

Approval of EKPC Meeting 15/03/22 Minutes

All members have received the suggested amendments from a member of the public and the same list was also copied by 2 other members of the public. All members have had access to the recording of the meeting.

In considering these amendments Councillors should remain mindful of what is required and what is guidance. What is required is very simple and is stated in our standing orders:

“The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:

- i. the time and place of the meeting;
- ii. the names of councillors present and absent;
- iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- v. if there was a public participation session; and
- vi. the resolutions made.”

Guidance is available in many places and all echo the same theme. This is from the Essential Clerk Booklet:

“Minutes should be as concise as possible but there is little agreement on the appropriate style for minutes. As a minimum the minutes must record the resolution or the decision but can also include a short summary of important points where this adds value. A detailed account of who said what is neither necessary nor advisable.”

Knowing that there was a lot of interest in the subjects being discussed I included a fair amount of narrative. This appears to have been an unwise decision, since now we are being asked to include precise quotes rather than a summary. This is not the purpose of minutes, the public are free to record meetings if that is what they require. I shall ensure future minutes contain no more than brief bulleted points where any additional information, other than Council decisions, is deemed necessary.

My recommendations, with reasons, on the requested amendments follow:

1. They suggest changing

“They asked that the Parish Council take action to challenge Forestry England over this.”
to

“They asked that the Parish Council to take coordinated action to challenge all aspects of Forestry England’s plans with engagement of other organisations, pointing out that this is in line with existing actions on the Council in the current Ennerdale & Kinniside Community Led Plan issued in 2018”.

I don’t dispute whether that was said or not, the question is, is that amendment necessary? My recommendation would be that it is not necessary, the overall point has been captured and summarised and the Council should be careful not to allow its minutes to become an

opinion section or newsletter for members of the public, otherwise, on an issue where there are two parties in disagreement, people could be demanding a blow by blow account of what was said and we would have set a precedent by making this alteration.

The second point made was that the member of the public asked for a written response from the chair. This is correct and I recommend this alteration be made. Councillor Outhwaite was in the chair and will need to draft a response for approval by the Council.

2. They suggest adding something that was not said during the course of the meeting. I recommend not doing this as it is illegal.
3. Social Media Policy / Press and Social Media Policy. The full title of the document is the "Press and Social Media Policy". Our previous version, although fundamentally the same, the file name was abbreviated to "Social Media Policy". The agenda said "Social Media Policy" and the Chair said "Social Media Policy". For good order, I'm quite happy to recommend the addition in brackets before the title "Press and".
4. Their suggestion is to change the sentence
"The clerk was asked to write to Natural England with copies to Forestry England, United Utilities and the National Trust as well as Angela Jones of the County Council, Trudy Harrison, Lake District National Park, Patrick Graham of Copeland Borough Council and Mike Starkie, asking for their support."

to

"The clerk was asked to write to Natural England with copies to Forestry England, United Utilities and the National Trust to register complaint about the lack of information and the poor engagement process and recommend the consultation was put on hold as well as Andrew Jones of the County Council, Trudy Harrison, Lake District National Park, Patrick Graham of Copeland Borough Council and Mike Starkie, asking for their support."

The additional words were not said in that form and section of the meeting. Earlier in the debate Councillor Taylor said that we should ask them to put the consultation on hold, but Councillor Outhwaite said that there had been no consultation. There was no consensus of opinion. I do not recommend adding these words as it was not said and therefore would be illegal.

5. Blank
6. Blank
7. The member of the public wishes to change the sentence:
"There was concern that we needed to prepare questions in advance.."

to

"and one member referred to his previous statement to the Parish Council that it needs some focussed people to challenge Forestry England as it would be too onerous and slow to be handled through normal council processes."

The suggested amendment is not verbatim. The comment referenced that it would take a lot of effort and couldn't be done on a two-monthly Council meeting (again not verbatim). If the suggested amendment was accepted, we would need to add "of the public" after member so as not to confuse them with members of the Council. However, again I would refer back to item 1. I believe that the short sentence summarises the point adequately and would not recommend the amendment for the same reasons already stated. This discussion went on for a little under 40 minutes. It is necessary to do no more than summarise points.

8. They have asked for the sentence:
"..RT said he had a room that could be used and was happy to work with volunteers on potential questions."

to

“..RT said he had a room that could be used and was happy to work with volunteers to coordinate the questions and he sought the agreement of the council to do so. There was further discussion on the imperative to prepare for the public meeting and need for the working group. Following these further exchanges supported by the CCC councillor & with no objections raised the chairman agreed and moved the meeting on.”

There was a lot said during that discussion and I provided the full transcript on the 6th April by email. RT did ask for a seconder but none was forthcoming. RT made a few comments that he was going to investigate and dig deeper, find things out. “RT: We need to dig a bit deeper I think, that's all I'm saying, we need to dig a bit deeper and just check on things eh? and I think that working party could do that eh, and I don't mind doing that eh, but I need seconded from yourselves to do that through the parish council eh. That's what I would like to do is coordinate that and see if there's anything else there and dig a bit and pull this together.” They say there was no objection, but there was no clear proposal to object to and no motion had been placed on the agenda for people to understand what was being suggested. The statement “The chairman agreed” is not entirely correct or clear as to what was supposed to be agreed to. At the end of a lengthy discussion he said “Right, we know where we're at”. Written in this way it could give a misleading impression that the chair was agreeing to the request for a working party to be authorised.

I would not recommend this amendment because of the reasons given in 1 and 7 and for the potential for misunderstandings arising from the wording.