Minutes of the Haverthwaite **Parish Open** Meeting at Outback Hall, Leven Valley School on **Thursday 5th May 2026 at 7.00pm**.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Stottart
2. **RESOLVED** the minutes of the Annual Open meeting held on 6th May 2025 were approved.
3. **RESOLVED Chair's Annual Report:** Cllr Erin Hitchen presented a report for the 2025-2026 Council year (attached)
4. **RESOLVED Open Forum:** To allow members of the public to raise matters of interest relevant to the Parish Council. There were no resident issues or questions raised.

Annual report: Haverthwaite Parish Council.

Cllr Erin Hitchen

Introduction:

This has been my first year serving on the Council, and as Chair following the resignation of our much-valued Councillor and Chair, Sue Sanderson.

As a result, this report reflects the work of the Council across the full year, with Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 representing the period under Sue's leadership, and Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 covering my time as both a Councillor and Chair.

1. Highways: Maintenance, Traffic Flow, Parking and Flooding

Throughout the year, the Council has actively engaged with Westmorland & Furness Highways and National Highways to address a range of ongoing concerns affecting safety and accessibility across the parish.

Key areas of focus included:

· A590 and GP Surgery Junction Safety: Continued liaison with Highways regarding safety improvements, including repainting of road markings and a broader safety assessment of slip roads and junctions in the area.

· Traffic Speed and 20mph Initiatives: Support in principle for the introduction of a 20mph zone, alongside data collection through Speed Indicator Devices (SID) to monitor vehicle speeds, particularly at Low Wood and along key pedestrian routes.

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· Road Safety Improvements: Engagement with Highways on signage improvements, including requests for clearer junction signage at Low Wood/Fishouse and safety concerns around pedestrian access where no footpaths exist.

· Maintenance Issues: Ongoing reporting of concerns such as landslip risks near the Ironworks and access roads at Backbarrow, as well as persistent littering challenges along the A590.

· Streetlighting Enhancements: Significant investment in upgrading and repairing streetlighting, including LED replacements along the bridge path, repairs to multiple faulting lamps, and ongoing discussions regarding transfer of maintenance responsibility to the Unitary Authority.

· Flooding Mitigation: Reports and follow-up actions on flooding issues, particularly at Whitewater corner, resulting in drainage works such as jetting of blocked drains.

· The Council has maintained a proactive approach, ensuring that local concerns are consistently escalated and monitored with the relevant authorities.

2. Footpaths and Lengthsman Works

The Parish Lengthsman has played a key role in maintaining the parish environment, supporting both routine and responsive works throughout the year.

Key activities included:

· Footpath Maintenance: Regular clearance of key pedestrian routes, including the bridge path, underpass areas, and routes to bus stops, improving safety particularly during autumn and winter months when leaf fall created hazards.

· Vegetation Management: Strimming of verges and footpaths, cutting back vegetation to enable safe access to infrastructure such as streetlights, and planned annual maintenance programmes.

· General Parish Upkeep: Work included clearing bus laybys, de-weeding road islands, improving visibility through kerb painting, and addressing slippery surfaces caused by organic debris.

· Noticeboard Works: Installation, repair, relocation and maintenance of parish noticeboards across multiple locations including Linsty Green, Low Wood and the playing fields.

· Contract Continuity: The Council reviewed and renewed the Lengthsman contract, ensuring continued provision of these essential services.

· These works have contributed significantly to maintaining safe and accessible public spaces across the parish.

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3. Community

The Council has continued to support and engage with the local community, addressing both immediate concerns and longer-term priorities.

Key outcomes included:

· Community Safety and Engagement: Ongoing dialogue with residents regarding traffic concerns, pedestrian safety, and infrastructure improvements, including support for 20mph zones and safer crossings.

· Community Infrastructure: Investment in and maintenance of noticeboards to improve communication and access to local information.

· Support for Local Facilities: Financial and practical contributions towards community assets such as churchyard maintenance and consideration of grant funding requests, including support for the Backbarrow Ironworks Heritage Trust.

· Wider Parish Collaboration: Participation in cross-parish discussions on shared challenges such as second homes and planning pressures, contributing to the formation of a Local Parish Partnership.

· Community Events and Engagement: Representation at local events and initiatives, including health and wellbeing outreach activities, helping to strengthen links between the Council and residents.

· The Council remains committed to supporting a connected, informed and resilient community.

4. Conclusion

Over the past year, the Council has delivered a broad programme of work addressing highways safety, environmental maintenance, and community priorities. The transition in leadership mid-year has been managed effectively, ensuring continuity while maintaining focus on key local issues.

The Council will continue to build on this progress, working collaboratively with residents and partner organisations to enhance the parish for all.

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