

ALDCLIFFE – WITH – STODDAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th December 2018 at 7.00pm

The Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster.

Present: Councillor Chris Norman (Chairman) – present for items 1,2,3,5,6 and 10.
Councillor Nicholas Webster – Acting Chairman for items 4,7,8,9,11 and 12
Councillors Colin Rogers and Kevan Walton
Derek Whiteway, Parish Clerk
One member of the public attended

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Emma Wolstencroft. Also, from County Councillor Gina Dowding and City Councillors Abi Mills and Ronnie Kershaw.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th November 2018 were approved without further amendment.

3. Declarations of Interest

The Clerk declared an interest in item 10 – Clerk's conditions of employment.

4. Public Discussion and Updates

a) Public Discussion:

- i) The resident present enquired about the status of the lodge at the entrance to Aldcliffe Hall Drive and whether any action was available to the Parish Council regarding maintenance. Councillor Webster reported that he understood the City Council's Empty Homes Conservation Team had issued a warning to the owners to make the property safe and a response was awaited. **Action:** If the owners take no action, the Parish Council will contact the City Council and request that the warning is enforced.

b) Clerk's Report:

- i) **Newsletter.** The Clerk had received a number of messages of thanks and appreciation for the recent newsletter. It was apparent that a small number of properties had not received a copy and this would be addressed in future.

Fly-tipping on Aldcliffe Hall Drive. Following an incident reported by Councillor Webster, the Clerk had written to Adcliffe Hall Estate's agents on 14th November 2018 about the dumping of garden waste on the Drive. No response had been received in time for the meeting. **Action: The Clerk to continue to communicate with the agents about this issue.**

- ii) **Burglaries.** The Clerk reported that there had been a strong community response to reports about burglaries in Stodday and that this had happily resulted in a man being apprehended. The Council again expressed its thanks to everyone who had responded and the residents who had spotted and reported the offender.

c) Members' Updates

i) **Highways Issues:**

- a) The Chair reported that he was still negotiating with relevant bodies regarding the canal-side parking issues along Aldcliffe Road. It appeared that no organisation was currently in a position to act. The Chair was investigating whether the Parish Council was able to adopt the length of canal in question, thereby enabling it to carry out maintenance.
- b) Grit bins within the Parish are a current concern. Councillor Walton advised that one in Stodday had recently been filled, the other being adequate. The Clerk reported that he had received a request from a resident and had referred them to the County Council's 'Report It' service to request replenishment.

- ii) **Lengthsman.** Councillor Webster reported that the Lengthsman had started work at the beginning of December on the basis of 4 hours per week. His first task had been in relation to problems on the culverted stream between Snuff Mill Lane and the cycle path. Several issues had been identified and it was agreed that Councillors would meet with the Lengthsman to review the position. County Councillor Dowding had also been in contact offering to resume negotiations with United Utilities on this issue.

Action: Councillors Webster, Rogers and Walton to meet on site with the Lengthsman to review the problems. Councillor Walton to liaise with County Councillor Dowding to recommence discussion with United Utilities.

The Lengthsman had raised questions about arrangements to dispose of waste collected from roadsides. **Action: The Clerk to investigate and identify options.**

The Clerk referred to invoicing and payment arrangements discussed with the Lengthsman. The Lengthsman will submit an invoice at the end of each calendar month. The Clerk proposed that arrangements be formally

adopted to ensure that the Lengthsman can be paid within a reasonable timeframe. **Resolved:** That the Council formally delegates authority to the Chair and Vice Chair to authorise payment to the Lengthsman prior to approval of the invoice at a Council Meeting, provided that the invoiced services and amount are within the normal terms of his engagement.

- iii) **Arna Wood Solar Farm.** Councillor Walton reported that some planting of screening trees had been carried out on the western side of the site.

Action: Councillor Walton to continue to monitor progress.

- iv) **United Utilities.** Councillor Walton advised that no further action was currently being taken regarding noise issues.

- v) **Application for a Public Right of Way, Aldcliffe Hall Drive.** Councillor Rogers reported that the consultation period for the Restricted Byway Order was due to end on 21st December 2018. It was understood that there had so far been one objection lodged that would be referred to the Secretary of State.

d) City and County Councillor Updates: None received

5. Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Chair and Councillor Rogers provided an update on progress. The application for grant funding from Groundworks had been approved, meaning that the project could move forward with Kirkwells Ltd as consultants. Funding was also being sought for a housing needs survey to be commissioned; this request was still under consideration. The Clerk is to be responsible for financial control aspects for the funding and for completing a 'due diligence' return.

Councillor Rogers is to act as chair of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group (NDPWG) and had engaged three residents as members of the Group. Councillor Rogers was making arrangements for an initial meeting of the NDPWG in January 2019.

The Chair reported that paperwork in connection with the Plan Designation Area was up to date and approved by the City Council, who had allocated a Planning Officer to the project.

6. Budget and Precept 2019/20

The Clerk presented a report setting out the outcomes and conclusions from a review of spending and future plans. Main considerations included:

- The recent engagement of a Lengthsman, which would entail an annual cost in the region of £3,000 if continued for future years; and
- The possibility of a Parish Council election in May 2019, the potential cost of which was estimated at £1,000.

Following a review of significant financial risks, the Clerk recommended that the Council adopt a target level of general reserves of £3,500.

Based on these projections, the Clerk had recommended a precept for 2019/20 of £5,200, compared with £3,600 in 2018/19. The recommended precept would represent a charge of £35.62 for a Band D property (£24.76 in 2018/19).

Referring to a donation of £3,000 to the Parish Council made by the former Aldcliffe Residents' Association, the Clerk recommended that, in line with the donors' wishes, this be used to establish an 'Environmental Support Reserve'. An 'Elections Reserve' was also recommended to help spread the cost of elections over each financial year. The Clerk set out proposed conditions relating to the management and use of these reserves in a draft 'Reserves Protocol' in an addendum to the report.

Councillors asked questions of the Clerk regarding the estimates and his recommendations and discussed the pros and cons of raising the precept. Following debate, Councillor Webster proposed that the report be approved. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Rogers and carried unanimously.

Resolved:

- a) **That the draft budget for 2019/20 is approved.**
- b) **That a precept of £5,200 is approved and notified to Lancaster City Council.**
- c) **That a target level of general reserve of £3,500 is endorsed**
- d) **That earmarked reserves for 'Environmental Support Reserve' and Elections Reserve' be established and managed according to the proposed Reserves Protocol.**

7. Parish Council Communications and Website

The Clerk and Councillor Webster reported on progress with setting up the new website, <https://www.aldcliffewithstoddaypc.org> which was now 'live'.

The Clerk advised that, following email communications about the recent burglaries, he had received several requests for email addresses to be added to the contact list. The Clerk is exploring ways of allowing 'subscribers' to be sent notifications whenever news items are added to the website. It is hoped that as many residents as possible can be reached in this way. **Action: The Clerk to explore ways to reach as many residents as possible through electronic communications.**

8. Information Management Policies

The Clerk presented a report covering proposals to adopt the following policies and statements:

- Information Management and Data Protection Policy;
- Privacy Statement;
- Publication Scheme;
- Complaints Procedure and Complaints Form.

Resolved: Following discussion, it was resolved that the draft documents be approved and adopted, subject to some minor amendments.

9. Planning Matters

The Clerk presented an update on planning decisions, which was noted.

Planning application 18/01100/FUL – Demolition of existing retail building and erection of a food store, Aldcliffe Road. The Clerk advised Members that whilst the consultation period for this application had ended on 25th October 2018, the statutory expiry date was 28th December and the Council may still be entitled to comment.

Councillors felt that concerns over the potential increase in traffic through the hamlets should be reported. **Action:** The Clerk to draft a letter of representation to the City Council.

Proposed incineration plant, Heysham. Councillor Webster referred to a recent article in the Lancaster Guardian about proposals for a furnace at Heysham, which would include the incineration of non-recyclable plastics. It was agreed that the Parish would have great concerns over emissions from such a plant. **Action:** The Clerk to investigate the position as regards planning and request that the Parish Council be notified of any developments.

10. Clerk's Conditions of Employment

Having declared an interest, the Clerk left the room during discussion of this item. The Chair and Vice-Chair informed the meeting of the outcome of a recent review of the Clerk's performance and hours worked on Parish Council business. Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Webster, seconded by Councillor Norman and approved unanimously that the Clerk's employment be confirmed on the existing pay scale point, with contracted hours of 9 to 11 per month.

Resolved:

- a) That the Clerk's employment is confirmed, with pay at scale point 17; and
- b) The Clerk's contracted hours be amended to 9 to 11 per calendar month, with effect from January 2019.

11. Accounts

The Parish Clerk informed the meeting of the following payments due to be made by the Parish Council:

Payee & Detail	£
Derek Whiteway – Parish Clerk salary and expenses, Oct-Dec 2018	213.33
HMRC – PAYE deductions for Oct-Dec 2018	52.40
Came & Company – Insurance Premium 2018/19	218.00
Friends Meeting House – hire of room 18/12/18	30.00

Resolved: That the above payments are authorised

12. Date and venue for next meeting

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was set as Tuesday, 5th February 2019 at 7.00pm at the Friends Meeting House, Lancaster.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

..... Clerk of the Council

..... Chair Date: