

Torver Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Held in the Schoolroom on Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Chair: Cllr C Bradley

Deputy Chair: Cllr T Stergiakis

Councillors: M Feather, J Ward, R Graham

Clerk: C Sargeant

Members of the public: None

Minute Number		Action By
APM1/26	Councillor Chris Bradley welcomed councillors.	
APM2/26	Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 1st May 2025: Resolved: The Minutes were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair C Bradley and D. Chair T Stergiakis.	
APM3/26	The Chair's Report for the year May '25 – April '26: I would like to begin by thanking the members of our Torver Parish Council for the work they do in representing the interests of our community. Mark Feather and Tom Stergiakis, members since our previous annual meeting, have been reliable and solid contributors. During the year, we were delighted to welcome two new councillors, Julie Ward and Rick Graham, both bringing their unique sets of talents. We are in the very happy position of having a full contingent of 5 parish councillors, a notable sign of commitment in a small community such is Torver. The regular attendance of members of our community is very much appreciated, as it informs our deliberations, decisions, and priorities. My sincere thanks to Chas Sargeant, our clerk. Chas has provided a year of diligent and dependable service to our parish council and continues to do this without payment. This is a remarkable act of generosity to our community and though we are deeply in debt to him, the council's finances are consequently healthy. My thanks also go to Fiona Ebbs for providing an essential and reassuring auditing service, and to Paul Devlin whose dedicated work with 'Nobbut' ensures the community remains updated and well informed. My thanks to Suzanne Pender for providing the council with updates on Westmorland & Furness decisions and initiatives and her continued support for us and the issues which affect our community. At our November 2025 meeting, our Chair, Peter Worth, offered his resignation, having made the decision to leave the village to be closer to his family in Tyne & Wear. Peter was an exceptional chair of our council, working with energy, enthusiasm and skilfully applying his extensive experience of local government. We wish him the very best of luck and our deepest thanks. As the previous vice-chair, I have taken	

	up the position of chair. Tom Stergiakis was unanimously welcomed as our new vice-chair. Peter initiated a reduction in the frequency of parish council meetings to six a year. This has continued to prove suitable to our village needs and likely allows councillors and clerk to balance effectiveness with their time commitment. Parish Plan: Pollution: The main area of concern is the question of effectiveness of the Torver Wastewater Treatment Works. United Utilities - who operate the site - have been asked to provide more information about design capacity and performance. Although they have promised to come to a council meeting, a date for this is still eluding us. Road maintenance: It is fair to say that Torver experiences the same steady deterioration in the state of our roads as the rest of the country is suffering. The stretch between Crook Corner and Little Arrow is in a particularly, parlous condition. We will continue to engage with the Highways Agency and Westmorland and Furness Council and press for improvement. Housing: The addition of the Walna Scar view properties has provided a welcome mix of affordable and market value homes. A small addition to the development at the North end of the row should provide yet more affordable residences in Torver. Community events: There are no specific events planned, but we are always open to suggestions! Environmental issues: The location of our community within the national park means that the local environment enjoys a continuing, heightened level of protection. Flooding: This is one of the problems of highest concern within the village. New modelling of the flood risk by the Environment Agency and the firsthand experience of flood events, particularly in the village centre, have made this an urgent issue. We are extremely fortunate that our newest councillor, Rick Graham, has lifelong professional experience in surveying and assessment of flood risk. Rick has contributed much time and effort over the last six months to researching and developing an understanding of the many factors and features of our local environment which result in the current and potential future flood risks. He has developed several practical avenues by which the risk might be reduced and this work is ongoing. Internet connectivity: High-speed broadband services have long been an aspiration expressed in parish plan surveys. During the last year, Fibrus have rolled out the installation of a fibre network along the major roads through Torver. They are now starting to offer internet connections to this new network. The village noticeboard, located on the wall of the Church House Inn, has provided sterling service to Torver over many years. It is now due for retirement, and the parish council is planning its replacement and possible relocation to a more central part of the village. The parish	
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	council is very grateful to the organisers of the Coniston 14 race, who in 2025 made a generous contribution to our fund for a new noticeboard for the village. British Telecom has decommissioned our village public phone box. The parish council took the opportunity to acquire the phone box for the princely sum of £1. A cork noticeboard has been installed, and we will be using this new (sheltered!) space for posting village notices while we transition from the aging noticeboard on the Church House wall to our future, village-centred, free-standing one. Community Governance Review: This review has been carried out during 2025/26 by Westmorland and Furness Council as a periodic assessment of whether local government structures continue to be fit for purpose. The draft proposals recommended a more suitable arrangement would be for a joining of the parishes of Skelwith, Coniston and Torver. This could be arranged as either a full merger, which is irreversible, or a 'grouping' which allows for the pooling of resources and councillors. Grouping can revert to the original arrangements should this be needed. The draft proposals have gone out for public consultation and feedback from the three parish councils, with the deadline for submissions being 22nd April 2026. Torver parish council held a public meeting to discuss the issue and to allow for parishioners to have an opportunity to make their views known. The overwhelming conclusion drawn from participation of the public and deliberation of parish councillors was that the draft proposals for merger or grouping were not in the best interests of Torver residents. An official response to the consultation has been sent back to W&F Council stating that the Torver Parish Council does not support any changes to the current governance arrangements. We will maintain a regular exchange of agendas and minutes with Coniston Parish Council to ensure that both councils and communities are aware of issues which might have wider implications. Our awareness of the activities in neighbouring parishes is further enhanced by our clerk communicating and meeting periodically with fellow clerks. Coniston GP surgery: Uncertainty about the future of GP healthcare provision in Coniston has continued since the retirement of the two doctors who had previously cared for the residents in our local area. Services have been maintained on a temporary basis while the problem of providing medical care for a dispersed rural community has been addressed. An enthusiastic and energetic campaign to maintain our localised medical cover has recently resulted in the promise of a satisfactory solution. Final announcements have yet to be made but it seems that a combination of an association with a local GP service provider and the development of a new surgery facility in Coniston will provide medical cover for the foreseeable future. Parish council communications: A new series of standards to which all levels of local government must conform, has necessitated the review	
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	of many aspects of the way in which our parish council communicates. Email addresses for councillors can no longer be 'personal' ones and must instead be standardised into the .GOV.UK format. The village website must also conform to rigorous and far-reaching standards covering many aspects of publication of statutory policies and documents, data privacy, specific financial reporting, and site accessibility. The current website and email arrangements do not meet these new standards and so a great deal of time and effort has been put into finding the best way forward to update our digital presence across the board. The resulting upgrades are nearing completion. This has been an eventful 12 months. I would like to repeat my thanks to the council and clerk for the way in which the challenges we have faced have been addressed with spirit and resourcefulness.	
APM4/26	Parishioners' Questions: With no parishioners present, the Chair concluded the Annual Parish Meeting.	
APM5/26	There followed the Annual Parish Council meeting of TPC.	

Thank you.

Kind Regards,

Chas Sargeant

Clerk to Torver Parish Council

website: <http://www.torverparishcouncil.org>