**MINUTES OF THE CLOUD GENERAL MEETING**

**Tuesday 8th March 2022 on Zoom**

**Attendance** (13)

Committee: Tony Blendall, Mary Breakell, Tony Breakell, Rosemary Hindley, Mark Salisbury, Barbara Walker, Tom Wilkinson, Heather Willes.

Members: Jill Bundy, Helena Dixon, Robin Jackson, Adina Lew, Sara Taylor

**Apologies** (3): Robert Fildes, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Abi Mills

1. **Welcome by Acting Chair**

Tom Wilkinson welcomed members to the General Meeting and thanked them for attending. The meeting had been arranged to discuss one specific item on the agenda.

1. **To invite CLOUD members to support a close working relationship between CLOUD and the new SLICE organisation in order to most effectively challenge and oppose the development of Bailrigg Garden Village and its supporting infrastructure.**

The Chair reminded members that at the last CLOUD AGM in October 2021 a call had been made for new Management Committee members as the present ones had been working extremely hard over the last two years and needed additional support and fresh ideas.

Following a range of discussions in the autumn the new organisation SLICE (Sustainable Lancaster in Climate Emergency) was formed and had provided the new blood which CLOUD had been looking for. SLICE essentially shares the same objective as CLOUD – to fight the proposals to build a new town of 9,185 houses in south Lancaster, together with three major new roads and a new motorway junction. SLICE had brought in students and young people (from Lancaster Youth for Environment) with energy and new ideas, and also expertise in climate and communications, which CLOUD had previously not been able to access.

The inaugural SLICE AGM had been held on 9th February and two CLOUD Management Committee members (Mary and Tony Breakell) are now also working on the SLICE Steering Group, which enables information sharing and ensures that there is no duplication of effort. Another CLOUD Management Committee member (Barbara Walker) is on the SLICE Communications Group. All three reported that their experiences of working with SLICE had been very positive. Barbara Walker noted that preparations were being made for SLICE’s first action on 10th March, which would be a protest against the new town and motorway links in South Lancaster at the first Lancashire Climate Summit at County Hall in Preston.

This agenda item was then approved unanimously by the meeting and Management Committee members noted that they were looking forward to continued collaboration with SLICE going forward.

1. **Any Other Business**
2. **Questions from Sara Taylor**

**The following three questions to the Management Committee had been submitted by Sara Taylor:**

1. Amongst CLOUD Committee Members, is there any feeling as to whether it's still possible to counter the Junction 33 and Galgate bypass development at this stage?

1. If not, what influence is it possible to have on housing given the need to meet the financial costs associated with HIF?

1. Do CLOUD and SLICE need to agree on the primary objective? If so, how does the CLOUD Committee envisage the approach varying between the two groups?

In response, it was noted that members had been encouraged by the collaboration with SLICE. Several issues have now been identified which will be used to oppose the development. These include the excessively high costs, financial risks, disruption of building a road under the West Coast Main Line (approx. £1m per day), environmental impact and carbon emissions (a quarter of the 90 year carbon budget for the whole district). It is quite clear that the scheme does not add up.

Members noted that there have already been significant national and international developments since the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid was approved by Lancaster City Council in August 2021, including the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and Russian invasion of Ukraine, which could lead to a world recession. Rising inflation and energy prices in the UK will increase construction costs, and the proposed new M6 junction and roads could become vulnerable to these financial pressures.

It was also noted that the scale of the proposed development is not based on local housing need. According to ONS predictions, the population in Lancaster is on a downward trend. The figure of 9,185 houses is based only on the need for sufficient developer contributions to fund the shortfall in road costs from the HIF. If this is not achieved, Lancaster District Council Tax payers will be at very serious financial risk for many years. It was noted that if the road goes ahead, the houses will follow.

Members agreed that there is a low level of awareness about the development in the local area, even in south Lancaster and Galgate, and that CLOUD had done more to publicise it than the City Council. Volunteers will be needed to help spread the word, particularly on social media, and to take the campaign forward.

There will be a public consultation on the M6 road plans, and various milestones after that, which will be opportunities for objections. We will need to make effective representations over the next two years to city and county councillors, planners, and central government ministers (including the Secretary of State for Transport). Good connections have been made with the local press. CLOUD and SLICE will collaborate to make the best case we can and hold the City Council to account.

Committee members noted that they had a breakdown of the vote (by Councillor and by party) at the Full Council Meeting on 25th August which approved the HIF bid, and that this information could be made available for the local council elections in 2023.

Details of the next stages of the road scheme are now available from Lancashire County Council and will be circulated in a CLOUD Newsbrief.

**(b) Timelines and Future Issues**

Tony Breakell noted that a timeline of key dates and events regarding Bailrigg Garden Village and its supporting infrastructure, and the South Lancaster Area Action Plan (SLAAP), had been produced and shared with SLICE. It is planned to share this with all CLOUD members in a future Newsbrief and to keep it updated as further meetings and developments occur.

**(c) Next CLOUD General Meeting**

It was agreed that the next General Meeting should be arranged as a face-to-face meeting rather than online. The date will be set by the Management Committee and communicated to all members in a Newsbrief.