

DRAFT Monthly Meeting of Grimley Parish Council

**Monday 22nd November 2021, 7.30pm
Peace Hall, Sinton Green**

Minutes of the meeting

	<p>Present: D Stanley (Chair), A Bretherton, P Ayers, J Izamis, G Moore, A Taft, S Wilson.</p> <p>Attending: DCllr Dean Clarke, CCllr Scott Richardson Brown Parish Clerk Lisa Stevens. Public 10, incl. JM, RD, RR, GP, TL, KP, AP. CG and PC.</p>
127/21	<p>Points of order. Information provided at the beginning of each meeting.</p> <p>Parish Cllrs voted to rearrange the agenda in order to allow the CCllr to speak, answer questions and then leave promptly in order to attend Hallow PC meeting. Motion approved. Cllrs moved to item 7 on the agenda.</p>
128/21	<p>7. The report of the County Councillor – Scott Richardson Brown</p> <p>CCllr Richardson Brown addresses concerns that Astons Coaches cancelled the Grimley village bus service without consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Astons did not cancel the entire route and only removed the service to that specific bus stop, due to inconsiderate resident parking and very limited numbers using the service. Any further problems with the road being blocked by parked cars might lead to the service being removed again. - Cllr Stanley noted that there was no warning about the removal of service to that bus stop and that the County Council also failed to notify the parish council and, that this was reprehensible considering the fact that the County Council subsidises the bus service using council tax funds. The Clerk was instructed to write to the County Council asking if financial contribution was required to secure the service against future loss. The parish clerk noted that in the past donations of up to £200 pa have occasionally been made to support a service. - The CCllr confirmed that the County Council is not required to be notified if a bus company stops a service, nor are the public required to be informed. Parish Councillors scoffed somewhat at this and instructed the Clerk to write to the County Council and confirm this fact. - The CCllr to investigate possibility of a 'no parking sign'. - Cllr Stanley commented that the cessation of any bus services during a climate emergency was not to be countenanced.
	<p><i>CCllr Richardson Brown left the meeting. The order of the agenda was resumed.</i></p>
129/21	<p>Public open forum</p> <p>Open forum does not usually form a legal part of the meeting but this restriction is waived in this case only as residents wished to address the parish council on matter relating to local planning applications.</p> <p>JM addressed councillors on behalf of the resident solar action group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latest public responses to the online consultation show 247 submissions against and 5 submissions in favour – all of whom are landowners of the site. <p>The solar farm action group had reached three key conclusions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicants have relied upon misleading info. and poorly interpreted data.

	<p>2. Unnecessary, detrimental impacts not justified by need. 3. Application contradicts government planning guidance.</p> <p>Action group members also noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a Defra biodiversity requirement is that all planning applications must result in a net gain for biodiversity. Group considers that biodiversity will decrease by 30% under the panels and that the agricultural potential of the site has been downplayed by the applicant. - the application fails to account for bird species, the bat survey is deeply flawed and the badger report is missing. - the application underestimates the road system use by residents, equestrians and cyclists and that the lack of suitable access points to the site will endanger lives during the construction phase. - low level noise pollution was a significant concern with recent Thorngrove chicken farm applications – the noise pollution from this solar application will be significantly more and will impact more local residents. - no account has been made with regard for lorry washing and turning and no storage areas are provided for on site. - no indication of who would monitor noise and pollution levels on site. - Group members noted the intense beauty of the site and that the parish is lucky to have this landscape. Action group ask that the parish council try to safeguard this landscape. <p>Finally, the group noted that the applicants are not the ones who will develop the site. If planning permission is granted, the site will be sold to an investor.</p> <p>Parish Councillors thanked the residents for their comments.</p>
130/21	<p>To consider any apologies for absence Parish Cllrs Atkinson and Passey due to illness. Cllrs noted the likely long term absence of Cllr Passey and were awaiting further details.</p>
131/21	<p>Declarations of interest. Cllr Ayers with regard to recent building works on her house which post-date any issues regarding ditches and the water table outside Langdale.</p>
132/21	<p>Minutes of previous meetings – Motion to approve previous minutes.</p> <p>a. 18th October 2021 – Approved, Prp AB. Scnd SW. b. 16th November 2021 – Approved, Prp PA. Sncd AT.</p>
133/21	<p>To receive the report of the District Councillor – Dean Clarke.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DCllr noted the Peace Hall film night schedule. - DCllr noted that national policy is in favour of solar panels generally and that residents and the parish council are best placed to advise the district council on the appropriateness of this site by demonstrating local knowledge. Residents and the parish council have opportunity to assist the district council in balancing visual amenity, wildlife, biodiversity, plus the short/long-term impacts.
134/21	<p>Planning - to consider, comment and resolve to respond to the following applications.</p> <p>a. 21/01846/FUL Birchall Green Solar Farm.</p> <p>i. To note that the parish council has the following extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parish Council initial questions to BRL by 11th November 2021 (actioned). - Formulate and submit an official response to MHDC by 12th December 2021. NB. Parish Council vote on the matter of this application on 22nd November 2021 - Consider any information from planning consultants after 25th November 2021 and submit any additional response to MHDC before Christmas.

i.	The Chair asked all Cllrs to give their views on the application:	
ii.	AT: Not against solar panels and has considered the climate emergency. Solar panels must be usefully put in the correct location and this is not the correct or appropriate location. Concerned that the site will be sold on to unknown parties with whom the parish council will have had no consultation/contact. PC should represent the opinion of the residents - many have valid reasons for objection.	
iii.	GM: Applicants have not suitably consulted with the parish council and have not addressed local concerns. The numerous business aspects of the applicants are concerning – little history to the group, new employees brought in on short timescales, high staff turn-over, difficult to find evidence of successful solar projects demonstrated by the groups involved. Applicants are effectively attempting to bulldoze the residents into accepting the project on the grounds of the climate emergency. This is not acceptable and the parish council in any case as local landowners has good reasons for asking for refusal.	
iv.	AB: The Gov has ambitious climate targets to reduce CO2 levels. The only way to achieve these is to reduce fossil fuel burning. A lot of concerns relating to the application are short term. Solar farm will be saving tonnes of CO2 each year. Concern for the future of the parish families and children. Agree that it is not nice to have the solar farm so close but the planet is dying.	
v.	JI: Renewable energy is not the only tool we have to deal with the climate crisis. We can address food waste and improve agricultural practices. Solar farms in this location are not the “right, difficult thing” that we should be advocating. Inappropriate for the area and ecology, noise and traffic concerns must be addresses.	
vi.	PA: This is the wrong place for solar panels. Visual impact on residents and visitors cannot be overcome. The narrow rural lanes are not suitable for the construction traffic and the damage that will be caused to the infrastructure has been underestimated or not considered at all. The parish already has a problem with speeding vehicles and adding this to the highway mix is not appropriate.	
vii.	SW: Improvements in advanced technologies and methods to combat climate change via other means, means that we should not rush to develop this site or make a planning decision in haste. The application is itself over 648 pages, much too much for local residents to be able to deal with fairly, hence why the parish council has assisted with funding the LVIA. District Cllr will rely on the planners and it is us who must help the planners come to the right decision based on local knowledge. The presentation by the applicants at the previous meeting demonstrated no accurate local knowledge. Must do what is best for the parish first.	
viii.	DS: Applicant give contentious claims of biodiversity net gain, but these are unsupported by the evidence, by knowledge and must only be taken as aspirational. Baseline data is taken from other agricultural sites where the soil is ruined and previously intensively farmed – nb. nothing like the soil on this site.	

The tools used to assess soil health/impacts are seriously flawed and does not taken account of carbon sequestration. Claims about producing massive amounts of electricity whilst simultaneously improving biodiversity are a nonsense. Some baseline data used by the applications is for woodlands not agricultural fields – the comparisons is not applicable even if the panels are translucent.

- ix. Cllr Pam Ayers proposed the **motion** that the parish council oppose the solar farm and request that the district council reject this application. Seconded by Cllr Georgie Moore. **Motion carried by clear majority vote.** 6 for. 1 against.
- x. The Clerk noted that parish cllrs now have two weeks to provide any concerns/objections to her for incorporation in to a parish council formal response to MHDC.
- xi. **ii. Motion to confirm commissioning of Birchall Green solar farm visual impact motion photography at no more than £500.** Prp JI. Scnd GM. **Motion carried.** Parish Cllrs thanked those helping with this project, which has the aim of demonstrating the change and impact that the solar panels will have on the landscape. This is to summarise to district cllrs the impact and also longer term provide any inspector with a change to accurately visualise the impact when reading the application documents. The film will accurately depict the exact locations and number of panels, fences, sub-station and cctv and the impact that this will have on the views, feel, visual amenity and historic nature of the site. Cllrs agreed that the cost was worth the usefulness that this film would have for planners, district cllrs, appeal inspectors AND the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, whom hitherto have incorrectly taken application baseline data at face value and have also underestimated the local impacts and damage that the solar farm would cause.
- b. **To note Planning appeal:20/01471/CU, Northington Farm, Farm Lane, Holt, WR6 6NQ. Change of use ground floor from agricultural to Class E (Light Industrial) and B8 (Storage).** Duly noted. Parish Council had received correspondence from two local families. Cllrs did not wish to make additional representation.
- Camp Lane enforcement – update if any.**
- c. Cllr Taft has been liaising with the County Council footpaths team. Both applications have been returned incomplete to enforcement officer A. Black who has asked them if they will resubmit. If these applications are not resubmitted then enforcement will consider whether it is expedient to pursue enforcement.
- d. **Regularising long standing use of right of way 635.** The Clerk confirmed that the parish council application has been returned to her unopened. Cllr Taft confirmed that the parish council is not eligible to request this and is liaising with local residents.
- e. **To note that enforcement have been informed of hedge removal on Ockeridge land.** Duly noted. Cllrs considered that the location matches proposed entry points with reference to solar farm but agreed that no conclusions can be drawn. Main concern is the damage to ancient hedgerow.

f.	Cllrs noted continued use of and new poly tunnels opp Fox Inn Monkwood Green. Clerk to receive information from Cllrs and pass to enforcement.	
135/21	Infrastructure, highway matters, drainage and flooding To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.	
a.	Cancellation and reinstatement of 308 and 310 bus services Grimley village. Already discussed.	
b.	Bins Sinton Green (noticeboard) and Monkwood Green (bus shelter) - update if any. One bin has arrived and needs a new sticker. Estimated date of delivery for the other is April 2022.	
c.	Flooding in road outside Church Farm, Grimley. No update available. Clerk continues to chase.	
d.	Christmas trees for three main villages. The Clerk noted for information that each village had a parish council budget of £80. AB noted that arrangements were being made for a 12 foot tree at Sinton. Some funds had been kept by Sinton residents from the previous years fund raising and would form part of the project. SW had also made arrangements for a tree to be placed near the well in a tyre provided by a local resident.	
136/21	Commons and Village Greens To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.	
a. i.	<u>Sinton Green.</u> Mowing for village green Cllr Bretherton reported that the smaller green needs a wider cut at this time of year and that the contract was being tweaked. Cllrs agreed that although the grass has been cut, the project has taken up more cllr time and resources than were necessary, had the contractor responded promptly to correspondence. All Cllrs to examine options in readiness for March 2022.	
b. i.	<u>Monkwood Green.</u> Management update Cattle remain on common in order to tackle brambles but the Commoners have received the grazing agreement which requires them to move the cattle off the Common if the ground gets too wet.	
ii.	Potholes on service roads Contractors have not responded to chase for requests for quotes. Bags of stone are imminent – waiting for local residents to buy them in dry weather.	
iii.	Drains and ditches update Ditches are almost complete by BP. Langdale ditch will be proceeding within the week. 5 x signs are required to make people aware of the newly dug ditches. 5 x Bollards are required to highlight the new grips. Cllrs approved these purchases by the Clerk as being necessary for health and safety on site. Cllrs noted that Severn Trent have confirmed that the water table on Monkwood Green is consistently and regularly high and that that is the nature of the site. Cllrs considered local reports that exacerbated water table height	

	<p>and any apparent change in ditch conditions has been exacerbated by recent building works by local residents, but considered that without considerable expense there was no way to prove this. Cllrs agreed that once the work by BP was completed no further work would be undertaken regarding the ditches and water table outside Langdale without a full inspection of the ground water conditions on that site, including the ditches to the rear and side of Langdale and Blackberry Cottage, the ditches running around the fields between Waverley Cottage and Langdale. Cllrs considered that considerable resident cooperation would be required. Cllrs also noted historical maps that appear to show a pond on the opposite side of that section of the Common, opp Ivy Cottage. NE permission would be required to reinstate that pond and at present there was no evidence that the pond served a water control function, as opposed to water for livestock.</p> <p>iv. Worcestershire WildlifeTrust mains water pipeline to service newly purchased land This project has not been progressed by WWT.</p> <p>Cllr noted that the trough has been leaking and that Mr P Williams has undertaken o conduct repairs. Cllrs agreed to accept the invoice once presented up to cost of £100.</p>	
137/21	<p>Reports from other Projects and Representatives To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.</p>	
<p>a.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>c.</p>	<p>Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022, including tree planting and beacon. To note the successful application for free trees from 'I Dig Trees'. Small Plot Pack: 10 x Rowan, 10 x Bird Cherry, 10 x Downy Birch, 10 x Field Maple, 10 x Goat Willow, plus 30 spiral guards. Residents who require a free tree to plant may approach the parish clerk. Clerk to advertise in parish newsletter once project progresses. AB and SW requested a Rowan tree.</p> <p>b. Broadband projects Grimley, Monkwood Green and north of Sinton Green – update.</p> <p>i. Motion to support revitalised broadband project for community to north of Sinton Green and to reaffirm decision to proceed with the project, with the parish council contributing £3000 in vouchers for the project. Prp: AB. Scnd: SW. Motion duly carried.</p> <p>Cllr Atkinson is the sole resident outstanding to get sorted at Grimley. Monkwood Green project is nearly completed. No update.</p> <p>c. Defibrillators at Grimley village and Sinton Green.</p> <p>i. Motion of thanks to all the people, including Mr Simon Russell, involved in bringing this about, fund raising and repairing the phone box and to the Grimley Small Charities whose financial contribution was greatly appreciated. Prp: AT. Scnd: GM. Motion duly carried with thanks. Cllrs noted that residents will receive an update on this project in the Dec parish magazine and approved the content of that article.</p>	

d. e. f. g.	<p>Peace Hall. Cllr Bretherton noted that he continues to attend meetings and is in receipt of the minutes.</p> <p>Lengthsman. No update</p> <p>School parking. Move to January agenda.</p> <p>Remembrance Day report The services at Hallow and the secondary one at Grimley church were both well attended. Cllr Stanley placed the wreath on behalf of the parish council.</p> <p>.</p>	
138/21	<p>Finance and Administration - To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice</p> <p>a. Parish Council budget for 2022/2023 To debate precept for next financial year (portion of resident council tax that the district council gives to the parish council) and for Cllrs to table future projects for discussion. Final decision in December 2021.</p> <p>b. To consider and motion to approve the payment of outstanding accounts. Prps: AB. Scnd: SW. Duly carried.</p> <p>c. To receive and motion to accept October Bank Reconciliation 2021 Prps: AB. Scnd: AT. Duly carried.</p>	
139/21	<p>Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda.</p> <p>a. First Notice of Order - Road Closure – Sinton Green 1121595. 5 day road closure in proximity to The Fold cottages, in order to attend to road flooding and ditch collapse.</p> <p>b. Autumn edition of South Worcestershire Rural Beat police newsletter. Distributed to Parish Cllrs via email 4th November.</p> <p>c. Town Centre Transformation Plans Survey. Malvern Hills District Council is producing five town centre transformation plans for each town centre; Barnards Green, Great Malvern, Malvern Link, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells. The documents will set out a vision for the future of each retail centre. Distributed to Parish Cllrs via email 5th November.</p> <p>d. WCALC AGM, 16th November, 6.30pm via zoom.</p> <p>e. Parish Council forum, 15th November 7pm via zoom.</p> <p>Items for future agenda: Update on project to improve facilities at Church.</p>	
140/12	<p>Date of next scheduled meeting Mon 6th December 2021 7.30pm. Peace Hall, Sinton Green. The press and public are cordially invited to attend this meeting.</p>	

Appendix 1 – Invoices/payments to be made (or date paid if contracted monthly payment)

Mrs Lisa Stevens	Monthly expenses Oct/Nov 2021.	£62.34	VAT under calculation
Mrs Lisa Stevens	Monthly wage Oct 2021	£576.48	VAT nil

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