

Caton with Littledale Parish Council

Minutes of the parish council meeting held on Tuesday 8th April, 2025 at 7pm at Victoria Institute, Caton

Present Cllr Gibbons, Cllr Powell, Cllr Walmsley, Cllr Wright
City Councillor Peter Jackson, City Councillor Joyce Pritchard

In the absence of the Clerk, Cllr Walmsley minuted the meeting. Cllr Wright chaired the meeting.

53/25 Open Forum

City Councillor Jackson updated councillors on proposals for local government reform, including how they might affect parish councils in Lancaster District.

54/25 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Heywood (Chair), Laura McGowan (Clerk), Cllr Boland, Cllr Carter, Cllr Rei

55/25 To consider and approve the minutes of the meetings held Tuesday 11th March, 2025

It was resolved that minutes be approved and signed by the Chair.

Proposed by Cllr Gibbons

Seconded by Cllr Wright

56/25 To receive declarations of interest and dispensations

Cllr Gibbons declared an interest in any item regarding the Victoria Institute as a trustee.

Cllr Walmsley declared an interest in any item regarding the Victoria Institute as a trustee and any item regarding Caton St Paul's Primary School as Governor.

Cllr Wright declared an interest in any item regarding Caton Primary School as Governor

57/25 To consider planning applications and matters

No planning applications to consider

58/25 Accounts and finance

Payments

2 x Green Bin War Memorial (clerk paid)	£92.00
Arbor Ace (Oak Tree uplift, corner of Copy Lane and Brookhouse Road)	£360.00
Arbor Ace (Greenway work)	£660.00

Regular Payments

Easyweb website hosting (S/O) (Mar)	£36.96
Victoria Institute (Contribution Mar)	£800.00
Victoria Institute (Contribution Apr)	£800.00
Clerks Wages (April)	£621.00
Clerk Expenses (Mar)	£53.00
Bank service charge (Mar)	£6.00

Receipts

JA&Jones (Community Orchard) Overpayment of VAT	£42.40
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Noted that the precept of £39,720.51 was due shortly from Lancaster City Council

Balance at end of March 2025

Co-Op Bank	£34,615.24
Unity Bank	£12,697.87
Total	£47,313.11

It was resolved that the payments be made.

Proposed by Cllr Powell
Seconded by Cllr Gibbons

59/25 To consider the update on the Fell View playpark repair and maintenance.

- Thanks to people from Littledale Hall who had raked the Cushionfall at the play park in time for the Easter Holidays.
- To consider update on the progress of repair – rotten timbers and repair of path. Repairs to path had been carried out. Contractor asked to submit invoice. Contractor had been reminded that LEF funding for work on rotten timbers expired at end of April; no update received.
- Maintenance contract. Clerk reported that Pennine Playgrounds went in to liquidation towards the end of 2024. Alternative suppliers approached but none would commit to the frequency required and just cover playpark inspection of equipment.

60/25 To consider any highways and/or footpath matters.

- To consider footpath review actions. The stile at the A683 end of the footpath from Kirkbeck Close to the main road had been repaired. Cllr Gibbons reported that Lancaster Ramblers would be in the parish later in April to improve footpath signposting, mainly in the eastern part of the parish and along the Lune.
- To consider current status of hedges in the parish. An overgrown hedge was still causing problems for vehicles emerging into Brookhouse Road from Holme Lane. Lancashire County Council had carried out some work on the hedges at the eastern end of the Greenway, which were obstructing the pavement.
- To consider participation in Best Kept Village competition. Decided not to participate this year.

61/25 To consider any parish management and maintenance matters.

- To consider update on Oak Tree Copy Lane restoration

Attempts were made to negotiate a lower fee to cover just a re-point rather than rebuild of the wall. The amount of £500 proposed by Mr Webster did appear to be unrealistic in today's climate. Clerk to update Mr. Webster.

- To consider update on Black Bull Pub closure

The Black Bull is currently advertised for sale as a business and premises for £400,000 freehold.

62/25 To consider any parish management relating to Victoria Institute.

- To consider public convenience opening times and costs. Cllr Walmsley reported that the Victoria Institute trustees had agreed to the opening of the public toilet for longer hours. The advertised opening times would be 7am to 7pm each day, although in practice the toilet would be unlocked by Co-op staff before the shop opens at 7am and locked at 10pm. The Parish Council would organise and pay for cleaning and cover the cost of any damage. The PC would continue to insure the facility. The new opening times would start on 1st May and run for a trial period of 3 months. Cllr Walmsley reported that the Victoria Institute's own cleaners did not have the time to cover the additional work. She had been recommended Graham Garden, who currently cleans the GP surgery in Caton and has previously worked for the Victoria Institute. She had checked the current pay rate for the cleaners at the VI, which is £15 per hour. She had spoken to Mr Gardener, who had agreed to do the work (2 hours a week). Clerk asked to write formally to the Coop to thank them for their help in this. Arrangements and payments accepted. Proposed Cllr Powell, seconded Cllr Gibbons.

63/25 To consider the update and status on the Greenway improvements.

- To consider work completed and in progress/scheduled. Cllr Powell confirmed that the current round of Greenway work had been completed. There would be a need to carry out regular maintenance such as hedge trimming and cutting the "windows" on to the views. Lancashire County Council would continue to provide funds for the PC to hold for work on the Greenway.

64/25 To consider the arrangements for Caton Gala 2025

- The clerk is currently underway writing the Risk Assessment for the event to submit to the Gala committee. Agreed that Cllrs Boland, Powell and Walmsley would prepare display as in previous years. Budget of £100 agreed for printing and other expenses. Clerk asked to ensure that the local PCSOs were aware of the Gala, in the hope that they would attend.

Proposed Cllr Powell, seconded Cllr Gibbons.

65/25 To consider the arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting

Agreed that the meeting would start at 18.30 on Tuesday 13th May at Lune Valley Methodist Hub. Focus for the meeting would be public safety and policing. Clerk asked to contact PCSOs to see if an officer could attend. Councillors asked to brief Chair on matters to include in the annual report.

66/25 To consider the appraisal of clerk including increment increase and development

- On-line based course Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) course
£120 plus VAT

It was resolved that the course fee be paid by the Parish Council.

Clerk's pay rate and hours

It was resolved that the Clerk's weekly hours be increased to 15 a week, and that the scale for the post be increased to point 10 on the NALC scale, with effect from 22 January 2025.

Proposed Cllr Powell

Seconded Cllr Gibbons

67/25 To consider an update on the passive housing development/Lune Valley Community Land Trust

No report

68/25 To consider update on provision for young people of the parish inc. engagement Activities

No report

69/25 To receive items for consideration for a future agenda and Any Other Business

- To consider councillor details on parish website
- To consider .gov.uk email addresses for councillors

Carried over to May meeting

70/25 Date and time of the next parish council meetings.

- Tuesday 13th May, 2025 – LVMH

The meeting closed at 08.30 pm.

Signed **Date.....**