

Arnside Parish Council – decision on the in- filling of the old foreshore steps

At the public meeting of Arnside Parish Council held on the 9th July the infilling of the old stone steps on the foreshore was considered.

Several members of the public attended and the Council were already aware of the public concerns expressed over work carried out on a local facebook page and from emails received.

The Chairman made a public apology for not providing better communication on the planned works including an inadequate description of the location and failure to display a public notice prior to works commencing. He also emphasised that the works had been carried out in good faith in the interest of public safety and were not yet complete.

Public concerns centred on the heritage of the steps, safety of those in the water and the current appearance.

After hearing these concerns the Council considered whether it should re-instate the steps as they were, or complete the job, improving the appearance, and making the steps match with the surrounding foreshore slope.

The reasons for the Health and Safety risk associated with these particular steps was described and included their height, narrowness and uneven nature. The Council heard that they were not listed or considered to be of significant historical value and that the location of other steps nearby mean that these steps are not required for safety of those in the water

The legal duty of the Council to eliminate (if reasonably possible) high level risks, or mitigate those risks if not possible; the number of deaths per year nationally from falls down steps and potential problems with a handrail in tidal waters were also outlined.

The Chairman took comments from all Councillors and the public before final council debate.

It was decided by a majority vote of the Council to complete the work to make the steps safe and to seek quotes from stoneworkers to match the infilled steps with the surrounding foreshore slope.

The Council undertakes to complete the works to the steps in a manner in keeping with the rest of the historic foreshore and will carry this out as soon as possible to improve the appearance.

It regrets the loss of what is for many people, including councillors, a site of happy childhood memories, however the Council duty to ensure the safety of the public was considered to be of overriding importance.

The Council would like to thank the local community for its understanding and to ask for continued support for the improvements it is making to the village.

Council meetings are held on the second Monday of every month and members of the public are invited to attend and are welcome to speak during the public session. Further details can be found on the parish Council Website. www.arnsidepc.org.uk