



Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 10th January 2024 at 7.00pm at St Paul's Parish Hall, Scotforth

Present: Councillor Nick Webster (Chairman)
Councillors Tim Dant, Denise Parrett and Kevan Walton.
Derek Whiteway, Parish Clerk

23/077 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Ward, City Councillors Abi Mills and Tim Hamilton-Cox and County Councillor Gina Dowding.

23/078 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 1) The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th December 2023, were approved without further amendment.

Matters arising:

- 2) **23/069(2) Signage on Arna Wood Lane.** No further progress to report. Councillors agreed not to pursue the matter further.
- 3) **23/069(3) Review of Non-Designated Heritage Assets.** No progress to report.

Action: The Clerk will write to the owners/occupiers of Lunecliffe Lodge regarding the property being included in the NDHA list.

- 4) **23/069(4) Oaklands and Craiglands Court Pedestrian Gates.** The Chairman reported that some painting work was yet to be carried out on the Craiglands Court gates. Councillors agreed that Rose and Thistle should be approached regarding the repairs needed to the loose pintles on the Oaklands Court gate.

Resolved: The Chairman will consult Rose and Thistle about the required repairs to the Oaklands Court gate.

- 5) **23/069(5) Public Footpaths.** Lancashire County Council PRow Team had advised that they would reinspect the Snuff Mill Lane restricted byway (RB0105010) in Spring and assess whether it can be added to their annual mowing programme.

- 6) **23/069(6) United Utilities Sewage Discharge Statistics.** No progress to report.

Action: The Clerk and Chairman will liaise in writing to the Chair of Lancaster City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ask for an investigation into sewage discharge into the district's rivers.

Action: United Utilities will be requested to provide statistics on sewage discharges from the Stodday WwTW.

7) **23/074(1) Stodday Lane and Lunecliffe Road hedgerows.** The Clerk reported that he had emailed County Highways again about the lack of action by some landowners to deal with chronic and severe hedgerow overgrowth. A response was awaited. Councillor Walton emphasised public safety concerns associate with the overgrown hedgerows.

23/079 Declarations of Interest

No further declarations or changes to existing declarations were made.

23/080 Planning Applications

1) **Planning Consultations.** No new consultations had been received since the last meeting.

2) Update on Previous Planning Applications

The Clerk's report on recent planning decisions made by Lancaster City Council was accepted.

3) Other Planning Matters

Councillors discussed the Council's rules and protocols relevant to the consideration of planning consultations and agreed that the Standing Orders should be reviewed.

Agreed: The Clerk will review the Parish Council's Standing Orders and report back on any necessary or suggested amendments.

23/081 Parish Council Budget Review and Precept 2024/25

The Clerk introduced a budget report covering a review of the current 2023/24 financial year and proposed budget and precept for 2024/25. Net receipts of £2,031 were projected for the year ending 31st March 2024, which would raise the General Fund balance to £9,375, i.e. £5,375 above the target balance level of £4,000.

On a 'continuation of services' basis, with no allowance for new projects or changes in service, a net budget requirement for 2024/25 of £7,445 was estimated. The Clerk had recommended that Councillors review the budget for Lengthsman Services as well as considering the precept and level of balances.

Lancaster City Council had advised that the Parish Council's tax base for 2024/25 is 147.89, a slight increase on the 2023/24 level of 146.82. The Clerk provided Councillors with a range of tax rate options ranging from no increase (with the full budget deficit being funded from balances) to a 27.4% increase to cover the full budget requirement.

Councillors asked questions of the Clerk and debated the merits of the various budget and precept options.

It was proposed by Councillor Dant, seconded by Councillor Parrett, that: the Lengthsman budget be reduced by £1,000; the tax charge to residents be increased by 5%; and that the remaining budget requirement be met from balances.

Councillor Walton proposed an amendment that the tax charge to residents be raised by 4%. On voting, this amendment was lost.

Councillors then voted on Councillor Dant's proposal. Councillors Webster, Dant, Parrett and Ward voted in favour of the proposal and Councillor Walton abstained.

Councillor Parrett then proposed that an earmarked reserve be established to support future revisions of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and that an initial contribution of £750 be transferred from the General Account balances. This was seconded by Councillor Webster and Councillors voted unanimously in favour.

Resolved: That the Clerk's report is accepted and that:

- a) a target level of general reserves of £4,000 is endorsed
- b) the draft budget for 2024/25 is approved, subject to a reduction of £1,000 in the Lengthsman budget (to £2,550).
- c) a precept of £6,130 is approved and notified to Lancaster City Council, representing a 5% increase in the tax rate to residents.
- d) £315 of the 2024/25 budget requirement be met from General Account balances.
- e) A 'Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Reserve' is established with an initial contribution of £750 being transferred from the General Account balances.

23/082 Lune Estuary Management Considerations

The Clerk updated Councillors on correspondence with Natural England regarding future arrangements. Natural England continued to look to the Parish Council to lead on the administration of the project.

Councillors thanked the Clerk for his work on the project to date. Following discussion, Councillors agreed that whilst the Parish Council should maintain involvement in meetings, they were not able to commit financial and staffing resources to administer the project.

It was also agreed that the Parish Council should seek to meet separately with The Morecambe Bay Wildfowlers Association (MBWA) and local tenant farmers about the ongoing flooding issues in the Parish.

Agreed: The Clerk will advise Natural England that the Parish Council is unable to commit financial and staffing resources to administering the project.

Agreed: MBWA and local tenant farmers will be contacted with a view to meeting to discuss ongoing flooding issues in the Parish.

23/083 Public Discussion and Updates

City and County Councillors' Reports

None received.

Clerk's Report:

The Clerk reported on recent items of correspondence. No actions were identified.

Members' Updates

1) Highways (Chairman)

The Chairman reported that a fallen highways sign on Aldcliffe Lane.

Agreed: The Chairman will report the fallen highways sign to the County Council.

2) Amenity, including the Lengthsman (Chairman)

Nothing to report.

3) Stakeholder Liaison.

Nothing further to report.

4) Broadband.

Nothing further to report.

5) Other Matters

Councillors expressed their pleasure at Councillor Webster's welcome return to the Council meetings.

Public Discussion:

No further matters were raised.

23/084 Payments

Payee & Detail	
Scotforth Parish Hall. Hire of Meeting Room for Parish Council meeting, 10th January 2024 (see note 1)	25.20
Derek Whiteway – Parish Clerk salary and expenses, December 2023	207.08
HMRC – PAYE deductions, December 2023	49.20

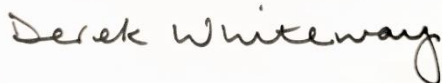
Note 1. Invoices from St Paul's Parish Hall are now received at the end of each calendar month and payments are processed separately.

Resolved: That the above accounts be approved for payment.

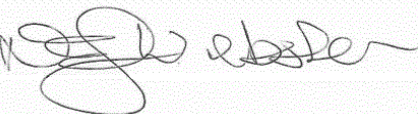
23/085 Date and venue for next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 7th February 2024 at St Paul's Parish Hall, Scotforth, commencing at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm



Clerk of the Council



Chair

Date: 8th February 2024