

CLOUD : 2022 AGM - Chair's report

(presented by Mary and Tony Breakell)

Over the last 12 months planning applications for housing in south Lancaster and Galgate have continued to demand our attention; we have been baffled and bewildered by the Local Planning process; we have been notified of potential compulsory purchase of properties standing in the way of the proposed M6 link road into Bailrigg garden village and witnessed the associated trial borings and surveys ; your management committee has bombarded both City and County Councils with Freedom of Information requests; and CLOUD has been joined by a new campaigning group. CLOUD membership stands at 220 which is encouraging - although more members always welcome! All this in a little more detail:

Planning Applications. This is just a selection of planning applications which CLOUD has responded to over the last year, all of which were reported in Newsbriefs at the time. [Opposition by local residents supported](#) by CLOUD earlier this month to defeat the planning application by Wain Home for 115 houses on Highland Brow in Galgate. This was a grassroots led campaign led by a group of villagers, including CLOUD committee member, Babs Walker, who also spoke at the Planning meeting alongside 6 others. Mary Breakell another CLOUD Committee member wrote one of the speeches.. Definitely a positive outcome, although an appeal could still be made against the Planning Committee decision. The long standing application by Gladmans for 600 + houses on land NE of Bailrigg Lane resurfaced in the summer. CLOUD objected (yet again) as none of the amendments addressed key concerns over flooding, increased traffic flows, pressure on school places and health services and other points all detailed in our Newsbriefs. Fortunately this application and its details have not been finally decided yet, and it's not too late for members and our other supporters to make representations to their councillors and to planning officers.

The most recent application is for the field on the opposite side of the A6 to the Ward Field Farm site where development is under way. Given its history of flooding this site might seem more suitable for house boats! . [CLOUD has alerted members and has written an objection](#). A Teams meeting was convened on 10 October 2022 by Wain Homes to which the Galgate Flood Action Group, the EA and a limited number of people, but including City Councillor Sally Maddocks, were invited. Members are encouraged to raise concerns over this development on the Conder flood plain, especially given the vulnerability of neighbouring properties to flooding

Local Planning. At last year's AGM we reported that the City Council was conducting a Climate Emergency Review of its Local Plan - the plan which had only secured Council approval as recently as July 2020. CLOUD submitted a comprehensive response, pointing out that, while the review contained some welcome features, it ignored the elephant in the room in the form of the carbon footprint of Bailrigg garden village. This year a Planning Inspector has begun public hearings into this Climate Emergency Review - a process that is ongoing. CLOUD has not had the time or resources to speak at these hearings - a decision reinforced by our experience with the 2019 hearings into the Local Plan when the Planning Inspector effectively ignored everything we and other objectors said at the hearings. However the planning process continues.

The Lancaster South Area Action Plan. During 2022 the City Planners have been conducting a series of "informal engagement events with key stakeholders" - to quote from the Council website. It seems that the Planners are choosing who to engage with, while reports from one of the Parish Councils involved in this process suggest that no record is being kept of issues raised etc. Outreach is obviously to be welcomed, but we have our suspicions and reservations about the way this is being handled. **Transforming Lancaster's Travel.** In November 2021 residents across a wide area of south Lancaster were notified by Lancashire County Council that their properties might be subject to compulsory purchase to enable M6 Junction 33 to be reconfigured and access roads constructed into the proposed Bailrigg garden village site. Since then various surveys and trial borings have taken place across a wide area.

Freedom of Information Requests. The CLOUD Management Committee submitted a wide range of Freedom of Information requests in the Spring of this year to both City and County Councils and also to Network Rail. I won't attempt to read through all the questions and responses, but key points to note are the vague and evasive responses to questions about who is liable if (or when?) costs exceed the original estimates and that County has refused to answer our question about the figure of 9185 houses so that we have referred this to the Information Commissioner as a breach of the FoI Act. He has given County until 4 November 2022 to respond - so far nothing has been forthcoming. We have also pressed the City council to release the Viability Report they commissioned into Bailrigg garden village - clearly a vital document and one we believe residents and council tax payers should be able to see. So far the Council has refused point blank to release even a redacted version. We are considering what further steps we might be able to take.

SLICE (Sustainable Lancaster in Climate Emergency)

During the winter of 2021/22 there were discussions relating to the need for new blood, ideas and energy to continue the campaign relating to Bailrigg Garden Village and associated road infrastructure identified at the 2021 CLOUD AGM. A new organisation was established and SLICE held its inaugural meeting on 9 February 2022. They share objectives with CLOUD and brought the new complementary expertise and energy needed. At a Zoom General meeting on 8 March 2022 there was unanimous approval for CLOUD to work cooperatively with SLICE. Tony and Mary Breakell joined the SLICE Steering group and Babs Walker joined the Communications Group. .

The relationship is proving positive and constructive with new activity including a [demonstration at Lancashire County Hall at the time of the Climate Summit](#). Currently focus remains on the financial risks associated with the Housing Infrastructure Fund Agreement.

City By-elections - There have been 2 by-elections in South Lancaster in the last year (Uni and Ellel wards) and also one in Warton. For the 2 south Lancaster elections, CLOUD maintained its non-party political stance and asked candidates for their views on the garden village development and related infrastructure. These were reported in Newsbriefs so CLOUD members could judge for themselves when deciding how to vote

This concludes our report on CLOUD's activities over the last year, including matters arising from the minutes of last year's AGM and the General Meeting held in March.. Are there any questions?