

MINUTES OF COOKLEY & WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE PAVILION 28 APRIL 2014

Present: Cllrs. David Cask (Chairman) (DC), Mike Porter (MP), David Whitwood (DW), Zoé Mair (ZM), John Winter (JW), Bill Camplin (BC), Nick Jarvis (NJ), Ian Newton (IN). In attendance: PCSO Julie Hinton, District & County Cllr Stephen Burroughes, Raymond Catchpole (Clerk) and 26 members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr. Anne Thomas.

14/061 Declarations of Interest: ZM & MP declared continuing pecuniary interests in CEA, Cookpole and Allotments matters, but are permitted to discuss and vote on these matters by clerk and members through a previous resolution. NJ and IN declared their non-pecuniary interests as neighbours to the proposed Solar Farm at Hill Farm. JW declared a non-pecuniary interest in the same matter as the applicant in a current planning application for a solar panel installation.

14/062 Public Participation: The chairman introduced the procedures for public participation at this stage of the meeting.

Police Report: PCSO Julie Hinton reported there had only been one crime since the last meeting: a domestic assault. ZM mentioned there was still a need to get together to arrange a visit from the police road show.

There being no matters brought by the public the chairman moved directly to the Solar Farm presentation by Kinetica by Charlie Young and Chris Askrill of Kinetica. It was explained that this is a presentation of proposals only, prior to submission of a formal planning application in due course.

Pre-Planning Application Presentation: Proposed Solar Farm, land at Hill Farm, Cookley: Kinetica spoke to their plans and impressions as tabled for the meeting. Kinetica was established in 2012 with investment from a source having experience in renewable energy. It has one solar farm operating at present in South Wales. Our local grid area has a requirement for greater input, leading to selection of the present site at Hill Farm. Planning Officer has revised the location following a site visit. It is thought the undulating land provides natural screening and the site plateau is also screened by two ridge lines. Entire site has been walked by Planning Officer.

Low level panels are proposed, rising from 0.7ms from ground to 2.2ms at maximum at an angle of 22 degrees. Panels are finished in a non-reflective coating so reflection should be at a minimum. The scheme would allow introduction of wild life biodiversity and sheep may safely graze. The land is currently intensively used arable and sheep grazing continues the agricultural use until the site is eventually returned.

The existing public footpath to the western boundary of the site will be supplied with a green buffer and other boundaries will have substantial planting. Storm water drainage through swales will handle runoff water from the panels. It is hoped to keep open other tracks across the site, but security fencing will be required.

The chairman then threw open the presentation to public questions. Answers given by Kinetica to searching questions are summarised below:

Lifespan of the site is 25 years, constructed on removable micro piles. A financial bond will be in place to guarantee restoration to of the land. Badger gates will allow badger access to the site, hares, etc. will be able to access beneath security fencing. Shadow beneath the panels will be at a minimum due to generous spacing of the panels; wild flowers should not have to struggle for light. There will be 3.8ms between rows of panels. Security fencing will either be

dark green Weldmesh or deer fencing. Total site acreage is around 60 acres, but that includes significant boundary and other spaces.

Electricity will be taken from site at the top of Rockstone Lane. Buildings on site will include transformer and sub-station, expected to have a footprint of 6ft by 5ft. These could possibly also be sunk into the ground.

The site was chosen essentially because of availability of a grid connection and for visibility. The present site is a plateau, but naturally well contained. The site also has to be suitable to UK Power Networks.

Benefits from development of the site could accrue not just to the landowner, but also to the community. For example, in South Wales a cancelled meals-on-wheels service was resurrected and paid for by Kinetica. However, Kinetica will liaise with the community to establish what may be required rather than imposing their own proposals on the community. Another example has been the gifting of insulation to a primary school.

Concerns about owls were addressed by reference to the installation of owl boxes on other solar sites where residency has been taken up. Solar sites provide ideal hunting grounds, free from human interference.

Maintenance throughout the site's life is light touch and employment is limited to cleaning panels. During construction, use will be made of local employment wherever possible.

Kinetica were not aware of any problems encountered on other sites after implementation and operation for two or three years. Issues before implementation were mainly concerned with visibility. Agricultural use remains throughout operation and is there when the site reverts.

There was unlikely to be any problem from glare from the panels, but a glare assessment document would be part of the application.

Where there may arise specific problems of visibility relating to individual properties, Kinetica will be prepared to discuss details with the householder and, if necessary, engage in specialist tree planting.

Whilst Kinetica have not to date engaged in direct communication with neighbouring landowners, as soon as their plans are sufficiently advanced to lodge a planning application they will contact individual landowners. Kinetica wished everything to be more advanced before such discussion took place so as to prevent 'Chinese whispers'.

In response to concern about contours of the proposed site, Kinetica said they will submit amenity and detail plans and assessments with the application. MP pointed out that there was a similar solar farm operating in the Wissett area and suggested anyone with concerns could view that site.

The application is likely to be submitted in four to six weeks' time. District Cllr Burroughes confirmed it will be subject to proper consideration and scrutiny by committee and it will come to the parish council for comment in the usual way. Kinetica will keep in touch with the parish council throughout the process.

In respect of biodiversity, sheep grazing would not be mandatory, but government policy is moving towards a return to agriculture. Feedback as to biodiversity and related issues is always welcomed by Kinetica.

The chairman rounded off the discussion and closed the presentation. The public then left.

Suffolk County Council Report: County Cllr Burroughes' report reproduced below and circulated to members in advance of the meeting:

- **Suffolk County Council responds to Ofsted findings**

SCC has responded to a report, published by Ofsted last month, following inspections into council's arrangements for supporting school improvement. The report recognised that the county council has a vision for improving education attainment, is ambitious and that Headteachers value the support they receive from the authority in strengthening governance. However, overall, it rated our approach to helping schools improve as being ineffective. In doing so, it identified four areas of improvement for the council to focus on, all of which had already been identified by SCC as needing focused work, and this was already underway when Ofsted visited. The Ofsted's report makes sobering reading. Suffolk County Council welcomes the report and agrees with the four areas of improvement identified. So much so that work to address them is already well underway. Results are improving in Suffolk, but too slowly. And although 70% of schools in Suffolk are rated good or outstanding, this isn't enough. We are all working hard to drive up standards.

- **Parents continue to secure their school of choice**

Nearly every Suffolk pupil has received an offer for a place at their preferred secondary school. This year, SCC received 7,661 applications from parents stating their preference of secondary school for September 2014. Of those, 98.6% received an offer for one of their three preferred schools; 95.1% got into their first choice. The number of Year 9 pupils getting their first choice has risen to 99.77%, compared to 99.04% in 2013. Any applicant who has not secured an offer of a place at one of their preferred schools has the right to appeal to an independent panel. It is important to see every child attending a good or outstanding school and being taught by a good or outstanding teacher. Heading towards our goal of achieving this, our record in getting such a high proportion of pupils into their preferred school is good news.

- **A-Z of Recycling launched**

A new campaign "Waste Less and Save More", has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership. To point out the benefits for residents of recycling, both personal and financial, a new A-Z of Recycling has been launched to help everyone discover ways to reduce waste and save money. Last year the cost to the Suffolk taxpayer was £3.5million to dispose of recyclable items that ended up in landfill. The A-Z of Recycling, a searchable directory, added to the Suffolk Recycling website helps to find how to reduce, re-use and recycle standard household items. It also covers re-using clothing and other textiles, as well as how to avoid food wastage. The A-Z can be found by going to <http://www.greensuffolk.org/recycling/a-z-of-recycling/>. In the ten years to 2013, the amount of Suffolk's waste that was re-used, recycled or composted rose from 26.2% to 52.4%. The new guide will contribute to extending this excellent record.

- **Options for a new crossing over Lake Lothing to be developed and consulted on**

Three different proposals for a new crossing over Lake Lothing in Lowestoft are being developed and consulted on. SCC has commissioned planning and engineering experts WSP to develop the options and lead a major public consultation. The first job will be to review the options for the location of the crossing. The public will be given an opportunity to comment. Further technical work will then be carried out on a preferred option, including the crossing's design. This will also be subject to widespread public consultation. Assessments of the environmental impact of a new crossing will also be carried out. It is hoped that crossing location options will be available for public comment in May 2014, followed by a further consultation on a preferred scheme in October 2014. A final report is expected by the end of the year.

● **Work begins on a new care home at Cedars Park, Stowmarket**

Suffolk's cabinet member for health and adult care, was at Cedars Park in Stowmarket last month to mark the start of work on a £4.5million state-of-the-art residential care home. At the site he was joined by representatives from Care UK, developers Castleoak, and pupils from Cedars Park Primary School. The facility is being built on land in Creeting Road East, close to the pond and primary school. It will provide 24-hour nursing care, specialist dementia services, a small cinema, hairdressing salon and café and shop.

The well-being centre will open seven days a week, and provide day clubs and specialist care, therapy sessions and activities which will be available to people living in the community. Residents at Wade House in Stowmarket, which is scheduled to close, are being consulted about their choices, which include the opportunity to move into the new home when it opens in the spring of 2015. Meanwhile, as part of the overall investment of £60million from Care UK, Mildenhall Lodge in Mildenhall and Davers Court in Bury St Edmunds will open this summer. Our partnership with Care UK, and the £60million investment they are bringing to Suffolk, is a major contribution to this priority.

● **County-wide call to shape the future of housing in Suffolk**

Over 80,000 households have received questionnaires inviting them to have their say on what they value most about living in Suffolk. In what is Suffolk's biggest housing survey, all seven district and borough councils are calling on people to tell them about where they live, and what housing choices they are likely to face. The results will help local councils influence the way housing is provided to meet the needs of a changing population. When combined with census results and housing market information, the county-wide survey will paint a compelling picture for planners and housing developers alike. Using the electoral roll, printed surveys will be issued to a random sample of 25% of the county's population. Completion of the survey ended on 23 April 2014, and the results will be published later in the summer. The results of this survey will be extremely helpful in shaping the supply of new housing in Suffolk.

● **A12 flood defence work to begin**

Construction work to build a series of raised banks to defend the A12 from flooding has begun. Bunds will protect the single carriage A road as it crosses the Blythburgh estuary, north of the village. The scheme is approximately 650m in length and addresses the flooding issue present through that stretch of A12. The project comprises of two sections of work: the first is to construct a new west embankment and toe ditch, and the second is to install sheet piling with the re-grading of the east embankment. The west embankment will be constructed first so that a disruptive habitat survey and species translocation on the east bank can be carried out prior to piling. The two phases of work will be: main construction: March - July 2014; landscaping and planting: October 2014.

● **Record Heritage Lottery funding of £1.5m for new Brecks project**

A scheme that will deliver a host of exciting projects in the Breckland area has been boosted by a £1.5million Heritage Lottery grant. SCC and the Breaking New Ground (BNG) Landscape Partnership Board applied for the Landscape Partnership funding, which will go towards a £2.2million project to benefit the Brecks landscape, heritage and communities. The restoration of the Pump House at Brandon Country Park by West Suffolk College students, and its development as a volunteer centre for the Brecks, is among the 37 individual projects in the scheme, to be delivered over the next three years. Thanks to this grant, the partnership will be able to carry out many exciting projects.

These will include the creation of a conservation volunteer centre, walking and cycling trails, heritage interpretation that tells the story of the Brecks and new training opportunities. This is excellent news for the Brecks and Suffolk as a whole."

- **Findings from Home Care and Community Meals consultation revealed**

Last month the Suffolk's cabinet agreed proposals for how home care and community meals services should be delivered in the future. The county council received over 1,000 responses as part of its 12-week consultation. Those responses have been reviewed and used to help shape the proposals for the services. It revealed a preference for a community-led service with a wide range of support services, and also indicated that customers would like more choice and control over how allocated funding is spent and services arranged. Following the cabinet decision, the new home care service will allow providers to work more closely with customers to make decisions on how their funding could be used to support them to live at home. The new community meals service will provide customers with a wider choice of frozen and chilled foods, as well as meals offered by an expanding number of local meal providers. We want to listen to the views of Suffolk residents and, wherever possible, to shape services to meet their changing needs. The new proposals for home care and community meals are a case in point, and will ensure that the services are tailored, as much as they can be, to suit the customer.

Suffolk Coastal District Council Report: County Cllr Burroughes' report reproduced below and circulated to members in advance of the meeting:

- **District Moving forward with Boundary Changes**

Suffolk Coastal has submitted its proposals for the new warding arrangements and the reduction of Councillors from 55 to 42 to the Boundary Commission for its approval. A review had to take place in order to equalise the amount of 'electors' per District Council 'Ward' and Suffolk Coastal have put in their suggestions for the Boundary Commission to study. Reducing the number of councillors will save money and more fully engage councillors in the day to day running of the council.

- **Suffolk Coastal may move to new HQ**

A move to new offices is being considered by Suffolk Coastal Councillors. The current HQ in Melton are becoming costly to run, are not particularly accessible and not 'fit for purpose'. Suffolk Coastal's Cabinet are looking at options to see if a move to new premises is possible and how to make the it happen without putting any cost onto the council tax payer.

- **NEW LOCAL ENABLING BUDGET FOR COASTAL AREA**

A new community enabling budget is being introduced across Suffolk Coastal District to help promote the core aims of the council, i.e., protecting the environment, promoting healthier lives, and increasing physical involvement of young people. It is seen as a way to significantly help promote active community involvement and applications for funding can be made to your District Councillor setting out the nature of the scheme, how it will be of benefit to your community, and how it will be delivered sustainably.

The County Council already operates a successful 'Locality' Scheme, which is vital in the Council's objective of supporting communities financially.

District Cllr Burroughes talked to his report. ZM asked whether purchases could be made in advance of receiving any grant from the District Council Locality Budget and Cllr Burroughes confirmed that would be acceptable against proper invoices and receipts.

Cllr Burroughes confirmed that the sale of Marsh View, Walpole had gone through and legals were moving forwards. The vendor is likely to be involved in ongoing construction of hard landscaping.

There being no further questions arising from the reports, the chairman moved the meeting into council mode.

14/063 Approval of Minutes: minutes of the council meeting on 17 February 2014, previously approved subject to slight amendment were signed by the chairman. Minutes of the council meeting of 17 March 2014 were approved and signed by the chairman. Minutes of the planning meeting of 7 April 2014 were approved and signed by MP as chairman of that meeting.

14/064 Matters arising: ZM referred to the realignment of planting in a ditch at Holly Trees. Members confirmed the realignment had happened.

14/065 Planning: There were no new planning applications. **(a) Planning Notifications.** Clerk reported back on response from Planning Department to complaints about lack of notification of planning applications to neighbouring landowners and householders. ZM agreed to notify those who may be affected if they are on the community email list. JW suggested the option to be included on this email list to receive such information should be advertised to residents. Clerk will place a notice on the notice boards and website. **(b) Proposed Solar Farm: Land at Hill Farm.** The earlier presentation and observations from the public were considered. BC asked what members felt. ZM was concerned at overall scale. IN was concerned that no direct communication had been made by Kinetica to neighbouring landowners, but the presentation had settled some issues. District Cllr Burroughes asked what grade the land was; MP advised Grade 3 and significantly productive. JW said the key was that there was available capacity on the grid. Cllr Burroughes mentioned it would be important to establish the ongoing credentials of Kinetica. Other company failures had previously caused complex ownership and leasing issues. BC considered the financial bond for restoration a good asset. JW thought post and wire deer fencing would be a better visual than Weldmesh fencing. Clerk will advise when application is lodged. **(c) Derelict Cottages, Cratfield Road, Cookley** Clerk updated members on complete demolition.

Ill Farm

14/066 Finance: (a) RFO Report: clerk presented his report and financial statement.

The following invoices were approved and paid:

Clerk's Expenses £ 71.70
SALC Subscription 2014/15 £120.00
SALC Training (website) £108.00
Community Action Suffolk (subs) £ 30.00
Diocese of St Edmundsbury, etc. £180.00

Balances to carry forward were submitted as under, taking into account the above:

Community Account £5,233.26
Business Saver £1,092.81 £6,326.07

Financial statement was approved unanimously by show of hands.

14/067 Highways: (a) MP reported two large potholes on Walpole Lane and Halesworth Road. Clerk will arrange another parish tour with SCC Highways. Cllr Burroughes expressed a wish to be copied in. ZM referred to continuing fly-tipping at the water borehole at the top of Rockstone Lane. Clerk will notify SCDC Environmental Health. Again Cllr Burroughes would like to be copied in. Clerk will also notify police as this does seem to have become an unsavoury meeting place. MP asked about using the national pothole website; Cllr Burroughes suggested if this is used, SCC should also be copied in

14/068 Footpaths: BC had previously spoken of the need for steps to be dug in some paths to facilitate access and this was in hand by SCC. The Rockstone footpath requires attention and the path through outbuildings attached to Cookley Grange requires way marking. JW would be willing to way mark paths on his land and discs will be supplied through BC.

14/069 Trees: ZM thought some trees on the Village Green should be cut back in the autumn. MP said we would need to plan ahead. BC asked about ash die-back in the area, but MP thought this not to be a dying problem locally.

14/070 Cemetery: (a) Cemetery Fees. Comparisons had been circulated. BC established the principle was that fees needed to be increased, but not necessarily on a par with District Councils. Clerk is to add a fourth column to his circulated comparisons with suggested new rates for Walpole and circulate again to members prior to a further meeting. **(b) Consecration of remainder of cemetery:** clerk updated members on the process. A formal petition for consecration was signed by DC as chairman, together with ZM and NJ. Clerk will submit the petition together with the cheque signed this evening, and seek a date and time. DW thought it should be notified to the village so people can attend if they wish. Clerk will advertise it on noticeboards and website. The Pavilion will be used for robing and teas and transport will be needed from Pavilion to Cemetery and return.

14/071 Cookpole: (a) CEA: ZM reported community woodland [project was moving forward; with landowners consent neglected pockets of woodland would be managed, possibly by MenCap volunteers working under a trained leader. There was also a project in discussion with W&CPFT to provide solar powered chargers for electric bikes and also the hire of such bikes. Discussion was ongoing. **(b) Allotments:** report was deferred in the absence of Anne Thomas, but lots of activity on site had been noted. **(c) Cookpole News:** ZM raised a request for consideration of costs in respect of producing hard copy of the newsletter. Hard copy was greatly appreciated over emailed copies and it was the intention to supply every household with a hard copy newsletter. DW suggested a donation of £100 from the parish council, seconded by BC and carried unanimously.

14/072 Villages Together: it was agreed that with Cllr Burroughes new series of parish meetings and other cluster meetings being offered no further action will be taken for the time being in respect of Villages Together.

14/073 Sizewell C Community Forum: clerk will attend the next meeting in autumn 2014.

14/074 Correspondence: (a) clerk had been made aware of a matter of serious concern regarding difficulty in obtaining household insurance through post code applied dangers of flooding. DEFRA and Environment Agency had produced definitive plans showing the extent of the flood plain; clerk will make this available on notice boards and website. **(b)** Clerk had received invitation for the village to enter Village of the Year Competition 2014. Hard copy of details passed to ZN for Cookpole to consider. **(c)** SALC Training schedules had been circulated to members. MP suggested it would be good for any councillor who had not previously received such training to take advantage of it. Clerk will await confirmation from any interested councillor so that he may book dates as appropriate. Clerk was also authorised to attend Clerk's Information & Networking Days; all approved unanimously by show of hands.

14/075 Future Agenda: nothing noted beyond those matters already minuted.

14/076 Next Meeting: 19 May 2014 7.30pm at The Pavilion: Cookley and Walpole Parish Meetings, followed immediately by Parish Council Annual General Meeting and, time permitting, regular scheduled Parish Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.48pm

Chairman Date

