

# Defford and Besford Parish Council

## Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014  
at Defford Village Hall

Present: Cllr Robert Bemand (Chairman), Ron Davis, Sonja Lee, Ian Spiers, Patricia Steel and Hazel Wakefield.

Also present: Linda Blake, Francesco Cornacchia from Solar Planning Limited, 8 members of the public

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Clive Woods.

The Chairman announced to the meeting that he received the resignation of Roy Shepherd and Council **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to make a vote of thanks to Roy Shepherd for all of his hard work and contribution to the Parish Council over the years.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014 to be confirmed and signed**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014 be accepted and signed as a true record, subject to the following amendments being made;

Under Minute 5 – Planning, W/14/01268/PN – Woodbine Cottage - The Planning Committee had no objection to this application.

Councillor Steel's comments under Minute 8 should read 'Councillor Steel said that she felt that this issue should have been debated earlier and that although there were benefits to a neighbourhood plan.....'

### **4. Planning**

#### (a) New Applications

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

Proposal: An amendment to the proposed ground mounted solar farm, associated works and ancillary infrastructure as follows;

Removal of proposed panels and associated development from south west corner. Submission of further information including preliminary land contamination assessment, glint and glare assessment, landscape and ecology information / proposals, revised construction management plan, revised design and access statement and archaeology.

Francesco Cornacchia, Technical Director from Solar Planning Limited, explained how the Solar Farm Planning Application had been amended to take into account comments received during the consultation phase. The following issues had been addressed;

- Possible Flood risks
- Risk of contamination
- Glint and glare

- Traffic and landscape
- Visual issues such as screening.

Cllr Davis stated that as Wychavon District Councillor he would abstain from the vote on this application.

Cllr Ian Spiers expressed his further concerns about flooding on the site and Mr Cornacchia explained that panels could be turned off externally in the event of extreme levels of flooding.

The Parish Council **AGREED** that they had no objections to the amendment to this planning application.

(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/14/01268/PN: Woodbine Cottage, Woodmancote, Defford	Approved

Cllr Davis stated that the Application for 20 dwellings on Land off Harpley Road had been refused. The Parish Clerk confirmed that she had not yet received official notification of this.

**5. Finance: To approve any payments due**

The following invoices totalling £1,665.31 were approved for payment: New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman work July 2014; Besford Court Management Ltd, Hire of Community Centre for August Parish Council Meeting; N Power, Street Lighting – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014/15; New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman work August 2014; Defford Village Hall Trust, Hire of Village Hall September; Grant Thornton, External Audit for the year ended 31 March 2014; LA Garden Services, Grass Cutting August and September 2014.

**6. Use of New Homes Bonus Money**

Two applications had been received for the use of New Homes Bonus Money and these were both considered by the Parish Council;

- Anne Booth had submitted an application for new notice boards in the village as she felt there is difficulty in advertising events in the village of Defford and that more notice boards and more specifically notice boards for general use would be beneficial in improving this. The Parish Council felt that it was not a straight forward decision as to where the boards would be best situated and it was therefore **AGREED** to defer this matter until the next meeting when Anne Booth could be asked to speak to Council about possible sites for new notice boards. It was **NOTED** that community support for this project had been well demonstrated in the application.
- David Wakefield had submitted an application for works to clear the footpath on Spring Bank. Council considered this application and **AGREED** that a further quote should be sought as the two quotes currently obtained demonstrated some disparity in cost. It was further **AGREED** that the Parish Clerk would write to the Footpaths Officer at

Worcestershire County Council to summarise the problem and see if the County Council would be able to assist in this matter.

### **7. Community Benefit**

Further to the Planning Application for the proposed Ground Mounted Solar Farm at Defford Aerodrome, the Chairman and Parish Clerk had met with representatives of Solar Planning Ltd to discuss possible projects of community benefit that could be supported by SunEdison.

The Chairman reported that projects discussed included solar panels for the village hall and tarmacking of the village hall car park and driveway. He invited other Parish Councillors to think about other potential projects, but this matter was for information only at this stage and would be revisited at a later date if the planning application was successful.

### **8. Street Lighting**

Following problems with vegetation surrounding a street light in Crown Lane, the homeowner had now cut back the vegetation, so that this street light was no longer concealed.

Cllr Lee explained that the homeowner was now experiencing problems with the light shining directly into an upstairs window and asked if the Parish Council could assist in this matter and perhaps fit a blanking plate to avoid the glare from the street light on the side closest to their upstairs window.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would investigate the possibility of fitting a blanking plate to this street light.

### **9. South Worcestershire Development Plan**

The Chairman along with Cllr Steele and the Parish Clerk had attended a briefing session at Wychavon regarding the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

The SWDP inspector had provided a revised housing supply figure of 28,370 for South Worcestershire, which was an increase of 6,000 dwellings. Following discussions between Wychavon, Malvern and Worcester Councils, the SWDP housing element for Wychavon has now been proposed at 10,300.

A Council meeting is being held by each of the three Councils separately on 30 September to agree the proposals for each area.

The Chairman emphasised that other areas in the district had received very large allocations of houses as part of the SWDP and that the feeling of many at the briefing meeting was that these new allocations had been undemocratic. Jack Heggarty, Chief Executive of Wychavon District Council had spoken at the briefing and said that is essential for the SWDP to be agreed in order to prevent the continuation of speculative development plans all over the district for an unlimited amount of time.

It is hoped that the South Worcestershire Development Plan would be completed and signed off by Autumn 2015.

### **10. Correspondence for Information**

The clerk outlined correspondence as circulated;

- 1) A letter from Mr and Mrs Venable expressing their view on the Rosconn's groups proposal for Upper Street, Defford
- 2) A letter from Mrs Rice expressing concern about speeding on Upper Street and also concern about the Solar Farm Planning Proposal for Defford aerodrome.
- 3) An email from Tony Kent dated August 2014, regarding public participation at the Council Meeting on 5 August 2014.
- 4) An email from Anne Booth dated August 2014 regarding the use of New Homes Bonus Money.
- 5) An email from Tadjio Szczepanik regarding matters discussed at the Council Meeting on 5 August 2014.
- 6) A letter from the Electoral Services Department at Wychavon District Council notifying the Clerk that the casual vacancy caused by Roy Shepherd's resignation can now be filled by co-option.

The Parish Council **NOTED** all the correspondence received.

With regard to item 5, the Parish Clerk was asked to reply to Mr Szczepanik to make the following points. There would be no apology for the events at the August Parish Council Meeting and although the Parish Council are keen to encourage public participation at meetings, they will not allow lengthy statements from spokesman of local groups when they contain denigrating or disparaging remarks.

The Parish Clerk outlined advice received from CALC confirming that the decision made regarding the Neighbourhood Plan was not "Ultra Vires" and this would be summarised in the letter as well.

With regard to item 6, the Parish Clerk informed the meeting that as no request for an election had been made by 10 electors of the Parish, the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Roy Shepherd can now be filled by co-option. The co-option process will be advertised in the Defford Newsletter and put on the agenda for the November Council meeting.

#### **11. Councillors reports**

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

b) District Councillor R Davis  
Cllr Davis made the following points;

- He explained that the budgeting process at Wychavon District Council had now started again and he was heavily involved with this.
- Interviews for the new shared chief executive post would be held shortly and the appointment would then be subject to agreement by both Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils.
- The Wychavon Health and Wellbeing Plan had now been published.
- The Tour of Britain had been very successful on its route through Pershore and Evesham.
- Continental Landscapes Ltd, who maintain parks and open spaces for Wychavon District Council have successfully entered the parks for a BALI National Landscapes award.

c) Parish Councillors

- i. It was **NOTED** that a wreath would be provided for the Chairman to lay at this year's remembrance observation; this had been agreed in the 2014/15 budget.
- ii. Cllr Steele pointed out that her annual term on the Village Hall Management Committee was about to finish. It was **AGREED** that she would continue to be the Parish Council's representative on this Committee
- iii. Cllr Steele also raised the possibility of the Parish Council asking their contractor to cut the lawn by the Village Hall. Other Parish Councillors expressed their support for this idea.
- iv. Cllr Davis raised the issue about starting Parish Council meetings at 7:30pm to try and avoid late finishing times. The Parish Clerk would speak to Roy Shepherd about this possibility and feedback to the next meeting.

**14. To confirm date of the next meeting**

The date of the next Parish Meeting will be 25<sup>th</sup> November at Defford Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 10:10pm.

**Public Questions / Comments**

- i. Mrs Rice addressed the meeting regarding speeding on Upper Street and asked if speeding checks could be put in place. Parish Councillors responded that it was unlikely that a speed check would be set up on a minor road but that speed calming methods could be investigated.
- ii. Mrs Roe asked whether the Parish Council would consider allowing members of the public to give some background information when asking a question of the Parish Council. The Chairman responded that in line with the Localism Act 2011 which encourages public participation, he as Chairman would not allow lengthy statements from spokesmen of local groups as although participation is to be encouraged, denigration would not be permitted.
- iii. Mr Miller asked whether there was a village policy on how to deal with planning applications of differing sizes. The Chairman advised that there was a lot of speculation at present in the light of the recent onslaught of planning applications. There was no formal Council policy, but the Parish Council needed to be mindful not to make any comments until a formal planning application is submitted.
- iv. 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. It was noted that the Clerk would chase Rooftop Housing regarding the damaged steps on Hill View.
- v. A parishioner asked if there was any update on the issue of railway memorabilia. The clerk had confirmed that the memorabilia was covered under the Council's insurance policy, but that she had yet to receive a detailed inventory of the items held. It was agreed that an item would be put on the November Council agenda to discuss the potential ways of displaying the Railway Memorabilia.