

WESTHAMPNETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

6 OCTOBER 2016 AT 7PM

AT THE MARCH C. OF E. SCHOOL, WESTHAMPNETT

PRESENT: Cllrs Harding (Chairman), Mrs Hardstaff (Vice Chairman), Mrs Burborough, James, Mrs McLeish and Mrs Moth.

IN ATTENDANCE:

G. Burt, Clerk
12 Members of the Public

1. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Fabricius, District Cllr Hall and County Cllr Hunt.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members and officers were invited to make any declarations of pecuniary and/or non-pecuniary interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and were reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then became apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue was to be considered. None were declared.

4. Proposed Solar Farm on Closed Landfill Site.

The Chairman welcomed Tom Coates and two colleagues from the team at WSCC and their development partner, Carillion, who had recently submitted a planning application to WSCC as determining planning authority, for a Solar Farm at the former landfill site, positioned between the A27 and Stane Street.

They explained that the site could not be developed for many more years as it needed to rest, and WSCC was also obliged to seek to make best use of its assets particularly in challenging financial times. The works would be undertaken in conjunction with improvements to the gas extraction equipment, and livestock grazing could resume upon completion of works.

Residents then spoke against the development. Comments included:

WSCC had been *sneaky* in the way the development had been poorly advertised.

Views would be ruined.

What health implications were there from such equipment, including effects on Pacemakers etc?

Residents would have to look at the ugly rear of panels.

New landscaping would obstruct views.

Property values would fall; would residents be recompensed?

The site is still sinking.

Westhampnett would suffer whilst WSCC would keep the profit.

Wouldn't dirt in the air from the Transfer Station dirty the panels?

What was Rolls Royce's involvement?

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan had identified the site for outdoor leisure activities in the long term.

There was nothing positive about the scheme.

Residents around the site had already suffered for 25 years.

Westhampnett had already had more than its fair share of development.

Residents were not NIMBYs.

There were approximately 25+ pair of Skylarks resident on the site, including those already dislocated from the Nursery Site adjoining. It was illegal to disturb or move them and the RSPB were already looking at the site.

98% of residents had objected to the Traveller Transit site and been ignored so what was the point in objecting?

Where could the plans be seen?

What was the planning status of the site?

Can humans use the site?

Would glare from the panels dazzle A27 motorists and Goodwood aircraft?

Could less of the site be developed, say just the southern half?

In response, Mr Coates commented/answered that:

The panels would cover the whole site and face south.

WSCC would retain the profit from the operation.

The application had been submitted the previous week (23/09/2016), and there was an official three-week consultation period.

It would take four months to build.

They would be happy to meet residents on site.

The site could be used for community use in the long term.

It was currently low grade agricultural land.

Methane levels were still too high for it to be used for most other uses for prolonged periods.

They had developed a similar site at Tangmere.

There were already panels on the hanger at Goodwood Airfield.

Access would be via the existing gate.

The made little/no noise at night.

Mr Coates agreed to come to further meeting the following Thursday evening, tbc, when he hoped to have answers to the many points raised.

The Clerk would ask for an extension to the deadline for comments, to enable the Parish Council to consider the matter after the additional information had been forthcoming.

5. Community Hall

Cllr Mrs Hadstaff reported that further to a request to Bellways for a detailed breakdown of their costings for the new hall, the resulting information had been scant in some areas, such that the Parish was still unable to make an informed decision about whether what Bellway's were offering represented good value for the Parish.

RESOLVED that Cllr Mrs Hardstaff seek a detailed quote from a reputable local building contractor for comparative purposes, to further inform the Council's deliberations.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm.