

DODFORD WITH GRAFTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Dodford with Grafton Parish Council held on Monday 25 March 2024 in Dodford Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Scott Fuller, Lynne Griffin, Rory Lydon (Vice Chairman who chaired the meeting), and Jonathan Shapiro

In attendance: County Cllr Shirley Webb, District Cllr Kit Taylor, Clerk Kay Stone, Hugo House (Spring), Liban Elmi (Spring), and 12 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Cllr Rachel Jennings (Chair), Scottie Sanderson, and Jenni Schuett

2. Declarations and Register of interest

- i. None.
- ii. None.

3. Dispensations

No dispensation requests received.

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the public attending the meeting to raise matters of interest.

The Vice Chairman invited residents to give their views against and in favour of the proposed solar panel farm at Foxwalks Farm. Two Spring executives were present at the meeting and there followed an extensive Q&A session. Main answers being:

- Traffic management plan to ensure safety on the lane. This will be self-policed by walkie talkies ensuring only one wagon at a time. Five HGV vehicles in a day will be limited to a low speed.
- To take loads across the bridge there will be a temporary compound before the bridge and smaller trucks will take the loads across the bridge. The compound will have removable aluminum hard plastic matting weighted to 100 tons.
- The compound will be manned 24 hours a day as there is high risk period during construction. Once constructed, cables will be underground and there will be 24 hour CCTV monitoring.
- The solar panels will be cleaned twice a year by hand from quad bikes using purified water. Spring will send images of the equipment to be used.
- There are stringent procurement protocols for sourcing the solar panels and they will be sourced taking into account slavery and human rights.
- A noise assessment has been carried out for the noise and impact on the curtilage of nearby residents.
- Spring has had discussions with Fire Chiefs. The site will not have any batteries as it is purely a solar farm.
- There is a commitment to decommission the solar panel farm after 40 years.
- There will be running repairs to the lane during construction and the District Council could include a condition that the lane is resurfaced after construction.
- After the aluminum piles have been used, they will be dug up and pulled out.
- Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has appointed an ecological consultee.
- 49.9 megawatts and anything over needs to go for a Secretary of State approval. All their generation numbers are based on 45 megawatts. If this is contravened then they will be in breach of planning.

Cllr Shirley Webb organises a community liaison meeting for the proposed extended quarry at Wildmoor and offered to organise a similar meeting for this development.

There were no other items raised and the meeting continued as follows:

4. Meetings

- i. Cllr Griffin proposed, Cllr Shapiro seconded, and all approved the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 26 February 2024. The minutes were signed by the Vice Chairman as being a true record.
- ii. No response from suggested speakers.

5. Reports

- i. County Cllr Webb reported as follows:
 - a. Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Highways will reduce the Alfreds Well triangle slightly and mark each corner with a verge master. They will also remove the vegetation in preparation for this work then the Lengthsman can keep on top of it. They will clean the post and also flatten the land under the sand box;
 - b. North West Water Management (NWWM) has taken a look at the flooding issue in Alfreds Well and confirmed all was OK;
 - c. the owner of the property where the stream is being blocked in Yarnold Lane has been spoken to about abandoned pallets, and
 - d. has sent a residents request concerning safety issues in Cockshutt Lane to Traffic Management but before anything can happen there will have to be a consultation period. Cllr Webb is happy to speak to the resident direct.
- ii. District Cllr Taylor reported as follows:
 - a. the planning application for Sumach has been called in;
 - b. he will receive £2k fund to be distributed and will advise the Parish Council when it is available;
 - c. there is possibly a broken water pipe in Yarnold Lane and a camera is to be put down to investigate;
 - d. he is in touch with the Environment Agency (EA) regarding the settlement in the brook, and
 - e. there are changes in Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) Planning department and Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) has been brought in to help with enforcement.
- iii. No social media report.
- iv. Clerk's reported as follows:
 - a. the three month status check on the defibrillator has been successfully completed;
 - b. an invitation was received on 7 December for the Parish Council to attend BDC enforcement training but as it was on the same evening as the February Parish Council meeting, and no-one was able to attend;
 - c. Local Government Association (LGA) is continuing to push for more councillor safety and continues to lobby for councillor's home addresses not to be made public under the Register of Interests. The Parish Council support this lobbying;
 - d. information on "A Big Lunch" head by Eden Project Communities has been received, and
 - e. in October 2022 the Parish Council voted against signing up for the Civility and Respect Pledge. After six months, an item that was voted on can be resurrected and Cllr Shapiro proposed, Cllr Lydon seconded and all agreed that the Parish Council should sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

6. Planning

- i. Acceptance of the minutes of planning committee meetings held on 4 and 12 March was proposed by Cllr Shapiro, seconded by Cllr Lydon, agreed by all and signed by the Vice Chairman as a true record.
- ii. After listening to the public participation discussion at the start of the meeting, the Parish Councillors present at the meeting debated on their response to BDC. The Parish Council were unable to come to an agreed conclusion and so a vote took place resulting in two Parish Councillors in favour, one against and one abstained. The vote for in favour was carried and the Clerk to send the following comments to BDC:

In principle, the Parish Council are in favour of this planning application but remain concerned that the following conditions be imposed, implemented, and enforced, should the District Council be minded to approve the application:

- a. The developers should
 - b. submit a traffic management scheme to ensure the safety of the private road and its users during construction.
 - c. ensure that the number of loads being transported across the bridge is maintained and managed.
 - d. ensure that noise levels are assessed, and the agreed levels adhered to for the health and wellbeing of the residents
 - e. protect the ecology and wildlife of the area before, during and after development
 - f. assure themselves that the developers have funds put aside for decommissioning
 - g. limit construction times to five days a week, with start/finish times that are not deleterious to the health of residents. The proposed 8am to 6pm seem excessive.
 - h. Maintain the surface of Grafton Lane and properly resurface it when construction is completed
- iii. No planning decisions received.
 - iv. No planning appeals or appeal decisions received.
 - v. No enforcement updates received.
 - vi. Cllr Shapiro proposed, Cllr Lydon seconded, and all approved the draft letter to be sent to the Chief Executive of BDC.
 - vii. An application consultation has been received for a new building at Fockbury Mill Farmhouse and there will be a planning committee meeting on Tuesday 16 April in the Village Hall.

7. Highways and footpaths

- i. The item covered in Cllr Webb's report.
- ii. This item covered in Cllr Webb's report.
- iii. This item covered in Cllr Webb's report.
- iv. No update on the bridge repair on Church Road.
- v. This item covered in Cllr Webb's report.
- vi. The Clerk to arrange a site visit with the company who can supply a solar light on the Alfreds Well island.
- vii. Church grounds bin request ongoing.
- viii. No applications received for a Footpath Warden.
- ix. No footpath / bridleway issues.

8. Memorial Garden

- i. A resident has some planks from when the woodland was felled (with permission from the Land Agent) and suggests a notice board and a bench be made from this.
- ii. The Clerk to ask the Lengthsman if he can install an information lectern for the Parish Council.

9. First Aid Courses

St Johns Ambulance has paused requests for free first aid awareness sessions and the Clerk has joined a list to be notified when the sessions are restarted.

10. Bleed out kits

An outside locked wall cabinet costs £475. An emergency bleeding control kit costs £85. The Clerk to ask if the Village Hall Committee wish to request a grant for a kit. Cllr Webb offered to give a grant for the locked wall cabinet in the next financial year and the Clerk to ask the Village Hall Committee for their approval for its installation.

11. Community Orchards

WCC has advised that the intention of this scheme is to create public / community orchards accessible to the public. If WCC has spare money at the end of the scheme they might consider the Parish Council's proposal of trees for private gardens.

12. Solar Panels

As the resident who brought up the subject of National Grid new connection issues affecting residents in Dodford had written and received a reply from Sajid Javid MP, the Parish Council regret the situation but felt there was nothing further the Parish Council could do.

13. Phil Richardson Community Award 2024

The Clerk to arrange for the nomination form to be sent together with the Annual Report to all households in April / May.

12. Dodford Village Hall

- i. No updates.
- ii. The Clerk to contact the Village Hall Committee as above regarding the bleed out kits.

13. Finance

- i. The March Financial Report:
 - Deposit account as at 29 February - £19,984.12
 - Current account as at 29 February - £145.27
 - Payments to be made by bank transfer on 26 March – Proposed by Cllr Shapiro and seconded by Cllr Lydon:
 - a. Clerk's salary - £597.17
 - b. Clerk's expenses - £136.14 (Travel 24 miles @ 45p per mile £10.80; Storage £5.00; Use of telephone and internet line £20.00 and Heating £10.00; colour printer ink £45.97 and black printer ink £44.37)
 - c. HM Revenue and Customs - £149.20
 - d. Lengthsman's duties for February plus VAT and mileage - £109.50
 - e. Dodford Village Hall – hire of hall for 26 February - £35.00
 - f. Dodford Village Hall – hire of hall for 4 March and 12 March - £60,00

14. Correspondence received – for information

Correspondence received was noted with the Clerk being asked to report deliveries of stone, rubble, and soil at Woodside Farm to BDC.

15. Councillors items

A request was made for Yarnold Road to be swept due to the mud now building up in the middle of the lane. Cllr Webb confirmed that the owner of the reclamation yard is in talks with WCC about installing hard standing at the end of the drive.

The meeting was closed to the public at 9.27pm.

Signed.....Vice Chairman