

SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION AT THE 11th DECEMBER 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council held on Monday, 13th November 2023 at the MRCC, Nelson Lane, North Muskham at 7pm.

Present: Councillor I Harrison (Chair)
Councillor P Beddoe
Councillor S Dolby
Councillor N Hutchings
Councillor A Oliver
Councillor M Talbot

Also present, District Cllr Mrs Saddington and 24 members of the public.

The Chair thanked residents for attending, and also noted and welcomed the attendance of Councillors from neighbouring parishes

NM100-24 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor Preston and County Councillor Laughton

NM101-24 Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 9th October 2023 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

NM102-24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hutchings declared an interest in Agenda Item 9(b) and 9(d).

It was AGREED that any further declarations of interest would be stated by Members as required during the meeting.

NM103-24 Public 10 Minute Session

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.03pm for questions from the public.

A resident referred to blocked drains, previously reported to the Clerk. It was confirmed that these had been logged with Via. An update would be requested.

The Chair thanked residents for their questions and reconvened the meeting at 7.04pm.

NM104-24 To consider any matters that need to be raised with District Cllr Mrs Saddington

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.05pm for District Cllr Saddington's report.

Cllr Mrs Saddington referred to the District Council's Planning Committee held on 9th November, which saw the two applications for solar farms at Caunton refused. One of the grounds given was the loss of agricultural land for a 40 year period. Councillor

Mrs Saddington had asked the District Council to consider the introduction of a solar farm policy.

The Chair referred to the fire in Newark over the weekend. It was understood this was plastic waste and concern was expressed at the potential for contamination of the adjacent River Trent. Councillor Mrs Saddington advised this would be raised with Environmental Health. It was expected that there would be a full investigation by the Fire Authority and the Environment Agency.

The Chair thanked Cllr Mrs Saddington for her report and reconvened the meeting at 7.11pm.

NM105-24 Newark & Sherwood District Council

There were no matters to consider.

NM106-24 To consider any matters that need to be raised with County Councillor update Cllr Laughton

There were no matters to report.

NM107-24 Nottinghamshire County Council

There were no matters to consider.

NM108-24 Planning

(a) 23/00954/OUTM – Land Off Main Street, North Muskham – Outline application for up to 18 entry level affordable dwellings with all matters reserved except access

The Chair confirmed that a site visit had been undertaken on 12th November.

Members considered that the proposals failed the sequential test and there were other sites at lower flood risk than 3, that may be better used.

The Flood Risk Assessment included with the application does not identify the pluvial flood risk which the Parish Council considers to be at the centre of the site. A dip on the site exists that was previously a pond, and which is subject to gathering water in heavy rainfall events. Neither was it considered that the assessment adequately mitigated climate change impacts in the future.

It was noted that the proposal showed the hedge was to be retained. However, the Parish Council considered that the proposed footpath should be a minimum 2.5m width which, if permission were granted, would mean the footpath would be in the middle line of the hedge. It was also noted that the introduction of a footpath would require the removal of two substantial trees contained within the hedgerow. This is a historic hedgerow dating back some 700 years.

Any additional need for affordable housing had been met by the Gilberts Field exception site in 2020.

The application was contested on the basis of the above, but also on the Local Development Framework Spatial Policy 3, which requires that new development does not have a detrimental impact on the character of the location. The Parish Council considers that this proposal would impact negatively on the character as it is one of only two remaining open areas of the village main street that allows for a unique and highly attractive vista to the East, across the River Trent to the ancient church of Holme. The loss of this important vista has been considered sufficient for refusal of previous applications for this site.

It was noted that some residents supported the proposals as the village has an aging community.

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.17pm to allow residents present to participate and give their views.

A resident expressed concern at a second submission for this site, given that refusal for the previous application was very clear in outlining that, as the application was contrary to the Development Plan, working positively and proactively with the applicants would not have overcome the reasons for objection.

A resident referred to flooding on Main Street, immediately opposite the land, which saw water pooling when there was heavy rain.

The ecology report was based on the plan and not the whole site and states that there is no issue with bats. Residents who live adjacent to the site had knowledge that bats were in the field every evening.

It was considered that the application was intended to mislead as it only showed 9 homes, yet the wording referred to 18.

The Chair thanked residents for their input and reconvened the meeting at 7.28pm.

It was proposed by Councillor Talbot, seconded by Councillor Beddoe that objection be raised to the application on the grounds referred to in the Chair's report, amended to include concerns with regard to the viability of the Ecology Report and its impact. This was unanimously AGREED.

The Chair asked Councillor Mrs Saddington to refer this application to Planning Committee should a recommendation be made by officers for approval.

(b) Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor Hutchings left the room as he had declared a pecuniary interest.

23/01922/FUL- Cherry Tree Cottage, Vicarage Lane, North Muskham - Demolish the existing three-bedroom dwelling and garage and erect a new three-bedroom dwelling and timber-framed garage

After consideration, it was proposed by Councillor Talbot, seconded by Councillor

Beddoe, and unanimously AGREED that no objection be raised to the application.

(c) Update on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk was asked to arrange an additional meeting as soon as possible and inform them on the whats app group of the progress to date so as to maintain their enthusiasm. Members noted that the application for grant funding was now progressing.

(d) Prior to consideration of this item, Councillor Hutchings left the room as he had declared a pecuniary interest.

23/01698/FUL – The Nook, Marsh Lane, North Muskham – New gabion wall – correspondence from Highways

Members noted the correspondence from Via that had been logged on the planning portal, together with an objection from the Conservation Officer and highways. No action was considered necessary.

NM109-24 Parish Council Matters

(a) Allotments/Green Hub Report

Members noted the allotment report circulated by Councillor Preston. The Clerk advised that CEMEX had been contacted to see if they might be able to help with the access road. More details on the length and width had been requested, which the Clerk would provide.

It was confirmed that all plots had now been taken.

(b) To consider the recent flooding and any lessons learnt requiring action by the Parish Council

The Chair referred to concerns raised during the recent flood event. There were some matters that needed to be fed back to the District Council regarding evacuation notices. It was considered that the Parish Council were best placed to understand the limits of the river and where the risks lay.

The Clerk was asked to again request volunteers to come forward to train as flood wardens.

(c) To consider the adoption of a Community Flood Plan

It was AGREED that this consideration of this matter be deferred to the December meeting.

(d) To receive details of the Great North Road Solar Farm

The Chair referred to information received from the developer regarding the Great North Road Solar Farm and correspondence from the Planning Inspectorate requesting the Parish Council's comments on an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report.

Members noted that there was a statutory consultation deadline of 7th December to respond to the Scoping Report. That deadline would not be extended.

The Chair had reviewed the Report and picked out the following information:

Potential generation capacity of 800MW to provide power to 400,000 homes (the size of Nottinghamshire) using 6,920 acres of land.

The park would support energy security and see a reduction in household bills and support the UK ambition of Net Zero, saving 250,000t of CO₂. The developer also suggested there would be an increase in wildflowers and biodiversity on the sites.

The project was classified as a Significant Infrastructure Project and, as such, required a Development Consent Order from the Government, which is granted by the Secretary of State for Energy.

The Scoping Report was the first stage, with community consultation opening in 2024. Residents could register for further information.

The developer will want views on:

- Location of equipment for the solar and energy park
- Cable connection between the park and Staythorpe
- Impact mitigation measures during construction and operation

A decision was expected on the Development Consent Order in 2025/26 with construction starting in 2027 if permission was granted.

It was considered that the Parish Council needed more information on:

- What the surface would be beneath the solar panels
- The life expectancy of the project
- The risk of increased flooding with run-off
- How impactful the connection cabling would be; would it be underground or visible
- What mitigation measures were proposed for affected communities and individuals
- Potential impact on property values
- Length of consultation
- Proof of the increase in wildflowers and bio-diversity of sites, and level of tree planting proposed

There may also be additional information required but, at this stage, it was not clear what that would be.

The Parish Council would need to pull out of the Scoping Report the affect and impact on North Muskham. The land included was outlined as grade 2 or 3 agricultural land, with 3 being the lowest grade, but it was still land that was used for food production. Councillor Beddoe referred to the information contained within the Report outlining how much energy could be produced, but would want advice on

how much food production would be lost over the life of the project, especially as there was decrease in yields with climate change.

Within the Report there was only one area where a visual impact assessment had been undertaken, which was from Vicarage Lane. It was considered that there would need to be additional assessments from the southern end of the village.

Reference was made to habitats, which included 81 species, 43 of which were considered at high risk. There was potential loss of disturbance or harm to habitat, but the developer outlined they would devise mitigation plans to help lessen the impact.

There was a potential impact on flooding. The majority of the land included was in flood zone 2, but some was in 3. A Flood Risk Assessment was being undertaken but there would be an impact on the ground and run-off from structures.

There would be little impact of transport and traffic during the operational stage, but considerable impact during the development phase with impact on the A1, A616 and A617 main routes, but also country lanes around the village. In North Muskham most traffic impact would likely be on Vicarage Lane.

North Muskham would be impacted to the North, South and West, with the main impact being West of the A1 and the East Coast Main Line.

It was recognised that there needed to be input from residents in the response to the Scoping Report. As such, it was AGREED that the Clerk create a specific page on the Parish Council's website and share the link with residents on all its platforms with a request for any response to be submitted by 30th November 2023 to allow the Parish Council to include any comments within its response to the Planning Inspectorate.

It was further AGREED that the Clerk seek advice from the Council's Planning Consultant on whether they would be able to assist the Parish Council, and other affected parishes, during the process.

(e) To confirm arrangements for the Christmas Tree Celebrations on 2nd December and installation of the trees

The Chair advised that it had been intended for the celebrations to be on Friday, 1st December and NOT Saturday, 2nd December. Members AGREED that the date be amended and information circulated to the community regarding the change of date. The event would commence at 7pm.

Invitations would be extended to County Councillor Laughton and District Councillor Mrs Saddington to attend.

It was noted that the Salvation Army were unable to attend so music for Carols would be sourced by Cllr Talbot.

The trees would be put in place on Saturday, 25th November from 9am.

NM110-24 Environmental & Community Issues

(a) Skatepark and Play Area

The Clerk advised that the resurfacing works underneath the see-saw and slide was scheduled to be complete by Friday, 17th November.

NM111-24 Highways

(a) Highways Log

The Clerk was asked to again report the surface of Great North Road, which was degrading along the whole length.

County Councillor Laughton to be asked to visit both Great North Road and Waltons Lane to see the degradation first hand.

NM112-24 Financial Matters

(a) Accounts for Payment

The Chair referred to the accounts for payment. It was AGREED unanimously that the following accounts be agreed for payment:

- Clerk's Wages – October - £284.20
- PAYE – July – £71
- Village Handyman – October - £147
- Mayor of Newark Earl Haig's Poppy Fund – Poppy Wreathes - £40
- Richard Watkinson & Partners – Land Valuation - £360
- Proludic – Black Net Ladder - £815.34
- PWLB – Second Half Loan Payment - £1,697.24
- Hugo Fox – Annual Website Cost - £244.68
- Currys PC World – Printer/Scanner - £150.83
- MRCC – September Room Hire - £25
- Notts Association of Local Councils – Allotment Training - £15 (shared cost)

(b) To note any Receipts

The following receipts were noted:

- Newark & Sherwood Community Lottery – £124.50
- Allotment Payment – Plot 11 - £63.12

(c) Financial Report as at 31st October 2023

Members received and noted the financial report as at 31st October 2023.

(d) To note the National Joint Council for Local Government Services pay award backdated to 1st April 2023

Members received and noted the pay award backdated to 1st April 2023. The Clerk would process payment with the November wages.

NM113-24 Notts Association of Local Councils

There were no items to consider.

NM114-24 Correspondence

The Chair referred to concerns raised by a resident regarding the number of boats being launched from the Ferry. Members noted the map circulated which identified the extent of the highways in the area.

After discussion, it was AGREED that the Clerk seek permission from Via to install bollards to prevent access.

NM115-24 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 11th December 2023

NM0116-24 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) which is a category of exempt information under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) which the Council has the power to exclude the press and public if it so wishes.

RECOMMENDED that under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of this item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 1 (2) of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Exempt Minute NM117-24

The meeting closed at 8.36pm.