

BEETHAM PARISH ASSEMBLY

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 14th March 2024 held at Heron Hall, Storth.

Present were BPC Parish councillors Brian Meakin (Chair), Margaret Knowles and Dave Phelan. Also present were WFC Cllr Rupert Audland, Parish Clerk John Scargill, speaker Lucy Barron (Manager, Arnside & Silverdale AONB) and twelve members of the public.

1. Opening of the Assembly and welcome – Cllrs Meakin welcomed those present.

2. Apologies for absence – received from Beetham Parish Councillor Yates.

3. The minutes of the Annual Assembly, held on 16th March 2023 (previously circulated), were taken as read and authorised for signing by Cllr Meakin.

4. Review of the Parish Council's year 2023/24 by BPC Chair Brian Meakin. Two of the three vacancies on Beetham PC at the start of the year had now been filled; it would be good to fill the last remaining vacancy at an early date and parish residents were asked to consider this as a practical way of helping with the administration of the parish. On 1 April 2023 the newly-formed Westmorland & Furness Council took over the responsibilities of the former South Lakes District Council and is represented at parish council level by WFC Cllrs Audland and Chaffey. Your parish council is keen to accept the invitation to submit a prioritised list of projects to the new authority and suggestions from parishioners would be most welcome. A few modest projects are already recently completed or currently underway, such as protecting vulnerable grass verges from car parking, the installation of a Queen's Jubilee seat on Storth Playing Field and a much-needed traffic mirror at the B5282/Storth Road junction. Traffic speeds in the parish, and particularly on the Beetham parish section of the A6, are of particular concern and everything is being done to have the speed limit here reduced from the present 50mph to 40mph or less. The much-loved Beetham stocks are deteriorating and in need of attention – another possible future project. The high tide flooding of the B5282 at the Storth Road junction remains a serious problem at certain times of the year. The continued closure of the Ship Inn at Sandside is the cause of widespread concern among local residents as is the uncertainty and eventual nature of the nearby proposed major housing etc development.

5. Presentation by Lucy Barron, Arnside & Silverdale ASONB Manager. Lucy started by explaining the reason for the recent change of name of the AONB to 'National Landscape', mainly to improve consistency with other similar areas and public awareness of the organisation generally. She went on to list the many aspects of its work, the extent to which it relied on volunteers and its dependence on local authority etc funding. She explained how fortunate we all were to live in an area with such a wealth of natural features including its scenery, geology, flora and fauna and what a privilege it was for her to have responsibility for protecting and promoting it. Future development may well include a greater presence for National Landscape in the general planning process.

6. Cllr Meakin concluded this formal part of the meeting at 9.00 pm, thanking the speaker and all who had attended and suggested that questions, both to Lucy Barron and to BPC/WFC Councillors, be dealt with over the customary refreshments provided by the parish council.

7. Refreshments were then served as those present mingled and chatted informally.