Agreed the Clerk write to Cumberland Highways.

Clerk

64/24 LIST OF COUNCILLORS

It was agreed once the new noticeboard is in place the Clerk put a list of Councillors with addresses in the noticeboards.

Clerk

65/24 REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

Ewan Roberts reported on the meeting of the Village Hall – they are looking for funding for improvements and looking to promote increased usage.

66/24 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

15th July 2024 at 7.15 pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting ended 8.40 pm

The members went to Harpers Lane for the Allotment Inspection.

Signed as a true and correct record

Date.....

