

Seascale Parish Council DRAFT

Chair; Cllr Lizzie Mawson

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th May 2026

at Methodist School Rooms, Seascale

AP 1/26 Present: Lizzie Mawson Chair, Mary Bradley supporting clerk, 7 Parish Councillors and 3 members of the public.

AP 2/26 Cllr Mawson welcomed everyone and asked those present to introduce themselves. She expressed her disappointment that more public had not attended as this is their opportunity to understand what has been achieved this year and to influence the work of the Parish Council for the coming year.

AP 3/26 Approval of the Annual Parish Meeting minutes 14/5/25.

MB summarised the minutes and *progress to date from requested actions.*

- Concern regarding the old Bank building and its future - *Jane Coltman said she is making progress and now is in dialogue with the owner. The next stage maybe to involve Cumberland Council.*
- Need for a banking hub – *Jane Coltman had followed this up and basically there isn't sufficient population in Seascale to warrant this. There was a Hub being developed in Whitehaven.*
- Main project to refurbish the Library – *the project has needed to be scaled back to match the funding available, the bid is being written and preparations to seek building consent are continuing.*
- Library car park in refurbishment plan – *yes providing funds allow.*
- Explanation of Reserves requested – *for 2006/7 the opening balance will be Contingency reserves - £43K
Restricted reserves- £53,363 to complete Coniston play park, £20,000 for Foreshore
General reserves for asset management £41,434*
- Suggestion for use of display board – *Agenda now posted and, in more detail,*
- Request to move public section higher on agenda - *Agenda changed to allow people to speak near the beginning*
- Waste on Carpark was a concern – *new bins ordered, CCTV in place, new signage for CCTV*
- Web site thought to be too expensive and new requirements– *met assertion 10 and on next council agenda*
- Suggestion to have foreshore information boards – *these are now in place*

- Question regarding play park inspections - *contract in place for monthly inspections for playgrounds and maintenance as required*
- Grass cutting and Dell – *contract for mowing is in place but Dell is still just a path through – this is work in progress*
- Questions regarding overgrown footpaths - *Footpaths are reported on HMS as Cumberland responsibility*

Acceptance of minutes: proposed by David Moore, Seconded by Catherine Harvey Chadwick. All accepted.

AP 4/26 Parish council report was presented by Cllr Lizzie Mawson as chair

Now it's time to report on the last year.

In all the time I have been involved in the Parish Council here in Seascale I can say with some certainty that this has been the most challenging year yet.

Firstly, losing Michael as clerk was, I feel, a huge blow, although we must remain indebted to him for his remaining in the role of RFO and his going above and beyond to help with the extensive audit and investigation that have arisen throughout the year.

Thankfully, although I seem to spend my life apologising to her for it, Mary stepped in to help us this year as acting clerk. I'm sure she won't object to me letting everyone know what a challenging role this has been. Our recruitment for a replacement is ongoing but it must be said the difficulty in filling this position reflects badly on us as a council, something I feel upset and troubled by.

We have faced unexpected financial pressures on the precept due to extra costs in audits and elections and most notably the grass cutting contract which is now costing us the same pre month to fulfil as it did for the whole of last year. The precept rise of an unprecedented 20% was sadly unavoidable. Without Mary's support and guidance and incredible hard work I don't know where we would be right now. Thank you Mary.

I'm going to talk briefly about the trial by social media we seem to have been facing this year. It's been awful and shows our village in such a bad light. Seascale is a wonderful place to live, we have excellent assets and amenities, our beautiful foreshore, bathing quality beach and, the most remarked by visitors, free toilets and car park. However, the picture painted on Facebook this year shows a hateful, mean minded and ungrateful community. I hope moving forward this year those that seek to criticize and complain so publicly can see fit to put themselves forward like the great team of volunteers our village is lucky enough to have making it a great place for us all. My fellow councillors included, their time is given freely and generously, they don't deserve to be spoken of like this.

That is far longer than I would ever like to speak critically so I'll move on to the positive progress made by the PC this year. A significant overhaul of our policies has been made, thank you for those who gave their time to this, the parish assets have continued to receive the maintenance and investment they require, it's difficult to find trades people to carry out these works and I appreciate the efforts of those councillors in working towards these investments.

Most notably was the £80K investment from the Hearts of the Community trust. The sports hall solar panels are proving to be a huge success, the information boards on the foreshore a welcome addition, improvements both electrical and plumbing to the public toilets and pavilion a real boost to parish assets. This project was managed incredibly by Cllrs Moor and O'Hanlon delivered both on time and perfectly within budget, thank you both.

Moving forward under the driving force of Mrs Dawn Dennett the Coniston Avenue play park renovation is well underway and set to be enjoyed by the village very soon. Thank go to GDF for their financial help in the enabling of this project.

Investment in the village also coming from developments at the new Shackles Off building and nets and storage at the Cricket Club. Our village is alive with active community groups and proactive people, we should be very proud.

In summary, and as blunt as it may sound. It can only get better, let's move forward from the difficult period with positivity and remember how lucky we are to call Seascale our home.

Report from Sports Hall

The Sports Hall remains well used and in a healthy financial position, in spite of an overall loss over FY 2025. To offset this user hire rates have been increased from Jan 2026 with the aim to draw even in 2026.

The hall has 3 regular user groups: Badminton, Pickleball and Archery. In addition, it has been used for numerous parties through the year; it provided a venue for the 'Everybody Here' Xmas Light Event and supports the 'Game On' children sports camps as well as the annual C2C and Rat Race events.

The management became a CIO during 2025 and will soon submit a first Trustee Annual Report (TAR) after approval at the recent AGM. There are currently the minimum 3 trustees.

An application to remove surface water charges from Water Rates was unsuccessful. New replacement Soft Play equipment has been purchased using a grant provided, via the SPC, from Hearts of the Community. Similarly, the same grant fund was used to purchase a solar panel system which will offset electrical charges in future, for both the Sports Hall and Pavilion.

All mandatory safety documents have been reviewed and are valid and the contents insurance has been reviewed and renewed.

Report from the Bowling Club

This year the pavilion has been upgraded with new electrics and a new door. The bowling green has benefited from a new water system funded by the Hearts of community grant. The bowling clubs continues to flourish.

We are currently pulling together a bid to upgrade the conservatory and other items.

Report from the Library

It has been a busy year. The Library currently has 18 volunteers which makes it a welcoming place for its visitors. There are 6 trustees and a treasurer who oversee the running of the library and ensure it is compliant.

The library is supported by Whitehaven library and generous donations from the public, some of which are sold to raise funds. Funding is also raised from various activities including coffee mornings and a Christmas event.

The library is used by several groups including, HV for a baby clinic, a well- being group, local knitters, local scouting and is a registered warm space. Children and school groups are welcomed.

A project group has been established to support the funding application for the refurbishment which we hope will take place at the end of the year.

AP5/26 SPC activity

The main activity for SPC this year is the completion of the Coniston Play park project (hopefully in the next 8 weeks) and the refurbishment of the library (hopefully towards the end of the calendar year). Working as task and finish groups has proved really useful delivering projects on time and to budget. The benches from the Coniston play park will be re-sited. The extension of the Game- On project for 2 years was welcomed as this provides activity for young people in school holidays. Consultation of the proposed mural for the sports hall continues. Other items raised in Ap6/26 will be considered as time and funds allow.

AP6/26 Those present then gave some thought as to what would enhance Seascale moving forward. The following is an ideas list:

Ninja Trail – fitness equipment for teenagers and adults – potential to bid for this and maybe enhance the BMX track facilities.

History boards – suggestion that the history of key sites in Seascale could be displayed and increase public awareness.

Showers for removing sand – suggestion that options could be explored including external to toilets, near the wishing well etc.

A bike stand on the car park – thought to be a good idea, so be added to the car park discussion on 3/6/26

Entrance to the beach is in a poor state - encourage people to report on HIMS

Regalvanising of the jetty gates – would be well supported. DM offered to get a quote.

Promotion of activities – Andy highlighted examples of the C2C bike ride 1st weekend in June (Seascale to Whitby) , Rat Run – 1st weekend in Sept. Plus just general SPC notices and similar items. - Need recognised and needs some thought.

Library notice board – under used but not easy to open in poor weather. - To be added to the library bid

Biodiversity – workbook and briefings available – idea is to recognise and encourage initiatives in community – for future SPC agenda.

A7/26 Summary

A lady thanked the Councillors for all their work during the year.

Cllr Mawson summed up the evening by thanking those present and reiterated what a lovely place Seascale is to live, work and visit.

The meeting closed at 20.20