



WINDERMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Representing the interests of the communities of Windermere, Bowness and Troutbeck Bridge

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

10th April 2019 at 6.00pm, The Marchesi Centre, Holly Road, Windermere

Minute No	
	<p>Present: Mr John Saunders (Deputy Mayor) in the Chair, Cllrs Leith Hallatsch, Ms Kathleen Atkinson, Ms Sandra Lilley, Mr M Stafford, Mr A Legge, Mrs Christine Hallatsch, Mrs Lisa Greasley, Mrs Magda Khan, Mr Peter Hamilton, Mrs Kate Tripp, Ms Grania Nicholson.</p> <p>Also present: Mrs J Hartley (Town Clerk), District & County Cllrs David Williams, Kevin Holmes, Andrew Jarvis, Dyan Jones (for part of meeting), Ben Berry, Jim Bland. Also 5 members of the public and 2 newly elected councillors who will take their seats in May.</p> <p>The meeting opened at 6.00pm.</p>
	<p>Apologies & Absence: Cllrs Mrs Jennifer Borer & Mr Alan Hands, Adrian Faulkner (Chamber of Trade) and Carol Shaw (Windermere Motor Boat Racing Club).</p>
1.	<p>Welcome from the Mayor Deputy Mayor John Saunders started by welcoming everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11 April 2018 These were adopted as a true and accurate record with one small change made on the body of the signed copy.</p>
3.	<p>Annual Report: 2018-19 Deputy Mayor John Saunders gave a presentation which set out key issues and achievements for the Town Council in the past year. This included: The function and structure of the Council and how discretionary funds are spent. The time input from Councillors, which is significant and often unrecognized. The new planning sub-committee that has been established and why it is now a very important part of Council business. The parking and congestion report which was commissioned and put together by Town council and is having an impact in decisions being made in our area, with the early bird scheme in Broad Street and district council investment in Braithwaite Fold, as well as outline schemes in the National Park's local plan 2020 onwards. The War Memorial gardens look better each year, thanks to Nick our gardener there. It was wonderful to celebrate 20 years of Windermere being twinned with Diessen last year and thanks to Councillors, particularly Leith Hallatsch, the retiring mayor and his wife and fellow councilor, Christine. Also thanks to Cllr Jenny Borer, who has worked tirelessly on this relationship. The Town Council's partnership with the District Council (SLDC) also goes from</p>

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strength to strength, with improvements to Baddeley Clock gardens, Car Parks, the Bowness Bay promenade and Glebe Beach and Cockshott point.

The impact of the work of Bowness & Windermere Forward is now being felt, with markets taking place on the Glebe all through this season and the Millerground project is now realizing its full vision, with pathways and the play area due to be constructed. Altogether £250k of grants have been raised for this lovely area by the volunteer group supported by SLDC and the Town Council.

Windermere in Bloom is the largest single contribution made by the Town Council to the town and last year was an enormous success with more entrants and sponsors than ever. Thanks and gratitude to Cllr Christine Hallatsch, who heads up the organizing committee.

Thanks to all serving Town Councillors for all the volunteer work they put in throughout the year, never letting the community down. Thanks to the District council, its Councillors and officers, without whose support much of this would not happen. And thanks to Gary, the Town Steward, and his monumental dedication to our community.

The Clerk then gave a short explanation of the challenges ahead for this civic year, as outlined in the Annual report. This included:

Continuing to support Windermere in Bloom, the Millerground project and the Bench Project, as together making a real contribution to enhancing the attractiveness of our area.

The Clerk thanked the Town Steward for his excellent work in carrying out local repairs and enhancements in our community. This year, his efforts will continue to be concentrated in Elleray Woods, where a new licence has been obtained from the Forestry Commission authorizing the Town Council to sensitively fell another area of the woods, improving the health of trees and the woodland floor and open new viewpoints.

The transfer of land at Longlands to the Town Council from SLDC will present its challenges and opportunities, in deciding a strategy to use this land to better effect for the local community.

There will be opportunities to take on more local highways work from Cumbria County Council and the Town Council will be looking into how to make this a reality.

There will also be consideration of a potential partnership with Cumbria Police, looking at the possibility of installing CCTV linked to the police control room.

So a busy time ahead, with 15 volunteer and unpaid councillors, one part time clerk and one part time steward. But a lot to look forward to.

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	<p>The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council is in a comfortable financial position and has funds to enable improvements to be made where necessary. For the last financial year (2018/19), expenditure was £113,452 (under budget by £9k) and income £134,559 (over budget by £2k). This means that the Town Council now holds just over £158k in reserves, of which £10k is committed to specific schemes. These accounts are currently being audited and will be available for public inspection from 7th June to 26th July and advertised on the website and noticeboards.</p> <p>Finally, as always, the Clerk thanked the Town Councillors for their hard work and commitment, often unappreciated and misunderstood but without whom Windermere would be a poorer place.</p>
4.	<p>SLDC Community Governance Review:</p> <p>The Clerk introduced the Community Governance Review that is being carried out by SLDC, looking at the viability of parish councils in South Lakeland, ensuring that they adequately reflect community identity. After looking at trends in Windermere over the last few years, SLDC Democratic Services officers have concluded that, in comparison with other similar sized parishes, the number of Councillors (20) is too high and that this has led to a democratic deficit, in that there has not been enough candidates in elections in 8 years now to force a competitive election. The local electorate is due to number 6,346 by 2023 and, using government benchmarks on average parishes and population, this recommends a Council of between 9 and 16 Councillors. This would result in: Applethwaite (3), Bowness North (4), Bowness South (3), Windermere Town (3). A total of 13 Councillors.</p> <p>Town Council is asked to provide a response to this consultation, which has a closing date of Sunday 26th May.</p> <p>The debate was full and considered and resulted in the following response to SLDC: Town Council appreciate the logic of the proposals and share the concern of SLDC about the democratic deficit that could arise. However, reducing the size of the Town Council also impacts on the potential number of volunteers that will work free of charge in our community and take on services and work that is now left vacant by the larger Councils and their cutbacks. The Town Council therefore concludes that its potential size should be left at 20 councillors and that there will be a renewed focus on recruitment of new councillors.</p>

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5.	<p>Representations from the Public:</p> <p>Several members of the public called for better communication from the Town Council and specifically asked that social media be used to more effect. This was accepted and the Clerk will ensure there is better use of social media in the coming civic year. Cllr Greasley asked if some way could be found to recognise the contribution to Windermere of the late Jennifer Jewell, who was a long serving Town Councillor and did much to further the cause of Elleray Woods. It was agreed that the Town Council will erect a plaque on one of the new woodland benches in Elleray Woods. Also, there was representation from Queens Park Bowling Club, who asked for the help of Town Council in raising the problem of access to the green with equipment. The Town Clerk agreed to look into this.</p> <p>Finally, Marion Jones, who is the National Park ranger for the Windermere Area and who had spent the afternoon with Councillors in Elleray Woods, introduced herself and hopes to work closely and positively with the Council in the coming year.</p>
6.	<p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor closed the meeting at 7.35pm, thanked everyone for their attendance and invited those present to partake in refreshments.</p>

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