

UPTON GREY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Upton Grey Parish Council meeting held remotely on 18 February 2021 at 7.00pm

In attendance: - Cllr C Holroyd, Cllr N Ralls, Cllr A Barker, Cllr P Barnes and Cllr T Harman

Also in attendance- Beverley Bridgman (Parish Clerk), Gordon Hunt (Lengthsman), PC Andy Reid, District Councillor Anna McNair Scott and Borough Councillor Mark Ruffell

Draft minutes subject to confirmation

1. Receive and accept apologies for absence

All Parish Councillors present

2. Receive and note any declarations of interest relevant to the Agenda

Cllr Ralls spoke under agenda point 17 in his capacity as Chairman of the Upton Grey Cemetery Lane Committee. Cllr Ralls also declared an interest in agenda points 6c and 18.

3. The Chairman to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21 January 2021

Approved-The minutes will be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity

4. Open the meeting to members of the public

13 members of the public attended the meeting remotely

5. Receive reports

Reports were received from the Parish Clerk, Lengthsman, PC Andy Reid, District Councillor McNair Scott and Borough Councillor Ruffell; these reports can be found in Appendix A

6. Consider and discuss the following planning applications:

a) Rear garden of property

Fell to approx 100 mm above ground level 2 mature Ellwoods Cypress

Lift low branches to approx 4 m from ground level all round of one twin stemmed Walnut

Remove one low limb back to approx 0.5 metre from trunk 1 Apple tree

Remove one leaning stem from Hawthorn at rear of orchard

Rowancroft, Weston Road, Upton Grey, RG25 2RJ

T/00044/21/TCA

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **no objection**

b) Back Garden

2 mature Yew trees (trees A and B on the sketch) to the right of garage-crown raise canopy up to 4 m to allow better lawn growth and less shading

Deadwood canopies throughout and thin out canopies by 20% throughout

Hedge trim some of the front side of Yew tree B over walled garden

Compton House, Weston Road, Upton Grey, RG25 2RH

T/00041/21/TCA

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **no objection**

c) Leylandii tree that is growing on the boundary between Glebe Cottage and Sherborne Cottage: reduce start height of the tree: 12 metres, finished height of 9 metres. Start crown spread of 10 metres (approx), finished crown spread of 7-8 metres (approx)

Glebe Cottage, Church Street, Upton Grey, RG25 2RB

T/00054/21/TCA

Having declared an interest Cllr Ralls was not part of this discussion.

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **no objection**

d) Yew tree – reduce tree spread from 20 m to 16 m and trim the branches around the telephone wire to clear branches over the lane and to prevent damaging the phone line in high winds

Sycamore Cottage, Church Street, Upton Grey, RG25 2RA

T/00075/21/TCA

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **no objection**

e) Certificate of Lawfulness to confirm that material operations have taken place pursuant to and consistent with Planning Permission No. 20/01055/ROC Fiveways Cottage, Westers Lane, Humbly Grove, South Warnborough, RG29 1RY

21/00367/LDEO

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **no objection**

f) Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with an output capacity not to exceed 49.9 MW of energy, with associated battery storage and supporting infrastructure including inverters and a transformer, fencing, CCTV installation and landscaping works

Chosley Farm, Bidden Road, North Warnborough, RG29 1BW

20/03185/FUL

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **objection**. The Parish Councils objections can be found in Appendix C

g) Construction of temporary access road to enable construction of Basingstoke Motorway Service Area

Land At M3 Junction 6 From Junction 5 Off Slip, Basingstoke

20/03130/FUL

The Parish Council discussed the application; it was resolved to submit a comment of **objection**. The Parish Councils objections can be found in Appendix C

7. Update on previous planning applications

Since the last Parish Council meeting on 21 January 2021 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) have **approved** the following Tree Work Applications:

T/00002/21/TCA Village Farm House

T/00019/21/TCA Cleves House

T/00006/21/TCA 2 Exbury House

T/00016/21/TCA Waverley Cottage

Since the last Parish Council meeting BDBC have **granted** the following Planning Applications:

20/02946/FUL Barn at Manor Farm

20/02996/ROC Reynard House

Since the last Parish Council meeting BDBC have **refused** the following Application:

20/02361/LDPO Land at Weston Road

Since the last Parish Council meeting the following Planning Application has been **withdrawn**:

20/02678/HSE Sycamore Cottage

8. Approve the Electronic Payment request for February

Approved-The Electronic payment request can be found below. This will be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity. Payments will be set up by the Clerk and authorised by a Councillor

Upton Grey Parish Council February 2021 Electronic Payment Request

To	Item	Amount	Invoice number
Staff	Salary February 2021	£600.00	
	Home office expenses February 2021	£18.00	
	Total	£618.00	02/21
Staff	Expenses February	£14.39	02/21
Staff	Salary February 2021	£48.84	February 2021
HMRC	Tax & NI February 2021	£12.20	February 2021
Saunders Landscape	Maintenance February 2021	£222.00	1472
Chairmans Signature and date:			

9. Note the current financial situation and approve bank statements

Noted-The current financial situation can be found in Appendix B. The bank statements will be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity

The current balances as at 12 February 2021 were:

Current Account: £19390.45

Tennis Maintenance Fund: £16791.73

10. Discuss car parking at the recreation ground/tennis court

The Parish Council has received complaints from Little Hoddington residents regarding the parking spaces in their area. When the tennis court and recreation ground are in use this often results in reduced parking capacity for residents.

Agreed Councillors will circulate an email to both the Tennis Club and residents to ask that when using the tennis court or recreation area, people walk and cycle if possible; if these are not an option, when restrictions are lifted, car sharing should be considered. The email will also be published on the village Facebook page and in the parish magazine

11. Discuss requesting an 'Unsuitable for HGV' signpost at the junction of Tunworth Road and Huish Lane

Agreed County Councillor McNair Scott will speak to Hampshire Highways to see if this can be implemented

12. Update from Cllr Barker regarding S106 playground equipment

Installation of the adult gym equipment will begin on Thursday 25 February and should be finished on Monday 1 March.

Once installed the equipment must be 'signed off' through a Post Installation Inspection which must be completed by an ROSPA qualified inspector. This 'sign off' by a qualified inspector is also a condition of the Parish Council insurance. Cllr Barker has received confirmation an inspection will be completed within 2 weeks of installation. The installers have agreed to leave the 6ft security fencing around the new equipment until the inspection has taken place and will insure the equipment until 'sign off' has taken place

Agreed to proceed with a Post Installation Inspection by an ROSPA qualified inspector at a cost of £395 plus VAT

Cllr Barker advised she will shortly be sending a letter to residents of Little Hoddington regarding the multi purpose ball wall. The letter will advise the Parish Council have listened to comments regarding the potential noise increase from an additional ball wall and as a result have changed the materials and position of the ball wall.

Cllr Barker confirmed quotes are in progress from various suppliers and it is hoped a decision regarding installation can be made at the next Parish Council meeting

13. Discuss repair work to posts around the pond

At the last Parish Council meeting it was "**Agreed Cllr Barnes/Cllr Holroyd will obtain a quote for replacement of the whole fence with a view to apportioning costs for damaged areas to ME Developments and the haulage company**"

A quote of £835.20 inc VAT has been received for the replacement of 5 posts and 6 rails.

The Parish Clerk has been in communication with the haulage company who have agreed to pay their portion of the damage (40%) £334.08.

Cllr Holroyd has been in communication with ME Developments who have agreed to replace the damaged posts and rails

Agreed to await completion of the repairs by ME Developments

14. Discuss quotation received for annual maintenance contract 2021-2022

A quotation has been requested and received from the current contractors, Saunders Landscape, at a sum of £2724 for the period 1 May 2021-31 April 2022.

Agreed to accept this quotation

15. Agree wording for 'Disproportionate Burden' and 'What we're doing to improve accessibility' for the accessibility statement on the Parish Council website

The Parish Clerk confirmed that following last months meeting the website provider (Vision ICT) has been instructed to proceed with an accessibility statement for the Parish Council website. This work has been completed however the Parish Council need to add their own wording for 'Disproportionate Burden' and 'What we're doing to improve accessibility'. Prior to the meeting the Parish Clerk circulated a suggested wording to all Councillors.

Agreed to proceed with the wording suggested by the Parish Clerk

16 Discuss and agree jobs for the County Lengthsman visit on 10 March 2021

The Lengthsman suggested the following jobs for the County Lengthsman:

- Unblock gated drain outside the Old Vicarage on Church Street
- Unblock gated drain on the left side entrance to Hoddington Farm
- Repair two curb edging blocks that have been dislodged outside 22 Little Hoddington, Bidden Road

Additional jobs suggested by Councillors:

- Clear weeds on the road outside Village Farm House
- Clear weeds from the playground and tennis court
- Clear grips in the village

Agreed to include these jobs for the March job sheet

17. Update from Upton Grey Cemetery Lane Committee (Questions from Councillors only)

Cllr Ralls provided an update from the Cemetery Lane Committee (UGCLC). This update can be found in Appendix D

18. Discuss Cemetery Lane Committee status

Having declared an interest Cllr Ralls was not part of this discussion.

It is important to ensure the UGCLC remain very independent of the Parish Council and that there is no level of pre-determination for the Parish Council regarding the potential planning application. To try and reduce costs, a retired solicitor in the village has offered to do some of the 'leg work' regarding the transfer of land at Church Meadow; this work is likely to be overseen by the appointed solicitor, Clyde & Co.

As members of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) the Parish Council are entitled to one hours free legal advice; This free advice is being used to check the Parish Council are acting legally, there are no issues of pre-determination within documents proposed by The Trust and no implications to the Parish Council in using a retired solicitor

19. Agree meeting dates April 21-November 21

Agreed to continue to hold Parish Council meetings on the third Thursday of the month with no meeting in August.

The Parish Clerk confirmed the law allowing on-line meetings ends on 7 May 2021, however due to the ever changing situation this may change. The Parish Clerk will keep the Parish Council updated

20. Confirm the date and time of the next meeting

Confirmed-the next Parish Council will be held remotely at 7pm on Thursday 18 March 2021

There being no other business the meeting finished at 8.54pm

Appendix A

PC Andy Reid Report February 2021

Since the January Parish Council meeting the following have been reported:

- Criminal damage to crops at Manor Farm
- 26 January-suspicious vehicle 5 Lanes End area
- 29 January-suspicious vehicle 5 Lanes End area
- 11 February-concern for welfare
- 15 February-suspicious vehicle 5 Lanes End area

From the enquiries we've made the suspicious vehicles all have links with criminality.

The bad condition of Weston and Bidden Roads have also been reported.

County Councillor Anna McNair Scott February 2021

I'm very sorry about the upset regarding roadworks in the village. I hope the village is satisfied Hampshire County Council and the Highways department are doing all they can to ensure the roads are properly repaired.

I will find out what will happen to the damaged verges.

Question from Cllr Ralls:

- In addition to the trench for sewage pipes an enormous amount of damage has been caused to the road surface in general. There is a fear that in a couple of years time the road will fall apart. Would it be better for Hampshire Highways to re-surface the whole road?

Answer

- The road shouldn't fall apart if it's been competently repaired. The developer is completing the road repairs however these will need to be 'signed off' by Hampshire Highways.

Question from the Lengthsman

- Since the roadworks the drains by the Hoddington Arms have become silted up. I reported this to Hampshire Highways in January but have received no response.

Answer

- I will follow this up

Borough Councillor Mark Ruffell February 2021

- Church Meadow-you could apply for this to be a 'designated local green space' via Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Weston/Bidden Road roadworks-if the road is not repaired satisfactorily this time Hampshire County Council should repair the work themselves and send an invoice to the developers
- Entrance road to M3 Service Station-Please, as a Parish Council send your comments regarding this application

Appendix A

- I'm starting a project to register the whole area south of the M3 (west and east) as a 'Designated Landscape' and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). I think we need to be looking at having a nature recovery network, or equivalent, in the area which would work with Hampshire and Isle Of Wight Trust and other bodies to restore, protect and value the wildlife and natural environment we have
- If your parishioners agree, I would recommend joining neighbouring parishes and taking a stand to protect the North Hampshire Downs as a whole against the many large scale planning applications within the area
- There is a proposed plan to change the £500 plus VAT charge for playground inspections by the borough. The proposed scheme would charge 60p plus VAT per household in your parish; so the fee for Upton Grey could be reduced significantly
- 5yr land supply in the borough-by April 2021 it is estimated the borough will have 4.5 yrs housing land supply. The methodology changes in May and then we will have 4.7yrs. I am taking a proactive approach to cure this rather than just hoping our plan will deliver i.e. looking for sites that can be easily delivered (50-100 units) and using developers that wish to work closely with the parish and borough

Parish Clerk Report February 2021

Playground

I have shown Gordon how to view the playground inspectors database and he has been checking this weekly.

Part of the seesaw has been damaged and this has been classed as a 'medium risk' by the inspector. Richard Randall will be visiting the playground in the next couple of months to re-paint the graphics and to repair the arson damage and so I will ask him to look at the seesaw to see what needs to be done

30mph sign on Church Street

The 30mph sign is covered over by a self-seeded tree branch.

I have checked with the Tree Officer at Basingstoke and Deane and they have confirmed the Parish Council can go ahead and either just remove the branch or remove the complete tree.

They have suggested we contact Hampshire County Council (HCC) for removal of the tree, which I have done (reference 21543319)

Gordon has confirmed he is happy to remove the branch however we will hold off on this pending a response from HCC

VAT re-claims

I have put in re-claims for VAT from HMRC up to December 2020 (£237.40) and again for January 2021 (£607.39) Both of these claims have now been paid into the Parish Council bank accounts

Appendix A

Wild Flower Verge

My initial enquiry to HCC regarding the verges under reference 21536745 has now been passed to the appropriate department and I am awaiting a response

Internal Audit

This has been booked for Tuesday 13 April

Lengthsman Report February 2021

I checked the grit salt bins beginning of the month all still with sufficient materials

The new fence around the open space at Cleves Lane looks good
All benches still fit for purpose

I reported the stile at the start of footpath 7, Hoddington Hill and farm entrance end (Parish Clerk followed up by sending photos I had taken) HCC ref no's PROW131537 and PROW610872. This has been allocated a job on the 'to do list' by the Countryside Team

I have reported a pot hole opposite the church entrance (part of old trench) HCC ref 21542107

Villagers have contacted me reference different items:

- Faded white lines around Wayside Cottage (they help to protect the guttering down pipe the corner of the wall and the overhanging thatch) Reported to HCC ref 21513852
- Footpath 12 reference the condition from the Princes Trust building to Greywell Road (it is quite worn with tree roots prominent and not visible when puddles form) Parish Clerk has reported this to HCC, ref PROW192220
- The amount of litter in the entrance to Meadow Side and Elder Dell (The residents of Elder Dell put their bins in a collection area near the field) There has been instances of the bins being blown over and litter being blown about. The refuse operatives do not collect spillages

Now the weather is hopefully getting better and I have permission to work again I can walk the footpaths

Upton Grey Parish Council Monthly Sheet for February 2021 (Appendix B)

Lloyds Current Account

Balance as at 15 January 2021

£21618.07 (agrees statement dated 29 January 2021)

Payments

Date	To	Amount
22 January 2021	Staff Expenses January	£59.37
22 January 2021	J Smith & Son Invoice 0266	£720.00
22 January 2021	J Smith & Son Invoice 0272	£552.00
22 January 2021	Upton Grey Village Hall Committee (shop rent)	£600.00
22 January 2021	Vision ICT Invoice 12227	£240.00
1 February 2021	Staff Salary January	£618.00
1 February 2021	Staff Salary January	£48.84
1 February 2021	HMRC January	£12.20
1 February 2021	Saunders January Invoice 1466	£222.00

Receipts

Date	From	Amount
28 January 2021	VAT refund	£237.40
10 February 2021	VAT refund	£607.39

Balance as at 12 February 2021

£19390.45 (agrees on line statement dated 12 February 21)

Lloyds Tennis Maintenance Fund

Balance as at 15 January 2021

£16791.60 (agrees statement dated 1 February 2021)

Receipts

Date	From	Amount
9 February 2021	Bank Interest	£0.13

Balance as at 12 February 2021

£16791.73 (agrees on line statement dated 12 February 2021)

Total Balance as at 12 February 2021

Lloyds Current Account	£19390.45
Lloyds Tennis Maintenance Account	£16791.73
Unpresented cheques	Nil
Cancelled cheques	Nil
Net Bank Balance	£36182.18

Chairmans Signature and date:

Appendix C

20/03130/FUL MOTO:Construction of temporary access road to enable construction of Basingstoke Motorway Service Area

Upton Grey Parish Council discussed this application at their Parish Council meeting held on 18 February 2021.

It was agreed to **OBJECT** to this application for the following reasons:

Dickens Lane, where the proposal is to construct the temporary access, is a small country road with numerous bends and blind spots that is regularly used by residents of our Parish. It is used as a cut-through for those going to and from work in Basingstoke who alas tend to drive more quickly than they safely should. We believe that the safety of road users needs to be the most important consideration when considering this application.

Any temporary access road on Dickens Lane should therefore strictly follow the guidelines issued by the Highways Team of Hampshire County Council (“HCC”), in order to ensure the safety of drivers, including that of our villagers, on the road.

Drawing number M342/30 Rev A ‘Temporary Construction Access’ shows the visibility splays for access onto Dickens Lane. These do not fulfil the requirements of HCC’s Technical Guidance Note TG3 – Stopping Sight Distances and Visibility Splays. Actual measured vehicle speeds have not been used to inform the visibility splays, and we understand that these are less than the requirement. The application if approved would present an unacceptable safety risk contrary to the guidelines of HCC.

Additionally, we understand that the proposed visibility set back distance proposed at 2m is only suitable for urban residential streets where a footpath is present. This is unsuitable for Dickens Lane, a rural lane without a footpath.

Upton Grey Parish Council concludes that the proposed access road would be against guidelines, and make the road unsafe for users. **It objects to the application and requests that it be rejected.**

Upton Grey Parish Council

Consultee Response

26th February 2021

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re:

20/03185/FUL | Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with an output capacity not to exceed 49.9MW of energy, with associated battery storage and supporting infrastructure including inverters and a transformer, fencing, CCTV installation and landscaping works | Chosley Farm Bidden Road North Warnborough Hook Hampshire RG29 1BW

Upton Grey has been informed about this application by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, as it has a significant impact on the Parish. The application was discussed at the Parish Council meeting held on 18 February 2021 where it was agreed to submit a comment of **objection**.

Our statutory response is submitted as follows.

Upton Grey Parish Council **objects** to the above proposal on multiple grounds relating to Policy, Visual Impact, Ecological Impact including on SSSI's, Transport matters and insufficient Landscaping and mitigating Ecological measures.

Whilst we agree that the UK needs to embrace renewable energy it should be done in a focused and planned way to ensure it is located in the right places. Solar farms of this magnitude, due to their large surface area and land-take, have the potential to be very harmful to important landscapes if poorly sited.

Flat sites and those which are not located in exposed landscapes have extensive potential to host Solar Farms with very little in the way of collateral harm. Other more suitable sites including brownfield and previously developed Land, will exist in Hart.

The poor site-selection of this proposal, due to its siting on the flanks of a large hill, gives rise to multiple issues of harm reaching a significant distance.

1: Policy:

1.1 NPPF: The National Planning Policy Framework- NPPF, sets several tests for the acceptability of development.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF States that:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)".

The Proposal does not, and by nature of its scale and location, cannot be adapted to succeed in fulfilling any of the criteria above.

The Proposal introduces an alien, highly intrusive and inappropriate feature to the setting of Odiham and North Warnborough, and the adjoining parishes of Greywell, Long Sutton, South Warnborough and Upton Grey, with an adverse impact visible from key locations in their Conservation Areas.

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

The proposal is not directly supported in this location by adopted HDC Policies. Rather than enhancing the landscape it would destroy its character and create the loss of ‘best and most versatile agricultural land’ (51% of the site area classified as such).

Paragraph 151 of the NPPF states that:

“To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:

a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);

b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and

c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.”

HDC’s Local Plan does not identify this site as a suitable location for a major industrial development. If it did directly assess the suitability of the site for such it is hard to see that such a topographically exposed site would be deemed suitable, or capable of fulfilling the criteria of paragraphs 127 and 170 of the NPPF.

1.2 Pre-Application advice:

Pre-Application advice from HDC on Landscape stated that “the impact of any such development on the countryside and landscape is key”. This advice would appear to concur with our assessment of NPPF requirements of Policy and Decision-making outlined above. The applicant’s LVIA fails to demonstrate that the requirements can be fulfilled. Instead, it is evident that such an exposed and raised countryside site will always struggle to satisfy these criteria.

1.3 HDC Policy:

HDC’s Local Plan Policy LP32 NBE2 states:

Development proposals will be supported where there will be no adverse impact to:

a) The particular qualities identified within the relevant landscape character assessments and relevant guidance;

b) *The visual amenity and scenic quality of the landscape;*

The wording of the policy is explicit: it will accept no adverse impact. Not 'some', or a 'moderate amount', or even a 'negligible adverse' effect as optimistically assessed by the LVIA, but none.

2: Landscape and Visual Impact:

We have already set out above some of the key points relating to landscape impact and overarching national and local policy.

2.1 Landscape character:

The main distinguishing features in the National Character Area profile for the site and its surroundings are identified as follows:

“the rolling elevated chalk arable downland has an open, exposed character that provides open skies and long-distance views” and in the Hart District Character Area assessment “typical chalk scenery with strongly rolling land forms, sooth hill tops and dry valleys. A dominance of intensive arable cultivation and weak hedgerow structure, shallower slopes at the edge of the chalk which creates a large-scale, predominantly open landscape with extensive views and a sense of exposure.”

In reading the assessments of importance, harm, visibility, etc., it is difficult to believe that the applicant's Landscape Architects Weddle, have spent sufficient time physically on site and walking the extensive areas affected, to learn and understand the sensitivities of this beautiful part of Hampshire.

2.2 The Size of the Proposal in Context:

Viewed on a map in its wider context, the proposal is about the same size as the whole of the built-up area of Odiham and North Warnborough combined. It is also similar in size to the whole of the built area of RAF Odiham. It is bigger than the whole of Upton Grey, and grossly in excess of the size of the nearby village of Greywell.

This, combined with the topography of the Whitewater Valley and the North Hampshire Downs will make it a very considerable challenge to hide and mitigate its impact on the Landscape.

2.3 Cumulative effects: Furthermore, a second Solar site of the same scale is potentially being brought forward between the southern edge of RAF Odiham and Long Sutton – oddly, subject to an EIA as one would expect, with the Council's scoping response identifying many of the same sensitivities raised here. Assessment should also consider the combined effects of both potential developments.

2.4 An especially exposed site:

The proposal site covers a very large area and is approximately some 1.25 kilometres wide across an elevated hillside. The hill is particularly prominent in local landscape views, the site rising to some +125m AOD in height, above a valley of +80m AOD.

The proposal falls far short of making clear the real context of the proposal, which is that it is set on the slope of a hill which rises 45 metres (148ft) above its immediate surroundings.

Inexplicably for an application of this scale, the design statement/ 'Design Strategy' document and the submitted application drawings do not reference ANY topographical information at all. This is in spite of height data being available for all forms of Ordnance Survey mapping.

The LVIA by Weddle refers to the site being at '+110m': one could be misled into believing it is a flat site, when in fact its elevation spans all the way from the +85m AOD contour (adjacent to Bidden Road in the west) to +125m AOD at its north east.

As this is not visually demonstrated in ANY form in the application plans, **Officers and Members may not easily see that the flanking elevation of the solar development itself is some 40m of vertical rise.** The 'flat' statements are made by the applicant that the development will be 'glimpsed' or 'barely noticeable' are clearly incorrect and should not mislead those who will be considering this application.

Viewed across the valley from Upton Grey and Greywell, the visibility of the fields in question right now, is stark.

The proposal will be clearly visible in open countryside views from within both the Conservation Areas of Greywell and Upton Grey, and will bound right up to North Warnborough's Conservation Area. In doing so it will change the entire character of the valley by the introduction of large areas of hard unnatural surfaces, and inappropriate screen planting.

The application documents assess a couple of viewpoints on PROWs between Upton Grey and Greywell, whereas in reality the site will be continuously visible and intrusive in a Kinetic view along around a 1km stretch of the Three Castles Path (a National Footpath just southwest of Greywell and its SSSI.

The development will result in the extensive loss of fine open countryside views on the B3349 Alton Road which are absolutely characteristic of the North Hampshire Downs.

These points are illustrated in the diagram and photographs appended to this response.

Accordingly for all of these reasons, the development will present an unacceptably damaging impact upon the landscape character of the area within Hart District and stretching well into the adjoining Borough of Basingstoke and Deane.

3: Existing Ecology:

The SSSI at Greywell Fen and the Basingstoke Canal SSSI's are of National and international importance. Concerns have been very clearly laid out in the representation by the Whitewater Valley Preservation Trust (including those raised by Natural England) over a number of issues relating to both water quality and impact on the nearby bat colony at Greywell Tunnel, the largest bat colony in the UK. Upton Grey Parish Council shares those concerns.

4: Discrepancy in assessment of EIA screening between this site (20/01658/EIA Chosley Farm Bidden Road EIA Screening) and that for a near-identical proposal at Long Sutton (20/02632/EIA Long Sutton EIA Screening):

Whitewater Valley Preservation Society has set out a detailed comparison of the manner in which the EIA screening was undertaken for this application and the subsequent one for a site a short distance to the south-east. We would urge Officers and Members to review this as it very clearly shows that many of the factors seemingly dismissed in this application's documents, are highlighted as concerns by HDC and Statutory Consultees in the Long Sutton/ Ford Farm EIA screening.

5: Poor Community Engagement

Whilst Upton Grey has been assessed to a passing extent in the application documents before us now, the village/ the Parish Council were not consulted in the EIA Screening, nor directly with regard to this application. With much of 2020 spent in 'lockdown' and with social interaction at a historic low, it is clear that many villagers in all the affected areas and Parishes have remained unaware of these plans for a considerable time.

6: Transport:

Construction traffic for such a large development poses real problems. Extensive recent experience by Upton Grey, Greywell, North Warnborough shows that HGV through traffic is not compatible with the small lanes in all of those places, with no pavements, and each has a number of Listed Buildings directly on the road which would be at risk from heavy vehicles. Similarly, the road outside Robert May's School (and the junction with the B3349 at Odiham) are very sensitive to traffic blockage at peak times. All of these potential routes would pose a danger to other road users, cyclists and pedestrians. The only viable access point would be from the B3349 Alton Road. If approval is given, we recommend that a condition is that the only permitted access point is from the B3349 and that traffic safety issues are given correct consideration.

7: Proposed Landscaping and Ecological enhancement:

The proposals for landscaping need clarifications: the Indicative Masterplan has a key showing existing and proposed hedgerows, but the drawing make no distinction between them visually.

The statements assert that 'fast growing' screening will be used; screening that will reach the heights described in a short timeframe are highly unlikely to be appropriate to the Landscape Character Area.

The planting and ecological buffer zones at the edges of each 'field' of solar panels are nowhere near large enough to provide either

- i) The claimed ecological benefits; or
- ii) Sufficient screening to avoid significant harm damaging the Landscape over short, medium and long-distance views.

Conclusion:

Upton Grey Parish Council strongly objects to this ill-conceived proposal, and overwhelmingly supports all of its neighbouring Parishes, each of which have also raised objections founded in serious Planning concerns.

This is the wrong place to site a solar farm, and no amount of landscaping will make it 'fit in'.

It will be damaging to Landscape Character, Ecology and the SSSI's, and will damage the setting and attractiveness of Odiham, and affect those living in North Warnborough who enjoy walking on the footpaths. Transport associated with construction will overload small local roads.

We urge Hart District Council to consider how its Local Plan Policies can be used to select a more suitable site, preferably on brownfield land which policies dictate should be favoured over best-quality farmland and fine countryside landscapes.

When HDC considers how it has responded to the EIA screening for a similar development close by to the East, it must surely also conclude that this applicants' statements of levels of harm have been significantly downplayed. Due to the selection of the site, it is unlikely that any form of solar scheme here, other than one a fraction of its size, could be acceptable.

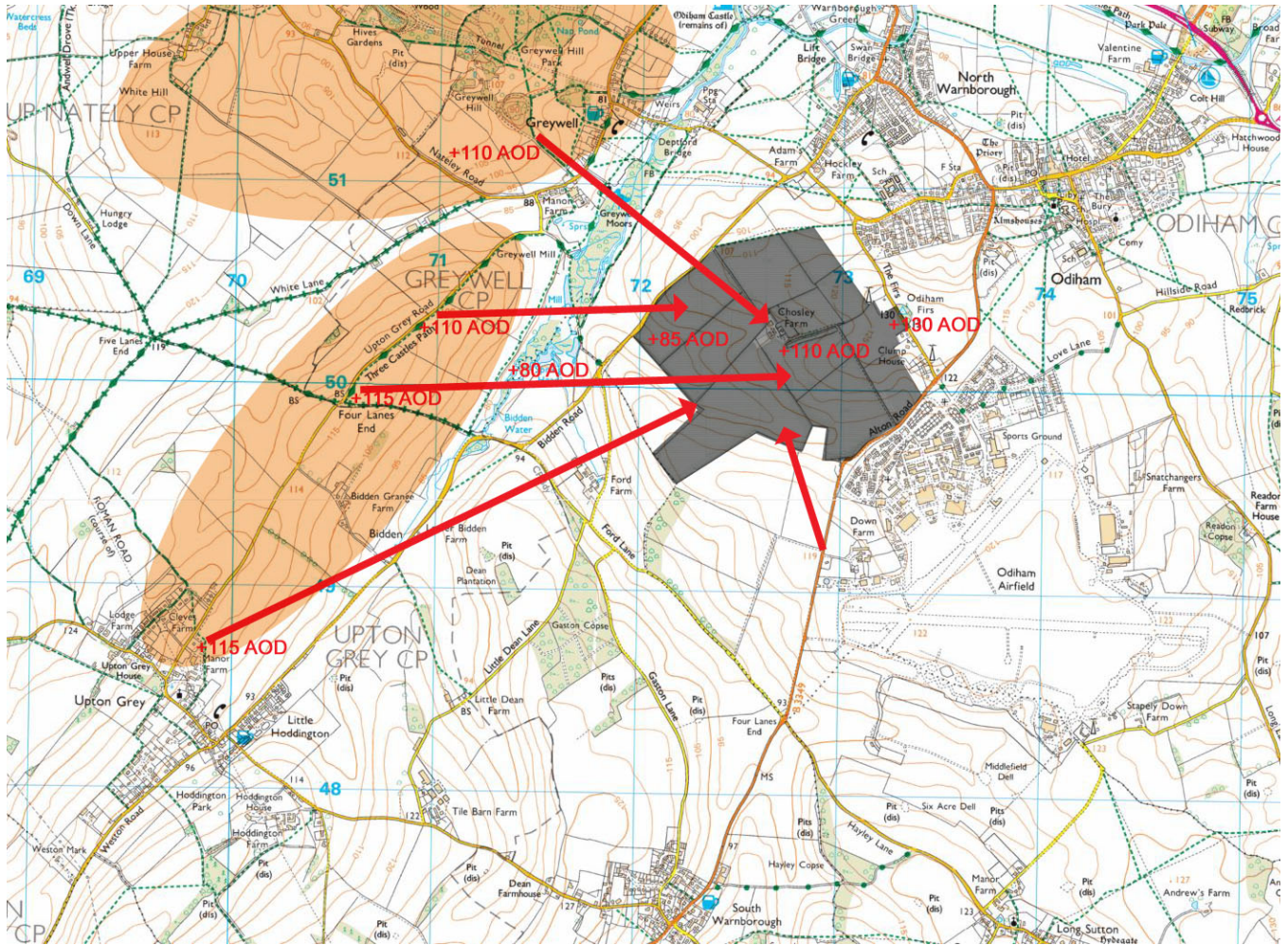
In spite of the 'temporary' nature of the application, if approved, this scheme will irreparably damage the North Hampshire Downs landscape for the foreseeable future. The proposal does not satisfy Local and National Planning Policy, **and we urge HDC's Officer and Members to reject this application.**

Appendix 1:

Topographic Diagram:

Much-used popular walking routes and heritage viewpoints will be exposed to big views of the Solar Farm, due to the elevated Downland nature of the area, and the rising hillside of the site (45m+ above the valley floor):

The huge scale of the proposal is visible compared to the surrounding settlements.



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Appendix 2:

View from the Three Castles Path:

The elevated Three Castles Path between Upton Grey and Greywell looks straight across the valley to the proposal site. Greywell Fens SSSI is at the bottom of the valley in the middle ground. This open, kinetic view is experienced for a walking distance of 1km.

Due to the elevated rise of the site (open elements highlighted)- some 45 metres from the valley floor, no amount of hedge planting is going to effectively screen the proposal from dominating the Landscape.



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Appendix 3:

View from Bidden Road Between North Warnborough and Upton Grey:

A characteristic and beautiful aspect of the existing downland is its steep undulations that form the valley floor, experienced on Bidden Road. This right adjacent to the proposal: the impact and loss of downland views is starkly apparent.



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Appendix 4:

View from Bidden Road Between North Warnborough and Upton Grey:

From the same viewpoint as Appendix 3 the view eastwards will be dominated by the proposals with associated loss of Landscape Character. This trend continues on the Alton Road side of the site as well, with longer distance views to be lost.



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Appendix 5:

View from Upton Grey Conservation Area:

The proposal will dominate the setting of the view along the valley from around 200m of much-used public footpath on the northeast of Upton Grey Conservation Area.



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Upton Grey Parish Council

Appendix D
Upton Grey Cemetery Lane Committee

Update for the Village- UGPC meeting February 2021

Proposed Development of farmyard and land adjacent to Cemetery Lane, Upton Grey:

Provided as an ongoing update on discussions on the proposal above.

The Proposed Development and what we have been doing:

Since our update at the January meeting:

As reported last month the Committee has been reviewing, along with appointed solicitors, the proposal documents for the offer of a land transfer to the Village (Church Meadow). (As opposed to the likely design.)

In review and interaction on these the committee is seeking to ensure that the proposal would actually result in a beneficial transfer and that the land and its surroundings would be protected accordingly from threats of other future development.

Some progress has been made in this regard, and the process is ongoing.

What stage have things reached?

Design:

No further update: (In terms of designs we have not discussed design matters in further detail with Cherrington but our understanding is that the proposed scheme when submitted will be as discussed in the Autumn.)

Programme: We don't have a defined programme but we do know that Cherrington wishes to submit its application soon (spring 2021).

The Land:

Last month the Trust issued a statement on the 'North Land', appended to that meeting's update; we have nothing additional to report on that point but have sought some clarifications from the Trust on whether there are any alternative ways of securing comfort for the Village that the north land could never be threatened by development.

What Now?

Discussions between lawyers are expected to continue on the points above.

With regard to legal fees: we have received generous offers within the village of assistance on legal matters, in addition to legal expertise within the Committee itself. We have discussed the detail of how this can best be focused, and the upshot is that this will most likely go a very long way towards limiting exposure to legal fees.

Appendix D

This topic (and potential budgets) were discussed at last month's UGPC meeting. Clearly, in the interest of the Village the Committee must do everything we can to minimise that exposure and we are grateful to have a possible solution for this.

Once sufficient progress has been made on the details of the proposed land transfer offer, we would expect to be able to report on the content of it so that the context of the development proposal scheme can be understood together with how it might be expected to affect or benefit the Village.

Nick Ralls

Upton Grey Cemetery Lane Committee

Nick Ralls, Geoffrey Yeowart, Andrew Dunkley, Julian Livingston-Booth, John Frieda, James Raven