

**Silloth-on-Solway Town Council**  
**Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 12 October 2020 at 7.00pm via video conference**

**Present:**– Councillor M. Orchard (MO).

**Councillors**

J. Cook (JC), C. Doran (CD), S. Graham (SG), V. Hope (VH),  
W. Jefferson (WJ), A.J. Markley (AJM), J. McCormick (JM), J. Snaith (JS) & G. Wilkinson (GW).

Also present: Wendy Jameson (Town Clerk) & various members of the public.

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|             | <i>In accordance with The Local Authorities &amp; Police &amp; Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority &amp; Police &amp; Crime Panel Meetings) (England &amp; Wales) Regulations 2020 this meeting was held by video conference call.</i>   |  |
| <b>724.</b> | <b>Apologies:</b> Councillor A. Emmerson (working) & Councillor M. Irving (unwell).   |  |
| <b>725</b>  | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br>Councillor John Cook re: Silloth Rotary. Cllr. McCormick re: Silloth Carnival. Councillors Markley & Wilkinson, also the Town Clerk re: Silloth Vintage Rally.   |  |
| <b>726.</b> | <b>Exclusion of Press &amp; Public</b><br>There was some discussion on whether the meeting should be held in private which is normally the case when discussing contracts, tenders or staff salaries etc. It was agreed not to hold a meeting next week, as the events will not be taking place until next year and an item can be included on the Agenda for a future meeting, when information has been gathered together. It was agreed that the meeting be held in public, as everything needs to be transparent and it would enable members of the public to see how the Council comes to its decisions or otherwise.  |  |
| <b>727.</b> | <b>Adjournment of meeting</b><br>One request was received from a member of the public to speak but they did not appear to be present.   |  |
| <b>728.</b> | <b>Events on Silloth Green</b><br>The purpose of the meeting is for the Council to discuss and formulate its own aspirations when it comes to events on Silloth Green, ahead of a forthcoming meeting with representatives of groups and interested parties involved in the organisation of events etc.<br>There have been complaints about Silloth's precept being the highest in Allerdale and the Town Council therefore need to look at options to bring in income to reduce the Precept. Silloth Green is the biggest asset and the Council needs to maximise on that. Paul Blake approached the Town Council with a proposal to take over the running of the fairground at the events on the Green in exchange for a minimum of £1,000 but with the potential of bringing in more revenue which would be passed on to the Town Council. The events would get the same amount of money which they received in the previous year. It has been posted on social media that the Town Council do nothing for the events. However, the Town Council provide the Green for free for local events and free use of the electricity. The Town Council staff provide the safety barriers and clear any litter afterwards. The toilets are also available to use. It was questioned why the people of Silloth should have to pay for it all. The Council needs to decide what its aspirations are in relation to the Green and surrounding areas but discussing a specific proposal could make that difficult. It was suggested that the Council consider doing their own event on the Green. Last year, the Carnival received £1,000 from the fairground for one day which they would continue to get, with any extra revenue going to the Town Council. The Council wants successfully run events on Silloth Green, using known and reliable organisers and hopefully reduce the precept. Need to look at the key organisers of events i.e. Vintage Rally committee, Rotary Club, Carnival committee, Fletchers & Blakes. We have three councillors who could put some pressure on Allerdale and the County Council for funding for Silloth |  |

Green, its maintenance and events. There could be a consortium put together of the event organisers and the business element, with the Town Council acting as the co-ordinator or accountable body perhaps. It could also involve Silloth Tourism Action Group and Friends of the Green. The Green is the asset of Silloth Town Council and it should be the Town Council who decides what goes on, who represent the people of the town. The Town Council is not looking to take anything over but looking at what's best for the people of Silloth. Need to work as a team and look at all the options available. Blakes and Fletchers will hopefully work together. People of Silloth have not had an opportunity to say what they want and their input would be useful. Not looking to change anything but to maximise the potential. The Council needs to discuss what it wants to do with the Green and surrounding area, whether to put things out to tender etc. There needs to be a clear idea of what the Council wants (i.e. a project) before Allerdale can be approached for funding. The Carnival Committee are concerned that if the organising of the fairground is taken away from them, that there is nothing to stop the Council then taking over the organising of the stalls etc. The event organisers have always organised everything that goes on at the event. The Carnival committee are not happy and might consider moving the Carnival elsewhere in the town. This could be the beginnings of a simple project, involving all the event organisers and the business element which would get good community support and would enable Allerdale to be approached for funding. The individual groups would still be responsible for organising their own events. A detailed proposal to come from each individual organiser for their event which would need to be costed and provided to the accountable body, to ensure transparency.

The Carnival committee are concerned that the Town Council will take over other aspects of the event, although it has never been suggested. The Town Council are looking at it from a business angle and trying to do the best for the town. Everyone on the Council can have their individual ideas but should be working for the good of Silloth. Councillors are democratically elected to represent the ratepayers of the town and to make decisions on their behalf. This is a potential policy change for the Town Council which needs written down, to cover all the events on the Green which is fair for everyone. Going out to tender for someone to provide fairground rides at an event could be an option. There have been a lot of valid points raised at the meeting which need to be considered. There is no need to rush into any decisions as there may not be any events for quite some time due to the current situation. The area of land at the seafront used by the fairground should also be put out to tender. All the facts and figures need to be in place to make sure the events are not adversely affected. Facts and figures need looked at and the policies need to be changed. To identify the key elements of the project, there initially needs to be talks with the individual event committees which can be delegated to a couple of people, to discuss the implications. Preliminary investigations can be made with Allerdale and County Council on potential funding available. Silloth Tourism Action Group would be the ideal group to steer this as it was set up as an arm of the Council many years ago, to promote the town and tourism. A copy of an email from the Showmen's Guild to Joyce Fletcher was circulated to members of the Council which was read out at the meeting. It refers to the agreement between fairground operators when there is a written lease in place or established rights. There is no written lease between the fairground operator and the Town Council but it would be questionable as to whether there are established rights, due to them having been there for so long. However not everyone is a member of the Showmen's Guild and there will have been a break in events being held due to the Covid pandemic. The Showmen's Guild is a gentlemen's agreement between fairground operators so that they don't encroach on each other's area. Without the existence of a lease, the Clerk needs to check whether there is any other historical way that there could be a claim to that area. When the Green was taken over by the Town Council, the concession for the seafront land and ice-cream concessions were passed to the Town Council, so that the income would come to the Town Council. The Chairman felt the Council had spent the whole meeting considering the aspirations of every other organisation rather than discussing the aspirations of the Town Council which had been a waste of everyone's time. The proposal by Jaybee Blakes was read out again. Jaybee Blakes would like to apply for sole use of fairground/amusement rides on the Green for the following dates: Sat 29<sup>th</sup>, Sun 30<sup>th</sup> and Mon 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and Sat 28<sup>th</sup>, Sun 29<sup>th</sup> and Mon 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021. This would not in any way effect Green Day, Carnival Day or

any other events held on the Green and we believe our proposal would compliment these events. Jaybee Blake would pay Silloth Town Council all money taken as rent for each event on the Green, with a guarantee of £1,000 minimum. We will of course forward all the necessary operators licenses, risk assessment & liability insurances prior to each event.

The Council want to make better use and generate more income from the Green, with the next step being to discuss it with representatives of the events and other interested parties. We need to make more income and reduce the Precept for the ratepayers of Silloth. The proposal from Blakes is welcomed but we need to measure the potential impact on the event organisers and come back. We need to maximise the Green and support the events financially. It was questioned if the Town Council is willing to let a third party run the fairground on the Green, to agree a deal that the Town Council and the events are happy with and move forward, and guarantee the financially security of the events. Agenda item was to discuss the aspirations of the Town Council and not a specific proposal, with a view to speaking to the individual committees. There has been a healthy debate and a lot has come from the discussions.

To go forward from this meeting, the Town Council are looking to maximise the income from Silloth Green, working with the events, to come to an agreement with them and look to engage a third party to run the fairground on the Green, who will financially support the people of Silloth and the events year on year. Cllr. Cook asked that it be circulated around the full council to digest, as it could be construed in the wrong way by certain people.

Thanks need to be given to the initial proposal received from Blakes but need to get the reactions from other event organisers. It was also asked if the football club could be invited as their events also involve the fairground. Speaking to the groups individually would be better. Reactions can be obtained from the individual event organisers.

People don't like change but these are positive changes and a step in the right direction. Residents of Lawn Terrace would favour the fairground not being so close to the properties on Lawn Terrace. It would also bring in much needed revenue to the Council and to the events. It was suggested that a response should be sent to both Joyce and Paul Blake. The ideal solution would be if they can work together which would enable both the town and the events to benefit.

It was suggested that both proposals be put on a future agenda, along with any concerns raised by the event organisers but the decision is down to the Council who manage the assets for the good of the town. The Council needs to ensure the longevity of the Green and maintain its assets to the highest standard it can. Policies need to be in place to ensure event organisers know what's expected of them which includes the Council's policy to involve a 3<sup>rd</sup> party in the running of the fairground, who would work alongside the event organisers.

RESOLVED that the Town Council wishes to maximise income from Silloth Green, working with the event organisers and coming to an agreement with them, and look to work with a third party to run the fairground on the Green, who will work alongside the event organisers, to support the events year on year. Minutes will be agreed at the next meeting. The decision has been made to ensure the longevity of the events and to support the people of Silloth, with a view to reducing the precept. To maintain the precept at the same level would be an achievement, as last year we had to lose a member of staff and also sold equipment. The precept increased this year due to the boundary changes and losing the houses at the Lido Village from the parish which was outside the Council's control. The Council needs to look at getting more revenue in from other sources. It was suggested that consideration should also be given to the Soul on the Green and Beer Festival which are also events held on the Green. With the new policy in place, if Soul on the Green wanted a fairground at the event it would be an option and would be arranged through the 3<sup>rd</sup> party and provide financial support. It was also suggested that the Council run its own event as a Council. Event committees need to be reassured that the Council is not taking anything from them and the Council wants to support them. Local events will not be charged for being on the Green.

Signed.....

Date.....