

Ince Blundell Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held 17th September 2015

32. **Present:** K Sharples (In the chair) Councillors Robert Waugh, Michael Ashton and Michael Mansour. Mr I Cowell – Clerk.

33. **Apologies:** Cllr Roger Jenkins.

34. **Other Apologies:** Sefton Cllrs Catie Page and Tim Hale.

35. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr K Sharpe declared he was also the Chairman of the H-Alt Group.

36. **Open Forum:** a) ***Anonymous letter of complaint*** regarding the state of some parts of the Village. Resolved: Some of the issues raised will be explored.
b) Cllr Waugh mentioned the Broad band in the Village had been recently enhanced.

37. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Resolved 'Approved'.

38. **Matters Arising:** a) ***Lower Alt Wind Farm:*** The Chairman said he had attended a meeting of the H-Alt Group at which a number of objections were listed. In addition it was likely a banner would be prepared and displayed objecting to the proposed Wind Farm. The Clerk said he had checked the West Lancashire District Planning site that morning and an application by Coriolis had not been listed. The Clerk also mentioned that the application for United Utilities for two wind turbines at their plant at Hill House had also been listed on the Lancashire County Council planning site and undertook to inquire as to whom the prime mover is in planning matters relating to Great Altcar.

b) ***Local Plan – Sefton:*** The Clerk had been notified there was to be a pre-hearing meeting at Bootle Town Hall on 24th September 2015 at 10am to discuss how the independent scrutiny will be conducted. The Clerk said he understood that the Local Plan submitted by Sefton MBC in which it was stated 615 houses would be built between 2012 and 2030 had not initially been accepted by the Planning Inspector who, in the light of new household projections published in February 2015, had indicated that approximately double the number of houses were needed. Sefton MBC had, in consequence, decided to submit the plan for scrutiny as it at present stands and await the determination of the Planning Inspector as to the number of houses needed. There is a feeling that the number of houses may be determined by the Inspector as part of the Liverpool City Region rather than Sefton Borough in isolation.

c) ***Solar Park, Ince Blundell:*** The application by Hivey for a Solar Park on the Greenwood land in Ince Blundell had been refused by Sefton Planning Committee.

39. Correspondence: a) Tax Reduction Scheme – Top up Grant: The Clerk reported that at a meeting of Sefton Cabinet on 6th February 2015 to update the budget position for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 the Cabinet recommended to Sefton Council, amongst other matters:-

To cease the discretionary support to Parishes under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Under the previous arrangements help with paying council tax was provided by central government. Eligible taxpayers therefore got help from the government to pay their council tax. However a new scheme was introduced. Local billing authorities, such as Sefton MBC, now determine local schemes (albeit within parameters set by the Government) and they now reduce the amount that eligible persons have to pay. Crucially this reduces the amount that the authority bills the taxpayers and, consequently, reduces the tax base. Because people who qualify for a reduction in their liability receive smaller bills, the amount that the billing authority can collect for any given level of council tax is less. The government is continuing to accept that the cost of supporting people with their council tax is a national responsibility, and so it is providing a grant to principal councils and other major precepting bodies to compensate them for a reduction in the tax base. This is at a rate of 90% of the cost of the old scheme. No such grant is, however, being paid to parish and town councils, instead the share is, effectively, being included in the grant made to the billing authority. The government has made it clear that billing authorities should, as a moral obligation, pass on to local councils their fair share of the government grant. However, in a conversation with a member of Sefton's Finance Department, the Clerk had learned that though the decision as to whether or not a tax reduction grant would be made to parish and town councils in Sefton it was regarded by the Borough as discretionary and a decision as to make a top up grant would be made next February. As a draft precept was prepared by Ince Blundell Council in November and approved in the following January for submission to Sefton MBC in February 2016. In the Clerk's view there was a need for clear guidance from the Sefton Borough on the subject. For, on the basis of the Cabinet recommendation, mentioned earlier, parish and town councils, in determining their precepts will now need to deduct the amount of any such top up grant from their budget requirements to arrive at a new precept figure.

b) Pension Auto Enrolment; In response to the low take up of pension saving in the UK, the government has introduced a scheme for the automatic enrolment of most employees into a pension scheme. Because of his age this does not apply to the present Clerk. Nonetheless, all employers, including Ince Blundell Parish Council, must register under the scheme. The present Chairman will be

responsible for overseeing the process which will be handled by the Councils Payroll provider Autela Ltd.

c) **Sefton Area Partnership of Local Councils** – Receipt for the annual donation.

d) **Rights of Way Liaison Group** – Notification of a meeting to be held on Thursday 24th September 2015 in the Ainsdale Discovery Centre.

e) **Letter from Cllr R Jenkins**: I would like a question to be asked of Sefton Council, concerning the new Brooms Cross Road. With the rider I think it is a jolly good job and well executed, unless things have changed over the past week or two – there are a couple of flaws in the signage: If you approach the switch island interchange from the M58, there is no signage to direct you to the new road, other than a modification to the numbers written on the tarmac – which, even if you can see them, which is in doubt, they are right on the junction at which point it is too late: Secondly, approaching from Dunning Bridge Road, towards the ‘switch island’, the same pretty well applies – there is a distinct lack of clear signage – perhaps even more critical in this direction, as the slip road onto Brooms Cross Road, is so narrow as to be almost an afterthought. In contrast, the approach from the M57 is clear and well signed. The Clerk has forwarded Cllr Jenkin’s letter to Sefton Cllr Catie Page for advice.

40. Finances: Current Account: £1,946.29. Accounts for Payment: Mr I Cowell Salary for three months; £132,00 cheque 100160 (payable on 25/9/15); HMRC Tax £30.00 cheque 100161; Ince Blundell Village Hall Committee £25.00 cheque 100162; SLCC – Arnold Baker on Council Administration 9th Edition £66.00 – cheque 100163. Resolved: Account for payment Approved.

41. **Next Meeting**: Thursday 12th November 2015.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Chairman