

CLIFTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Clerk: Ms Becx Carter, 40 Windebrowe Avenue, Keswick, CA12 4JA – cliftonpc@outlook.com; 077866 78283

Minutes of the Clifton Community Council Meeting held in the Abbott Lodge on Thursday 15th January 2026 at 18:30

Community Councillors Present: Jonathan Davies, Sarah Davies, Claire Bland, Sharon Blaylock,
Phil Clarke

Attendance: Becx Carter (Parish Clerk & RFO), WaF Cllr N Vecquerary

With 5 councillors present the meeting was quorate.

01/26	Apologies None received
02/26	Minutes of last Clifton Community Council meeting The Chair was authorised to sign, as a correct record the minutes of the Community Council Meeting held on 27 th November 2025 (<i>previously circulated</i>).
03/26	Declarations of Interest/requests for dispensation None
04/26	Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960) None
05/26	Public Participation None <ul style="list-style-type: none">- WaF Cllr N Vecquerary informed Clifton Community Council that WaF are going to be becoming a 'child friendly' authority in the future.
06/26	Resolutions Update/Actions Log. The resolutions sheet is hosted online for councillors to review and was noted as received. Action: Clerk to update.
07/26	Planning <i>i. Planning applications received from WaF for Consultation</i> Ref: 2025/2344/OPA Location: Black Barn West of Maple Croft Clifton, Penrith Proposal: Outline application for the demolition of a building and erection of a dwelling with all matters reserved 2 members of the public attended to raise concerns about this application on the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Risk of it not being classed as rounding off, without rounding off being

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caveats it could lead to 'infill in the middle field.

- Road Safety/Speed, including lack of contiguous lighting along this stretch of road (there are pools of lighting) the nearest streetlight is 53m away. There are concerns around low levels of sunlight in the winter when driving south at this location which has been a legally attributed to an accident and full road closure at this location in the past. There are excessive numbers of speeding vehicles on the autospeedwatch in the vicinity of this site location. 3 build outs have been destroyed in this vicinity by vehicles in recent years. The visibility to the north turning out of the proposed access road would be 7m and to the south 30m (far below what the 'normal' standard is on other planning applications in the village).
- The proposed dwelling is 400m² (which is a comparable size to the George & Dragon and its associated accommodations) which is overdevelopment of the site and over domination compared to the local vernacular.
- Concerns were noted about the possibility of this very large development being split in the future which would make the access issues even more worrying.
- There are concerns about the lack of environmental reports (bats, owls, swallows & swifts are regularly seen in this location).
- The applicant states that nutrient neutrality will be achieved elsewhere on their land holdings (but no details on where/how), the site of the application is 1400m² so a query was raised regarding why nutrient neutrality is not being satisfied on site.
- There are flooding/water retention concerns as there is known flooding on the access road.
- Sewage capacity is also of concern and known to be an issue in the local area.

Cllr J Davies noted that potential future developments risks/possibilities are not classed as material planning consideration and that Clifton Community Council can make representations on the application as it stands.

It was noted that WaF are still undertaking Housing Needs Surveys for the area so the known housing need (and for a property of this size) is not known.

Councilors noted that the tenant farmer is currently still using this barn for agricultural purposes.

Resolved by the majority of those present (with 1 abstention) that Clifton Community Council object to this proposal on grounds of major concerns about the proposed access route in terms of volume of traffic that passes, visibility splays, speed of traffic. Additional concerns about the impacts of this on the operation of the farm and the agricultural activity around the area. Also concerns about the overbearing nature of the proposed development including potential loss of light and also being out of keeping with the local architectural vernacular and further have concerns that if this permission is granted that it could be used to enabling future development.

It is also noted that the applicant has not proved in the application that there is a need for a dwelling of this size/scale. There is also concerns about the implications of the noise on any proposed development from the A6/M6/Railway, and if similar conditions would be required as the recent Persimmon developments to prevent windows opening. Clifton Community Council also formally as part of the objection request that the application is considered at a

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	<p>full planning committee to allow members of the public to speak.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to submit these comments</p>
08/26	<p>Network Rail M6/Clifton Bridge Replacement</p> <p>A round table discussion took place reflecting on the various issues/challenges that were faced by the community during the period of the bridge replacement. A list of the issues identified are noted below for the public record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issues with Network Rail parking on the pavements in Clifton Village since the bridge replacement has been 'completed' have been reported to the Police on the 14th January 2026.- WaF Environmental Health are looking into the composition and implications of the dust cloud that formed and spread across Clifton Village during the demolition.- One farm had a tanker driver turned away at the road closure resulting in a significant amount of milk having to be disposed of.- The permit system did not work, one of the specific issues was that Brougham Road was physically blocked off to residents even though this was highlighted as residents route (yellow) on the leaflet that was distributed.- No cameras vehicles were placed in Clifton despite them being promised multiple times on the stakeholder call by National Highways.- Many of the mitigation measures that were promised to Clifton Community during stakeholder meetings (including lighting/crossing points/build out temporary replacements etc) never occurred or had to be chased up multiple times.- Communications from Network Rail was poor in the run up to the event and was non-existent in the 4 weeks prior to and the actual delivery period. However, when compared to National Rail, National Highways Communication was even worse.- The residents parking arrangements and the frequency with National Highways changed the proposals for residents parking (including publicising that the parking was going to be at a local Farm prior to consent being sought from the farmer) was very confusing and concerning.- The public meeting (last one) at the school was closed early, with a member of the public being ushered out of the door before the event closing time. It was also noted that the National Highways representative at the event was very arrogant in mannerisms.- Police coverage was not as promised by National Highways.- National Highways removed the WaF Traffic Data Unit strips without WaF consent, and thereby prevented Clifton Community Council from having accurate data on how many vehicles used the A6 during the first weekend (the busy weekend).- Concerns were raised about the lack of clarity about how much WaF received in terms of financial remuneration from National Highways/National Rail from this project.- There was very limited community benefit accrued to the community from this project (the base of one outdoor building for the school). All other options requested/suggested by the local community were dismissed by National Rail.- An FOI has been submitted to National Rail for information about the costs of the project but certain aspects of it have been redacted by

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	<p>National Rail on the grounds of commercial data/privacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is also an FOI from National Highways which confirms an amount that was paid to WaF but this doesn't appear to align with previous information provided. - Clifton Community Council raised concerns prior to the closures/diversions about Eamont Bridge being used for the diversions and if the structure could cope with it. WaF agreed in the run up to the closures/diversions that Eamont Bridge would be re-surveyed prior to the works taking place, but this never happened and it transpires that Eamont Bridge was recertified based on 2021 data. This is of serious concern. It is the opinion of Clifton Community Council that this survey could have taken place between 25th-31st December when the weather was clear, and dry. - Clifton Community Council also raised concerned about the safety/structural integrity of the Clifton Railway Bridge, which was not designed to take the volumes of traffic and size of vehicles that the recent closure expected it to take. - There has been significant deterioration of the road surface on the A6 as a result of these closures/diversions and this has been raised with WaF. National Highways prior to the event agreed to restore any damage caused to the A6, however there are serious local concerns that this will be another promise that is non honoured by National Highways. - Concerns were noted about the fact that Network Rail/National Highways only communicated during the closures of the M6 via X which given the political nature of use of this platform and the fact that many public authorities have come of this platform meant that many people were in the dark about the project. - National Highways were recorded in a meeting stating that they were paying Cumbria Police to police the diversions, and it was said by Stephen Mason that "Cumbria Police will do what we tell them to because we are paying them". - It was noted again that Clifton/Eamont Bridge/Hackthorpe were sacrificed to the suffering of the diversion because of a 'key' local resident in Kirkby Stephen who had apparently personally lobbied senior national highways officials. - Issues have also been raised by the Clifton local community about littering/toileting from Network Rail members of staff within the village of Clifton (photos have been provided to the council) This has been raised with both Network Rail & WaF EHO. - There were issues with people trespassing on private land to try and get closer to the works. Sadly Network Rail didn't take forward the viewing platform idea to prevent these issues, and this resulted in the police being called a number of times. - Thanks were noted by the Clerk and Chair of Clifton Community Council specifically to WaF officers Amy Hudson ,Laura McCellan and Guy Challands for all their support and for echoing the concerns with National Highways. <p>Resolved that a submission be made to the office of road and rail about National Rail & National Highways issues related to this project.</p> <p>Action: Clerk/Chair to take this forward.</p>
09/26	<p>Highways & Parish Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To receive updates on any Highways related matters within the

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Parish.

- It was noted that all issues are on HIMS
- It was noted once again with disappointment that there has been no progress on the lengthsman agreement again, this remains 'stuck' with WaF.
- Concerns were raised about Potholes in the west side of Crooklands road
- Concerns were noted about the lack of filling of the 5 grit bins in Clifton, and that the WaF system suddenly only lists 1 grit bin in Clifton.

Action: WaF Cllr N Vecquerary to raise this issues with her WaF Highways Mentor

ii. Autospeed Watch Update

It was noted that at the imminent Eden Locality Board the 20/40mph speed limit zones are recommended for approval.

Action: Clifton Community Council to attend the Eden Locality Board to thank WaF for their work on this and make representation on education around the speed limits/enforcement.

iii. Highways & Footways Lighting

No further correspondence has been received from WaF regarding the support they can provide (nor the audit of lighting on the A6), this was promised back in August 2025.

It was noted that at a recent Eamont Bridge meeting WaF had asked Eamont Parish Council to agree to either dimming/or turning off the streetlights, which has long been the concern of Clifton Community Council. The option that was selected by Eamont Parish Council was to dim their lights.

Resolved by all present that the matter be left in abeyance until contact is received from WaF.

iv. To consider any necessary actions relating to the Pocket Park

It was noted that the trees have been cut as per the tree safety survey.

Action: Clerk to obtain a quote for the concrete pad for the installation of the benches.

Action: Clerk to research and procure a sign for the pocket park around responsibilities e.g. dog fouling/where to report damage/no tree climbing etc.

v. Clifton Well

The Clerk noted that she had emailed David Bliss to ask if Clifton Community Council could take on the maintenance etc of this site, but no response has been received.

10/26

280th Anniversary of the Last Battle on English Soil

Some parts of the event have happened, but others including the school

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activities will happen later in 2026.

It was noted that a group has been formed involving a number of other local parishes by CALC to look at the anniversary of the formation of England (927), Clifton Community Council Chair has expressed an interested joining this group to the Chair of the group.

11/26

Clifton Playpark Update

It was noted once again with significant disappointment that this issue is continuing to go round in circles at WaF. WaF are still only offering a lease transfer for the site which is not acceptable to the Clifton Community Council.

A letter is to be sent to the S.151 officer and new CEO offering to take on this area to save them money due to the significant financial pressures that WaF are under.

Action: Clerk/Chair to take this forward.

It is noted that separately WaF have approached Clifton Community Council informing us that WaF are now looking to consult on some improvements to this play-area, and have been in to the school. It was noted with concern by Councillors that not all children from the village go to the school and therefore many will not have being consulted as part of this exercise.

Once again it was noted with disappointment that because of WaF's refusal to fully devolve this area to the Community Council the site is not able to be used by the community because of the bureaucracy that WaF have put in place around using WaF assets for community activities.

Resolve by all present that Clifton Community Council support WaF in taking forward improvements to the whole area but any consultation needs to be for the whole community and the whole site NOT just focused on the play area.

Action: Clerk & Cllr J Davies to confirm this to WaF.

It was noted that the correct method of communication from Cllr N Vecquerary for Clifton Community Council is to email the Clerk and ask her to circulate.

12/26

Financial Matters

i. To authorise the below payments.

Resolved by all present that the below payments were authorised/ratified for payment:

PAYEE	Budget line	Value	Action
Becx Carter	Dec Salary	£357.48	Ratify
HMRC	Dec PAYE	£100.20	Ratify
Becx Carter	Jan Salary	£357.48	Ratify
HMRC	Jan PAYE	£100.20	Ratify

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S & C Bland	Room hire (Nov)	£20.00	Approve
Gareth Davidson	Removal of old railings Clifton Well	£160.00	Ratify
Bowland Tree Consultancy	Tree survey pocket park	£247.62	Ratify
Nichol landscapes	Tree works	£576	Approve

Action: Clerk to pay these accounts

Cllr J Davies noted that WaF are recommending the Community Governance Review proceed including the ones for Clifton Community Council area (reducing the number of seats to 5, and moving all of Clifton Dykes into Clifton). If approved by WaF at the full council meeting it will then go out to full public consultation.

- ii. To receive and approve the bank reconciliation and spend against budget report

Resolved by all present these be noted as received and signed as a true and accurate record.

Action: Clerk to add on the reserves to the bank reconciliation in the future.

The meeting moved to private session & the Clerk left the room for the duration of the below agenda item.

- iii. To consider a salary rise for the Clerk

The Clerk had circulated a number of salary options to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk left the room during this discussion.

Resolved by all present that the clerk be offered a salary increase.

Action: Chair to formally discuss this offer with the Clerk.

The Clerk returned to the room.

- iv. To consider the draft budget as circulated with the meeting papers.

Resolved by all present that the precept be set at £15,680.25 (no change from the 25/26 financial year)

Action: Clerk to submit the precept demand

13/26

Correspondence received.

WaF Call for Sites Nominations

The clerk noted that this consultation is now open with a closing date of the 20th February 2026.

Sites can be submitted via

Further details about submitting a site can be found on the Council

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	<p>website: https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/call-sites/202526-call-sites</p> <p>All site submissions should be made using the online platform, Placemaker: https://cfs.westmorlandandfurness.urbanintelligence.co.uk/events</p> <p>Resolved by all present that submissions be made for green spaces allocations around the Parish all to suggest sites to the clerk for submission.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to circulate the information to all.</p>
14/26	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Resolved by all present that the meeting dates for 26/27 be set as these can be altered as required throughout the year:</p> <p>All at Abbott Lodge at 18:30</p> <p>26th Feb 2026 9th April 2026 21st May 2026 AGM/APM 9th July 2026 10th Sept 2026 22nd October 2026 26th November 2026 14th January 2027</p>

Meeting closed 20:30