SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION AT THE 14th OCTOBER 2024 MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council held on Monday, 9th September 2024 at the MRCC commencing at 7pm.

Present: **Councillor I Harrison (Chair)**
Councillor P Beddoe
Councillor S Dolby
Councillor S Preston
Councillor M Talbot

Also in attendance: 9 members of the public and County Councillor Laughton

NM057-25 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor Hutchings and District Councillor Mrs Saddington.

NM058-25 Declarations of Interest
There were none.

NM059-25 Minutes
The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday, 12th August 2024 were accepted as a true and correct record.

NM060-25 Public 10 Minute Session
The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.02pm for the public session.

A resident expressed concern at the sheep that were frequently roaming on the road, having escaped their field. There was concern over the welfare of the animals and the risk to road users.

The Chair advised that the matter had been reported to the Police and it was understood that visits had been made to the owner. There was discussion over whether the matter also needed to be reported to the RSPCA or some other body. The Chair advised that the Parish Council would ensure relevant bodies were made aware in order that a resolution could be reached.

A resident asked what the present position was with regard to North Marsh. The Chair advised that a bid had been submitted by the Parish Council but this had not been accepted.

The resident understood that a substantial offer of funds had been made from a local Piscatorial Society and questioned why the Parish Council had not accepted that offer. Both the Clerk and the Chair rebutted this suggestion and asked the resident to provide appropriate contact details of the person who had advised the resident of this information.

The Chair advised that the prospective buyer had been in touch with the Parish Council. The Chair had emphasised the value of the land to the village and had highlighted potential

problems with parking, flooding and nuisance to residents. The Parish Council had considered making a rights of way application across the land if it was considered that access would be lost to residents.

The Chair thanked residents for their input and reconvened the meeting at 7.17pm.

NM061-25 To consider any matters that need to be raised with District Cllr Mrs Saddington

There were no matters that needed to be raised.

NM062-25 Newark & Sherwood District Council

(a) To consider a response to the Public Consultation on the Draft Interim Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

The Chair referred to the draft circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Councillor Beddoe, seconded by Councillor Dolby that the comments be submitted. This was AGREED.

(b) To consider a response to the Public Consultation on the Draft Solar Energy Supplemental Planning Document

The Chair referred to the draft circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Councillor Talbot, seconded by Councillor Beddoe that the comments be submitted. This was AGREED.

(c) To note the public consultation on the siting of the Kiddey Stones

Members noted the public consultation by Newark & Sherwood District Council regarding the siting of the Kiddey Stones. The District Council were seeking views on whether they should be sited at Castle House, at a cost of £81,000 including refurbishment.

The Clerk was asked to share the link on the Muskham Messenger, and also on the village Facebook sites so that residents could respond.

Members considered that the Parish Council should respond. After discussion, it was AGREED that the District Council be advised that, while it would be lovely to have the Kiddey Stones sited, it was not considered that Castle House was the correct place, and that they would be better placed in a park. Further, it was not considered that £81,000 was value for money and suggested that the District Council consider submitting a Heritage Lottery Application for funding.

NM063-25 To consider any matters that need to be raised with County Councillor Laughton

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.31pm for Councillor Laughton's report.

Councillor Laughton advised that he had recently been appointed to the Trent Regional Food and Coastal Committee. The Great North Road Solar Park had been highlighted at a recent meeting, with the Environment Agency being made aware of the proposals.

The Chair advised that the Regional Mayor had been invited to attend the next meeting of JPAG on the 16th September. Clarification would be sought from the District Council on whether the Environment Agency would be consulted as part of the NSIP process given the flood concerns in the area.

Thanks were extended to Councillor Laughton for the recent road repairs that had been undertaken in and around the village.

The meeting was reconvened at 7.40pm.

NM064-25 Nottinghamshire County Council

(a) Lengthsman Local – Issue 3
A copy of the issue had been circulated to Members for information.

(b) To consider the offer from Via for Winter Service Supplies
The Clerk was asked to accept the offer of 5 bags of salt as offered by Via.

(c) To note the request for Snow Wardens
Members noted that Councillor Dolby had confirmed with Via that he would continue to act as the village Snow Warden.

(d) To receive details of the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Members noted that the Chair and Clerk would be attending the Webinar organised by Nottinghamshire County Council to learn more about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

NM065-25 Planning

(a) Decision Notice - 24/01115/HOUSE – Elm Tree House, Crab Lane, North Muskham - Single storey side extension
Members noted that the application as outlined had been granted planning permission. In its submission to the District Council objecting to the proposals, the Parish Council had highlighted comments made by the Planning Officer when the land had originally been developed that they would not allow a replacement building to be bigger than the footprint of the original before demolition. The Parish Council were concerned that the size of the extension would lead to flood waters being displaced. This objection was taken into consideration by the Planning Officer, but permission had been granted.

(b) Neighbourhood Plan
The Clerk was asked to arrange a further meeting of the Steering Group for early October.

NM066-25 Parish Council Matters

(a) Allotments/Green Hub Report
Councillor Preston reported that there were two plots that had not been cultivated this season. These were plots 2 and 10. It was AGREED that the Clerk would contact the plotholders to determine if they wished to retain their plot. If so, they would be asked to make the plots tidy.

It was noted that there were still a number of tyres on site. The Clerk was asked to arrange for their disposal. It was acknowledged there would be a cost for such disposal.

In response to a question from a member of the Allotment Sub-Committee, the Chair explained the ownership status of the allotments. The land was owned by the Parish Council, and while it was currently used as allotments, there was the option to use it as future burial provision in the village. However, it was unlikely that this would be for many years as there was sufficient space within the current Churchyard.

It was noted that it had been a challenging growing season this year, but problems with deer seem to have subsided.

It was noted that there were some items stored in the container that would be better stored in the container at the MRCC, and similarly items in the container at the MRCC that would be better stored at the allotments. Arrangements would be made to move the items around.

(b) <u>To note the resignation of a Parish Councillor and to receive details of the procedure to advertise a Casual Vacancy</u>

Members noted that Cllr Oliver had resigned from the Parish Council. The Clerk had acknowledged the resignation and thanked Cllr Oliver for his service.

The Clerk confirmed that Newark & Sherwood District Council had been advised and that a notice had been placed in the Parish Council's noticeboards advising of the vacancy. If the prescribed number of electors did not request an election, the Parish Council would be able to fill the vacancy by co-option at the October meeting.

(c) <u>To consider and agree the Parish Council's stance on the proposals for the Great North Road Solar Park</u>

The Chair referred to a number of issues that could impact on the village. These were the potential for gravel, which would continue to come South from Cromwell and from Collingham to the East. There are significant solar plans from the North and North East, and it now looks like there may be a commercial fishery, with some form of development which will restrict access, also to the North. To the West of the village there is the A1 and LNER, plus solar panels. To the South of the village there is access to countryside, but that is with permission of a private family.

A proposal by Elements Green will result in an application to the Planning Inspectorate for the Great North Road Solar Park, which will include some 1.5 million solar panels over an area of 6,900 acres with associated infrastructure and sub-stations to the West of the A1, affecting some 18 village communities.

This proposal, which will be in place for a minimum of 40 years, appears to fit with the Government targets for Net Zero and the developers suggest the scheme will provide power for some 200,000 homes. The Government suggests that this target is essential to further mitigate the effects of CO2 and global warming, and to increase the UK's energy security.

There are potential risks, some still unquantified, associated with the loss of the traditional landscape, increase in flood risk with increased run off speed and a channelling effect, ecology and bio-diversity loss, the use of food production land, environmental, physical and psychological aspects. There will be noise and increased traffic in the construction phase.

The proposals are still at the pre-application consultation stage and some mitigation has been made by Elements Green, in the form of additional screening and removal of some panels. Notwithstanding the Parish Council's position agreed at this meeting, requests will continue to be made for further mitigation, including additional footpaths.

The Parish Council are currently members of the Joint Parish Action Group seeking a collective response at the statutory consultation stage next year. The Parish Council has, in principle, agreed to make a contribution towards the commissioning of a planning consultant, dependent on the Parish Council's decision at this meeting.

It was noted that there was clearly a need for a move towards clean energy at some speed but the size and location of such proposals, and whether alternative brownfield sites and roof tops are a better solution, is open to debate and opinion.

In terms of consultation with the village, the Parish Council has circulated one survey to residents, together with a further information sheet and invitation to attend a meeting with Elements Green. There have been two open meetings held with Elements Green and the Parish Council has received many letters and statements of opposition, with a few in support of it. The Parish Council should be mindful that the most recent survey undertaken in the village suggested that between 65 and 70% of those responding objected to the scheme.

The Parish Council should also remember that it is in a position of leadership in the community and, whilst needing to be mindful of what residents desire, there are times when Members must lead and not follow and the Parish Council needs to agree what it believes is the best decision for the community as a whole.

At this point, the Chair suspended the meeting at 7.57pm to allow for comments from the residents present.

A resident suggested that even if the Parish Council and residents work with the developer for mitigation, there was no guarantee that would be implemented. If the GNR Solar Park were permitted, this would not be the end of solar farm applications.

A resident advised that, in principle, they were against the use of agricultural land. Further, technology was moving quickly in all sorts of areas, including energy production, and there was a history of industrial sites being developed and then left when there were no longer profitable. Concern was also expressed at the potential development of the A1 which had fallen by the wayside at the moment , but could be revisited in the future.

The Chair advised that Highways England would be consulted as part of the process.

A resident referred to the Rochdale Envelope approach to planning that the developer was implementing. While some fields had been taken out of the proposals currently, the Rochdale Envelope of planning law allows them to be flexible in their approach. Caution was urged where it appeared mitigation had been made, as it may not be the case.

The Chair thanked residents for their input and reconvened the meeting at 8.03pm.

The Chair invited proposals from Members on what the Parish Council's response to the GNR Solar Park should be.

Councillor Beddoe proposed that the Parish Council should object to the proposals. All points mentioned by residents were supported, and it was considered that this application would be the thin end of the wedge. Technology was moving on, and 40 years was a very long time to take fields out of agricultural production. Food and energy security should be part of a national strategy and the two are combined. One consideration for the landowners was the change of use of the land to solar would then classify the use as commercial, which would change the tax position on the land. The flooding element was also a concern, particularly within this area.

Councillor Beddoe's proposal was seconded by Councillor Dolby, and was unanimously AGREED.

(d) <u>To consider areas of mitigation with regard to the Great North Road Solar Park, particularly in relation to footpaths</u>

At the invitation of the Chair, a resident explained the work that had been undertaken on footpaths.

A copy of the report had been circulated to Members for information and consideration. After discussion, it was AGREED that the report be endorsed by the Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that information had been received from Elements Green regarding their Energy Efficiency grants. It was AGREED that this be placed on the Muskham Messenger and Facebook sites to inform residents.

Clarification was sought by the Chair on what support the MRCC had applied to Elements Green for. The Chair of the MRCC confirmed it consisted of two elements, one was for solar panels and the other through the Muskham Cougars. The Cougars application was related to land away from the MRCC.

The Chair explained that the expectation was that this application would be driven through by the Secretary of State. The Parish Council will strive to do its best for the Parish, including lobbying the District Council.

(e) To note the request to sign a revised Transfer Deed Plan for the Allotments to enable completion of the registration

The Clerk explained that this was an administrative error that needed to be rectified before registration could be completed. It was AGREED that delegated authority be given to the Chair and Vice-Chair to sign the amended plan, which would then be deposited with the Council's solicitors.

(f) To consider a response to the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

Members did not consider a response to the Consultation was required. They did, however, ask the Clerk to extend congratulations to the group for putting together such a comprehensive document.

The Clerk confirmed that a copy had been forwarded to the North Muskham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

(g) To note the requirement for further volunteers for the Speedwatch Scheme

A request for volunteers would be put out on the Muskham Messenger and Facebook pages.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council would be looking at ways of controlling traffic through the village. One consideration was for an ANPR camera to be requested, which would be especially useful when there were problems on the A1.

It was also noted that the weight limit sign on the A1 was incorrectly placed. Efforts had been made to have this moved in the past without success.

NM067-25 Environmental & Community Issues

Play Area

An additional quotation was awaited for the replacement surfacing at the play area. It was expected that costs would be in the region of £8,000.

Members noted that the basketball nets had been damaged. The Clerk was asked to put a message on the Muskham Messenger and Facebook sites regarding the damage.

NM068-25 Highways Log

There were no current issues on the log.

The Clerk confirmed that contractors had been instructed to cut the hedge on the bridlepath adjacent to the Ferry.

The Chair referred to the request made for bollards to deter Quad Bikes along the bridlepath. The Clerk advised this had been raised with the Rights of Way Team. A chaser would be sent.

The Clerk was asked to add maintenance of the area at the back of the Church to his duties.

NM069-25 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 – August - £299.60
- PAYE – August – £74.80
- Village Handyman – August - £
- PKF Littlejohn – External Audit - £252
- LC Computers – Laptop Repairs - £169.99
- North Marsh Refunds -£530
- St John Ambulance – Defib Pads - £70.80
- Wordprint – Printing - £35

(b) To note any Receipts

The following receipts were noted:

- Newark & Sherwood Community Lottery - £155
- MRCC – Donation to PWLB Loan - £1,500
- MRCC – Card Payments from BBQ - £16
- Mary Woolhouse Foundation - £4,000
- Fundraising BBQ - £70

(c) Financial Report – to 31st August 2024

Members noted the financial report to 31st August 2024.

(d) To note the donation received from the Mary Woolhouse Foundation for the play area

Members noted with thanks the donation of £4,000 from the Mary Woolhouse Foundation towards replacement surfacing at the play area.

(e) To receive an overview of the financial relationship between the MRCC and the Parish Council over the last 5 years

The Chair advised a request had been submitted to the MRCC for a full report of the current financial status in order that the Parish Council could fully consider financial contributions, to include the work of the Village Handyman. The Chair understood that the MRCC was now in a more stable financial position.

The Chair of the MRCC Trustees was present at the meeting and advised that there were a significant number of capital works that would be coming forward. The current Committee were trying to establish a working R&R fund. It was noted that the Parish Council had withdrawn financial support for the electricity to the external light adjacent to the play area. The Chair confirmed that this was correct due to the rising costs and the lack of benefit the light provided.

After discussion, it was AGREED that a full report would be brought back to the October meeting for Members consideration.

NM070-25 Notts Association of Local Councils

(a) September Newsletter

A copy of the Newsletter had been circulated to Members for information.

NM071-25 Correspondence

(a) To received correspondence regarding the Heat Hub project

After discussion, it was AGREED this be forwarded to the MRCC as it was felt more appropriate.

NM072-25 Items for Notification

(a) The Chair advised that the application for a change of use at Burnetts Farm was likely to be referred to Planning Committee. In the event that this was the case, it was AGREED that Councillor Talbot be appointed to speak on behalf of the Parish Council.

NM073-25 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 14th October 2024

The meeting closed at 8.53 pm.