ORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chair – Mr. Kyle Blue, Town Head House, Orton

Clerk – Mrs. M. Longworth, Yew Tree Farm, Greenholme

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**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 17th MAY 2021 AT ORTON MARKET HALL AT 7.30pm**

Present: Cllrs. K. Blue (chair); M. Lewis; D. Potter; M. Mawson; M. Coates; J. Taylor

County Councillor P. Dew; 4 members of the public and the clerk

*The meeting commenced with a short talk given by Cllr.K.Blue outlining the work of the Parish Council over the past year. The work had, of necessity, been restricted due to the covid-19 pandemic and the need to meet remotely, rather than face to face. However, all of the councillors had mastered “Zoom”, and a great deal of work had gone on behind the scenes on an informal basis. Lynne Potter was specially thanked for her hard work in keeping the public toilets open and safe to use, and volunteers had continued to pick litter and keep the village generally tidy. The chair also thanked Cllr. John Taylor for his work in researching the possibility of providing allotments for residents and he hoped this project could be carried forward in the future if a suitable site could be found.*

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from District Councillor A. Todd and from Cllr. S. Dunning

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in any item on the Agenda

**3. Minutes of the Meeting of 12th April 2021**

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the above meeting.

**4. Election of Chairperson for 2021/22**

It was proposed by Cllr D. Potter and seconded by Cllr M. Lewis that Kyle Blue be elected as chairperson for the year, and this was agreed unanimously.

**5. Election of Vice Chairperson for 2021/22**

It was proposed by Cllr M. Coates and seconded by Cllr J. Taylor that Cllr S. Dunning be elected as vice chairperson for the year, and this was agreed unanimously.

**6. Public Participation**

The Parish Council was thanked for their support for the “pop up” library that had been established in the bus shelter. Books and bookshelves had been donated and £450 had been raised and sent to the local Hospice at Home.

Concern was expressed about the trees in the parkland and that ash trees were dead or dying and in need of attention. A survey of the trees was being commissioned. Further tree planting to replace those removed would be considered in due course.

**7. Audit and Governance**

The internal audit had been completed satisfactorily.

7.1 The Governance Statement was approved and signed by the Chair

7.2 The Accounting Statement was approved and signed by the Chair

7.3 The Chair signed the Certificate of Exemption for the year, exempting the council from the need for an external audit.

**8. Path at Community Woodland – Carsa Brow**

Some preliminary estimates had been obtained for making up the path through the parkland so that it could be used by wheelchair users, and parents with push chairs. It was agreed that a specification for the works would be drawn up and local firms be invited to tender. The possibility of obtaining grant funding would be explored.

**9. Finance**

The following accounts were approved for payment:

L. Potter – salary for May 2021 £312.75

M. Longworth – salary for May 2021 192.00

HMPG – PAYE for May 2021 48.00

Cumbria Payroll Services 14.40

Mark Renwick Smith – internal audit 100.00

Came & Co. – insurance premium 847.94

M. Longworth – postage stamps 7.92

It was agreed that the clerk’s salary would be raised to £250.00 (after tax).

**10. Reports of District and County Councillors**

County Councillor Phil Dew reported that the Appleby Horse Fair would take place in August, very much against his wishes and advice, and against the wishes of many of the residents of Appleby and Kirkby Stephen. It was hard to see how this could take place safely in the light of the current coronavirus pandemic and the lack of time to prepare for vehicle parking, etc.

Mr. Dew also reported that Eden District Council was to suspend the devolution of services. This would mean that councils such as Orton, who had agreed to take on street lighting, would be financially disadvantaged in the future compared with those whose lighting would still be funded by EDC.

The closure of the M6 slip roads at Junction 38 was also discussed and further details of the plan would be obtained.

**11. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Monday 21st June 2021 at The Market Hall, Orton at 7.30pm.

Signed as a true record

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Dated ………………………..