

CULGAITH PARISH COUNCIL

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Fell View
Blencarn, Penrith
Cumbria, CA10 1TX

Minute of the Meeting Held on Monday 3rd March 2025 in Blencarn Village Hall. commencing at 7.30pm

Unapproved.

17/25 Present

Cllrs Caroline Richardson (Chair), Pauline Toppin (Vice Chair), Ken Philipson, Andrew Clay, Sue Smith, David Witney, Ian Stowers, WAF Cllr Michael Hanley and John Fleming (Parish Clerk).

18/25 Apologies

Cllr Nick Mason and WAF Cllr Mary Robinson.

19/25 Minutes

The Chair was unanimously authorized to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 13th January 2025, as a true record.
Proposed by Cllr S Smith and Seconded by Cllr. A Clay

20/25 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

21/25 Public Participation

21.1 Presentation by Alison Smith Hartside First Responders, Deputy Team Leader and Secretary

Alison reminded the meeting that Hartside First Responders had previously held a training session in Culgaith, on what to do in the case of a medical emergency, this included training on the use of a Defibrillator.

Hartside First Responders made enquiries to establish which First Responder team covered Culgaith and, as a consequence, it was found that Culgaith, Skirwith and Kirkland were 'orphans' while Blencarn was covered by the Milburn team.

Following representation being made to the NW Ambulance Service, it has now been confirmed that, since July last year, the Hartside First Responder's area has been extended to 'butt up' to that of Milburn and now includes Culgaith, Skirwith and Kirkland. This doesn't mean, though, that Blencarn isn't covered; in actual fact a First Responder attended a call-out in Blencarn in 2022.

All members of the Hartside First Responders team are liable to be called-out to a suitable incident where it either falls within the geofenced area or occurs within 3 miles of where they are located and sometimes the despatchers look at who is signed on and closest to an incident and call them anyway.

Alison mentioned that the First Responder's team were very thin on the ground and they are always looking for new recruits to be trained up, so that the area is well covered. The speed with which a Responder can arrive on scene can have a direct effect on the outcome for the patient, which is why it is best to have Responders in the same village or close to where you live.

21.2 It was mentioned that a new Defibrillator was soon to be installed in the Otters Holt area and that a Defibrillator training session was planned in the near future. There was also a desire for another training session to be organised in Skirwith; Alison indicated that she would be pleased to arrange for both to happen, at mutually convenient dates. It was confirmed that no charge was made for such training sessions.

The Chair thanked Alison for her very helpful presentation.

**22/25 Westmorland and Furness Council Report
Councillor Michael Hanley**

1. Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee 12.2.25

(a) EV Charger Strategy WAFC has received £3.9 million to instal EV (electric vehicle) chargers (from the Local EV Infrastructure fund). There are now 336 EV chargers in the WAFC area. By 2035 there is expected to be an 80% increase in EVs. By 2030 there will be an additional 1860 and by 2035, 3300. 30% of households have no off-road parking. There are various methods of helping these residents, Kerbocharge (cable under the pavement) being one. This is being trialled by the Council at the moment.

(b) **Community Power:** This is a policy to increase involvement of community groups. Appleby Emergency Response Group was given as an example (we have Alston Moor Emergency Response Group, but the presenter had not heard of this).

2. Health and Wellbeing Board 18.2.25 One of the main focuses of this board is to increase provision in the community to enable elderly patients, stuck in hospital, to be discharged and free up a bed (through “reablement”)

3. WAF Full Council Meeting 27.2.25.

(a) Budget: There was a deficit of £10 million and the Council lost the Rural Services Delivery Grant of £6.3 million (abolished by the government). This deficit was balanced by savings and the Second Homes Premium (doubling of the Council Tax for properties that are second (holiday) homes). The Council Tax was increased by 4.99% (It was pointed out that virtually all Councils have increased their Council Tax by at least 4.99% and some as much as 8.99%).

(b) Parish Councils’ elections will be brought into alignment.

4. Eden Planning Committee 26.2.25 Gas Peaking Plant at Shap: Strong objection from Shap Parish Council and Green Party members from Penrith. It will burn gas for 4-5 hours per day (at peak electricity demand). Operational life: 25 years. According to objector it will release 56,000 tons of CO2 per year, half of the output of Penrith. Chair of committee said he would oppose this and it was decided to postpone judgement until the next meeting to get more information.

23/25 Finance (Incl.Vat)

23.1 The following balances were noted as at: -

22/2/2025

	£
HSBC Account	2353.22
Penrith Building Society	16691.30
NSI Account	24.45
Vat to be claimed	<u>317.58</u>
Total Cash	<u>19386.55</u>

23.2 Presentation of Interim Accounts – 13th January – 22nd February 2025

These accounts were unanimously approved.

Proposer Cllr S Smith,
Seconder Cllr D Witney

23.3 The Following Accounts were Ratified

23.3.1	J Fleming Salary January 25	As per contract
23.3.2	J Fleming Office Provision January 25	20.00
23.3.3	HSBC charges – 15/1/25	5.00
23.3.4	D Tec Penrith – Waste Toner Tank	35.00
23.3.5	Solway Direct – Bench Otters Holt	456.00
23.3.6	Parishioner – Repair of Blencarn Notice Board	11.00
23.3.7	Signscape – Notice Board – Otters Holt	1414.50
23.3.8	‘GCA Webdesign’ – Domain Name – 17/7/26. Hosting 5/1/26	35.60
23.3.9	HSBC charges – 15/2/25	6.20
23.4	To Approve the Following Account for Payment	
	J Fleming Expenses, 13 th January – 3 rd March 2025	14.40
23.5	To Approve 23.3 and 23.4	
	These were unanimously approved	
	Proposer Cllr Ian Stowers	
	Seconder Cllr C Richardson.	
23.6	Receipts	
23.6.1	Vat Refund	165.78
23.6.2	Electricity NW – Wayleave	22.48

24/25 Planning

To Report.

2025/0132/FPA - Garth House Culgaith, Variation of condition 2 (plans compliance) for amendments to the East elevation extension and omission the North elevation extension, attached to approval 21/0845 Supported

2025/0004/HOU, Hudkin House, Skirwith.

Ground mounted solar PV installation Supported with comment

22/0362 – Land Northeast of Culgaith Primary School, Culgaith. - Erection of 5 dwellings including associated operations.

Reported that this application was approved at a recent WAFC Planning meeting, despite Cllr S Smith, clearly stating to the committee, the Parish Council’s strong opposition.

25/25 Otters Holt - Community Land Management Plan

25.1 Installation of a Bench

Reported that the bench had now been installed

25.2 Installation of a Defibrillator

Reported that the installation of the cabinet, on the wall of the electricity sub-station, was imminent. Cllr C Richardson was registering the Defibrillator with the ‘Circuit’ – (This is the national defibrillator network, which provides the NHS ambulance services with vital information about defibrillators across the UK). Once the defibrillator is in place Cllr I Stowers will take responsibility for reporting that the equipment is in order with the ‘Circuit’.

25.3 Defibrillator Training.

25.3.1 Culgaith. It was agreed to arrange an evening training session for, primarily, Culgaith village Parishioner, with **Hartside First Responders**, after Easter, in the Culgaith Victoria Institute. There being no charge for such sessions. This evening would be advertised in the Memo, on the Culgaith Facebook and with a leaflet drop in Otters Holt.

25.3.2 Skirwith. The contact details of the Hartside First Responders would be forwarded to the Skirwith Defibrillator Committee to enable them to organise a training session in Skirwith, should they wish.

25.4 Installation of a Notice Board at Otters Holt. It was reported that a notice board had been ordered and would be mounted on the wall of the Otters Holt, Electricity Sub – Station in the near future.

26/25 Parish Council Website – Retirement of Geoff Anderson.

26.1 It was reported that Geoff Anderson, of 'gca-webdesign', had given notice that he wished to retire from managing the Parish Council Website as from 31st December 2025

26.2 In discussion it was noted that when the current website was initiated, many years ago, it was designed as a village community site; however since then communication options had widened and it was felt that if a new design of website was to be considered, in the future it should be solely a dedicated, Parish Council site.

26.3 In further discussion it was mentioned that the newly established Melmerby Parish Council had engaged, very successfully a company 'Vision ICT' who specialized in Parish Council sites. This site can be viewed on

<http://www.melmerby.org.uk/>

26.4 It was mentioned that a retired website designer, Alex Martin, based in Alston, would be more than pleased to give advice and guidance to the Council to assist in choosing a suitable company to engage with.

26.5 Melmerby Village Hall were using, very satisfactorily, a company called 'Kierweb – Carlisle Web Design.'. This site can be viewed on

<https://www.melmerbyvillagehall.co.uk/>

26.6 The meeting was informed that an estimated, new site set up cost, could be a in the region of £700, with an annual running cost of approximately £130; the latter figure being similar to current costs.

26.7 Action:- It was agreed to further investigate possible website providers with costing, for presentation to the May meeting; the preference being to choose a company that specializes in Parish Council websites.

27/25 'Fibrus' FFTP Overhead Installation – Culgaith.

There was nothing of any consequence to further report on this issue, apart from being aware that some road closures had been requested by Fibrus, apparently to investigate the possible use of existing underground ducting.

28/25 Highways and Land Matters

28.1 Pedestrian Hazard - Black Swan Junction, Culgaith.

An update from Highways, regarding the possible installation of extra signage and enhanced road markings, was awaited.

28.2 Skirwith – Church St. Roadside Concrete Post and Rail Fence Repair. Reported, as previously, that this in hand with Highways and will be actioned when funding is available.

28.3 Drainage issue - The Pea to A6412 Junction

Councilors expressed concern that this flooding issue was creating a traffic hazard and also expressed disappointment that no action had been taken by Highways, in spite of it being reported on a number of occasions.

Action: - To further stress on Highways the need for the problem to be resolved.

28.4 Flooding Skirwith – Between Blencarn Junction and Skirwith

Noted that the drains, at this site, whilst coping with light rain water could not cope in storm conditions.

Action: - To report again to Highway, requesting that the drains be jetted as a matter of urgency.

28.5 Mill Cottage, Blencarn – Drain requiring Jetting

Reported that this work had been attended to.

28.6 Damaged ‘Give Way’ Sign – Blencarn to Skirwith Junction.

Councillors expressed concern that the failure to repair this sign, along with non-existing road markings, at the junction, was creating a traffic hazard.

Action: - To stress on Highways, once again, the need for the problem to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

28.7 Skirwith/Ousby – Damaged Finger Post Sign

Highways had informed the Council that new signage had been ordered and would be erected later in the Spring, when the winter road maintenance issues slackened off.

28.8 Skirwith to Kirkland Road Numerous Potholes.

This issue had been reported to Highways.

28.9 Howrigg/T Junction – Surface Water/Deep Hole in Verge.

Councillors expressed concern that this matter had still not been attended to.

Action: - To report again (forth time) to stress on Highways the need for the problem to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

28.10 Kirkland PCC – Collection Box by Kirkland Hall

It was reported to the meeting that a request had been received from Kirkland PCC, that they position a collection box, in aid of Kirkland Church, by the area where walkers park their cars opposite Kirkland Hall.

The following point was explained to the PCC, that where cars park, by Kirkland Hall, is Village Green and as such a collection box located in this vicinity cannot be construed as a charge associated with a visitor parking their car. That said Blencarn and Kirkland Councillors are sympathetic to an opportunity to raise funds for the Church. As a result, the Parish Council would not have any objection to a donation box being placed alongside the County Council Information Map with a notice stating:-

The Kirkland community welcomes you and trust that you enjoy your visit. You may wish to make a donation towards the upkeep of our church before you leave.

Thank you

Kirkland PCC'

Finally, the Parish Council reserves the right to review its position in the future

29/25 'Place Action Group: Alston and Fellside'

It was reported that the key areas for action, by this group, centred on establishing: -

- A Rural Food Bank; £2000 allocated
- Conducting a Rural Housing Need Assessment; £2000 Allocated
- Setting up Electric Vehicle Community Car Schemes; £2000 Allocated

Further information is available from: - Kate Clement, Community Development Officer – Eden, Voreda House, Portland Place, Penrith, CA11 7BF

Tel. 07919757119

30/25 Cumbria Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Pledge

With there being over 250 Parish Councils in Cumbria, Cumbria Constabulary are, regrettably, unable to attend local Parish Council meetings. To address the issue, it is intended to hold a virtual meeting, twice a year, with Parish Council representatives; each Parish Council being invited to nominate two Councillors to attend.

Action: - Agreed to nominate Cllrs C Richardson and I Stowers to represent Culgaith Parish Council.

Full details of this initiative are on file.

31/25 Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications.

The following item of correspondence was received since the last meeting.

- 31.1 33 E - Mails** had been forwarded to Councillors since the 13th January meeting, these being kept for 1 year.
- 31.2 Tarn Insurance Cover**
A query had been received, from the 'Guardians of the Tarn' committee, requiring confirmation that the Parish Council's insurance covered the Tarn for Public Liability. It was confirmed that the Tarn, as property owned by the Council, was automatically covered.
- 31.3 Skirwith Village Green - East of Eden Planting for Pollinators – Cumbria Wildlife Trust – Survey.**
29.3.1 It was reported that the survey recommendations would be available in late March.
29.3.2 Notification was given that a 'Pollinators Walk' would be organised in the Spring / Early Summer; details would be forthcoming from Charlotte Rankin <Charlotte.Rankin@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk>
- 31.4 20mph Speed Limit – Culgaith Village**
Reported that the Eden Locality Board considered a report at its meeting on 22nd January 2025, where the recommendation was agreed to progress a proposed programme, over the next two years, of implementing, selected 20mph speed limits. It was confirmed that Culgaith was selected as one of the identified schemes to be progressed in 2026/27.
The team will be in touch, closer to the time, to continue their collaboration with Culgaith Parish Council and to arrange an initial engagement meeting, with Parish Council representatives.
Steph Davis-Johnston. Team Leader – Road Safety and Projects
- 31.5 Community Tree and Hedgerow Planting Grant Scheme**
For information it was reported that, under this scheme, the minimum grant allocation is £2000 with a minimum of 50 trees/metres of hedgerow being planted.. The 50 trees minimum can be in combination such as 20 trees and 30 metres of hedge. There had to be public access to the site to be eligible.
Closing date 10th March.
- 31.6 Memo Subscription.** Reported that the subscription for 2024/2025 would be £190. This was unanimously accepted.
- 31.7 United Utilities Water Leak Blencarn – Village Green by 'Long Laites'**
Reported that a new pipe had been installed, to rectify the leak, which had been making this area of the Village Green very wet. United Utilities would be returning to reseed the damaged area, later in the Spring.
- 31.8 Culgaith Notice Board** – Reported to the meeting that the Culgaith 'Men in Sheds' group, had offered to refurbish the Notice Board. This offer was unanimously and gratefully accepted, with the Parish Council offering to cover material costs.
- 31.9 Blencarn Notice Board** – Cllr Andrew Clay, kindly offer to refurbish the Blencarn Notice Board. Again, this offer was unanimously and gratefully accepted, with the Parish Council offering to cover material costs.
- 31.10 Devolution update - Government Consultation Now Live.**
The meeting was informed that the consultation will seek views on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined Authority, for the local government areas of Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness.
The full consultation document can be found on the GOV.UK page <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cumbria-devolution> The cut-off date for the consultation is 11:59pm on 13 April 2025.

Should Parishioners wish to take part and express an opinion -,visit:
<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lqgc/cumbria-devolution-consultation>.

A Mayoral Strategic Authority - or MSA - for Cumbria would be in addition to the two unitary Councils, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness. While the final scope of the powers transferred to the new authority is still being determined, the expectation is that the vast majority of powers will be transferred to the new authority from Central Government. A small number of powers may be transferred from Cumberland Council and Westmorland & Furness Council, to the new authority.

Both unitary authorities have created new devolution webpages which contain some background information and updates. Visit www.cumberland.gov.uk/devolution and www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/devolution

32/25 Councillor Matters.

An opportunity for Councillors to raise issues on behalf of residents.

32.1 Howrigg Pothole - Reported that a severe pothole had emerged, just south of Howrigg Farm.

32.2 Kirkland/Skirwith Road – Reported that the roadside ditch required cleaning out..

32.3 The ‘Pea’ Degrading of Carriageway Edge – Due to defective drain opposite Jink Bank House.

Action: - Agreed to report all the above to Highways.

33/25 Dates and Venues of 2025 Meetings.

All on Mondays at 7.30pm

12th May	Culgaith, Victoria Institute, (Annual Parish Meeting/AGM/May meeting)
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7 th July	Skirwith Village Hall
1 st September	Blencarn Village Hall
3 rd November	Culgaith, Victoria Institute,

The Chair thanked Councillors for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21.15

Signed by Chairman _____ Date _____