



### **Draft minutes of Cloud Meeting 30.8.18 Boot and Shoe 7.30pm**

Committee members present: Stephen Constantine (Chair), Tony Breakell, (Treasurer) Rosie Morgan,(Secretary), Mary Breakell, Mark Salisbury, Sally Salisbury, Peter Quick, Tony Blendall

Also present: Abi Mills, City Councillor for Scotforth West, Tim Hamilton-Cox, City Councillor, Erica Lewis, County Councillor for Lancaster South.

Apologies (Committee and public): Jet Harris, Phil Ternouth, Roger Frankland, Ann Kretschmar, Val Purnell, Jill Bundy, Tom Wilkinson, Joyce Pollard

1. Stephen Constantine (Chair) welcomed a large gathering of CLOUD members (approx 50 people) plus some new faces. He encouraged those who have not yet joined the group as members to sign up assuring them that there was no joining fee. He explained the more members we speak on behalf of the more weight it gives our arguments. Mary Breakell thanked the volunteers who distributed flyers promoting Cloud and the meeting.
2. The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20.3.18 were approved by a show of hands.
3. **Cloud's preparation for a Public Inquiry.**

Stephen reported that Cloud has submitted a comprehensive response ( see website <https://www.cloudbgv2017.co.uk/cloud-local-plan-response-april-201>) and confirmed that it had been forwarded to the Planning Inspector at the Dept of Communities and Local Government for Public Inquiry. Thanks also to all supporters who have submitted individual responses.

Stephen explained that following the development of Lancaster City Council's Area Action Plan for BGV, and drop in sessions, we now face two inquiries:

1st Inquiry concerning the Local Plan as a whole, which is likely to be between November 2018 and January 2019 ( though no details confirmed as yet and this could slip back)

2nd Inquiry concerning BGV, is likely to be later in 2019.

Our priority now is to prepare to face the Planning Inspector at this 1st Inquiry. One of our main concerns is the calculation of housing need. The City Council have based projections on figures generated by Turley Associates which we believe are over-inflated and seriously flawed. Obviously, this is an area for expert analysis and in order to present our best case we feel we need to engage the services of an expert in the field who can be cross examined by the Planning Inspector and be able to answer in their terms.

Members of the Cloud committee have privately funded a report by Neil McDonald of Neil Macdonald Strategic Solutions (NMSS). CLOUD members are not being asked to fund this report. However, we would like Neil to speak on our behalf at Planning and would like member's approval to raise funds for this. The approximate cost is upwards of £2,000 but this will depend on how many days he may need to attend.

The meeting agreed this by a show of hands. No objections. A collection was also made and raised £635. This is a fantastic start to the fund raising campaign and CLOUD committee are enormously grateful. Some members of the Cloud committee have agreed to underwrite the cost in case insufficient funds are raised so no debt will be incurred by CLOUD.

**Neil McDonald's credentials:**

Neil McDonald is an independent adviser and commentator on housing demographics, working with local authorities, residents' associations and others on the estimation of housing need and related issues. He appears as an expert witness at both local plan examinations and S78 appeal hearings.

Neil McDonald was a civil servant and policy adviser to Ministers for over 30 years, the last 10 advising on housing and planning issues within the Department of Communities and Local Government. His seven years as a Director included a posting as Director, Planning Policy and a period as Chief Executive of the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit until its closure in 2010. He left the Department in March 2011 and has since worked with the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR) as a Visiting Fellow (2012-15), collaborating in particular with its founder director, Professor Christine Whitehead.

Neil McDonald was a member of the Taskforce which led the development of Bookham Neighbourhood Development Plan. He chaired the Housing Group and provided analytical support to the Taskforce.

Tim Hamilton Cox outlined points made in Neil McDonald's report principally relating to Population growth figures, job growth figures, market signals.

Cloud will register as an interested party, under Rule 6, which enables us to present our case.

We encouraged CLOUD members with expertise to come forward to assist the committee in its preparations for the Inquiry, and also urged folk to help recruit more members so that CLOUD's clout at the Inquiry would be the greater.

#### **4 Other business:**

Some Cloud committee members paid for a subscription to CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, as they can provide valuable advice and expertise from other similar causes. This will be due for renewal in May 2019. The meeting agreed in principle that CLOUD should fund this renewal at an expected annual cost of £36 .

We have also benefitted from contact with other campaign groups who have gone through the Public Inquiry process. We still welcome any CLOUD members with expertise in this area who wish to be involved as advisors, either before or during the planning inquiry.

The Treasurer reported that the CLOUD bank account currently had a surplus of £169 after paying for the printing of flyers for this meeting. He proposed that this sum should be used for the printing of flyers for the forthcoming annual general meeting and this was agreed by the meeting. It was explained that we had examined a range of options for printing the flyers and we were confident the current arrangements were economical and effective.

Cloud has submitted FOI ( freedom of information) requests to Lancaster University, Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council asking many questions on a range of issues raised by the Local Plan.

#### **Other Planning Issues**

There was a brief mention of the Chapel Lane development proposal (to which objections have been submitted, and, close to Junction 33, the Ellel Artisan Village and the Agri-Business development, about which we wait to hear more.

There followed a range of questions and contributions from supporters from the floor and Cloud committee responses:

a) Do other councils use Turley and has their work been questioned before?

Yes, many councils have used their work. CPRE have stated they think their projections for housing need are overly high.

b) Does the fact we have so much student housing in Lancaster skew the figures?

Tim HC explained that the number of 'homes' is based on number of kitchens so student accommodation not counted as individuals.

c) One member made the point that one developer has already pulled out of BGV, suggesting a growing lack of confidence in the scheme.

d) Have Cloud been in contact with local MP?

Yes. Cat Smith attended one of earlier meetings and is well aware of our group. Although committed to the BGV development she is concerned that potential issues around traffic and particularly flooding, are addressed.

e) Point made that public action groups can bring about change. Example of Canal Corridor scheme.

f) Have we had any support from local press?

Yes. Mary explained we have had good support from Lancaster Guardian and Radio Lancashire particularly in relation to flooding. Channel 5 did a documentary on flooding also. Mary in contact with Guardian.

5. Next meeting, AGM, October 2018, hopefully when we have a date for Inquiry.

Meeting ended at 9.15pm.