

**P A R I S H O F W E S T O N I N G**

**MINUTES of the Meeting of**

**Westoning Parish Council**

**held on Wednesday 14th July 2021 at 7.30pm**

**In the Village Hall, Westoning**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs A Rayment (Chairman), E Bhasin, R Botterell, P Ellis,

J Nethersole, E Russell, CBC Cllr J Jamieson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs K Barker (Clerk), 2 members of the public were present

Agenda published on the noticeboard and on the website

**7484 Apologies for absence** – Cllr B Rogerson, Cllr E Leftly, Cllr P Kelly

**7485 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2021 were approved. Cllr Luff proposed, seconded by Cllr Bhasin the approval of the minutes as a true record. All agreed by those present and the minutes to be signed by the Chairman.

**7486 Declaration of interests**

Cllr Rayment (Chairman) – finance Point 7491.2

Cllr Botterell – planning Point 7496.1

Cllr Bhasin – planning Point 7496.2

**7487 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**7488 Chairman’s actions**

The Chairman spoke of the situation regarding unacceptable posters displayed in the window of a resident. He said that he sent a letter to the Rabi at Luton Synagogue for guidance but has not yet had a reply. The Police are aware of the literature displayed and have visited the address.

The Chairman said that he contacted Adult Services regarding a resident who is struggling financially. They have taken steps and the resident has been allocated a social worker and helped them to claim the benefits they are entitled to.

**7489 Reports and representations**

CBC Cllr Jamieson reported:

The road from the bridge to Greenfield Road will be surface dressed. The majority of Cllrs agreed that they would like the work to continue to the A120.

CBC are undertaking more litter picking. Cllr Jamieson said that he will request that the vegetation on the path between Flitvale Garden Centre and Flitwick be cut back as it is overgrown.

**7490 Public Participation**

A member of the public said that Tingrith Parish Council has been in contact with the Traffic Department at CBC. CBC have put sensors on the road to monitor traffic and are waiting for the results.

**7491 Finance**

7491.1 Bank balances and finance report:

The Clerk supplied a finance report prior to the meeting.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **£** |
| TSB Community Account | 26,453.47 |
| TSB Instant Access Account | 66,468.11 |
| **TOTAL** | 92,921.58 |

7491.2 Cllr Ellis proposed, seconded by Cllr Botterell the approval of the following payments, agreed by all present:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cheque Number** | **Payee** | **£** |
| 000476 | Clerk – salary | 492.93 |
| 000476 | Clerk – expenses | 59.62 |
| 000477 | HMRC – Clerk tax June | 2.40 |
| 000478 | Parish Warden – village tidying | 275.00 |
| 000479 | D J Granger – play field Inv 021564 | 189.60 |
| 000479 | D J Granger – play field Inv 021630 | 189.60 |
| 000479 | D J Granger – play field Inv 021671 | 189.60 |
| 000479 | D J Granger – play field, village Inv 021653 | 604.54 |
| 000479 | D J Granger – cut hedges and vegetation | 180.00 |
| 000480 | Andy Muskett – light maintenance 1st quarter | 130.20 |
| 000481 | Westoning Village Hall – hall hire Inv PC0621 | 18.00 |
| 000482 | Barbara Osborne – payroll | 67.50 |
| 000483 | Air Ambulance – donation | 100.00 |
| 000484 | E.on – electricity bill | 49.59 |
| 000485 | Neil Gates – general maintenance | 340.00 |
| 000486 | A Rayment – reimburse for planters | 1,530.00 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **4,418.58** |

7491.3 Other finance matters:

7491.3.1 VAT

The Clerk said that she is still awaiting a response from HMRC.

7491.3.2 Review of 2021/22 budget

The Clerk to update ‘projects’ in the monthly accounts and circulate.

**7492 Highways**

7492.1 Village Walk - potholes and other faults/issues

The village walk was held on Monday 12th July. The Chairman to circulate the report from the walk and the Clerk to report any faults to CBC. (**Action Chairman/Clerk**)

7492.2 Traffic Management/Parking Control

Nothing to report.

7492.3 Traffic calming measures – top of Church Road

The Chairman said that parking in the area has become a great problem and yellow road lines are needed.

7492.4 C107 – formal request for 40mph limit on grounds of traffic and road safety

See Public Participation. Cllr Nethersole said that the Police are aware of the problem but they are unable to stay and monitor speeding vehicles and will only be able to monitor when passing by.

The Parish Council resolved that they would like a 40mph limit to be placed on the C107 and the Chairman agreed to draft a letter to CBC with this request. (**Action Chairman**)

**7493 Recreation Ground**

7493.1 Storage compound for Westoning Football Club

Nothing to report.

**7494 Village Matters**

7494.1 Flower Planters

Cllrs Nethersole, Russell and Rogerson met to discuss the planting scheme and suggested that 3 or 4 planters be planted out initially. A resident has offered to supply mulch and help in planting them out. It was agreed to try to get local businesses to sponsor a planter.

The Chairman said that there are a number of areas in the village where weeds are growing. He said the Parish Council need to employ a person to work a few hours a week removing weeds, cutting back branches etc. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Cllr Nethersole to offer the work to resident, Mr Badderley at £10 per hour, agreed by all present. The cost to be no more than £500 in the current financial year.

7494.2 Rock Snake

The Parish Council resolved to re-site the rocks on the wall near to the school as previously discussed. Cllrs thanked a resident who offered to do the work.

7494.3 Litter Pick

Cllr Botterell said that the event was successful and 14/15 people volunteered to help.

7494.4 Littercam

Nothing to report.

7494.5 Christmas Event

Cllrs discussed some new ideas for the event. Cllr Botterell offered to donate some illuminated Christmas animals. To be put on the September agenda.

7494.6 Flagpole

The Parish Council resolved that a 30ft flag pole be purchased at a cost of up to £100 and a St Georges flag and Union flag at a cost of £50.

7494.7 Tree for the Platinum Jubilee

The Parish Council agreed that they would like to purchase an Oak Tree for planting in November. Cllr Botterell to obtain a quote. (**Action Cllr Botterell**)

7494.8 Dogs on Recreation Ground

The Chairman said that he spoke to an Officer at CBC and they are reluctant to impose Protection Orders. Cllr Nethersole agreed to purchase some more dog bag dispensers.

7494.9 Festival of Britain sign

The Chairman said that he had difficulty removing the sign but now has the right tools. He will deliver it to Signs of the Times to obtain a quote. (**Action Chairman**)

**7495 Play Area**

Cllr Ellis said that the gate latch has now been replaced.

**7496 Planning**

7496.1 Planning Applications:

Cllr Botterell left the meeting

7496.1 CB/TRE/21/00279 – 2 Manor Gardens - works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order: (MB/67/0005/A1) Trim and balance Cedar (1191) and reduce crown, trim and balance Silver Birch (1198)

The Parish Council support any work approved by the Arboricultural Officer.

Cllr Botterell returned to the meeting

Cllr Bhasin left the meeting

7496.2 CB/21/02769/FULL - Oak Lodge, 34A Church Road - Two storey rear extension and single storey side extension with internal alterations

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

Cllr Bhasin returned to the meeting

7496.3 CB/21/02850/FULL – 46a Church Road – garage conversion with extension to create a studio annexe

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

7496.4 CB/20/02054/FULL – Chestnuts Caravan Park, Steppingley Road, Tingrith – siting of 4 additional caravan plots

The Chairman agreed to visit the site and speak with the owner to express the Parish Council’s concerns and then draft a response for the Clerk to submit to CBC. The comments submitted to be ratified at the next meeting.

(**Action Chairman**)

7496.5 CB/21/03051/FULL - 28 Campion Road - demolition of garage and creation of a two storey side extension, with off road parking for 3 cars

The Parish Council has no objection to the application.

7496.2 Other Planning Matters:

7496.2.1 CB/21/02583/FULL - Samphill Solar Farm, Land off Greenfield Road - construction of a temporary 43.45MW Solar Farm, to include the installation of Solar Panels with transformers, a 132KV substation, a DNO control room, a customer substation, GRP comms cabin, security fencing, landscaping and other associated infrastructure

Planning application received and the following response was submitted prior to the meeting due to the comments deadline:

*The Parish Council has considered the above application carefully and has engaged in a consultation exercise with residents, the results of which are shown in Appendix 1. The council wishes to record its opposition to the application for the development of a 162 acre solar farm on arable farmland off Sampshill Road in Westoning for the following reasons:*

* + *The scale of the development is excessive at 162 acres which, in addition to the existing 60 acre solar farm on adjacent land, would become one of the largest, if not the largest in the country.*
  + *The proposed development is located on land contained within the South Bedfordshire Green Belt and would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt.*
  + *There are several public footpaths, bridle ways and byways open to all traffic accessed from Sampshill Road and the area is very popular with walkers, cyclists and wildlife watchers.*
  + *Parts of the proposed development would be visible from the Sharpenhoe Clappers, an area of outstanding natural beauty. A recent application for the creation of a solar farm at Faldo Farm Barton was refused and the visibility of the proposed development from the Sharpenhoe Clappers was cited as one of the reasons for refusal.*
  + *The Council is concerned that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on wildlife habitat over such a large tract of arable agricultural land.*
  + *The proposed development, mostly on rising land, will be visible from many parts of the village of Westoning, especially from the several public footpaths and bridle ways to the east of the village and would spoil the natural countryside vistas currently enjoyed by residents.*
  + *The new landscaping proposed in the application is insufficient to adequately shield the proposed solar panels from view.*
  + *The Council deeply regrets that the application does not propose any community benefit to compensate for the significant harm that would be caused by such a large development. Clearly there is a national need for renewable energy and therefore a need for solar farms to built.  However these will inevitably cause environmental damage to local communities. This is recognised in the Government’s Community Energy Strategy which remains in place from 2015. What the Council finds most scandalous about Anesco’s current application is the lack of any substantial proposed community benefit to compensate Westoning for the considerable environmental damage this large solar farm will cause. Anesco paid a community benefit of £750 per MW per year for the existing solar farm at Clayhill – why are they proposing no benefit in the current application?   The Council appreciates that community benefits have fallen over the years to as little as half the previous level but we would expect a community benefit between £400 and £500 per MW a year to be negotiated if the scheme went ahead. As an exemplifier of what other companies are offering a link to a similar solar farm development at Kemble in Gloucestershire is attached where the developer is offering £350 per MW or £17,500 pa to the community for the next forty years. This is broadly the level Westoning/Central Beds should be achieving to compensate for the inevitable environmental damage caused by the development and requests that, in the unlikely event that the application is approved, an annual payment of at least £400 per MW per year for 40 years is required for the benefit of the residents of Westoning through a Section 106 obligation.*
  + *In the event that this application is approved, a condition should be attached requiring the land covered by the application is returned to agricultural use and not designated as ‘previously developed land’ or ‘brown field’.*

*If the application is brought before the DMC for determination, the Parish Council will wish to make use of the public participation facility to oppose the application*

The Parish Council noted that amendments to the application were provided by CBC and these were discussed at the meeting. The Clerk was asked to further comment that the Parish Councils decision remains unchanged from the comments above.

**7497 Committees/Sub Groups/Representatives - Reports**

Village Hall - Cllr Luff said that the Spensley Trust will be holding an open event on 4th September at 11/11.30am.

**7498 General correspondence:**

Bobby Scheme letter – the Parish Council agreed that the request for a donation of £500 was excessive.

**7499 Date of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting**

**Wednesday 11th August 2021 at 7.30pm (Planning and Finance)**

**In the Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Approved: ………………………………………………. Date: ……………………………………………………….