

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held in the MOOT HALL, MARKET PLACE, BRAMPTON on TUESDAY 23rd APRIL 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor J. Errington, Chairman of Brampton Parish Council, (in the chair), Councillors J. Harding, R. Grebby, R Logie, R. Peart, T. Robinson, J. Spears and M. Spears.

IN ATTENDANCE – Clerk to the Parish Council
Cumberland Councillor M. Mitchelson (MM)
16 members of the public
5 representatives from Cumberland Council

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th April, 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED to authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 27th April 2023, confirmed as a true and accurate record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Errington welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the following report:-

Hello everybody and welcome to the annual parish meeting 2024

I'm going to keep this short because I think that we need to give as much time as possible to the Moot Lodge presentation and questions and answer session so I will briefly report on the actions of the Parish Council over the last 12 months.

We started the year with the coronation of King Charles III. We celebrated with an event which took place at the community centre with inflatables, craft tables and food available which was all free of charge to everyone, later in the day an afternoon tea event was laid on for the over 65s, both events were well attended

We facilitated the Basque Children exhibition on behalf of Luis Eckersley and Rob David from the Basque Children of '37 Association. The memorial plaque is now in place on the Ella Thompson building.

The Moot Hall architectural lighting was installed and in use for Remembrance day and Christmas. There is still additional lighting for the clock tower to be completed.

Murray park – the boundary wall requires some TLC but it is proving harder than first thought to get contractors to quote. Hopefully the work will commence this year and will be undertaken in stages over the next few years .

Grants – This year the parish council has given financial assistance to the following:-
Brampton Allotments, Brampton Arts & Craft Club, Spadeadam Motor Club, St Martin's Church and Bramble Court Resident's Association.

Town trail – the updated leaflet is now in production with the help of officers from Cumberland Council and will soon be available to hand out to local businesses

CCTV – There was a delay to the lease due to the move to a Unitary Authority from Cumbria County Council, but this has now been completed and Cumbria Police have been informed to move forward with the installation.

Christmas lights – once again I would just like to say how lovely it is to see so many people attending what has become the highlight of the council's calendar along with the Elf Trail. Feedback from both events is hugely positive and something we will carry on doing every year.

There is always a downside to parish council work, by that I mean the dog fouling and car parking issues. Dog fouling is a case of teaching the few problem owners to be more responsible. While I appreciate parking is still a problem in the town centre, Cumberland Council is investigating a one-way system to see if that helps with traffic flow and eases congestion.

To wrap things up, I would like to thank my Vice-Chairman, John Harding for his support and all my fellow councillors for having faith in myself as Chairman, I couldn't do it without them. We pull together as a team and work to try and make Brampton the best it can be.

I would also like to thank our grounds maintenance team, Stephen and Melanie, our caretakers Stephen and Peter, cleaner Helen, gardener Martin, and of course our Clerk, Allison.

RESOLVED to note the report.

MOOT LODGE (ML)

Cumberland Council representatives attended the meeting to support a discussion on the public consultation regarding the possible closure of Moot Lodge and to answer questions from those in attendance.

An initial slide presentation commenced from Cumberland Council detailing a review of care provision and it's vision of future modern care that Moot Lodge cannot meet without investment of around £2.5m, however the presentation was quickly suspended by questions from those in attendance.

Q – Outside space - having worked in dementia areas it was often found that outside space was not required. For example at the cottage hospital the idea was quashed as it was not deemed a priority. Other local care homes do not have ceiling hoists and policies for dementia so why do you think ML needs all this equipment?

A – Care homes are care homes. We want to future proof and outside space is key especially for those active with dementia.

Q - Obviously people with complex dementia need much more support, they can't wander outside on their own. What percentage of people have high end dementia?

A – Over 50% have dementia and this will increase.

Q – But there are homes for those with dementia.

A – No, we struggle to find provision.

Q – So why are you closing a home that provides care?

A – It is also about the physical environment. We need to support the most vulnerable.

Q – How do you keep them secure in an outside space?

A – So, other homes, the outside space is more structured such as Burnrigg Court (Carlisle) and The Gables (Whitehaven).

Q – How much emphasis do you give to community?

A – There is other provision in Brampton. We want to keep people at home as long as possible.

Q – 2 x 20 minute visits for those needing care at home is not enough.

A – We need to meet the gap in the market. ML is a challenging building.

Q – You said it wasn't fit for purpose yet the Quality Care Commission found no issues.

A – For in house provision, we need to fill the gaps. Those with intermediate care could go back home, those with complex needs are spending too long in hospital and need to be in the community but we don't have all these facilities. The care at ML is good but working there is physically demanding. Staff have said how challenging it is to support people in the space they have. When it was built in the 1960's, needs were different and there are now more physical demands on the work force

Statement – Members of the public in attendance reported that there were only 2 rooms without ceiling hoists and 22 staff at Moot Lodge.

Q – I don't believe the needs have changed

A – They have. ML can't meet future demand, we can't admit people to ML with high end needs

Q – Why can't you have those with lower needs in ML?

A – We want people to have alternative provision, the last place for someone is a care home, we need to look at all other options first.

Q – ML doesn't have to be for dementia, the town is growing. Why don't you build a new care home here.

A – We have 2 local ones at Carlisle and Longtown.

Q – How are people getting to Longtown? The garden at Longtown has already been vandalised, there's been no vandalism at ML.

A – The garden at Longtown hasn't been vandalised beyond repair but vandalism has happened.

Q – Our relatives don't all of a sudden develop dementia, what happens to those without high end needs who don't need hoists but need love, heat and to be fed? ML has provided a perfect place when they reach that stage, it's a huge concern. There is going to be a massive gap with no facility for them to end their days in and not being allowed to stay in Brampton. You are running out of money and are closing down ML to the detriment of our wonderful old people. (Member of the public received a round of applause)

A - Every person you've described is at the heart of our council, we wouldn't let someone be passed by. Money is not a consideration here, it is based on future care. We would never let a vulnerable adult be left alone. We are engaging and listening and will take everything on board before making a decision. As a council we are committed to supporting people's well-being and not everyone in ML comes from Brampton. Unlike the NHS, adult social care isn't free. We can say that the care at ML is good but the environment isn't.

Q - So you're saying it's because of the physical environment that ML has to close. Where is the feasibility study for the cost of the work required?

A - It's a metric used to calculate the cost based on square footage. Haven't got that information today.

Q - Is the feasibility study available online?

A - I don't know. The floor plans are available. We will find the information and link it to the frequently asked questions.

Q - The feasibility study should have been the first thing done.

A - £2.5m was the cost allocated to ML to bring it up to National Standards. Modern day care homes don't have residents over 4 floors etc. Ideally things should be on the same floor where each unit has its own lounge.

Q - Actually the top floor of ML isn't for residents it is office and storage.

A - For modern care support we need open spaces and areas that are bigger, light and airy.

Q - My mum is in Bramble Court - they don't have a lounge on every level, there's only one.

Q - How much money are you losing on ML?

A - We can check that.

Q - You could save money with the current facility. Is it ethical/convenient for relatives to have to visit homes in Carlisle and/or Longtown. A business plan needs discussed.

A - Thankfully it is not about the cost, it is about the care. We are committed to care and the needs of residents. We are looking at higher complex needs, can we give better?

Q - At a recent meeting of Arthuret Parish.Council, the Cumberland Councillor reported that ML was to close and residents moved to Eskdale House, Longtown. It appears the decision has already been made.

A - The decision to close ML has not been made and the councillor should not have said that, I will write to them.

Q - it is agreed that ML is a good care home, there is no indication that staff/residents/families have issues. Prior to February were there any reports that it was unsuitable?

A - We'd had concerns about the physical condition of the building and bringing it up to standard.

Q - People look at ML as a good care home but you say it can't meet future needs. In your plans, what are the negatives for keeping it open?

A - We can't place people with high end needs there.

Q - You are reducing the number of beds not increasing the number of dementia spaces.

A - We want to keep people at home.

Q - If you ask the officers for all the information on ML, reports etc., what does this information look like? I submitted a FOI request and I got one link to the last meeting.

A - The team will help with FOI requests.

Q - I asked for a list of reports.

A - Maybe you need to be specific. We'll take your point back.

Q - I attended the meeting you held about ML at the community centre. The whole process is called a consultation but all I see is you fending off questions. No-one is writing anything down or listening to ideas. It's a brick wall. A sad situation. It is one way communication and not a consultation at all.

A - The community panel will have been recorded, we have pulled FAQ's together and they are on the website.

Q - Why can't other patients be put in ML?

A - As a local authority we don't necessarily generate income. We assess people on their needs then financially assess. It's a sliding scale, people pay what they can afford.

Q - Not everyone has dementia - what about those?

A - As a provider we support the most vulnerable. Gaps in provision are around dementia. We know the demographics across Cumbria and have a strategic plan. Ideally we want to support people at home for longer.

Q - What is going to happen to these people in their homes? Carers are like gold dust. How is the council going to magic these home carers? There's no connection between these people and those with dementia, you don't want to do other care.

A - We feel that providing more care in the community is the right thing to do. 87% of assessments was to support in-home needs.

Q - So you could move towards that and leave ML open? Otherwise there is no sensible local option, other local care homes are full.

A - No, there are 2 vacancies in Brampton care homes and we have nominations at Bramble Court.

Q - Wilson Homes has 25 on the waiting list with on average 1 person being housed annually. There should be a slot on new developments for a new care home.

A – I am here to hear everything. We haven't predetermined a decision to close. This isn't for show, to say we've been. We are trying to break out of old ways and have new ways of engagement.

Q - We don't want the building left empty, it means a lot.

Q – The building is only worth £200-300k.

A – I can't speak to that building in particular, but assets in general have a social value and use for the community. Selling isn't the only/first option. What can it be used for? A huge commitment for us is listening to residents. All consultation documents will be reviewed and would encourage residents to fill them in. The FAQ's have come from engagement sessions. If you have suggestions for the building then include them in the consultation document.

Q – Will this consultation be summarised and published?

A – Yes, it will be freely available.

MM – My stance is the same as those here, for ML to remain open. I have talked to relatives of those in ML and they are very passionate that it remains open. I understand dementia care and one of my points is that anyone local requiring that level of care should go to a facility offering that but there should still be a level of care available in Brampton.

There are people who have lived in Brampton all their lives and want to stay here and feel part of the community in their latter years, if not at ML then it needs to be somewhere else in Brampton.

Longtown is not easily accessible from Brampton by public transport and puts a strain on families.

As this is a consultation, how much weight will be on the responses from the people of Brampton?

If it's not about the cost then let's have some investment.

Q – Are there any other homes under consultation?

A – Yes, we are at the start of a review for the whole area.

Q – So this will be a domino effect?

RESOLVED to note the presentation and Q and A session.

OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Members of the public in attendance raised the following points:-

- What are you doing about the state of the roads in Brampton?

MM stated that he had personally reported 18 issues and agreed that the state of the roads was appalling, especially the A6071, and would continue to lobby for improvements.

With regard to a possible one-way system through the town centre, the highways department was currently monitoring speed and numbers of vehicles at various points through the town.

With regard to the poor state of the pavements following Broadband works, there had been two instances of companies being fined.

- To MM, I want you to bring pressure on whoever is responsible for the maintenance of the grass bank adjacent to Irthing Park on Greenfield Lane, it has been an ongoing saga for years.

Persimmon has stated they would continue to maintain the area, I have emailed them but haven't received a response and will continue to put pressure on them.

- From a resident survey a few years ago, it feels like things happen but perhaps we could do more as a community and draw together to address those issues. Brampton's community panel has decided that member of the public can't speak at their meetings.

CC representative – The community panels are like a local committee and have to follow legislation, community development officers are working on prioritising local issues.

We want 3 co-opted members to come along to the panel meetings as community networking is very important.

Each panel is different, it is up to the Chairman if a member of the public is permitted to speak. A neighbourhood investment plan is being developed and we want the public to participate at the start of panel meetings.

Meeting closed at 8.28pm.