

PARISH OF NETHER KELLET
Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at
Congregational Church School Rooms on Wednesday 4th April 2018 at 7-00 pm.

Present: Councillor Mr David Whitaker - Chair
Councillor Mrs Judith Bentham
Councillor Mr Nick Johnson
Councillor Mr Peter Riley
Councillor Mr George Smith
Councillor Mr Ian Williams

In attendance: City Councillor Mr J Roger Mace and one resident

18001 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received from Cllr Mr C Halhead

18002 **MINUTES:** It was **RESOLVED** that Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 07th March 2018 be approved.

18003 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:** There were no declarations of interests or dispensations in respect of items on the Agenda.

18004 **ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION & INFORMATION ONLY UPDATES:**

Public discussion: A resident provided an update on the developing Community Speedwatch (CSW) arrangements in the village. CSW is a national initiative where active members of local communities take part, with the support of the Police, to monitor speeds of vehicles using speed detection devices. Vehicles exceeding the speed limit are referred to the Police with the aim of educating drivers to reduce their speeds. The scheme also includes the wearing of seatbelts and use of mobile phones whilst driving.

Members were advised that volunteers had received appropriate training and now had the equipment needed to commence the scheme.

Members asked a few questions about the scheme and where volunteers will be located and at what time and the arrangements to ensure the safety of volunteers. It was then **RESOLVED** that the volunteers be thanked and that the Community Speedwatch Scheme be endorsed and supported as a proactive solution to improving the safety and quality of life for everyone in the local community.

Clerks report on activities and actions: The Clerk presented his report on activities during February including an update on the damaged sign in Shaw Lane and the blocked drains also on Shaw Lane.

The Clerk informed Members of *In the Know* available online and as a free messaging service that has been designed to provide regular crime updates; information on road closures, fires and other emergencies and updates on local neighbourhood policing. In the know is available at <https://www.stayintheknow.co.uk/>

The Clerks report also provided an update on the consultations regarding the proposal to close the Ticket Office at Carnforth Railway Station and proposed new opening hours for libraries across the County, including Carnforth library. Members were also informed about Lancashire County Council's planned investments on highways improvements to deal with potholes in the County and planned resurfacing work on the A6 between Tesco and Market Street in Carnforth. There are also plans to increase grass cutting alongside high speed roads and in other public areas.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk's Report be noted.

Members updates on issues arising since the last meeting:

- a) **PACT** – Nothing to report
- b) **ProW:** It was reported that with the recent bad weather and some wooden fence panels have been damaged. There is overgrowth on the Back Lane footpath that needs to be cut back.

- c) **Twinning Association** – No further update
- d) **LALC** - The Chair reported on the recent meeting of LALC where several topics were discussed including the developing Local Plan and consultation – the meeting had been attended by officers from Lancaster City Council to answer any questions. There had also been an update on neighbourhood planning and proposals to change Junction 33 of the M6 to circumvent Galgate.
- e) **Quarry Matters:** The main matters arising from Back Lane Quarry on 27th March were reported. Aggregate Industries will be responding to the Local Plan and will carry out repairs to potholes near the quarry. The viewing platform is expected to be completed by the end of the Summer and they are planning to mine around 100,000 tons per month in 2018.
- f) **Fly-tipping:** It was reported that a single bed mattress left on Shaw Lane had been quickly removed. A Member advised that a tree stump had apparently been dumped in a layby near Dunald Mill. This will be investigated.
- g) **Village Hall:** The recent Annual General Meeting was poorly attended. Financial balances are sound and the annual cost of running the Village Hall is around £8k. Plans for extending the Village Hall are currently in hold due, in the main, to planning requirements. Committee Members are not supportive of the box for B4RN being in the Village Hall car park as this will mean the loss of one parking space.
- h) **Projects:** Progress continues to be made. There are now many photographs that need to be considered further with the chosen ones forming the information board. It was suggested that this be an Agenda item at the next meeting for a final decision to be made with details to be subsequently posted on the community website and social media.
- i) **BA4N:** The wayleave agreement with the Parish Council has now been signed by all parties. Further progress is being hampered by ongoing discussion with landowners.
- j) **Lodges Charity:** The Charity has received notification that the deadline for Annual return to the Charities Commission to be submitted is 1st September 2018. It was considered that the arrangements with the Lodges Charity be reviewed at a future meeting.
- k) **Lengthsman Report:** Repairs to the noticeboards are being completed. The Lengthsman has carried out general duties including dealing with the removal of some fly-tipping and strimming the play area.
- l) **General matters:** It was reported that a flower planter is beyond repair and needed replacing.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members updates be noted and that follow-up action be taken as required.

18005 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS/TRAFFIC ORDERS:**

| Application No / Description | Parish Council Comment / Application Decision Status |
|--|--|
| <p>17/01410/FUL: Erection of 8 detached dwellings with associated access and landscaping; Land North East of Briarlea Road, Nether Kellet</p> | <p>Parish Council made comments neither objecting nor supporting the application. The Parish Council considers that the development would bring some benefits to the village but also empathises with concerns raised by local residents and asks that conditions are set / Awaiting decision</p> |

| Application No / Description | Parish Council Comment / Application Decision Status |
|---|---|
| 18/00021/FUL: - Retrospective application for the retention of a stable building; Mr R Barker, Woodside Holdings, Swarthdale Road, Over Kellet LA6 1DY | No comment from the Parish Council / Application Permitted |
| 17/01352/ADV: Retrospective advertisement application for the display of 1 internally illuminated hanging sign, 2 externally illuminated fascia signs, 4 window graphics, 6 posters and 8 board sign – Post Office, Main Road, Nether Kellet, LA6 1E | No comment from the Parish Council / Awaiting decision |

It was **RESOLVED** that the status of planning applications previously considered be noted.

18006 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:**

| | | |
|--------|--|---------|
| 100810 | Lancashire Association of Local Council's (LALC) – Annual Subscription for LALC & NALC | £120.22 |
| 100811 | Mr R Bailey, Quarter 4 Fees and Expenses | £859.41 |

It was **RESOLVED** that the above account(s) be paid.

18007 **APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR:** The Clerk presented Member with the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of Derek Whiteway which outlined his accountancy qualifications in public finance (CPFA) and years of experience in local government and, specifically as the former Internal Audit Manager at Lancaster City Council. The Clerk reported that Mr Whiteway would charge £15 per hour for his services.

Members considered the CV and asked some questions. It was then **RESOLVED** that, Mr Derek Whiteway be appointed as Internal Auditor for the municipal year 2018/2019.

18008 **DRAFT STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS:** The Clerk presented a first draft of proposed Standing Orders, a statutory requirement of the Local Government Act 1972 and Financial Regulations, a statutory requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Clerk advised that Standing Orders set out the rules, processes and procedures of how the Parish Council will discharge its powers, duties and functions and its governance arrangements. Financial Regulations set out the arrangements and internal controls for the effective management of the Parish Council's income and expenditure and to ensure value for money in the discharge of its functions.

Members welcomed the update on the previous Standing Orders which are now some years old. Members recognise the important of these documents as part of the Parish Council's overall governance arrangements. Some observations were made and it was **RESOLVED** that a decision on any required amendments and/or adoption of the draft Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be deferred for further consideration and approval at the Annual Meeting.

18009 **QUARTER 4 ACCOUNT TRANSACTIONS;** The Clerk presented a first draft of the income and expenditure transactions as at 31st March 2018. It was reported that total income received during the year was £10,347 and total expenditure of £12,839, representing a deficit between expenditure and income of -£2,492.

The Clerk briefly talked through the categories of income and expenditure and advised that the Parish Council still had healthy balances amounting to £18,404, being:

- Community Fund £3,260
- Land Purchase Account £4,990, and;
- Current accounts £10,154

The Clerk reported that the draft accounts when ready will be audited in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and a new Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2017/2018 completed and signed off at a meeting of the Parish Council at the completion of the internal audit.

The AGAR has yet to be received but the Clerk advised that under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Small Authorities) Regulations 2015, smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure does not exceed £25,000 in the year ended 31st March 2018, can now certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review, by the statutorily appointed external auditor. It was not clear at the time of reporting whether Nether Kellet Parish Council could be exempt given that the 2016/2017 accounts were qualified.

After some questions and discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the draft accounts and balances as at 31st March 2018 be noted and that the Clerk report back on the position regarding the *Certificate of Exemption* and audited accounts at the May meeting of the Parish Council.

18010 **PARISH COUNCIL FUNDS & POLICY FOR USE:** Members discussed the Community and Land Purchase Funds. It was explained that the Community Fund is an amount set aside to allow residents and local community groups the opportunity to contact the Parish Council with business cases and funding requests for community projects. It was acknowledged that the funds had not been utilised for some time and it was suggested that the availability of this fund could be promoted locally.

The Land Purchase Account has been dormant for many years, originally being set up with a view to a piece of land being purchased by the Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that, together with the funds in the current account balances are in a healthy position and that it would be in the Parish Council's interest to introduce a more formal approach to forward planning to consider opportunities for the development of the community and the Parish Council itself as well as mitigation for any uncertainties and risks that could have an impact on resources. It was suggested that a way of doing this would be to develop a Parish Plan for Nether Kellet.

After much discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that action be taken to: promote the availability of the Community Fund; review the purpose and ongoing need for the Land Purchase Account and the Clerk provides a report on proposals for the development of a Parish Plan for Nether Kellet.

18011 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS:** The Clerk reported that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had advised that the Committee on Standards in Public Life has launched a consultation as part of its detailed review of local government ethical standards. The review will consider all levels of local government in England, including town and parish councils, principal authorities, combined authorities and the Greater London Authority. It was reported that NALC would be responding to the consultation and that to help formulate a response all parish councils were invited to comment on several questions.

In considering the questions, Members felt that the Parish Council is unable to respond to many of the questions being asked because the ethical standards and conduct of local councillors had never been an issue. City Councillor Mr JR Mace commented on his experience on the City Council's Standards Committee and matters that concern them around the time and cost associated with investigating alleged breaches fairly and difficulties with enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct.

After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to NALC in general terms outlining the Parish Council's position and the need to improve the process for enforcing codes for misbehaviour and imposing meaningful and proportionate sanctions as well as opportunities to enhance existing structures, processes and practices that are conducive to high standards of conduct in local government.

18012 **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the Parish Council will be **Wednesday 4th April 2018 commencing at the rise of the Annual Meeting and Parish Assembly.** It was noted that the Annual Meeting will commence at 7:00pm.
The Parish Council meeting closed at 8:35pm



Clerk of the Council Date:

Chair

Date: