

## Appendix A

# Clerk's Report to Haigh Parish Council 19 October 2020

### Removal of Old Signatory

I have still not received confirmation of this.

### Engagement with the Facebook Page

Following the meeting in September I set up all members on the Facebook page as either Admins or Editors and Cllr Lawson as the Gatekeeper. I have also circulated information about the Parish Council's activities via Facebook since the last meeting and have monitored the degree of engagement with the page by members of the public. In the last 28 days our posts have reached 679 people (an increase of 80%) and there have been 318 engagements (an increase of 47%). The number of people who have 'liked' the page has risen from 45 to 56 and we now have 69 followers – a further increase.

### ID Badges

So far only two members have requested ID badges. If any other members would like an ID badge, please let me know. I now have the lanyards, etc and am open for business.

### Local Electricity Bill

Last week I circulated an email from a pressure group called 'Power for People' about the Local Electricity Bill – a private member's Bill – which was being debated in Parliament today. Power for People are campaigning in partnership with NALC and 300 Parish, Town and Community councils from across England, Wales and Scotland for this Bill to be made law.

If made law, the Local Electricity Bill would unlock the huge potential for more community-scale renewable energy by empowering communities to sell their energy directly to local people. This would have direct benefits for Parish, Town and Community councils and their communities. Local greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced, and money spent on electricity bills would remain in the local economy, supporting new local skilled jobs and providing more money for community projects.

**Power for People are at a critical moment in their campaign.** During the Parliamentary debate one of the Bill's cross-party co-sponsors, Ben Lake MP, will speak in favour of the Bill, then other MPs present may also voice their opinions. Finally, the Energy Minister will respond.

Power for People maintain that this is a superb opportunity to raise the issue of community renewable energy and to encourage more MPs and the government to support the Bill.

Why is this relevant to local councils? The Bill, if passed, will enable Town, Parish and Community councils, or other community groups, to set up a co-operative or a community company, perhaps in collaboration with other neighbouring Town, Parish or Community councils, and supply locally generated clean electricity to local residents or businesses. Local renewable energy projects would spring up all over the country and thrive where they currently exist. Local households and businesses spend money on their electricity bills. The money generated through the supply of electricity *could* be used in community projects and to support new local skilled jobs.

### Right to Contest

MHCLG are looking to refresh the [Right to Contest process](#) looking at its effectiveness and usefulness and have engaged with NALC to work with local councils. Essentially the Right to

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Contest is a right that any member of the public or body has to ‘contest’ any land owned by a public body that is unused or underused which could be brought back into use. The Right to Contest was previously known as the Community Right to Reclaim Land.

The Right to Contest has two strands: strand 1 covers central government bodies on a voluntary, non-statutory basis, and is administered by the Cabinet Office. Strand 2 covers bodies (local authorities and other certain public bodies) set out in Schedule 16 of the 1980 Act, and is administered by MHCLG.

Where a request is made under Strand 2 of the Right to Contest about a particular piece of land, MHCLG will communicate with the relevant landowner to identify its status. The decision on whether to direct that the land be released will be made on the basis of whether the land or property is in use or whether it is likely to be used in a suitable period of time.

I received an email from NALC on 2 October informing us that MHCLG had asked local councils to complete a very short snapshot online survey which would help to inform MHCLG how it should progress its refresh of Strand 2 of the Right to Contest.

The deadline for completion of the survey was Friday 9 October 2020 – so, as the survey consisted of eight very simple and straightforward questions, asking such things as whether we had ever heard of the Right to Contest and whether the Council felt threatened by it, I answered the survey on your behalf.

**K.M.P.: 14.10.20**