

Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held on 4th May 2021 at 7.00pm using Zoom video conferencing

Present: Councillor Nick Webster (Chairman)
Councillors Denise Parrett and Kevan Walton
City Councillor Tim Dant
Derek Whiteway, Parish Clerk
One member of the public attended the meeting

21/014 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from City Councillor Abi Mills and County Councillor Gina Dowding.

21/015 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 1) The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 6th April 2021, were approved without further amendment.

Matters arising:

- 2) **21/002(4) – Hedgerows.** The Clerk advised that, following discussions with the Chairman about progress made on some issues in recent months, the plan was now to monitor activity through the summer before deciding on when and how best to raise any ongoing issues with farmers and landowners.
- 3) **21/009(1) – Septic Tank/Sewer Leak.** The Clerk reported that the farmer of the land in question (a field to the South of Aldcliffe Hall Lane) had reported the leak to United Utilities (UU), who had responded very quickly and resolved the issue. The Chairman commented that he was hopeful that the work undertaken by UU might also have resolved the long-standing problem of water issuing from the field onto Aldcliffe Hall Lane.

21/016 Election of Officials 2021/22

- a) **Chair of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2021/22.** Councillor Walton proposed that Councillor Webster be appointed as Chairman for the year. This was seconded by Councillor Parrett and carried unanimously.

Resolved: That Councillor Webster is appointed as Chairman for the municipal year 2021/22

b) **Deputy Chair of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2021/22.**

Councillor Webster proposed that Councillor Walton be appointed as Deputy Chairman for the year. This was seconded by Councillor Parrett and carried unanimously.

Resolved: That Councillor Walton is appointed as Deputy Chairman for the municipal year 2021/22

c) **Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chair.** The Clerk advised that he would arrange for Councillor Webster to sign the declaration following the meeting.

21/017 Co-option of a Parish Councillor.

The Clerk reported that one application for co-option to the vacant Councillor position had been received, that being from Mr Duncan Hall, who was attending the meeting. Councillors had previously received and considered Mr Hall's personal statement in support of his application.

Following a brief discussion with Mr Hall, the Chairman proposed that Mr Hall be co-opted as Councillor on to the Parish Council. This was seconded by Councillor Parrett and carried unanimously.

Resolved: That Mr Duncan Hall is co-opted as a Parish Councillor

The Clerk advised that Councillor Hall would officially become a Parish Councillor once his acceptance of office and declaration of interests had been completed and submitted to the City Council's Monitoring Officer.

21/018 Declarations of Interest

No further declarations were made.

21/019 Councillors' roles for the municipal year 2021/22

The Clerk outlined the roles that Councillors had adopted in the previous two years and queried whether these were now in need of review.

Following discussion, Councillors agreed that the ongoing issue of broadband supply was a key issue for the Parish and that Councillors Walton and Hall should take a joint lead on the matter. It was agreed that Councillors should review other topic areas with a view to defining and assigning responsibilities at the next meeting.

Resolved: That Councillors Walton and Hall will take a joint lead role on broadband supply. It was agreed that Councillors should review the existing list of roles with a view to agreeing a revised list and assigning roles at the next Parish Council meeting.

21/020 Chairman's Annual Report 2020/21

The Chairman presented his annual report to the meeting. Councillors accepted the report the Chairman asked the Clerk to publicise it to parishioners via the Parish Council's website.

21/021 Final Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21.

The Clerk presented a report on the closure of the Council's Accounts for 2020/21 and submitted the draft AGAR for approval. The Internal Auditor's report was included in the AGAR, the auditor's opinion being that expected arrangements were in place and that no issues or recommendations had been raised.

The Clerk advised that in his opinion, all expected governance arrangements set out in Section 1 of the AGAR were in place and the statement could be approved. Section 2 set out the Accounting Statements for 2020/21, the figures corresponding with draft budget statements previously reported to the Council.

The deadline for submission of the completed AGAR is 30th June 2021. The Clerk therefore recommended that the AGAR be approved, and the period of public inspection be set as Monday, 7th June to Friday, 16th July 2021.

The Clerk reported further on previous discussions regarding the final accounts and the Council's earmarked reserves and recommended that a contribution of £250 be made from the General Account to the Elections Reserve. No further transfers to earmarked reserves were recommended, pending a planned review of reserves following completion of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21 is noted and accepted.
- (2) That Section 1 of the AGAR – the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, is approved.
- (3) That Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements 2020/21, is approved.
- (4) That the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts is set as Monday 7th June to Friday 16th July 2021 inclusive.
- (5) That a contribution of £250 be made from the General Reserve to the Elections Reserve

21/022 Banking arrangements

The Chairman and Clerk reported on the history of the Parish Council holding a 'Community Account' with the Skipton Building Society, and the dwindling annual interest returned by the account. The Clerk reported that, based on current balances and interest rates, a return of £4-£5 was anticipated in the coming year. The Clerk therefore recommended that, in the interests of efficiency, the account be closed and the balance transferred to the Parish's main Unity Trust Bank Current Account.

Following questions and discussion, Councillors agreed that the Skipton BS account should be kept open to provide potential for future income should interest rates recover, with balances being transferred to the Unity Trust Bank as necessary.

Resolved: That the existing Skipton Building Society Community Account be retained.

21/023 Risk Register Review 2021/22

The Clerk reported on his conclusions and recommendations from a review of the Council's Risk Register. The last formal review of the Register had been approved by the Council in August 2019. The Clerk proposed several minor updates to existing entries to reflect actions taken by the Council to mitigate various risks. In addition, two new risks were proposed relating to a) continuing flooding incidents within the parish; and b) the potential impacts on the parish from the proposed Bailrigg Garden Village development.

Following discussion, Councillors agreed that a further risk should be included concerning the ongoing impacts and dangers from heavy vehicles (both farming and commercial) using the parish's lanes.

Resolved: That the revised Risk Register is approved, subject to the inclusion of an additional risk concerning the ongoing impacts and dangers from heavy vehicles (both farming and commercial) using the parish's lanes

21/024 Review of Council Policies and Procedures

The Clerk reported on his conclusions and recommendations from a review of the following:

- a) Standing Orders;
- b) Financial Regulations;
- c) Information Management and Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice, and Publication Scheme; and
- d) Complaints Procedure.

The Clerk recommended several minor updates to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, mainly to reflect procedural changes associated with increased use of electronic record-keeping and online banking procedures. Councillor Walton raised a query regarding contract letting procedures and whether the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were wholly consistent. The Clerk agreed to review this matter.

The Clerk did not propose any changes to the Information Management and Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notice, and the Complaints Procedure. A single change was proposed to the Publication Scheme reflecting the introduction in 2020/21 of a Chairman's Annual Report.

Following discussion, Councillors accepted and approved the Clerk's recommendations without any further proposed changes.

Resolved: That the following revised policies are approved and adopted:

- (1) Standing Orders;
- (2) Financial Regulations;
- (3) Information Management and Data Protection Policy;
- (4) Privacy Notice;
- (5) Publication Scheme; and
- d) Complaints Procedure.

21/025 Planning Applications

No new planning applications had been referred to the Parish Council since the last meeting.

21/026 Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Councillor Parrett provided Councillors with an update on the project. A meeting of the Working Group, with Louise Kirkup, had been held on Monday, 12th April to discuss Louise's conclusions and recommendations on the responses received to the Regulation 14 consultation.

Three documents had now been completed for submission to Lancaster City Council, these being: a Consultation Statement; a Submission Plan; and a Basic Conditions Statement. These are currently being checked by the NDPWG and once complete, the City Council will be consulted as to whether any further screening assessments are required. Following that stage, the documents will be submitted to the Parish Council for approval, hopefully at the June meeting.

Following approval by the Parish Council, the documents will be submitted to the City Council to carry out their statutory consultation (Regulation 16). Progress was therefore slow but steady. Councillor Parrett was hopeful that the whole process might be completed by September, if all necessary parties to the remaining tasks are on board.

The Clerk confirmed that the 2020/21 end of grant report had been submitted to Groundwork UK and that an application for funding for the remaining stages could progress once the 2020/21 unspent monies were repaid to Groundwork UK.

21/027 Long Mile Lane Flooding

City Councillor Dant reported that work undertaken by a local farmer to dig out a gully alongside the path had had a significant impact on drainage of the area. Questions remained, however, as to why the area flooded earlier in the year and what further work might be carried out to clear the drain.

The Clerk reported on discussions held with one local farmer and the Morecambe Bay Wildfowlers Association (MBWA), who had lodged an application with Natural England (NE) to carry out gully clearing works on the foreshore. It had been suggested that

representations to NE from local Parish and County Councillors on this matter would be valuable.

Following discussion, it was agreed that, following the forthcoming elections, the Parish Council should seek the support of the County Councillor in making representations and should attempt to set up a site meeting with the interested parties (MBWA, farmers and Councillors). It was agreed that there was some urgency to make progress during the next few months when weather and tidal conditions would be most favourable.

Action: Following the election on 6th May, City Councillor Dant will liaise with the Parish's County Councillor and the Parish Clerk to determine a plan of action.

21/028 Future Meeting Arrangements

The Clerk confirmed that, from Friday, 7th May, Councils were no longer legally able to hold official meetings remotely. The Clerk had therefore arranged for the Council's future meetings to be held at the Quaker Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster, beginning with a meeting on Tuesday, 1st June 2021. The Meeting House had advised that the room booked carries a capacity limit of 10 people under current circumstances.

21/029 Public Discussion and Updates

City and County Councillors' Reports

No further reports had been received.

Clerk's Report:

1) Government 'call for evidence' on remote meeting experiences

The Clerk reminded Councillors that, alongside the imminent return to physical meetings, the Government had issued a 'call for evidence' regarding local Councils' experiences in holding meetings remotely.

Following discussion,

Action: No action was agreed regarding participation in the Governments 'call for evidence'.

2) Highways

Nothing to report.

3) Amenity, including the Lengthsman (Chairman)

The Chairman reported that the Lengthsman was planning work to remove weeds on the parish's pavements. Councillor Parrett asked whether the Lengthsman could be asked to look at the steps leading from the Smuggler's Lane public footpath onto the estuary multi-use path with a view to clearing the steps and to consider the potential for installing a handrail.

Action: The Chairman will consult the Lengthsman about work to clear steps leading from the Smuggler's Lane path up on to the estuary multi-use path and the possibility of installing a handrail.

4) Restricted Byway designation of Aldcliffe Hall Drive

Nothing to report.

5) Stakeholder Liaison, including United Utilities (Councillor Walton)

Nothing further to report.

6) BT Openreach (Chairman)

Nothing to report.

7) Ancillary (Chairman)

Nothing to report.

8) Other Matters

No further matters were raised.

Public Discussion:

No matters were raised.

21/030 Payments

Payee & Detail	£
Derek Whiteway – Parish Clerk salary and expenses, April 2021	121.70
HMRC – PAYE deductions, April 2021	30.40
Groundwork UK – Repayment of unspent Phase II NDP Grant	832.00
Dawn Allen – Internal Audit services 2020/21 audit	60.00

Resolved: That the above accounts be approved for payment.

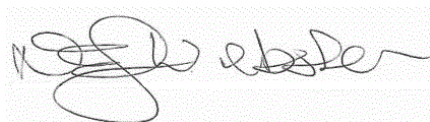
21/031 Date and venue for next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the Quaker Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster on Tuesday, 1st June 2021, commencing at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm



Clerk of the Council



Chair

Date: 1st June 2021