

Withington Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 7th September 2022
at 7.00pm in the Parish Room

Minutes

26/2022 Present: Councillors: Phil Heath (Chair), Neil Maxwell, Lesley Stone, Martin Timmis, Alan Williams, Councillor Lezley Picton, Denise Roscoe (Clerk) and 20 members of the public

27/2022 Welcome: The Chairman welcomed everyone

28/2022 Apologies: Bernie Jones, Stuart Jones and Rob Law

29/2022 Declaration of Interest: None

30/2022 Approval of the Minutes of 6th July 2022

An addendum was added to the minutes and they were approved and signed by the Chairman

31/2022 Public Forum

No concerns were raised.

32/2022 Report from Cllr Lezley Picton

Written report will be appended to the meeting minutes

33/2022 Village Green Committee Report

Written report will be appended to the meeting minutes

34/2022 Updates from Previous Meetings: Will be carried forward to the next PC meeting on 2nd November

- Speeding – Withington be included in 20mph pilot scheme
- Ownership of Village Green Hedges
- Sunnyfields – Willow Tree
- SmartWater Kits
- Misspelled Rodington Sign

35/2022 Defibrillator Awareness and Maintenance

The defibrillator was recalled for a software fault that has now been rectified. A new battery and defibrillator pads were purchased.

A new training video has been added to the Withington website it can be found here:

www.withingtonparish.co.uk/community/withington-parish-10141/defibrillator-training/

Action Clerk: to send email to distribution list.

Councillor Stone is offering to hold “Defibrillator Awareness” sessions. Anyone interested should contact Clerk and arrangements will be made for sessions in the near future. **Action Clerk:** to send email to distribution list.

36/2022 Letter from Hope House

Letter received from Hope House asking for donations. Withington Parish Council has a policy to not donate to charities. However, donations have been made to Hope House by the carol singers in the village.

Minutes confirmed as correct 2nd November 2022

Chairman

37/2022 Finance Report

Approval of Accounts to date for the Parish Council and the Village Green

**WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
6th September 2022**

Parish Council (Incl Defibrillator Funds)	Village Green
Brought Forward from 05/07/22 £7,343.29	Brought Forward from 05/07/22 £9,875.37
Receipts since 05/07/22 £61.02	Receipts since 05/07/22 £270.00
Wayleave £61.02	Friends of the Green (2022/23) £270.00
Payments Approved - 06/07/22 £47.00	Payments Approved - 06/07/22 £46.99
Hire of Hall (Jly 22) £12.00	W Thomas (Jubilee Plaque) £46.99
Information Commissioner £35.00	
Payments made since 05/07/22 for approval £3,805.61	Payments made since 05/07/22 for approval £1,759.92
L Stone (Jubilee Exp) £95.38	W Thomas (Goal Posts) £1,759.92
HMRC PAYE £2.40	
HMRC PAYE £108.20	
D Roscoe (Stationery) £33.94	
N Maxwell (Defib Pads) £47.94	
D Roscoe (Stationery) £8.75	
Shrop Council (Election Fees) £100.00	
N Maxwell (Defib Battery) £204.00	
D Malley (1/2 yr Payroll) £50.00	
Shrop Council (Village Green Loan) £3,155.00	
Balance Carried Forward to 06/09/22 £3,551.70	Balance Carried Forward to 06/09/22 £8,338.46
Payments for approval - 07/09/22	Payments for approval - 07/09/22
Hire of Hall (Sept 22) £12.00	None
Clerks Salary (Sept 22) £433.44	
HMRC PAYE (Sept 22) £108.40	
Authorisation to pay the following if within budget amount:	Authorisation to pay the following if within budget amount:
	Lawn Mower Maintenance
	Hedge Cutting

Payments approved:

Payments made since 05/07/22

£95.38	L Stone (Jubilee Exp)
£2.40	HMRC PAYE
£108.20	HMRC PAYE
£33.94	D Roscoe (Stationery)
£47.94	N Maxwell (Defib Pads)
£8.75	D Roscoe (Stationery)
£100.00	Shrop Council (Election Fees)
£204.00	N Maxwell (Defib Battery)
£50.00	D Malley (1/2 yr Payroll)
£3,155.00	SC (Village Green Loan)
£1,759.92	W Thomas (Goal Posts)

Payments for approval 07/09/22

£12.00	Hire of Hall (Sept 22)
£433.44	Clerks Salary (Sept 22)
£108.40	HMRC PAYE (Sept 22)

38/2022 Planning

Barkers House 22/03056/REF: Appeal to Secretary of State

The Parish Council had no objections to this planning application made in November 2021 and continues to have no objections. Action Clerk: To write to the Secretary of State giving the Parish Council's opinion.

Church Farm Solar Farm 22/03486/FUL

Review results of Parish survey

96 houses in the Parish

32 houses responded 33.3% of Parish

No = 8 houses 8.3% of Parish

Neutral = 10 houses 10.4% of Parish

Yes = 14 houses 14.6% of Parish

No firm views = 64 houses did not respond 66.7% of Parish

Therefore only 8.3% of households objected leaving 91.7% either in favour, neutral or not having any firm views.

P = Point raised

R = Response, where given

P. The assumption that only 8.3% of Withington households objected to the solar farm proposal was challenged and instead it should be based on the number of returned responses not total households. The findings of the questionnaire were challenged as being unrepresentative of the community view

R. The Parish Council (PC) will reissue the Survey under the terms that every resident, on the electoral roll, can submit a response rather than one response per household.

P. Concern was raised that the survey implied that the PC had already determined in favour of the application by reference to the Community Benefit Fund (CBF).

R. This was stated as not being so.

P. The validity of the impact on house prices was questioned as it only covers sample data from 3 counties.

R. A wide search was conducted on the internet for definitive surveys on the impact on house prices but few were available. One implied no impact on prices and another implied a 2-3% reduction. It was suggested that individual households could negotiate independently with Elgin Energy.

Further Points Raised

P. Was the proposed CBF an annual payment or a single upfront payment.

R. No amount or terms had been agreed with Elgin Energy.

P. Other brown field sites could have been chosen but the developers prefer the green field sites as it is cheaper to develop.

R. The owners of the land had elected to erect a solar farm, albeit there may have been active marketing of the option by the developers.

P. The 40 year life cycle of the project was challenged on the basis that the solar panels do not have such longevity.

R. Panels last approximately 20 years and are likely to be replaced within the 40 year life cycle to ensure optimum electricity generation.

P. With reference to the CBF do Shropshire Council negotiate with the developers.

R. No, they are not involved. It is a direct relationship between developer and local community.

P. It was suggested that the PC reflect the views contained within the survey in their response to the application.

P. Concerns were raised about the noise of construction and the operational noise from the inverters and sub-station, especially if not well maintained.

R. Each inverter will generate noise levels comparable to a domestic fridge.

Minutes confirmed as correct 2nd November 2022

_____ Chairman

R. The PC has until the 25th September to reply to SC regarding the planning application. Following the reissue of the survey Elgin Energy will be invited to an extraordinary meeting, later in the month to respond to all concerns. All concerns and questions should be documented and forwarded to the PC.

P. Concern raised over the ultimate ownership of the solar farm.

R. Elgin Energy may build the solar farm or may sell it on to a third party. The new owners would be bound by any conditions of the planning application. Observations were made that the solar farm could be worth approximately £1m on the open market even prior to construction.

P. It was mentioned that the new Prime Minister, Liz Truss, had stated that she will stop future solar farms being built on arable land.

R. The current law would need to be changed to achieve this.

P. Should the PC request an extension to the application to allow time for residents' concerns to be raised and addressed by Elgin Energy.

R. Enquiries will be made as to whether an extension can be granted.

P. Have previous Solar Farm application been turned down.

R. Yes

P. Shropshire Council do not have a policy for the development of Solar Farms.

Motion to approve the PC discussing the Community Benefits Fund with Elgin Energy

The Community Benefit Fund (CBF) is a voluntary contribution to the community the company is not obliged to make an offer.

The CBF is not a factor in Shropshire Council's (SC) planning decision.

CBF does not operate like the CIL payment applied to new developments and it is paid directly to the community and not via SC.

An initial offer of £75,000 has been made by Elgin Energy (£3,000 per MWh)

The PC's research shows that others have been offered between £3,000-£5,000 per MWh.

Elgin Energy will negotiate directly with the Parish Council.

It was suggested that the PC contact Sherrifhales PC for their experience. Some PCs have negotiated annual payments rather than an initial lump sum. Some PCs have solicited external expertise for negotiating.

The Parish Council voted unanimously in favour of the motion to grant authority to negotiate on a commercial basis with Elgin Energy in private. The public will be excluded from this meeting.

39/2022 Date of Next Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 2nd November 2022