



Clifton
Community Council

NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL CLIFTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



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YOUR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Welcome to the latest edition of the Clifton Community Council newsletter.

In the last few months the council have continued to progress work and have set the council budget for the next year 2024/25 at £15,184 representing a 0% increase and a realterm reduction of around 2.4% in the council tax precept for our community for the Clifton Community Council portion of the council tax.

Following the May 2023 local elections Clifton Community council was able to adopt for the first time the general power of competence that once adopted allows the council the ability to do a lot more things to support the community than it could previously.

Town and Parish council are often very restricted in what they can and cannot do to support communities. However, when a council is eligible to adopt the General Power of Competence as Clifton has become eligible to now do it affords us much greater scope to act of support and deliver for our community going forward.

Clifton Community Council are also currently working to achieve the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) certification operated by NALC the National Association of Local Councils.

Clifton Community Council hope to achieve "The Quality Award" that demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.

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COMMUNITY INFO POD

Clifton Community Council took on the ownership of the former telephone box from BT in 2022. Since then, we have carried out some work to start converting the former phone box into a community info pod.

The book exchange we started in 2022 has seen an amazing number of books donated and exchanged.

Following issues with the shelves originally used the council has now commissioned the construction of some bespoke book storage that will integrate the council's wider info pod projects and enable easy access to the array of books donated by the community.

The council has in the last two weeks had confirmation it has secured a grant of almost £5000 from the Electricity North West Storm Arwen resilience fund, for the Community Info pod project to enable a mobile charge point to be integrated along with a battery energy storage system that will provide a battery backup energy option for the community in the event of a sustained power outage to charge mobile devices and also have the power to run items such as kettles and a fridge that can be used for example to keep medication chilled as required.

Along with the new battery energy system the grant will also enable a new digital info screen system to be installed to act as a community information point along with a wifi system that will enable the information to be downloaded and shared in the event of power cuts.

The Clifton info pod will be used as an exemplar project for other communities on how to establish a resilient community communications hub to enable communities to remain connected and informed in unexpected events and provide wider beneficial usage of facilities for the community.

Work on the info pod will take place over the next few months with a full update in our autumn newsletter.



ACTIVE TRAVEL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Following a community mobility survey conducted by Clifton Community Council feedback has been used by the council to work on solutions to issues and ideas raised by the community.

Clifton Community Council already works to support the 106 Bus partnership that provided a vital bus link currently twice a week for Clifton between Penrith and Kendal,

One service the community identified was the desire for a Saturday bus link between Penrith and Clifton. Clifton Community Council worked with the 106 Bus Partnership at the option of a Saturday bus service unfortunately the volunteer partnership tendered for a provider, but no providers could deliver a Saturday service along the route.

Clifton Community Council then worked with the volunteer Fellrunner Bus group who have provided a Saturday bus linking Penrith Clifton and Shap on Saturdays.

From Saturday the 23rd March until November Clifton will also now have the 509 bus service linking Clifton with Penrith and Keswick via Lowther Castle and Pooley Bridge on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

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CLIFTON PLAY PARK

Clifton Community Council are continuing to try and protect and preserve the Clifton Play Park. We are aware the site needs some love and attention, and it could do with being refurbished/upgraded, however before Clifton Community Council can look to spend public funds on any such work we need to secure the site.

Clifton Community Council have been working on trying to do this for over 4 years by formally requesting that the site be transferred to Clifton Community Council as part of a Community Asset Transfer. Sadly, our efforts were frustrated a number of times with Eden District Council for a number of reasons (change of staff/covid 19 etc) prior to the Local Government Reorganisation. Our last attempt with Eden District Council was put on hold by them pending the outcomes of the formation of the new Westmorland & Furness Unitary Authority.

Clifton Community Council continued to pursue this request after the 1st April 2023 with Westmorland & Furness but again this process has been frustrated, culminating in a formal request being put to Westmorland & Furness in late 2023 to allow Clifton Community Council to compulsorily purchase the site to protect and preserve it for the local community.

The compulsory purchase request was a statutory process with a defined timescale for response. Westmorland and Furness Council didn't respond within this timescale, as such the request for Compulsory Purchase of the site has been passed by Clifton Community Council to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. Our case has been accepted by the Government and a decision is awaited.

If you would like to support Clifton Community Council in their ongoing campaign to try and protect and preserve this much loved and much used play area you can lobby for change by contacting Jonathan Brook (Leader of the Council) on jonathan.brook@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk



ROAD SAFETY

Clifton Community Council are continuing our work to address concerns in the community about speeding and road safety.

Following our recent survey on the community views on the introduction of 20mph zones the council submitted a request to Westmorland and Furness Council to look at the implementation of 20mph limits in the community including the closes and side roads as well as options on the A6 and the C3047.

We are also working with Westmorland and Furness Highways to look at other measures including the options to reinstate the white lines along the A6 and now gateway signage for both Clifton and Clifton Dykes and also the potential of a safe cross point near Clifton Primary School.



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STREET LIGHTING CONSULTATION

Whilst we know it's not a very exciting topic street lighting is a big deal for our community both in terms of financial and environmental issues. It's also a topic that has many divided opinions and views amongst our community.

Clifton Community Council is seeking your views via a short survey to help your Council decide how to deal with our streetlights in the future.

First a short introduction explaining the issues and then we have 7 questions we would like your views on.

For historic reasons Clifton Community Council is responsible for the maintenance and power supply to most of the footway lighting through Clifton. The former parish council took on responsibility for streetlights when Eden District Council informed parishes across Eden that if they did not accept responsibility then the streetlights would be removed, and communities would be left with no lights.

A full audit of all lamps has been undertaken including those still operated by Westmorland and Furness Council. Some of the lamps are now obsolete these are known as sodium lamps and Westmorland and Furness Council have a policy to remove and not replace them as they break. Clifton has lost three of these in the last year and has three more in the Community owned by Westmorland and Furness Council that will, as they break be removed.

Clifton Community Council streetlights have seen a substantial increase in operating costs with 2023/24 seeing a 52% increase in energy & maintenance costs over the last year with each streetlight now costing £120 plus vat to operate in 2023/24 plus insurance costs associated with the public space infrastructure. Costs of repairs have also recently emerged with a £6000 bill associated with repairs to just one light damaged in an accident.

All these costs have a direct impact on the council's budget and precept that forms part of the annual council tax bill for households in the community.



The benefits of upgrading our lights.

The replacing of many of the street lamps with LEDs in 2018 when the council first took on responsibility for the lights from Eden District Council has reduced some of the Council's energy and maintenance costs.

LED lamps are energy efficient and reduce the Council's carbon footprint however increases to energy costs have substantially increased the energy bill of operating streetlights across the UK.

The modern lamps are easier to control so it could be possible to adjust the amount of time lights are on as an option.

Clifton Community Council are currently evaluating two new solar street light heads that could provide a low-cost option for provision of sustainable streetlighting in the community.

Looking at options for the way ahead:

1. The Council could decide to "do nothing" and as lamps gradually fail, they would simply be decommissioned, and operating costs would be covered through adjustments annually to the precept.
2. Alternatively, some or all, of the lamps could be upgraded or replaced to off grid solar streetlights reducing operational and maintenance costs long term while maintaining streetlighting in the community.
3. Another option is that Clifton could move towards a Dark Sky Community like other communities have done; removing all operational and maintenance costs for streetlighting and the financial burden on the community.

In order to estimate the likely cost of any upgrading/replacement works the Council needs to know your views on the future of streetlighting in the community.

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STREET LIGHT CONSULTATION

Please help us to decide the best way forward by answering the following questions you can complete the consultation survey online at or alternatively pop this paper survey into one of the white community survey boxes located through the community.

You can complete this paper consultation or complete online at <http://cliftoncommunitycouncil.uk/streetlightconsultation>

Please tell us the street or road you live on (No need to include number or house name):

In general do you think the level of street lighting in Clifton is:

About right

☐

Too much

☐

Too little

☐

If you have comments about the light levels in a particular area or street please state your views being as specific as you can:

Would you wish to see Clifton become a "dark sky area" (this is where there are no street lights at all):

Yes

☐

No

☐

Don't know/no opinion

☐

If/when new lamps are installed would you want to see a standard mains LED or SolarLights with substantially less purchase and operational costs?

I would be happy with standard mains powered LED lamps

☐

I would be happy with Off Grid Solar powered LED lamps

☐

I don't have any preference

☐

In principle would you support an increase in the precept (our bit of the Council tax) to cover the cost of maintaining streetlight as it is now.

Yes

☐

No

☐

If you would like to add any comments or suggestions regarding street lighting in the community please comment here

Thankyou for completing this short consultation

Please place into one of the white community survey boxes located through the community.
