

DRAFT Minutes of the monthly meeting of **Grimley Parish Council**

Monday 20th November 2023, 7.30pm
Peace Hall, Sinton Green

Present:	Parish Cllrs A.Collett (Chair), R.Woodhouse (Deputy Chair), P.Ayers, G.Moore, G.Probert, A.Sinclair.
Attending:	District Cllr Dean Clarke, Parish Clerk & RFO Lisa Stevens. 26 members of public present including 5 welcomed as guests from outside the parish.
Apologies:	Parish Cllrs J.Izamis & S.Wilson. County Cllr Scott Richardson Brown apologies received during the meeting. 14 family group apologies from members of the public.
Vacancy:	1 vacancy for parish councillor available for immediate co-option subject to application and criteria. Meeting commenced at 7.36pm

107/23	Welcome and information provided at the beginning of each council meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Points of order (nil),- Adjustments to facilitate public participation (nil requested),- Apologies for absence (all duly accepted as being valid or unavoidable),- Declarations of interest. Cllr Woodhouse as a neighbour of planning application Stable End M/23/01465/HP. Accepted by council and entered on the list of declaration. Cllr Woodhouse will voluntarily not vote on this matter. (Previous declarations all remain in place and do not need to be stated again). Clerk has given advice to Cllrs for whom agenda items may have relevance to declarations.
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Public Open Forum. Please refer to 'information provided at beginning of meeting' for further guidance.

- Birchall Green Farm, Sinton Green, WR2 6NT. Original application number: 21/01846/FUL. Planning Inspectorate Ref:- APP/J1860/W/23/3325112.

Handouts appended to these minutes. Residents to inform Clerk if they plan to attend. Car share list created and disseminated.

108/23	Minutes of previous meetings – Motion to approve previous minutes.
a.	23 rd October 2023 extraordinary meeting. Prps: GM. Scnd: AS. Duly carried . One spelling amendment received.
109/23	Finance and Administration - To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.
a.	To consider and motion to approve payment of outstanding accounts. Appendix 1 - Prps: GM. Scnd: RW. Duly approved . Invoices inspected & signed.
b.	To receive and motion to accept latest Bank Reconciliation 2023. Prps: GM. Scnd: AC. Duly approved and bank statements signed. Cllrs are aware that the bank will no longer be sending monthly bank statements and that the Clerk will instead be required to download statements on a monthly basis. There were no objections to this new financial practice and Cllrs could see no additional risk posed.

<p>109/23</p> <p>ci.</p> <p>ii.</p> <p>iii.</p> <p>d.</p> <p>i.</p> <p>ii.</p> <p>e.</p> <p>f.</p> <p>g.</p>	<p>Replacement laptop for the Clerk. Motion to approve clarified spec for replacement laptop for parish clerk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This represents a re-visiting of a previous decision with the approval of the Clerk. The wider range of options available online needs consideration, to ensure best use of public funds. - Cllr Woodhouse expressed concerns with regard to purchasing a refurbished laptop, as the options for warranty are not the best and often not available. Ideally a 2 or 3 year warranty would be required. - Motion Proposal £700 for a new laptop (net budget), with as much warranty as possible. Prps: GM. Scnd: RW. Duly approved with no concerns or objections. ACTION Cllr Collett <p>Budget 2024/2025. (Current precept £20,080: £70 per annum per Band D household) Cllrs have received the Clerk's briefing paper.</p> <p>Option 1) Motion to approve 2.5% increase in precept (giving a precept next year of £20,580). <i>Motion adopted and approved. Prps: AC. Scnd: PA. Unanimous.</i></p> <p>Option 2) Motion to approve 12% increase in precept to recoup £2000, giving a precept of £22,500. (This would equate to £79 per Band D household per annum). <i>Motion rejected and not considered.</i></p> <p>To receive updated risk assessments and to consider scoring justification system. <u>Item moved to next meeting due to time restrictions</u></p> <p>To receive and accept updated parish council Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. <u>Item moved to next meeting due to time restrictions</u></p> <p>Bank signatories. <u>Item moved to next meeting due to time restrictions</u></p>
<p>99/23</p> <p>a.</p> <p>b.</p>	<p>To receive the report of the District Councillor – Dean Clarke. (Items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bonfires and enforcement matters in Monkwood Green. Site visit has been conducted by MHDC and they are now proceeding with planning enforcement on site. - Christmas trees for villages and hamlets. Sinton xmas tree has been organised by Cllr Probert and Sandra, at cost of £50 plus £69 with AB from previous year plus installation costs unknown as yet. Cllrs accepted that all costs might not be known and agreed to accept reasonable expenses as a way of thanking the community for the past year. AT is liaising in Grimley with SR regarding their tree – expenses not yet known and Clerk to enquire with liberty to accept reasonable installation costs, again as a thank you to the community. Prps: GM. Scnd: RW.
<p>100/23</p>	<p>To receive the report of the County Councillor – Scott Richardson Brown (Items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)</p> <p>Items deferred until next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Shared space' signs Camp Lane; - Road surface erosion (water) Dark Lane and connected flooding in Walton Lane; - Ditches and flooding at Sinton Green village; - Overgrown hedges Grimley village approach road.
<p>101/23</p>	<p>Planning - to consider, comment and resolve to respond to the following applications.</p>
<p>a.</p>	<p>M/23/01465/HP Stable End, Grimley, WR2 6LU. Part two storey and part single storey extensions to dwelling and alterations to the elevations. Motion to support this application. Prps: AS. Scnd: PA. Approved. One abstention.</p>

102/23	Commons and Village Greens - Updates and Motions not requiring written notice.	
a.	Sinton Green village green	
i.	<p>Project update ditch clearance and planning for spring 2024 pond clearance. Project just waiting for drier weather in order to commence. Councillor Woodhouse noted that surface water running from Oakhall Green was pooling at the corner of Sinton Green village green and causing an obstruction to vehicles and the school bus and that that this could be combated by installation of a ditch along that side of the green in order to remove the water. Clerk action to look at historical maps of site to ascertain if a ditch ever existed along this section. Cllr Collett action to talk to P.L to see if this additional requirement could be included in the project already existing.</p>	Clerk Cllr Collett
b.	Monkwood Green Common and SSSI	
i.	<p>Ditch clearance from Green Farm to The Woodlands. No update available. Cllr Wilson still chasing.</p>	Cllrs Wilson & Ayers
ii.	<p>Worcestershire Wildlife Trust for Green Farm nature reserve water. No update available – paperwork still with WWT solicitor.</p>	
iii.	<p>Defibrillator update - PC request to Heartbeat Trust for BT engineer to check RCD. Clerk had instructed an electrician who had declined to work with a defibrator in a BT phone box. HBT can send an engineer but this will result in a delay of up to 6 months and PC were advised to try their own resources again. Cllr Collett to ask R.P if he can receive HBT instructions and examine the RCD.</p>	Cllr Collett
103/23	Reports from Projects - Updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.	
a.	<p>Lengthsman – consideration and Motion to adopt 2024 contract amendments, including</p> <p>i) increase payment of mileage to 0.45p per mile</p> <p>ii) refresh of risk assessment.</p> <p>iii) Additional/clarified quarterly tasks, including resident feedback. <u>Item moved to January 2024 meeting due to time restrictions.</u></p> <p>iv) Approval for xmas thank you. Prps: AC. Scnd: GM. Duly approved.</p>	
av.	<p>Note from Clerk in reference to Xmas thank you: The Clerk has noted an outstanding action from November 2022 meeting in reference to budget item of expenditure "Christmas present to Lengthsman, taken out of Chairs' Allowance, up to £15". In response to the Clerk's general query to WCALC on this matter, the law does not allow gifts for individuals out of parish council precept (for example, Section 137 has restrictions that would preclude use for individuals). However, a large number of parish councils continue to use the Chair's Allowance, strictly sourced from historical (savings over 10 years old) or alternative funds (e.g. bank interest) and NOT precept for this expense. The Clerk has noted that this too has been the case for Grimley and that current interest rates allow sufficient interest to build up for this use. Most parish councils accept that it is important to thank those who go above and beyond their remit for their parishes and that the immense benefit brought to the entire parish by nurturing goodwill is more than commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred (less than £15 in the case of Grimley). The Clerk has noted that in the past 7 years no Grimley Parish Cllr had ever claimed expenses (mileage or postage or otherwise) - something that they are permitted to do so, but each has voluntarily forgone to further allow this single, annual gift of thanks.</p>	

105/23	Correspondence, dates for diary, items for future agenda and AOB	
a.	Tree warden WCC scheme. Advert gone in parish magazine asking for volunteers to approach county hall for more info. Duly noted. Clerk notes that this action can be included in the requirement for the parish council to consider biodiversity in all actions and projects.	Clerk
b.	Footpaths officer scheme – WCC clarifying situation asap. Volunteers in question have made contact and are very happy to wait and continue to be involved.	
c.	VAS dangerous bend sign at Moseley. Highways has declined Vas signage on a 60mph road but will install additional chevron signs on the sharp bend. No further action by PC.	
d.	Repair of existing memorial bench at Peace Hall – may not be possible as is concreted into the ground and bench is already getting beyond repair.	
e.	Memorial tree plaques update – Clerk for next meeting.	Clerk
f.	Updated parish council Code of Conduct and Standing Orders – Clerk for next meeting.	Clerk
g.	Updated risk assessments and to consider scoring justification system – Clerk for next meeting.	Clerk
h.	Bank signatories – All Cllrs have agreed to participate. Clerk to organise.	Clerk
i.	PAT testing PC equipment in home office - Clerk to organise.	Clerk
106/23	Dates of next scheduled meeting. Peace Hall booked. The press and public are cordially invited to attend these meetings and should note Standing Orders in advance please. Monday 29th January 2024, 7.30pm – room booked. Cllr noted the new peace hall booking clerk is in post and the new hall policy of monthly invoices for hall bookings. Motion: The Clerk gained approval to request an invoice for all 2024 bookings and pay in advance, rather than pay monthly invoices. Prps: AC. Scd: GM. Duly approved.	

Appendix 1 – Payments to be approved. Payments on accounts, this month and forthcoming

<i>awaiting payment</i>	70	Mr Simon Skeys	Lengthsman October worksheet received 9/11/22. Claimed from WCC 15/11/2023	235.10	0 VAT
<i>awaiting payment</i>	71	Mr Simon Skeys	Mowing Sinton October 2023 plus tidy away of wildflower meadow	205.00	0 VAT
15/11/2023	72	Cllr Sue Wilson	Xmas tree project MWGreen community grant for resident project.	50.00	n/a
15/11/2023	73	Grimley Peace Hall Foundation	Monthly invoice for November 2023. Meeting on 20th November 2023	42.00	0
15/11/2023	74	Community Heartbeat Trust	Annual care package for 3x defib	453.60	75.6 VAT
15/11/2023	75	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Monthly Expenses Nov2023, stationery, postage, printing, tea coffee for resident solar meetings.	35.93	Individual receipts
15/11/2023	76	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Zoom meeting membership reimburse.	15.59	n/a
Authorised 15/11/2023	77	Nest Pensions	Clerk pension, inclusive of clerk contrib.	40.35	n/a
15/11/2023	78	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Stinky Inks reconditions cartridges 953XL for HP 7720 A3 series	86.60	14.44 VAT
<i>awaiting payment</i>	79	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Nov payment for Oct wage 2023.	553.42	n/a



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including this agenda

Contact the parish clerk if you would like to receive agendas or minutes by email.
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<https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/>

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This document is available via the website above, searching 'G' for Grimley and then selecting 'publications'.

Appendix 2 - **SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES – Solar facilities**

Grimley Parish Residents fully recognise that climate change is the biggest threat to biodiversity globally, and that concerted action at all levels and in all policy areas, including renewable energy generation, is needed. However, climate change mitigation through renewable energy generation should not come at the expense of biodiversity.

The UK is officially one of the world's most nature-depleted countries. Now, the latest State of UK Nature report shows there has been "no let-up in the decline of our wildlife, with 1 in 6 species at risk of being lost from Great Britain." 27 Sept 2023

- **Inefficiency.** By comparison with off-shore wind, solar farms are hugely inefficient. In terms of efficiency rating i.e. the amount of power exported to the grid, solar's rating is between 11 and 15% whereas for off-shore wind the figure is 50%+.
- **Location.** Development should be limited to brownfield land, poorer quality unproductive land and rooftops. Sequential testing is essential for any proposal involving greenfield land.
- **Clustering.** Clustering of development around sub-stations has disastrous consequences for the landscape, local amenity and wildlife. The cumulative effect intensifies the harm caused. Ref Fitchers Brook proposals. Every new consent for solar projects would add to the probability that further projects would be consented, in a positive feedback loop due to precedent and momentum.
- **Landscape.** Solar panels dramatically alter views of the countryside and the key features that punctuate it. The countryside is industrialised by the

development of large-scale solar farms. Continuous rows of glass panels completely alter landscape character.

- **CCTV and fencing.** Boundaries are changed by security fencing and the intrusion of CCTV. The amenity of neighbouring property can be seriously harmed by secured boundaries and intrusive CCTV.
- **Noise, vibration, pollution, light.** Peace and quiet is destroyed by industrial grade traffic, light pollution and the noise and low level vibrations from invertors and battery storage systems.
- Grazing sheep and bee-keeping are token gestures and in no way compensate for the lost potential of the land. The soil is degraded with little actual benefit for biodiversity, as half of it will be in permanent shadow and rain water run-off creates set channels without proper dispersal.
- **Biodiversity.** Other solar developments have been approved on the basis that developers promise a benefit for biodiversity. The example of research at the solar facilities installed on the Gwent Levels in Wales shows no benefit to biodiversity, wildlife or ecology AND shows undeniable damage to the SSSI at that location. Levels of waterborne pollutants arising from the constructed solar farm have risen hugely. Monitoring indicates a marked decrease in biodiversity, with several bird species lost entirely and bat species abundance dropping by 95%. The flora on the Gwent Levels site has also been severely damaged by the construction process – the ground has been compacted and the panels have large areas of bare earth under and around them. Brambles have started to take over the area, in stark contrast to the habitat before construction. Sheep do not graze brambles. **Post construction monitoring at Gwent Levels irrefutably points to evidence of a systemic failure to control, mitigate or compensate for serious damage to the SSSI from solar development**
- Will the land ever revert to agriculture? **Probably not.**
- Will the equipment be re-cycled? **Probably not.**
- What condition will the land be in in 40 years time? **Unknown.**
- **There are better alternatives:** The former Department of Energy and Climate Change estimated that there were 600,000 acres of south facing commercial roof-space in the UK. Why use precious farmland?

- **Mental health impacts**

Summary produced by Grimley Parish Council, with sources taken from

- <https://www.solarcampaignalliance.info/>
- <https://www.cpre.org.uk/explainer/rooftop-solar-revolution-turning-possibility-into-reality/>
- “THE PROBLEM WITH SOLAR FARMS - FACTORS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS” prepared by numerous parish councils and organisations including the CPRE. <https://www.solarcampaignalliance.info/information>
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Site visit/s

Pre 29th November - Informal visit.

Before the Inspector's hearing, which begins on November 29th, it is highly likely that he will make an informal visit to the site. Unlike hearings, this will not be an opportunity for anyone to approach the Inspector and discuss the proposals. Please do not engage in conversation about the appeal with him, other than exchange pleasantries.

29th – 31st November – 'Formal, accompanied site visit'. Following the hearing, the Inspector will make a second, formal visit. If the Inspector requires access to private land or require Interested Parties to be present at the visit to guide them or point out certain features, those involved will be specifically invited. The applicant/appellant is likely to be present.

Hearing venue:

The Council House, Avenue Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3AF.



1 The Council House, Customer Service Centre / Reception and The Council Chamber
The Council House, Avenue Road, Malvern
WR14 3AF

2 Malvern Splash
Priory Rd, Malvern WR14 3DS

i Malvern Tourist Information Centre

★ Bus Stop

Participating at hearings

- The inspector will try to make sure that everyone who wants to speak has an opportunity to do so. BUT If the hearing is very busy, Interested Parties will be given priority over those that have not registered. So the message is to **encourage everyone to register and get there in plenty of time.**

- Those intending to speak should introduce themselves to the case team on arrival, who will be able to assist them with seating arrangements and offer advice about the process.

- Audio/video evidence may be played at the hearing. If you intend to submit this type of evidence please let the Inspector know asap.

- The Inspector will usually give a summary of the appellant's and the District council's cases, and say which topics will be discussed at the hearing.

- The Inspector will encourage a fairly informal atmosphere so that anyone who is not familiar with planning matters is not discouraged from speaking or made to feel uncomfortable. Everyone involved will have a fair hearing.

- The appellant will usually give his or her views on a topic first, followed by the District Council, and then anyone else who wants to comment.

- When you speak at the hearing it is not necessary to read out all the detail you may have put in your written representations. The Inspector will already have that information.

- There is no need to repeat what others have said, you can just say that you agree with them.

- You should not introduce new factual detail at this stage. This may result in delay to the hearing if other parties need time to respond.

- Once everyone has made their initial points and has spoken, **the subsequent discussion type format may permit individuals, while addressing the 'chair' (the inspector), the opportunity to make observations and ask questions.** The Inspector may ask if you are willing to answer questions about your evidence. You do not have to do this, although it is often helpful to do so, and it may add weight to your evidence. Do not feel intimidated. The Inspector will not let anyone ask you hostile or unfair questions.

- At any stage during proceedings the Inspector may also ask questions. Questions may be put to all those who give evidence, including interested people. Those present may be invited to put up their hands if they have an answer or evidence to give.

- There may be periods of silence while notes are taken, and people gather their thoughts.

Jargon explained

Appellant – Previously known as the Applicant.

Main or 'principal' parties: the person or organisation which asked for the hearing (and their agent, if there is one) and the local planning authority.

Other parties: town or parish councils, local residents, and so on.

Main issues: the main points of disagreement between the parties that the inspector identifies.

Development plan, local development framework: plans prepared by local authorities containing their planning policies for the area.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs): documents prepared by the Government containing national planning guidance on important subjects such as housing.

Material considerations: any information about the specific proposal that the inspector must consider.

LPA – Local Planning Authority (MHDC)

Contact details on the day

Parish Clerk

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Parish Council Chairman

Adam Collett
07767 241462

Tips for speaking at the hearing

- 1) Nervousness Is Normal. ..
- 2) Know Your Audience.

'Sir' is the normal address when addressing the Inspector/'Chair'.

The Inspector is Tom Bristow: His Linked in profile gives the following:" I have worked as a Planning Inspector, during which I have examined Local Plans, dealt with over 400 cases in about 70 different local authority areas, and mentored other Inspectors. My cases have varied from smaller schemes to proposals for hundreds of homes, from housing to commercial, infrastructure provision and works to listed buildings. Beforehand in central Government, I lead on local plan policy development (and before that various elements of policy and legislation)." Master of Science in Spatial Planning. Bachelor of Arts in History.

Appellant is Tyler Hill Solar Limited (previously referred to as BRL Solar UK Limited) (Agent was Third Revolution Projects and is now Pegasus).

- 3) Organize Your material.
- 4) Address the Inspector only and make eye contact. Do not address the Appellant unless instructed to do so.
- 5) Let your personality come through. ...Use humour, tell stories. But do not belittle the appellant – stay respectful.
- 6) Reading from notes is encouraged – the inspector will be used to this and will not mind.
- 7) Take your time, speak slowly and clearly.
- 8) Ask for the question to be repeated if you do not understand it or cannot hear.
- 9) If you are not sure of the answer, say so.
- 10) You can ask the Inspector for guidance at any point.
- 11) Take a full breath between phrases and sentences. This will stop the sense of everything feeling rushed. This full breath should also stop you using fillers such as 'ums' or any random noise.
- 12) Check that you are not leaning forward as that tends to make delivery faster. Find a balanced anchored position.

