

Caton-with-Littledale Annual Parish Meeting

**Tuesday 14th May, 2024 at 6.30pm at
The Lune Valley Methodist Hub, Brookhouse.**

Minutes

Present:

2 members of the public, chairman of the parish council, clerk to the parish council, Cllr Boland, Cllr Carter, Cllr Powell, Cllr Wright

1.Apologies for absence.

Cllr Gibbons, Cllr Walmsley (vice chair)

2.Annual report from the chairman of the parish council.

As the Chair of Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council, I am pleased to chair this Annual Parish Meeting.

2023/24 has been a year of real change within the Parish and Council itself. Our Parish Clerk Gill Mason after managing to retain her last year, left for pastures new after 7 years, and I wish to thank her for the time she spent with us. On a positive note, following interviews and selection, we have appointed Laura McGowan to take over this role. Laura is from the village and has already taken a highly proactive approach to her new position.

This last 12 months have seen two major projects moving forward, one near completion and one ongoing.

Firstly, the Greenway. Last year I could report that funding had been gained and work would start in the summer, unfortunately appointing a suitable contractor proved difficult and works were delayed, however with the hard work and steadfastness of Cllr Powell in conjunction with Georgina Peacock, Lancashire County Council and some input from and guidance to Sustrans with the work they were also doing, to help all users of this fantastic amenity, this has moved on leaps and bounds with only some hedge work and seasonal planting of native shrubs and a linear orchard left to do.

The other main focus of our attentions this year has been repair, maintenance and upkeep of the play park. There was an immediate need to replace the old play hut, repair the zip line, install new decking and replace the benches there. We have been building up funds for this, but with the extremely high costs and regular repairs we were fortunate enough to obtain a grant from the L.E.F, and donations from Caton Gala committee, Halton Hydro, The Duchy of Lancaster and B4RN local volunteers fund, along with private donations. We still have a lot to do, which is being planned in

for this next year. For example, cushion- fall and the wooden boundary repairs. Georgina Peacock has given her time voluntarily to help us with this. We also have a crack commando team who regularly help in the weeding and general upkeep of the play park (already tallied up 110 hours between them, medals in the post). Volunteers are always welcome to help keep all our village amenities clean and tidy.

LCC have finally resurfaced part of the Hornby RD car park and white lines have been reinstated.

We have also placed a bench at the bus stop on Caton/Quernmore road junction and replaced some litter bins.

The old oak was removed from the fish stones and the area was stabilised and improved. A replacement sapling grown from an acorn of the old oak has been planted and all the ironwork repaired and refurbished. Thanks go to Ted Curwen for the new sapling and to ex Cllr Ray Elvis and Chris Lennon for this work.

A new SPID (solar powered speed indication device) has been obtained at a greatly reduced cost thanks to a Lancaster business (NHT Ltd) and will be installed following post installations by L.C.C.

At the 2023 meeting, concerns were raised regarding road safety, road condition and footpaths. Working with local residents we now have a spreadsheet of footpaths needing attention and will deal with these in priority order. We hope the new average speed system and our spid will make the A683 safer and we are looking forward to the reviewing of the pedestrian crossings safety in the village by LCC.

We have transformed and updated the village website and have added social media to speed up communication within the parish when needed.

The Emergency plan for our parish and North Quernmore has been revised. We have also made three grants this year. The Victoria Institute, towards its rewiring. The Twinning group so they could host visitors from Socx in April and to St Paul's church for the village burial ground.

We will have a presence at Caton Gala this year, we welcome comments, ideas and suggestions to help our Parish be a better place to live. We look at everything we get and if practicable we will take onboard. I would like to thank Cllr Boland especially for taking, assessing, and running with all the suggestions and ideas that come to us via the Gala.

I would also like to thank Cllr Walmsley as vice chair for all the work she does in front of and behind the scenes and for making me look as knowledgeable as I am!

3.Statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2024.

Finance summary ending 31st March 2024

Carried forward	£88,642
Receipts	
Precept	£35,999.23
Grant LEF	£6,750.00
Donations	£3,900.00
VAT	£1,923.33
Fishing Rights (Poor's Land)	£1,162.73
PROW Grant	£800.00
Admin adjust (training refund)	£235.35
Payments	
Salaries & contractual works	£9706.70
Office/audit/insurance/subscriptions/room hire/ training/Neighbourhood plan/Bank charges	£7,570.60
Equipment Laptop/Phone/SpIDs	£3,829.55
Victoria institute grant	£8,000.00
Village repair/ maintenance / grass cutting/ rates	£11,702.32
Greenway Project	£41,182.14
Grants (Poor's Land)	£2,200.00
Car Park Lease	£1,500.00
To Carry forward	£53,727

Opening balance included funds received 2022/23 for the Greenway project but invoices incurred in 2023/24.

Poor's Land funds transferred to main account with £212.73 balance remaining prior to monies received for fishing rights 2023/24 and 2024/5.

4.Open forum

Cottam's Trust

Suggestion from a resident to recommend approaching the Cottam's Trust for the bench repairs etc in a bus stop as this benefitted the elderly of the village.

Cllr Carter thanked Cottam's trust for contribution to the Victoria Institute.

Greenway

A resident remarked the hedge was too high on the Millenium Pathway to appreciate the view.

The Parish Council confirmed at points the path is lower than the hedge so if it were to be removed that it would not increase the vista due to perspective. Several “windows” had been cut in to the hedges where possible to increase the opportunity of seeing the river and views from the pathway.

Buses

“The buses from the village that go to Lancaster all go to the bus station. This is not at all helpful for anyone with mobility problems at it is some distance from the bus station to the town centre, the railway station and the hospital to name a few important destinations. Changing buses at the bus station makes journeys much more time consuming and too complex for some users. Taking a taxi from the Bus station seems to defeat the object of using public transport somewhat. could the parish council make some representations to the right parties please.

More buses to and from the village would be very useful especially for those living here but working elsewhere.”

Cllr Wright would be attending Lancaster Bus Users Group on Thursday. Members of the public were very vocal in how pleasant Kirkby Lonsdale coach drivers. Perhaps there would be a potential to explore a potential of B4RN and/or the business who manage the windfarm perhaps may support the service as a greener initiative.

A survey was suggested to gauge demand for additional need. An evening service would be beneficial too.

Footpaths

Riverbank footpath closure for 6 months concern.

The Parish Council updated (including original social media post) that the landowner has granted permission to use his land adjacent to the closed footpath so there should be minimal to no impact on residents of the closure and works.

A number of footpaths are covered in grass and have obstructive bollards.

“Access around the village, many pavements particularly in Caton along Lancaster Road, Quernmore Rd and in Brookhouse around Rotten Row, Brookhouse Rd, and Home Lane are non-existent or very narrow and this makes access around the village very difficult for those with buggies, prams and mobility scooters. There are also a number of ginnels which are difficult to negotiate especially where there are bollards

in the entrances. The demographic of the village is elderly and many older people have mobility difficulties, if the parish council is able to improve access around Caton and Brookhouse this would be very helpful”

The Parish Council took the comments on-board but being part of a Natural Landscape (AONB) and design of the village, installation of new footpaths would be difficult in places. Cllr Boland has been assessing the accessibility of the footpaths using the gold standard report and the Parish Council was exploring the removal of non-compliant obstructions.

Distribution of facilities.

“I am very aware that our Parish Council covers Caton, Brookhouse, Caton Green and Littledale, the vast bulk of facilities are based in Caton. Would the parish council be able to consider supporting some extra facilities at least in Brookhouse. Examples might be a play park in Brookhouse and greater use of the methodist hub for parish events perhaps including some Parish Council meetings? The majority of facilities are based in Caton. Would the Parish Council consider some in Brookhouse such as a playpark and to host some of the Parish Council meetings in the village?”

Youth provision for the villages was an item on the agenda for the next meeting. Parish Council meeting locations were to be considered for alternating between Caton & Brookhouse.