

ALDCLIFFE – WITH – STODDAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th November 2018 at 7.00pm

The Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster.

Present: Councillor Chris Norman (Chairman)
Councillors Colin Rogers, Kevan Walton and Nicholas Webster
City Councillor Ronnie Kershaw
Derek Whiteway, Parish Clerk
3 members of the public attended

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th September 2018 were approved without further amendment.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Public Discussion and Updates

a) Public Discussion:

- i) Councillor Rogers questioned whether any action could be taken in relation to a recent letter received from County Highways about winter conditions. Suggestions were made, including encouraging action by residents and a review of gritting bins (not completed during the summer). Councillor Webster suggested that residents could be encouraged to de-weed highway areas outside their properties.

Action: A review of gritting bins to be completed and reported to County Highways. Also, the Parish Council to write to all residents encouraging action during the winter period.

b) Clerk's Report:

- i) **Elections.** A letter had been received from the City Council advising of the likely costs of elections in May 2019. The letter was noted.

Action: The Clerk to build potential costs into the budget process for 2019/20.

- ii) **Invitation to VIP Event** – Invitation to the Chair to attend an event by Lancaster Place Board on Thursday, 6th December. The Chair advised he was not available to attend.

Action: City Councillor Kershaw offered to investigate the nature and purpose of the event.

- iii) **Guide to Emergencies.** Document received from Lancashire County Council. This was noted without any further action proposed at this stage.
- iv) **Clerks Conference.** The Clerk advised that he was attending a half-day conference organised by Lancashire County Council scheduled for Saturday, 24th November.
- v) **Lune Valley Flood Forum.** The Clerk advised of an email just received from the LV Flood Forum seeking support in their project to grow Flood Action Groups in the Lune catchment area.

Action: The Clerk to forward the email to Councillors for their individual consideration.

c) Members' Updates

- i) **Application for a Public Right of Way, Aldcliffe Hall Drive.** Councillor Rogers reported that the Order for the establishment of the Restricted Byway had been made on 3rd October 2018, with a deadline of 6th December 2018 for any representations and objections to be lodged with the County Council.

- ii) **Highways Issues:**

- a) The Chair reported that he had received no further response from County Highways regarding the problematic canal side road surface on Aldcliffe Road. It was noted that a number of vehicle collisions had occurred on the stretch. **Action:** The Chair continues to pursue the issue with County Highways and the Canals & Rivers Trust.
- b) The Chair reported that enforcement action by County Highways was still awaited in some areas where landowners were failing to trim hedges. **Action:** The Chair to continue to monitor. City Councillor Kershaw also offered to write to the County Council about the issue.
- c) City Councillor Kershaw reported that he had been advised by County Highways that HGV restriction signs were to be installed on Aldcliffe Road, this taking up to 12 weeks to complete.

Action: It was agreed that the Council needed to push for other restriction signs along the Ashton Road to Stodday road (via Waterside Farm).

- iii) **Arna Wood Solar Farm.** Councillor Walton reported there had been no further action regarding the outstanding planning condition concerning site screening issues.

Action: Councillor Walton to write to City Council Planners on the Council's behalf on this matter.

- iv) **United Utilities.** Councillor Walton reported that United Utilities had written stating that they could not identify the source of any reported noise. They had gone on to suggest that the Council refer the matter to the City Council Environmental Health service.

Action: Councillor Walton to contact Environmental Health on the issue.

- v) **Access between Lune Estuary Path and Stodday:** This matter was discussed later in the meeting under the item 6 – Lengthsman considerations.

d) City and County Councillor Updates: None received

5. Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair advised that a meeting to establish a Neighbourhood Planning Working Group had yet to be arranged. An update had recently been received from Lancaster City Council on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area Application, which had been lodged on 7th August 2018. The application was due to be considered as an Individual Cabinet Member Decision within the next few weeks.

The Chair also reported that a Support Package and fee proposal in the sum of £8,450 had been received from Kirkwells Ltd following the presentation made to the Council meeting on 18th September. The proposal was contingent on a successful bid (with Kirkwell's support) for Locality funding covering the full cost of the exercise.

The Clerk advised that, whilst the proposed procurement fell over the £5,000 threshold within the Council's Financial Regulations requiring official tenders, it could be exempted from competition provisions as a specialist service (para 11.1(b)). This exemption did not absolve the Council from ensuring value for money in the procurement. The Chair outlined actions he had taken to evaluate the proposal received from Kirkwells and the company's credentials, these including positive recommendations received from the City Council and from another local Parish Council who had recently completed their Plan.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Councillor Webster, seconded by Councillor Walton and unanimously agreed that, subject to a condition of successful application for locality funding, the fee proposal submitted by Kirkwells Ltd be accepted and the company be appointed as consultants for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Resolved: that, subject to a condition of successful application for locality funding, the fee proposal submitted by Kirkwells Ltd be accepted and the company be appointed as consultants for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chair then reported that he had recently met with the Canals and Rivers Trust (C&RT) regarding the Lancaster Canal frontage within the Parish between Aldcliffe Road and Deep Cutting (Ashton Road). Following discussions regarding the provision of a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the Chair had obtained a quotation of £300 for the provision of a survey from the C&RT's recommended specialist, with a view to the study being undertaken within the coming week. The Chair reported that a further survey would be required during the Spring/Summer 2019. The Clerk advised that, under the Council's Financial Regulations, the procurement fell under the £500 threshold for competitive quotes (para 11.1(g)) and could be exempted from competition provisions as a specialist service (para 11.1(a)(ii)). The proposed service could be funded from earmarked funds donated to the Council by the former Aldcliffe Residents Association. After consideration of the Clerk's advice, it was unanimously agreed that the quotation be accepted.

Resolved: that the quotation received for the production of a Phase 1 Habitat Survey be accepted.

6. Lengthsman Considerations

Councillor Webster reported on a site meeting (involving a tour of the Parish) held by himself and the Clerk with Mr Greg Robinson, proprietor of Robinson Countryside, provider of countryside maintenance and management services, including Lengthsman services to several Parish Councils in the area.

During the tour of the Parish, a variety of tasks were identified, including hedge and verge trimming, drainage issues, detritus clearance and some specific chronic problems such as flooding of the footpath between the end of Snuff Mill road and the Cyclepath. Mr Robinson had advised that he judged the work identified to require 4 hours per week.

The Clerk advised that the Council's current annual precept level of £3,600 could clearly not sustain the level of service being proposed, but that existing reserves could cover the cost of engaging Mr Robinson for the remainder of the current financial year. If the Council wished to consider such a service for the future, an increase in precept would be necessary and built in to budget projections.

Following discussion of other options, including the establishment of community groups and the use of volunteers to undertake this work, it was proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Webster and agreed by majority that Mr Robinson be approached with a view to engaging him as Lengthsman for the period up to 31st March 2019. It was also agreed that the service should be closely monitored, with Councillor Webster as liaison, and impacts evaluated over the period before any further budgetary commitment is made. Current priorities identified were the footpath mentioned above and clearing the overgrown verge along Aldcliffe Hall Lane.

Resolved: that Robinson Countryside be approached with a view to engaging Mr Robinson as Lengthsman for the period up to 31st March 2019.

7. Planning Matters

The Clerk presented a report setting out an update on planning applications made in the parish during 2018.

Resolved: That the report be noted

8. Accounts

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

Payee & Detail	£
Friends Meeting House – hire of room 06/11/18 (not yet received)	18.00
PKF Littlejohn – statutory audit 2017/18	240.00

Resolved: That the above payments are authorised

9. Date and venue for next meeting

The date of the next Parish Council meeting was set as Tuesday 18th December 2018 at 7.00pm at the Friends Meeting House, Lancaster.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

..... Clerk of the Council

..... Chair Date: