

## HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014, at Harberton Parish Hall

Present: Cllrs Beamish, Broom, J. Hockings, S. Hockings, Janes, Padfield, Trott, Williams, Wynne. D.Cllr Steer, C.Cllr Vint.

Apologies: Cllrs Camp, Clayton and Hoddinott.

Public: 6

Clerk: Ms C Radford

The Chairman opened the meeting and invited members of the public to speak.

### **Public Session**

A member of the public expressed concerns following the EGM to 'them and us' 'farmers and public' comments as being untrue and insulting. The use of the term 'rebuttal' in the Chairman's reply was concerning as it is expected that councillors listen to rather than dismiss public comment. The speaker was concerned at a perceived lack of knowledge of the councillors of existing turbines nearby, dimensions of turbines or comments to the effect that one large community wind turbine would be better than lots of little ones.

The speaker also expressed surprise to learn that the draft plan presented to residents was a summary, asking why there are two versions. The speaker also asked for clarity on who was on the Finance Committee and commented that this was not discussed at the last meeting.

Councillors replied stating that councillors were appointed to the Finance Committee at the last meeting and details were in the draft minutes to be approved.

A second member of the public wished to address the council regarding the Sustainable Energy chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan. As its author, the speaker commented that the draft chapter took a long time to research and it is believed that it doesn't conflict with guidance or national and local policy. The speaker commented that the chapter reflects public opinion yet does not prohibit developers provided proposals meet local conditions and concerns. The speaker commented that the chapter flags up features relevant to the Parish (Bats, Radar) so that Parish Councillors can give a view. The speaker was of the view that the adoption of this paper should mean that applications are better considered – which can only be a good thing. If the council were minded to adopt the chapter, the author would be willing to have it checked by an independent specialist planning lawyer to ensure that it complies with guidance and national policy. The speaker finished by disagreeing with the notion that one large turbine would stop a plethora of smaller turbines as made at the EGM.

A third speaker addressed the council with regard to two turbines proposed yet refused at Diptford. The speaker commented that refusal was made on the following grounds (*paraphrased by the Clerk*):

- The proposed turbines in combination appear overly dominant with cumulative impact. Becoming a renewable energy dominant landscape.
- The small scale landscape features would be overwhelmed. The punitive impact would be unacceptably high. Cumulative impact is very material and cause for concern locally.

The speaker concluded by stating that local feeling is to give reasonable resistance and hope the Parish Council will take that on board.

In reply D. Cllr Steer agreed that these proposals were turned down on the grounds stated and that planning officers are well aware of cumulative impact. He commented that it will be interesting to see result of the review on the Coombeshead development.

The fourth speaker commented that last month the chairman of Climate Change committee made it clear that sufficient onshore wind turbines had already been approved to make obligations to 20/20. Any further would be over and above government targets putting more burden on the landscape than is required.

The speaker commented that although the Parish Council is not the planning authority but a consultee, they should tell the planning authorities what the people think rather than driven by an overarching planning policy.

One of the councillors replied to say that councillors do listen to comments of the public and find the lobby intimidating at times. This councillor also suggested that members of the public should not assume that everyone in the Parish feels the same way as they do.

The sixth speaker queried whether councillors would specify the size of wind turbines in its policy or the distance turbines would be allowable from property. There was a short discussion in which it was agreed that government doesn't refuse separation distances but state that they mustn't be rigid. There are also conditions regarding the effect of noise.

The Chairman closed the public session to begin the meeting.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Camp, Clayton and Hoddinott.

### 2. Reports from County and District Councillors

C. Cllr Vint circulated a paper report which had no issues specifically related to Harberton. Following queries from councillors regarding the shared space initiative in the Narrows, Totnes, C.Cllr Vint commented that the cycle group for Totnes recognise the problem of cyclists travelling the wrong way down one way streets and are trying to tackle the problem. This is a separate issue than the Shared Space policy.

It was reported that no decisions have been made on land availability issues as yet.

Further to comments about poor temporary road works, councillors reported that proper repairs at Marley Head are fantastic and recommend that no more time is wasted with temporary pothole repairs. C.Cllr Vint replied that the County Council will continue to undertake repairs on minor roads, but that the repair to the Western Bypass will not be completed until September.

D.Cllr Steer reported that operations at South Hams District Council is being slimmed down to meet funding cuts. Recent developments see officers being allotted specific areas for planning and other local issues. D. Cllr Steer reported that the South Hams District Council Chair is in hospital to undertake a heart operation. Cllr Broom asks D.Cllr Steer to send best wishes from the Parish Council.

### 3. Minutes

- 3.1. The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10/06/14 were considered and after making some amendments were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 3.2. The minutes of the Planning meeting of 24/06/14 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 3.3. The minutes of the EGM of 01/07/14 were considered and after making some amendments were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

### 4. Matters Arising

4.1 It was reported that a meeting was held at Luscombe Cross on 17<sup>th</sup> June in which councillors considered solutions to the issue of vehicles driving over a hump between the style and the cross. Cllr Hoddinott had agreed to level the area, leaving a step up to the cross. It was also suggested when on site that the issue of jumping over the stone style could be solved by laying the hawthorn. It was reported that this will be attended to in the future.

### 5. Planning

5.1. Planning Application 23/1494/14/F. Resubmission of planning approval 23/0155/14/F for construction of garaging and formation of parking area at Hernaford Farm Barns, Harbertonford.

A motion was proposed to not object to the application but to write to the developer suggest turning the garage around to facilitate the fitting of solar panels on it. The motion was seconded and carried by vote.

A motion was proposed to write to the developer to request that funds are put towards an all-weather walkable path at Hernaford road. There was no seconder for the motion.

Councillors commented that the web link to the comment from the Highways Agency did not show a comment but a listing and that this is a regular occurrence. It was queried how the Parish Council can take comments into account if they have not been made. **Action: C.Cllr Vint will raise this as an issue.**

### 6. Monthly reports

6.1. The Finance sub-committee has not met and so there is no report.

6.2. Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee

6.2.1. Discussion on whether Sustainable Energy Policy is an independent declaration of the Parish Council or part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was commented that if the Parish Council make a resolution to adopt a policy on renewable energy then it is binding for 6 months. As the Localism Act specifies that the Neighbourhood Plan is

developed and adapted in consultation with the public, it would not be compatible to have both. It was recommended that the Parish Council should make a decision on which way to go. It was advised that if the Parish Council adopted the policy then it should be explicitly removed from the Neighbourhood Plan.

The above comments were debated by councillors; individual councillors commented that the Neighbourhood Plan policies should not be frozen, that the Parish Council should not adopt a policy but make decisions on applications on their own merits and that the Parish Council should not adopt policies that predetermine decisions as those decisions would likely be thrown out.

A motion was proposed to remove the sustainable energy policy from the Neighbourhood Plan. The motion was seconded. The majority voted against the motion and it was lost.

A motion was proposed to refer to the draft neighbourhood plan document when considering planning applications on sustainable energy as a guide. The motion was seconded and was carried by a majority vote.

#### 6.2.2. Constitution of the Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee

It was reported that a number of regular members of the committee had stepped down. Cllr Padfield, Cllr Trott and Cllr S. Hockings also stepped down from the committee. Councillors believed that the Neighbourhood Plan was approximately a third complete, that the section on housing and transportation needed the most work and that there remained a question mark over the issue of agreement of the land owner on development of proposed sites for inclusion. It was commented that access issues are one of the key criteria for eliminating sites and C.Cllr Vint commented that he would insist on getting comment from Highways at this point in the process, rather than wait until areas were selected before making comment.

Councillors reported that the process requires a lot of detailed work in writing and mapping and checking access which is time consuming, and that 90% of the work has been done by a 2 people. It was commented that the next phase requires negotiation with land owners requiring considerable administration in keeping dialogue maintained. A suggestion was made to hire someone to undertake this work as it is difficult to enlist volunteers to do it. It was also suggested that work could be undertaken by staff at the Town Council as there is duplication in the IT and other administrative functions. It was commented that the Neighbourhood Plan could be reduced in scope to make it simpler and that this could be discussed at the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan committee.

Councillors were asked for nominations for the Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee. Cllr Broom did not step down. Cllr Wynne was nominated and voted onto the committee. There were no other nominations.

A motion was proposed 'to attempt to get the Neighbourhood Plan up and running with the available councillors and explore technical support from the Town Council; for other councillors to be given the opportunity to step up to the committee at the earliest opportunity'. The motion was seconded and carried by majority vote.

Cllr Wynne agreed to attend a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July at the Guildhall in place of Cllr Padfield.

#### 6.3. Community Land Trust

It was reported that the architect was in meetings with the land owner in order to map out the final boundary prior to going to option agreement.

#### 6.4. TAP (Town and Parish) Fund

It was commented that the TAP funded asset awarded to the Harbourne Shuttle had now transferred to Bob the Bus when the organisations were merged. Councillors queried whether the Parish of Harberton would still benefit. **Action: C. Cllr Vint to ask for dialogue with Bob the Bus on the issue.**

It was reported that Dave Black of Devon County Council had re-estimated the cost of the Toll House Cycle path at £70,000.00 rather than the £40,000.00 originally quoted. It was reported that other projects proposed by local councils were also under threat due to shifting goal posts. Councillors asked C.Cllr Vint to follow the issue up, who stated that he has requested that each affected council write to Mr Black copying each other and relevant bodies into correspondence.

A motion was proposed that a letter was written to Dave Black to state that 'the Parish Council notes with grave disappointment the undocumented escalation of the price of the Toll House cycle path from £40,000.00 to £70,000.00 requiring an explanation on how he had got it so wrong. This moving of the goal posts makes fundraising extremely difficult'. The motion was seconded and carried by majority vote. **Action: Clerk to draft letter.**

#### 6.4.1. Discussion of proposals to 2015 TAP fund.

It was reiterated that new applications to the TAP fund would require benefit to two or more Parishes. Following discussion, councillors agreed to explore a TAP fund proposal installing solar panels at Harbertonford Primary School. **Action: Clerk to raise the issue of solar panels with the Primary School Committee.**

#### 6.5. Clerk's report

It was reported that the Clerk had responded to a letter from Dr Sarah Wollaston MP regarding burial plots in the Parish. Information was relayed from Rev. Caroline Luff that there are no concerns regarding the number of available burial plots within the Parish.

It was reported that a DALC course on financial systems and protocols for Parish Councils and online banking had been cancelled. The Clerk had hoped the course would have given some guidance on new bank accounts for the Parish Council but will continue to research options for the next meeting of the Finance Committee. The Clerk is reviewing models for minutes/agendas and financial systems following training and research.

#### 7. Policy on Renewable Energy

7.1. Review Sustainable Energy papers. In view of the earlier discussion it was agreed that new drafts should be brought to the Parish Councillors as soon as possible.

7.2. Invite legal/District Council response on Parish Council resolutions on renewable energy. A motion was proposed to 'seek legal advice on the policy passed'. The motion was seconded and carried by majority vote.

#### 8. Agreement of payments

A motion was proposed to pay all payments as circulated. The motion was seconded and carried by majority vote.

£300.00 Grant to St Peter's Church Chq 634

£30.00 New Clerks Short Course DALC Chq 635

£123.75 Andrew Hockings IT support and 5 months of LiveDrive backup services 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2014 – 1st July 2014. Chq 636

£48.00 Andrew Hockings 12 months LiveDrive Back up services 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015. Chq 636

£107.90 Domain Name and Webhosting – reimbursement to the Parish Clerk chq 637

£224.38 Parish Clerk Salary 29<sup>th</sup> July Chq 637

£224.38 Parish Clerk Salary 29<sup>th</sup> August Chq 633

#### 9. Correspondence

9.1. 26/05/14 Planetaid clothing bank request for Parish Hall car park.

It was reported that Planetaid requested to place a clothing bank in the higher car park. It was proposed that the Parish Council turn down the request. The motion was seconded and carried by majority vote.

**Action: Clerk to relay clothing bank decision to Planetaid.**

9.2. 04/06/14 Devon Youth Service Review. Information was read to councillors.

9.3. 10/06/14 Let's Talk Renewables, Parish and Town Council Training Invitation. Cllr Padfield and Cllr Broom agreed to attend. **Action: Clerk to register Cllrs Padfield and Broom to attend training.**

9.4. 19/06/14 Empowering Parish Councils to sell electricity. The email was read out to the Parish Council. There was a proposal to support the motion to empower Parish Council to sell electricity. The proposal was seconded and carried by majority vote.

9.5. 20/06/14 Lights Out - Further Information. Information was given to councillors.

9.6. 24/06/14 Parish Views sought on Rural Housing. **Action: Clerk to pass information on to Cllr Williams to complete.**

9.7. 25/06/14 Allotment Society Open Day d 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The invitation was given to councillors. Councillors noted that the event of the previous year had been well worth attending.

9.8. DCC Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic and Parking Tristford Road, 8-10<sup>th</sup> September. Read out for information. **Action: Clerk to circulate.**

9.9. 16/06/14 Devon County Council Day Services Review. The email was read out to councillors who noted that several day services across the county would be closing.

9.10. 01/07/14 Day services - Message from Councillor Stuart Barker. The email was read out to councillors.

9.11. 03/07/14 Totnes and Dartmouth Ring and Ride Meeting Tuesday, 22nd July, 2014. The information was given to councillors.

10. E Newsletters received available to councillors on request:

Public Sector Executive  
Rural Services Network  
JoinedUp (Health)  
Devon Home Choice  
Devon County Council Community News Round – Up  
Devon and Cornwall Police Newsletter  
DALC Newsletter re training  
Devon County Council Emergency Planning Team  
South Hams Our Plan E Newsletter  
Local Government Strategic Leaders Forum

#### **11. Matters at the discretion of the Chairman**

It had been observed that there was a fallen branch in one of the Harberton passing places. It was commented that the issue was in hand.

It was commented that the dog litter and litter bin issue at Harbertonford Park had not been resolved and needed to be followed up. It was suggested that a separate bin for dog mess should be installed. **Action: Cllr Broom to follow up.**

It was reported that Leigh Bridge was about to be repaired and there would be a complete road closure with a diversion in place whilst work is undertaken.

The Chairman had received a phone call regarding a proposed fibre box at Harbertonford, asking if there Parish Council were likely to make any objections. The response given was that it would be very welcome.

It was agreed that there would be no ordinary meeting of the Parish Council in August.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be a Planning meeting in late July, dates to be circulated.

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be 9<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30pm at Harberton Parish Hall.