

NORTON & LENCHWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Norton & Lenchwick Parish Council Meeting held on
25th March 2009 in the Village Hall at 19h00

Present

Cllr Worthington (Chair)
Cllr Fletcher
Cllr Leonard
Cllr Middleton
Cllr Hill
Cllr Iorns
Cllr Prew
Cllr Weaving
Cllr Richards
District Cllr Holt
Mrs Spence (Clerk)

A large number of members of the public were present for the public forum prior to the meeting regarding ScottishPower Renewables proposed windfarm. Cllr Worthington welcomed all present and introduced Parish Councillors and District Councillor Holt who then chaired the public session.

All households in Norton & Lenchwick had been given the opportunity to participate in an Opinion Poll 'Are you in favour of the Proposed Lenchwick Windfarm?'

The Parish Clerk announced results:

Number of Opinion Poll papers distributed: 385
Number of Replies received: 230

Number of 'Yes' replies: 41
Number of 'No' replies: 169
Number of 'Don't Know' replies: 20

The following questions were taken from the public:

Q: What was the Objective of the Norton & Lenchwick Opinion Poll and how would the Parish Council be reacting to it.

A: The objective was to gauge local opinion regarding the proposal for Parish Council guidance. Planning Application was expected to be submitted during June/July. The Council could not pre-judge the application, comment would be made once documentation was received.

It was noted that the only planning received to date relating to the proposed windfarm was an application for temporary met masts to measure windspeed. This application had been referred to the Development Control Committee who were meeting to discuss on the 2nd April 2009. Cllr Holt confirmed he would be questioning

the timing of the application for wind turbines given that met masts were being proposed as a temporary installation for 3 years to gather data.

The Council further commented that the response to the poll had been good and it was indicative of local opinion. The Council did feel it was their responsibility to represent local opinion in their decision making.

Q: When would the Parish Council make a decision regarding the windfarm?

A: The Council would make comment once the Planning Application for the Proposed Windfarm was officially received. The Council did not support the application for met masts.

Q: Does the Parish Council confirm that it regards its primary duty to represent the Parish?

A: Parish Councillors are governed by a Code of Conduct and as a consultee in the local Planning Process it is inappropriate for them to pre-judge a planning application before the official planning consultation commences. Councillors did feel it was their duty to represent the community.

It was noted that members of the public should be aware that they could write to Wychavon Planning Department with any comments regarding planning applications, all correspondence was recorded and taken into account during decision making. An action group VVASP (Vale Villages against Scottish Power) had also been setup to oppose the windfarm, this was a further means for members of the public to make their comments. Additionally correspondence could also be sent to Cllr Holt who was in a position to express a view as he was not part of the Development Control Committee.

Q: A member of the public asked what Cllr Holt's view on the turbines was?

A: Cllr Hold said he was opposed to the project.

Q: The Parish Council had said they would address concerns raised at the January meeting with ScottishPower, had this happened?

A: Concerns had been raised in writing with ScottishPower. The Parish Clerk read out the responses (Full list of questions & replies would be published on the web-site)

Q: Although there was no planning application for wind turbines yet, it is felt that applications for met masts were indicative of locations. Can the Parish Council confirm they will lobby to object to the planning application?

A: Councillors would not pre-judge the application before receiving it.

Cllr Holt commented that everyone was generally reacting too quickly, there would be plenty of opportunity to comment once the application for windturbines was submitted. It is at the time that the public consultation period opens that correspondence should be sent to Wychavon District Council, Parish Council, Cllr Holt etc

Q: Despite the reply from ScottishPower regarding no Health Issues, people were still concerned. Does the Parish Council have a view on possible Health Issues?

A: The Parish Council was not qualified to have a view, it is a Government issue. Cllr Holt would write to Peter Luff MP regarding the concern and to establish what Government regulation was in place.

Q: A member of the public had written to ScottishPower regarding a recent case Davis & Davis where a farmer had suffered health issues resulting from windturbines near his property. ScottishPower replied that the arrangement and type of turbines referred to in the case was different to proposals for Lenchwick. His question of impact on health was completely ignored. Why can't the UK have rules on proximities of turbines from properties as in other countries?

A: Cllr Holt would include in his letter to Peter Luff.

Q: Having now a better understanding of the planning application procedure, should members of the community who have already sent letters of objection to various parties do so again when the planning application for the windturbines is submitted?

A: Cllr Holt replied that they should

Q: A member of the public had written to Wychavon planners expressing concern that approval of met masts could be seen as an assumed approval for wind turbines. Did the Council have any comment on this?

A: The Council agreed that if met masts were installed, time was needed to collect data and as a result the planned windturbine application possibly being submitted in June/July was too soon. This point would be addressed at the Development Control Committee meeting.

Q: Could the Parish Council confirm the procedure for planning and offer guidance to the parish as to how to respond?

A: Anyone can look at planning applications, either on-line or at Wychavon District Council. Anyone can attend the development control committee meetings and also request an opportunity to speak in support or in opposition to a proposal.

Q: Was the council aware that the proposed area under consideration for the wind turbines had been extended?

A: The council was unaware of any change

Q: A member of the public had requested planning for a porch on his property which was turned down by Wychavon Council on the basis it would be a blot on the landscape. How then could a series of windturbines not affect the local beauty?

A: The effects on the conservation of the area would be addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment submitted with the planning and would be considered by the planners.

It was further noted by a member of the public that a small windturbine applied for by a local farm shop had not been approved.

Q: Would there be a Planning Gain to local community if wind turbines are approved?

A: It was thought there may be monies made available to local communities affected by such a proposal but the Council had not received any information of this nature from ScottishPower.

Q: If Wychavon voted against the application for wind turbines, what happens next?

A: ScottishPower has the right of an appeal. A planning inspector is appointed to consider the appeal and make recommendations.

Q: If plans for wind turbines are approved by Wychavon, can the community appeal?

A: Yes, there could be a judicial review which would be very expensive.

Q: In light of the expected increase in traffic from the Richmond Homes development at BBC Wood Norton would it be possible to extend the double-white lines from The Squires to BBC entrance on A44 to avoid vehicles overtaking? Could anything be done to reduce the speed on the road in this area near residences?

A: Speed limits were under review. Clerk would write to Highways regarding the white lines

The public session closed at 7.50pm

The meeting commenced at 8.05pm.

Eight members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies** – None
2. **Declaration of Interest** – No declarations of interest were made
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2009** were approved as a true and correct record.
4. **Chairman's Report** – Cllr Worthington reported that he had attended a Development Control Committee meeting on 5th March regarding The proposed Richmond Homes development. He had spoken in support of the project. The Development was approved.

The internal notice board fabric appeared to be wearing. Clerk to discuss with Lengthsman.

5. **District Councillors Report** – Cllr Holt reported that Wychavon District Council had recently undergone an audit and had been rated as 'Improving Strongly' with four stars. It had received the highest rating in the West Midlands. The District Council was currently chasing landowners regarding clearance of water courses. Clerk confirmed correspondence had been received.

It was noted that the surface of Kings Lane was in need of repair. Cllr Holt reported that there was an additional 3million pounds in the next County Council budget for repairs to footways. He requested that a list of all problem areas relating to roads in the locality be forwarded to

him.

6. **Field Path Officer's Report** – Cllr Leonard reported that she would be meeting with the Countryside Access Officer to discuss a budget for 2009 and an application would be submitted. Vote of thanks was extended to Cllr Weaving for his assistance with installation of posts. It was agreed that path 522 could be cleared by the council with Mr Wadley's permission. Cllr Leonard to action. Path 520 Manor Farm area needed a proper ditch crossing; Path 518 by the river in Chadbury needed a ditch to be improved - no dates where available for work to be actioned. Orchid Walks would be taking place on 11th and 16th June. Cllr Leonard would consider organising a village walk later in the year.

7. **Playing Fields** – Wicksteed annual inspection of the equipment had been scheduled for April 2009.

Refuse at Hipton Hill continued to be a problem. Clerk to write to Wychavon (copy to C Holt). Brambles in vicinity of Kingdom Hall also overgrown. Clerk to refer to Lengthsman.

8. **Lengthsman** – Flood recovery work was complete. Hedges along Lenchwick Rd towards Chadbury had been cut back; gulleys had been cleared; footpath in Lenchwick had been widened; overhanging laurel near church had been cut back by landowner. Lengthsman to ask for hedge to be cut back some more, still dangerous. New lengthsman agreement had been signed for 2009/10. Allowance would be £2100. It was noted that a heavy duty strimmer was required for lengthsman's use. Quotes to be obtained.

9. **Street Lighting** – As light in Lloyds Close is located in someone's garden permission would be required to remove it. EON would then make good any disruption to the garden which would increase the cost to the Council and then install a new light on the pavement. Clerk to contact resident.

10. **Community Website** – the Norton & Lenchwick Parish website was up and running currently free of charge. Address: www.parity-council.com/NortonLenchwick. Cllr Leonard was currently managing the website and would post all information pertinent to Parish Council such as meeting agendas, minutes etc. A vote of thanks was extended to Cllr Leonard for organising the website. It had been very well received locally.

11. **Draft Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009** – Draft accounts to date were briefly discussed. It was agreed that the accounts would be presented in the 'Receipts and Payments' format required for audit. Final Accounts would be presented at the next meeting for approval prior to audit.

12. Finance

- a. The following payments were approved:

Clerks salary & expenses	£244.07 (Feb+March 2009)
Lengthsman	£516.05 (Lengthsman 215.50 playing field work)
Weaving Machinery	£ 128.80 (Windfarm admin)
Norton Village Hall	141.00 (Meeting Rm/Hall hire)

- b. No receipts were reported.

- c. Internal Auditor – It was agreed to appoint Iain Selkirk as internal auditor of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009

13. Planning

There was no planning application for discussion or correspondence to report. Cllr Worthington would attend the Development Control Committee Meeting at Wychavon on 2nd April 2009 re ScottishPower Renewables application to install a temporary met mast.

14. Councillors Reports and Items for Future Agenda

Annual Litterpick

15. Correspondence – Correspondence was circulated

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting would be held on Tuesday 12th May 2009 in the Village Hall, following the Annual and Statutory meetings which would commence at 19h00. The meeting closed at 21h17

Signed:

Chairman

Date
