Community Benefit Fund (CBF)
Village Meeting
Wednesday 28th October 2026
6.30pm in the Parish Room
Minutes

Present: Chair: Phil Heath, 11 Parishioners and Clerk: Denise Roscoe

Welcome:

Phil Heath welcomed everyone and explained that the purpose of the meeting is to agree an outline process for how the CBF will be managed and how projects are selected and managed. Not to select projects tonight

Apologies: Rob Law, Stuart Jones, Steve & Yvonne Walton, Helen & Wayne Thomas, Joe Ford.

Background of the CBF for Withington

- Solar Farm approved in April 2023
- PC negotiated with Elgin Energy a Community Benefit Fund of £4k per MW, approx. £100k. The contract was signed in May 2025
- What is a CBF?
  "Community benefit funds are generally offered on a voluntary basis by developers of wind and solar farms to help ensure their developments deliver tangible economic, social, educational, cultural or environmental benefits to the local community". Elgin sold the project to Severn Trent Green Power (STGP) who agreed to honour the CBF contract
- The CBF will be paid to WPC within 30 days of connection to the National Grid which we expect to take place in late 2027

How are we going to manage the CBF

- Withington already has an existing model that could be adopted the Village Green which is a charity with a board of trustees.

- **Comments**
  - A Community Interest Company was suggested as an alternative
  - Registering as a charity will probably involve having to submit accounts and other information to the Charity Commission Annually.
  - Concern was raised that a conflict of interests may be created if parishioners on the CBF committee are also on committees for the Church and Village Green.
  - It was suggested it would be best to establish a committee to manage projects overall, who would then ask volunteers to join a working group for each individual project.

- It was **agreed** to investigate the benefits and disadvantages of registering the CBF as a charity or community interest company and explore whether there are other more suitable options. **Action**: PC and Clerk
- It was **agreed** to look at other methods Parish Council's etc have employed to manage CBF's. **Action**: PC and Clerk

The role of the Parish Council

- The role of the PC is to ensure that the CBF is spent on projects that benefit the community.
- To ensure that the fiscal management of the CBF provides accountability, budget adherence and regulatory compliance
- To ensure that the community is actively involved in the selection process and management of projects

Discussion on an outline process for selection of projects

- A suggested process – parishioners' input to the process welcome
  Set up a CBF Management Committee comprised of parishioners and representatives from the Parish Council. It was suggested that the committee should be made up of 5 parishioner and 2 parish councillors. Parishioners on the committee should represent a cross section of our community and include parishioners from all areas of the parish.
  Agree a process for the selection, management and allocation of funds to a project that ensures all parishioners have an input to the process.

  - **Comments**
  - When evaluating project ideas, it was suggested to have an experienced estimator to give guidance on the costs of a project.
  - A process and criteria for deciding ideas needs to be established.
  - As the Solar Farm will run for approx. 40 years, should some of the fund be kept back for future generations.
  - As the funds will not have the same worth in 40 years, should projects be selected that last for many years as well as short term projects.
  - It was suggested that funds be retained for ongoing upkeep of any projects.
  - It is important to ensure that **all** parishioners receive communications and have the opportunity to respond.

Going Forward

Issue the notes minutes from the meeting to the Parish email list, notice board and WhatsApp.

Parishioners are invited to make comments on these minutes by contacting the Clerk by email clerkwithingtonpc@gmail.com or telephone 01743 709603

The minutes of this meeting will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 4 November 2026, with a view to consulting all parishioners and seeking their feedback on the process outlined above.