

Defford and Besford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

of Tuesday 5th August 2014
at Besford Court Community Hall

Present: Cllr Robert Bemand (Chairman), Ron Davis, Sonja Lee, David Robinson, Roy Shepherd, Patricia Steel, Hazel Wakefield and Clive Woods

Also present: Linda Blake, Barry Flux and 3 colleagues representing Solar Planning Ltd; 27 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Ian Spiers.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Presentation by representatives of Solar Planning Ltd regarding plans for a proposed ground mounted solar farm at Defford Aerodrome

Barry Flux and his 3 colleagues gave a presentation outlining plans for the proposed solar farm at Defford Aerodrome.

Members of the Council asked a number of questions including issues such as possible contamination of the site, the effects of glare and glaze and proposals for screening of the area.

These questions were answered by the representatives present and Mr Flux agreed to provide further information on both screening and contamination.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 2014 to be confirmed and signed

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the 27th May 2014 be accepted and signed as a true record.

5. Planning

(a) New applications

W/14/01244/PN: Defford Aerodrome, Rebecca Road, Besford.

Proposal: Proposed ground mounted solar farm, associated works and ancillary infrastructure.

Councillor Shepherd proposed that there should be a formal objection to the proposal siting and supporting the following;

1. Martin Smith on his well-researched and well-reasoned statement, in particular based on his extensive personal knowledge of the site but also his perception in pointing out anomalies and flaws in the applicant's arguments.

2. Jonathan Edwards' letter written on behalf of The Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust which draws attention to the impact upon the outlook of Capability Brown's unique garden at Croome Court.

3. The Environment Agency's letter dated 30th July setting out details of a flood risk and the risk of land contamination.

4. The concerns set out by English Heritage which concludes in summary that the proposed development will cause harm to the setting of Croome Park.

A vote was taken. 2 in favour, 3 against – therefore the motion failed.

Councillor Steel proposed the Council should approve the application subject to several conditions.

A vote was taken and the motion agreed. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that;

Defford and Besford Parish Council do not object to the proposal, but the Parish Council requests that approval is subject to the following requirements;

1) The Parish Council are concerned that the proposed landscaping is not sufficient to shield this very large, intrusive scheme. A bund or bunds are required along the boundaries of the application site and the individual sections of the proposed development and all planting should be on top of these bunds.

2) Having read the glaze and glare report, the Parish Council are concerned about the effect of glaze and glare on the Besford side of the development and request that the planners ensure that changes are made to ensure that there will be no glaze and glare effect.

W/14/01268/PN: Woodbine Cottage, Woodmancote, Defford

Proposal: Change of use and alterations to a detached outbuilding with the curtilage of Woodbine Cottage into a separate dwelling.

Planning Committee: No objection.

(b) Wychavon District Council decisions

W/13/02118/OU: Defford Motors, Upton Road, Defford

Pending Consideration

W/14/00711/PN: Land off Harpley Road, Defford

Pending Consideration

W/14/00714/CU: Neilson Park, Defford Arms, Defford

Permitted

6. Finance: To approve any payments due

The following invoices totalling £1,719.55 were approved for payment: New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman work May 2014; Linda Blake, Clerk's Expenses for postage and printing; New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman work June 2014 and removal of a fallen tree; LA Garden Services, Grass Cutting May, June and July 2014, Gallagher and Co., Internal Audit for the year ended 31 March 2014.

7. Use of New Homes Bonus Money

An application had been received proposing that the some of the New Homes Bonus Money should be spend on the purchase and installation of a swing on the Millennium Green (see Appendix A to these minutes)

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would support this application to progress through the process of a New Homes Bonus Money Application.

Two other projects were mentioned in connection with applications for New Homes Bonus Money, one concerning the footpath at Spring Bank and the other for a notice board. It was **AGREED** that as councillors had not had sufficient time to consider the details of these proposals, these applications would be deferred until the next meeting.

8. Parish Plan

a) Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman explained that he was going to permit discussion of the Neighbourhood Plan under this item as a late agenda item. One Parish Councillor had requested that this item should be added to the agenda and discussion of a Neighbourhood Plan is linked to discussions about the Parish Plan.

The Clerk outlined the benefits of a Neighbourhood plan as well as pointing out the level of resources required and limitations to its scope and powers.

Councillor Steel said that felt this issue should have been debated earlier and that although there were benefits to a Neighbourhood Plan, both the cost of such an exercise and the need for Parish Councillors to volunteer as champions of such as project were important considerations.

Councillor Davis suggested that the Parish did not need both plans and along with several other councillors expressed concern about the costs of completing a neighbourhood plan and its effect on the parish's precept.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Neighbourhood Plan should not be pursued at present but should be kept in abeyance. The Parish Plan should be published as soon as possible.

b) Parish Plan

Councillor Lee explained that the current Parish Plan was the result of three and a half years work and had identified the following main issues;

- 1) Disposal of dog waste
- 2) The requirement for a new village notice board
- 3) Speed restrictions on the main Defford Road
- 4) Play apparatus for the Millennium Green
- 5) A village bus shelter
- 6) Lack of parking in the village
- 7) Maintenance of footpaths
- 8) Siting of new housing in the village

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Plan should be adopted by the Parish Council and put into a suitable format to be printed as soon as possible.

The need to keep the Parish Plan as a live and working document was noted and any parishioners who would like to contribute to making sure the Parish Plan is regularly reviewed were asked to make themselves known to the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council noted the hard work that had been put in to produce the plan to this stage.

9. Review of the Parish Lengthsman Scheme

Following agreement at the last meeting of the Parish Council, Councillors Steel and Woods along with the Parish Clerk had met with the lengthsman to discuss improving the service in Besford.

Councillor Steele reported that this meeting had been successful as it had enabled both the Parish Council and the contractor to understand and review the work requirements for Besford. Councillors Woods had arranged to drive around the Parish with the contractor to agree a satisfactory way forward and the contractor had agreed to make timesheets more specific from this point forwards.

10. Works in Harpley Road

The works by Severn Trent in Harpley Road were noted.

11. Village Hall Car Park

Councillor Shepherd outlined the two steps required to transfer the freehold of the village hall car park into the Millennium Green Trust Deed. Firstly the Parish Council would need to consult with the Charity Commission to change the deed and secondly arrange the legal transfer of the freehold from one part of the Council to another.

Councillor Shepherd proposed that the freehold should be transferred into the Millennium Green Trust Deed.

A vote was taken. 3 in favour, 4 against. The motion failed.

12. Correspondence for Information

The clerk outlined correspondence as circulated;

- 1) A letter from a former Parish Clerk regarding train memorabilia owned by the Parish Council.
- 2) Information from Wychavon District Council regarding new permitted development rights.
- 3) A public consultation newsletter from the Rosconn Group regarding potential development of the Land off Upper Street, Defford.
- 4) Draft Order for proposed stopping up of Highway at Defford Motors, Upton Road, Defford.

Following discussion of correspondence at item 1 above; it was agreed that the Parish Clerk would write to Graeme Evans again and ask for a detailed inventory of the items he holds and investigate if there is sufficient insurance to cover them at his home address.

13. Councillors reports

a) County Councillor A Hardman
Cllr Hardman was not present.

b) District Councillor R Davis
Cllr Davis gave an update on the progress of the SWDP and advised that Wychavon District Council had been very busy with planning applications. He also informed council of his involvement with the draft Wychavon Health and Well Being Plan for 2016. Finally he advised that talks regarding the possibility of a shared Chief Executive between the Wychavon and Malvern Hills were continuing and that toilets in the district would no longer be manned very shortly as part of budget savings.

c) Parish Councillors

- i. Concerns were raised again about the street light in Crown Lane that was still obscured by vegetation. It was AGREED that the Parish Clerk would investigate the Council's legal position on this matter and then the Chairman would approach the homeowner.
- ii. Cllr Shepherd asked for thanks to be recorded to Cllr Davis for arranging for the removal of the recycling bins from the village hall car park.
- iii. The Chairman raised two issues; firstly the state of the verge on the A4104 by the turning to Dunstall as vegetation was now obscuring the view around this bend. Secondly there had been damage to the tiles on the old bus shelter on the A4104. It was AGREED that the clerk would contact WCC regarding the verge and a local builder to enquire about repairs to the bus shelter.

14. To confirm date of the next meeting

The date of the next Parish Meeting will be 23rd September at Defford Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 9:55pm.

Public Questions / Comments

- i. Tony Kent speaking on behalf of a number of local residents asked two questions as follows
 - a) Why hasn't the Parish Plan been completed and when will it be finished?
 - b) Why hasn't the Neighbourhood Plan been considered and why wasn't it on the agenda for tonight's meeting?

The Chairman responded to these questions as follows;

- a) The Parish Plan is on the agenda to be adopted at this meeting. It has taken three and a half years to complete due to the amount of work required and the limited resources available.
- b) Following a request from a Parish Councillor, I have as Chairman agreed for discussion of the Neighbourhood Plan to be allowed as a late item under Agenda item 8 as it is linked to discussion of the Parish Plan. Members of the public are asked to remember that any requests for an item to be included on the agenda should be made through a Parish Councillor.
- ii) A parishioner asked if there was any update on the issue of railway memorabilia and the Chairman advised that a letter had been received and that this would be covered under agenda item 12.
- iii) A parishioner asked if an update could be given on items raised at the last Council meeting and the Clerk was asked to provide this update.
- iv) A parishioner advised the Council that a streetlight at the top of Crown Lane was not working and the Clerk was asked to investigate this matter.
- v) A parishioner asked if there had been any progress on the issue of speeding on the main road at Defford. The Clerk responded that the Highways Department have confirmed that they consider the location suitable for speed monitoring, but are awaiting a legal matter to be approved before this goes ahead.

- vi) The landlady of the Defford Arms addressed Council regarding proposals for new homes in Defford and asked whether there was any overview taken when considering single planning applications as part of an overall scheme of developments. Councillor Davis gave an update on the progress of the SWDP at this point and explained that both the Parish and District Councils cannot act until a planning application is actually formally lodged.

APPENDIX A

25th July 2014

Dear Councillors,

We would like the Council to consider spending some of its New Homes Bonus money on the purchase and installation of the attached swing on the Millennium Green.

It is supplied by Playdale at a cost of £1,995 (excludes VAT) with an additional £540 chargeable for delivery and installation. We have been advised that the swing requires a footprint of 8.1m x 3.9m and so would suggest siting it at the location marked on the attached plan (it may appear close to the path but in reality there is now no path evident as the grass has overgrown it).

We have chosen this particular item as we believe that it would suit a wide range of ages from small children visiting the Green with their parents, to teenagers who we have been informed by Playdale would not overload the weight limit of the swing.

The swing is sturdily built to deter vandals although it would of course need to be insured by the Parish Council. When we visited the Green to show the children playing there our plans they were very enthusiastic and indicated that they would look after the new swing if it was installed. During our visit the children did come up with other items that they wished for so we have included in our request a set of goal nets and a request that the hedges be cut back and to a lower height.

We would also recommend that the area underneath the swing be protected with the installation of "GrassLok" tiles (or any similar product), which are also available from Playdale. GrassLok consists of 0.5m x 0.5m interlocking recycled PVC / rubber tiles designed specifically for use as safety surfacing underneath play equipment. The tiles allow existing grass to grow through, which can then be mown as usual. GrassLok can provide a critical fall height (CFH) of up to 3m. Playdale recommends 23m² underneath the swing and can supply and install the surfacing for £966.

In order to meet its obligations towards safety, the Council would need to undertake regular visual inspections of the equipment and arrange a yearly inspection by a qualified inspector. This annual inspection can be carried out by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) at the very reasonable price of £65 per year which includes up to 5 pieces of play equipment so could also include the goalposts already in situ at the Green.

There is a great deal of local support for the proposal from children, parents, grandparents and other residents and we are happy to enclose a copy of the sheets circulated to gather local opinions. Also, on the draft Parish Plan, play equipment was cited as the 3rd most desired additional amenity. County Cllr Adrian Hardman has pledged his support for the project and has agreed to donate £750 from his County Councillors Fund towards the project if the Parish Council go ahead (a copy of his email to us is enclosed).

Football Nets: These are widely available and vary in cost depending on the thickness of the material. We obtained a price from Net World Sports (**01691 683807**) which came to approximately £150 which includes a pair of nets at maximum thickness, net clips, net pegs, delivery charge and VAT.

Total costs

Swing	£1995 +VAT
Delivery & Installation	£540 + VAT
Grasslok including Installation	£966 + VAT
Football Nets	£150
Total	£3661 +VAT

Less £750 donation from County Councillor Hardman
£2911 +VAT

Yearly inspection £65 (RoSPA)

A note about being sued

In the past there appears to have been some reluctance to install play equipment on the Millennium Green due to fears that if an accident occurs the Council would be sued. However, with the inspections in place the Council could feel confident in its management of the Green and would not be liable for any accusations of negligence. In addition, if the Council still has concerns, we suggest contacting the stewards of the play equipment in other villages which we can supply if you wish.

We hope that you will be able to discuss the proposal at your next Parish Council meeting and would greatly hope for a positive decision. We are aware that the next meeting after August will not take place for another two months so in view of this, if you would like further information please let us know as soon as possible so that we can supply any additional details required in time for the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Nicky Szabranski
Steve Ide
Helen Ide
Jo Adams
Kara Thomas