

Silloth-on-Solway Town Council
Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 7 September 2020 at 7.00pm via video conference

Present:– Cllr. M. Orchard (MO).

Councillors

J. Cook (JC), C. Doran (CD), A. Emmerson (AE), S. Graham (SG),
M. Irving (MI), W. Jefferson (WJ), J. Snaith (JS) & G. Wilkinson (GW).
Also present: Wendy Jameson (Town Clerk) & various members of the public.

	<i>In accordance with The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020 this meeting was held by video conference call.</i>	
650.	Apologies: Cllr. A.J. Markley (unwell) & J. McCormick (no reason given). Also Ken Wannop.	
651.	Co-option Four applications were received for consideration by the Council – Vicky Hope, Peter Leslie Holmes, Gary Brady & Ian Ward. Vicky Hope was proposed by Cllr. Doran & seconded by Cllr. Graham. Ian Ward was proposed by Cllr. Emmerson and seconded by Cllr. Cook. Cllr. M. Irving declared an interest as she is related to one of the candidates and abstained from the vote. A vote took place. Vicky Hope received 6 votes, Ian Ward received 2 votes, with 1 abstention. Vicky was welcomed on to the Town Council and will need to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before becoming a councillor.	
652.	Declarations of Interest As recorded.	
653.	Exclusion of Press & Public It was agreed that the public be excluded for items 27, 28 & 29 on the Agenda.	
654.	Chairman's Announcements The Chairman attended a Teams meeting of the Silloth-on-Solway Coastal Community Team and represented the Town Council, as Cllr. Jefferson had stepped down as the Town Council representative, as he also represents the AONB. It was a very positive meeting. The construction of the cycle path between Allonby and Silloth has started and they are confident they will have it finished by the turn of the year. As the route of the path has changed some of the budget will not be used and with the excess funds, they are looking to resurface a couple of car parks at Allonby and an area around the mile 21 fortlet. They will also be looking at the car parks up Skinburness (particularly where the Big Fella sculpture is) and also a car park for a new access to West Beach. The Chairman met with Paul Hagan, Tim Riley & the Golf Club the following day. The proposal is to construct a new footpath running alongside the lairage, up towards the Convalescent Home and then across to the beach, with a new car park. ABP would be looking for the Town Council to provide the brown tourism signs to signpost West Beach. The existing car park will be blocked off. Extra land is to be given to the Golf club for them to extend their car park at the top. The Golf Club has agreed to give the Town Council the use of the bottom car park (part of which belongs to the Town Council already), with additional options which can be considered at a future date. ABP are wanting to give something back to the town. As part of the cycle path they will also be looking to see whether it would be possible to resurface the path behind the industrial units at Station Road which runs from West Silloth and comes out at Station Mews. Allerdale is the responsible body but when it comes to any choices to be made, it is down to the Coastal Community Team. By attracting people to West Beach we may also need to consider the water quality.	
655.	Minutes	

	It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 6 July, 9 July & 20 July 2020 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.	
656.	<p>Adjournment of meeting</p> <p>Owen Martin spoke at the meeting in relation to allegations made to the Police about Silloth Tourism Action Group (STAG). The group would like to know who on Silloth Town Council authorised Cllr. Snaith to contact the Police and log a complaint on behalf of the Council. The Chairman confirmed that the Town Council did not authorise anyone to contact the Police.</p>	
657.	<p>Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications</p> <p>RESOLVED that the schedule of correspondence, notices and publications be noted.</p> <p>Cllr. Emmerson requested copies of correspondence from members of the public and the MP which are included under information. Cllr. Cook asked if the letter from Mark Jenkinson MP could be read out. The Clerk will email a copy to everyone and it can be included on the next Agenda if necessary.</p> <p>a) Email from Peter Wise regarding the Junior Football and use of the land adjacent to the rugby pitch (West side). The letter is probably obsolete now as the Junior Football were considering separating from Silloth AFC but they are continuing under the same umbrella. They have simply formed a sub-committee of the club rather than an independent committee.</p> <p>b) Request for a rent reduction for the four months loss of revenue from 23 March to 25 July for the Solway Fitness Centre. The Fitness Centre did not qualify for any of the grants as they do not pay business rates on the building as they are paid by the Town Council. Rent of £1030 p.a. is paid, with four months being approx. £350. It was agreed that a refund of 4 months rent be provided to the Fitness Centre to compensate for the loss of revenue due to covid-19. Reply to be sent to Mavis Baty.</p> <p>c) CCC – re: Emergency plans for Silloth. Email regarding the process of setting up a Community Emergency Response Group in the Silloth area. The County Council are pushing for emergency plans to be put in place and it tends to be towns that have previously been flooded. The County Council are encouraging local towns to look after themselves and apply for funding etc but when there is an emergency there should be support from the County Council. It was agreed to invite Heather Nixon to the next Council meeting to ask any questions and obtain further information. Town Clerk to send her an email.</p> <p>d) Email from Neil Henderson asking if Silloth AFC has permission to train on other grounds in and around Silloth e.g. pitch by the tennis court or areas of the Green. The Council needs to help the youth of the town. It was agreed they could use the football pitch on Skinburness near the tennis courts or the right-hand side of the Green but they would need to change the areas they use to make sure there is no damage to the surface. It was questioned why they couldn't use the school fields as well. The insurance implications were questioned but the Clerk will check that they have public liability insurance in place.</p>	<p>WEJ</p> <p>WEJ</p> <p>WEJ</p> <p>WEJ</p> <p>WEJ</p> <p>WEJ</p>
658.	<p>Planning Applications</p> <p>Allerdale Borough Council has approved the following:- Ref No: HOU/2020/0077 Applicant: Mrs Lesley Hope Proposal: Ground floor extension to rear of property and partial loft conversion Location: Orchard Villa, Silloth</p> <p>The Planning Committee has approved the following:- Ref No: FUL/2020/0119 Applicant: Mr Frank Scott Homes Proposal: Revised house design of plot 3 and 4 Location: Land Adjacent to Lycoan, Blitterlees, Silloth</p> <p>Allerdale Borough Council – re: 1603 – The Good Companions, Silloth. Plan provided by the applicant showing location of the proposed three replacement trees was circulated to members of the Planning Committee. No objections received and no preference on the species of replacement trees.</p>	

<p>659.</p>	<p>Committees Minutes from the following committee meetings were received and any recommendations considered by the Town Council: Planning Committee – 20 July 2020 – noted. Play Equipment Committee – 1 August 2020 – Ongoing repairs are to be carried out and a recommendation for the Council to consider replacing some of the older items of equipment which will become more costly to repair as time goes on. It could be included as a project in a Town Plan or the Council can look to include something in a future budget and seek external funding. Copy of the report to be provided to members of the Council and further consideration to be given at the next meeting.</p>	<p>WEJ</p>
<p>660.</p>	<p>Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies RESOLVED that verbal reports received from Representatives on Outside bodies be noted. Joint Advisory Committee – No meeting but Cllr. Jefferson is in regular contact with Naomi. STAG – No report. Sea Dyke Charity – No report. Longcake Education Trust – No meeting. Solway Community School & Sports Hall – Back to school. Friends of the Green – There are now 20+ volunteers, including people travelling into town which are a fantastic group. They have spent the last few weeks working on the Community Garden and now moved onto the Criffel Street bed. The Silloth Smile initiative was started by Judith and Ann from Friends of the Green (with Carol as their apprentice), who have been handing out posies of flowers (from the allotment) to passersby which proved to be very popular. Also gave a posy to every councillor and the Town Clerk as a thankyou for the funding provided to Friends of the Green (FOG) by the Council which was appreciated. FOG hope to build on this and get more volunteers involved and make more people smile. A number of projects are under discussion which will be brought to the Town Council in the future. Temporarily, FOG will be using the cabin to provide light bites for the volunteers and tea/coffee. They have been loaned a gazebo and chairs to use and are also storing the putting green equipment until the new shed is installed. It may need to be put on the Town Council agenda to look at the options moving forward for using the space. Thanks were given to local businesses of Silloth who have helped the group, even when they have tried to pay for food, they have donated things. In house funding has been created so that the group can feed the birds on the Green throughout the year and maybe look at getting a third feeding station next year. The Chairman asked for the thanks of the Council to be passed on to Friends of the Green at their next meeting for the work they are doing, as it is visible and gratefully appreciated. Members of the Council thanked Cllr. Doran for the posies. Comments had been heard from members of the public who had received one of the Silloth Smile posies on how fantastic the town was which is invaluable. Sports Association – Cllr. Orchard didn't attend the last meeting but the Football club have now sorted out their differences and things are moving in the right direction. Coastal Community Team – Meeting was highlighted earlier on the Agenda (see Min 654).</p>	
<p>661.</p>	<p>Borough & County Council Reports Allerdale Borough Council (ABC) – Priority over the last couple of weeks has been the Coastal Community team and visiting the various car parks. Illegal parking of camper vans is an issue and difficult to deal with. Rogerscough Farm is also an issue where the RSPB are wanting to demolish it but the public want it saved. A full statement has been provided by the AONB and is on file with Allerdale. The RSPB own the property and the best option would be to make it safe. Cllr. Cook advised everyone to read the AONB management plan. The next 5-year tourism plan is going to be put forward and a working group is to be put together, including Councils up and down the coast to see what is in place and what can be done. There are proposals being put forward for a single unitary authority for Cumbria and it was questioned how that would impact on Allerdale. No-one can agree on what is to happen and there are various proposals being suggested. It is the Government who is pushing it forward but everyone will be consulted on it, including town and parish councils.</p>	

662.	<p>Park Manager's Report The Park Manager provided a report on work done over the last month which was noted.</p>	
663.	<p>Town Clerk's Report The Town Clerk provided a report on work done since the last meeting which was noted.</p>	
664.	<p>Payment of Accounts RESOLVED that the payments listed in the register report to 7 September 2020 be approved for payment. An invoice has been received for £144.00 from Unblock Cumbria for unblocking a drain at the Criffel Street toilets which was approved for payment. An invoice has also received from Allerdale Borough Council for £1,946.10 for business rates for the Community Hall, despite previously receiving discretionary covid-19 relief earlier in the year. It was agreed that this should be queried with Allerdale. Cllr. Graham asked if the Town Clerk could put some figures together to show the cost of having the public toilets open and what the ratepayers of Silloth are paying for. Despite three toilet blocks being closed the cost has still been considerable as the toilets that have been open have been used a lot more and cleaned more often. Cllr. Cook suggested the Council go back and look at charging for the use of the toilets which may result in a profit being made. The cost of installing the equipment could be covered by the company and the profits shared.</p>	
665.	<p>Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 Further to carrying out the internal audit of the Town Council's accounts, Stamper & Co Accountants confirmed that there were no issues arising regarding the financial recording of the Town Council's activities and the preparation of their annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2020.</p>	
666.	<p>Applications for financial assistance None.</p>	
667.	<p>Insurance Prior to renewal of the Council's insurance, confirmation is required and any other changes which would need to be made to cover going forwards which the Clerk will go through with Came & Company. It was questioned whether the Town Council would consider insuring the gardening tools belonging to Friends of the Green who are working on the Green on behalf of the Town Council. The cost should be nominal and would ensure the tools could be replaced if they were stolen. This was agreed by the Town Council.</p>	
668.	<p>Events to be held on Town Council property The Town Council considered the following dates for events in 2021:- i) Friends of Silloth Green – Soul on the Green – Sun 2 May 2021 ii) Silloth Vintage Rally – Sat 12 & Sun 13 June 2021 iii) James Richards Circus – Sun 15 August to Mon 30 August 2021 It is hoped everything will be back to normal next year and the events go ahead. Rent of £1,010 has been received from the James Richards circus this year made up of a deposit of £202 and balance of £808.</p>	
669.	<p>Back Lane Lighting A request was received from local residents for lighting in the lane at the back of Waver Street and Caldew Street for security reasons. A similar request was received some time ago from a resident in the Crofts but it would be down to the Town Council to cover the cost of providing any new lighting which the Council is not in a position to do. With existing footway lighting, Allerdale will cover the maintenance costs and Town/Parish Councils will be starting to pay the electricity costs from April next year. A similar request was received years ago for a light at the back of Eden Street which was going to cost thousands to do. A meeting was held earlier in the year with Ricki Crawford from Cumbria Highways and everyone was asked to let the Clerk know about any issues regarding</p>	

	<p>potholes and lighting prior to the meeting but nothing was put forward. Many of the streetlights have been replaced with LED's which are not as bright as the previous lighting. This needs to be brought up with Cumbria Highways, particularly in relation to Caldew Street. It is becoming a common trend for responsibilities to be passed down to the third tier of Government and it is time for the Town Council to make a stand on what we can afford to do. The Chairman suggested that members of the Council drop a line to the Clerk with details of any issues regarding streetlights etc and if necessary a meeting can be arranged. Cllr. Markley can also bring it up with Cumbria County Council.</p>	
<p>670.</p>	<p>Future Town Plan It was proposed that the Town Council consider creating a Town Plan for Silloth, with a view to getting a plan in place for 2021 but it was suggested by the Chairman that in light of the current uncertainty with regarding the budget and covid-19 etc that it be put on hold for a while and to make sure the Council can cover its existing responsibilities. Other places are benefiting from funding because they have a town plan in place to show what is needed in the town. It was questioned what type of plans other towns have in place - whether it's a Neighbourhood plan or a Community led plan? Cllr. Cook will come back to the next meeting with all the information, to see if we can get funding for a plan whenever the Council is ready. At a previous meeting with Mark Jenkinson MP he had encouraged the Council to have a Town plan in place which would be a wish list and would not necessarily commit any funding by the Council but would be there if funding streams came available. A list of priorities is what is important and concentrating on the Council's current responsibilities. It was agreed to put the creation of a plan on hold for the time being but Cllr. Cook will get the information together in the meantime.</p>	<p>JC</p>
<p>671.</p>	<p>Public Announcements / Social media sites Following sometimes extremely negative and at times incorrect announcements, it was suggested that the Town Council agree that in future all announcements via the Town Council are submitted by the Town Clerk to the social media sites and that no Councillor should replicate these thereby undermining the Town Clerk and creating confusion. Private individuals are exempt but we need to show new guidelines of professionalism. Shortly after lockdown there were various 'Don't come to Silloth' signs posted on social media and a lot of very negative comments. People who visit Silloth were given a very unwelcome message and the negativity got worse. The Town Clerk by putting an announcement on social media is passing on the decisions of the Town Council and both the Clerk and Council should not be undermined, although it is acknowledged that it is impossible to prevent posts by individuals on social media. Councillors need to stand together and be part of a team, in accordance with the Good Councillors Guide. Town Clerk to email a copy for everyone. Members of the Council did not have an issue with the proposal.</p>	<p>WEJ</p>
<p>672.</p>	<p>Drop-in Service Various means of communication are offered to the residents of Silloth but many still do not use email and are uncomfortable with telephone conversations and a one to one is still the most effective communication. A rota base of 12 would mean each councillor would give a minimum of 1 per year. This could be structured as a 1-hour duration and 2 weeks prior to a Council meeting enabling anything urgent to be put to the Council swiftly. This would offer a further way to build valuable relations with the people of Silloth and promotes approachability with availability. Contact information is available on the website and a drop-in service would be worth trying. The Town Clerk has offered to attend the sessions and include a regular item on the Agenda. We are lucky to have two councillors on the Town Council who represent the Borough Council and County Council. Also Cllr. Owen Martin who represents Silloth at Allerdale Borough Council who should also be offered the opportunity to attend the drop-in sessions. Some minor issues can be dealt with straight away and others will need to be brought back to the full council. Cllr. Cook held a number of surgeries at the Community Hall when he became a Borough Councillor but very few people attended. It was questioned whether it was worthwhile doing when there are so many other ways</p>	

	<p>to contact the Council. Many elderly have difficulty using email and may prefer face to face contact and the drop in session would offer another open door. Cllr. Doran to bring a proposal to the next meeting and once things open-up more following covid-19 then we can look at setting it up.</p>	
<p>673.</p>	<p>Future events & Town Council revenue</p> <p>It was suggested that the Council discuss options to increase revenue for the Town Council via events, concessions and assets/rent. Honesty boxes would be one option, particularly by the Splash Pad. The people of Silloth are paying for people to have a free day out at Silloth and an honesty box would be a good way of seeing how much people appreciate what is provided for them for free. Approximately £8,000 is paid for water for the splash park and one way of saving money would be to have a well dug. Discussions took place with one firm but near the splash park may not be suitable due to it being in close proximity to sea water. Another option would be to install it next to the toilets on Criffel Street. It would be a relatively small box with electricity which pumps the water out of the ground and could save approx. £5,000- 6,000 per year. There would be the initial installation costs and then ongoing maintenance and electricity costs but it would be an investment which would save money each year. Pay to use toilets would be another option. The toilets currently open (male, female and disabled) are well used but probably not appreciated and are costing the ratepayers of Silloth. The initial suggestion would be to make these three toilets pay toilets until they generate enough money to add another pay facility on to another toilet. Another option would be to bring a third-party company in who would install the equipment for free and give the Council a share of the profits. Where the fairground is sited on the seafront is a prime location. The ice cream concession is paying more for one pitch compared to the whole area used by the fairground. The land needs better utilised. The Town Council could have the say on who goes on there, with each ride paying rent to the Town Council the income could be tenfold. The Council receives applications for events on the Green, the events are organised and the Council receives a peppercorn rent. A proposal has been received from Jaybee Blakes who has asked to be able to put fairground rides on a portion of the Green on the following dates 29, 30 & 31 May 2021 and 28, 29 & 30 August 2021. If permission is granted they would give the Town Council a minimum of £1,000 per event. If more rides turned up, then the donation would be greater. It will have no bearing on the events which can still go ahead. Anyone applying for a burger van/ride etc through the Town Council would pay a rent. Everyone is enjoying Silloth and the people of Silloth are paying for it but we have to start bringing funds in. Previously the event organisers had sole use of the Green for their event and this would remove one aspect. It would be a way of bringing revenue into the Town Council, reducing the burden on Silloth ratepayers and making money from the town's assets. The proposal can be considered at this meeting or bring it back next month. It's the responsibility of Council to look at ways of bringing in revenue. Groups organising the events may not be happy with this proposal and it would be better to consult with them. The events can still go ahead but the event organisers would not get exclusive use of the whole Green. The Green is Silloth's biggest asset which is not being utilised and can bring in much needed revenue to the town. This is a major shift in Council policy and a big change on what has been done before and therefore the Council needs to be careful and clear on what is being agreed. It was agreed to put the proposal on the next Agenda when people have more time to consider the matter. Charging for car parking could be another option. Information to be obtained on pay to use toilets and investigate the provision of a well which will be brought back to a future meeting. Any ideas to bring revenue into the Town Council or save the people of Silloth money should be brought to the next meeting.</p>	
<p>674.</p>	<p>Silloth Tourism Action Group (STAG)</p> <p>Following receipt of the STAG Accounts for 2018 and 2019, to arrange a date for a joint meeting between the Town Council and STAG. The Town Council have waited many months for STAG to provide the Accounts and when they didn't appear Cllr. Snaith decided to go to the Police as he had serious concerns that funding was being misappropriated and was therefore within his rights to do so. The Police have stated that there is a case to answer but at this present time there is not quite enough evidence to take it to the Crown Prosecution Service. A copy of STAG's Accounts have been</p>	

	<p>received for 2018 and 2019 but they have not been audited and are simply an independent examination of the books and yet STAG's constitution states that the Accounts are to be audited and put before the AGM each year. The Town Council did not authorise Cllr. Snaith to go to the Police but he had previously stated that if the matter was not resolved, that is what he would do. STAG have not been holding AGM's or having their Accounts audited. Almost 12 months ago there was an accusation of misappropriation of funds by Cllr. Snaith but it was not something the Town Council wanted to be dragged into. The Chairman and Town Clerk met with Cllr. Cook (Chair of STAG) and it was agreed that the Clerk provide Cllr. Cook with a list of funding provided by the Town Council. Cllr Cook agreed to come back with details of how that funding had been spent, as long as the Council changed its funding policies which would satisfy the Town Council that there had been no misappropriation. The Town Council has amended its funding policies but the information has still not been provided. There have been delays due to covid and STAG having to find an alternative auditor. A meeting would not need to involve the whole of STAG or the whole of the Town Council but Cllr. Cook suggested it would not resolve the matter, as it has not simply been about STAG's accounts but a personal vendetta against a former councillor. Cllr. Snaith has not provided details of his questions but if the Accounts had been audited the questions could be answered. Cllr. Snaith had a legitimate question and has a right to go to the Police as a councillor. He was not asking the Police anything on behalf of Silloth Town Council. Various questions were raised in the meeting but it was felt that a separate meeting should be held. STAG are not in a position to afford to get the Accounts audited as there is only £450 in the bank account but it is something which should have been done each year. Cllr. Cook offered to take all the accounts to Cllr. Snaith to resolve the matter. It was then suggested that STAG's accounts could be provided to the Clerk along with Cllr. Snaith's questions and the Clerk could make her own decisions before it comes round to the next Council meeting. The Accounts need to be audited before there can be any progress made. Cllr. Cook will speak to the guy tomorrow who carried out the independent examination. Colin Baty was the Treasurer during the period for which the Accounts have been prepared (i.e. 2018 and 2019) but is no longer Treasurer for STAG. It was agreed that the necessary information be provided to the Clerk by Cllrs. Snaith and Cook, with a decision made on whether to bring it to the next Council meeting.</p>	
<p>675.</p>	<p>Councillors' reports and items for future agenda The Chairman suggested that the applicants who have put their names forward to join the Town Council be invited to the next meeting so the Council can get to know them should a future vacancy arise, as it is unfair to dismiss candidates because they are not known.</p>	
	<p><i>RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.</i></p>	
<p>676.</p>	<p>Estimates A flimsy storage cupboard containing cleaning supplies was broken into at the toilets near the Lifeboat Station which has since been replaced with a steel cupboard from the Community Hall and seems to be more substantial. A price has been obtained for a proper cupboard to be installed with a 5 lever deadlock which would cost £422.50 + VAT. The metal cupboard has not been touched and the busiest time is now over, so it was agreed to leave it in abeyance for the time being.</p> <p>It was questioned why the press and public are excluded when considering these items on the Agenda, as in other towns it is done differently. When considering estimates the names of the person putting in a quote could be kept confidential. The question was also raised in relation to salaries, as in one parish the cheque payment to the Clerk was mentioned in the main Council meeting and approved by the Council. Staff salaries are discussed with the press and public excluded in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, as we need to respect the privacy of our staff.</p>	

677.	<p>2020/21 National Salary Award The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has agreed the new pay scales for 2020-21 to be implemented from 1 April 2020 which basically amounts to a 2.75% increase. Noted by the Town Council.</p>	
678.	<p>Amounts owing to the Town Council There were no amounts owing to the Town Council.</p>	

Signed.....

Date.....