

WESTHAMPNETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2016 AT 7PM

AT THE MARCH C. OF E. SCHOOL, WESTHAMPNETT

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

G. Burt, Clerk
District Cllr Hall
County Cllr Hunt.
18 Members of the Public

1. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Fabricius and James.

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 back 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 gave an overview of the history of the site and further details about the current application.

Questions / points from the audience included:

Have any WSCC Officers been in the homes likely to be affected?

There were no properties anywhere near the WSCC Solar Farm at Tangmere.

The panels were ugly.

Birds might mistake the panels for water.

Site panels on brownfield sites instead.

WSCC more interested in flora and fauna than humans.

Westhampnett has already taken more than its fair share of controversial development.

The proposed site is semi-rural.

Won't the Electromagnetic fields be detrimental to public health?

Have WSCC thoroughly looked at all potential Health & Safety issues?

The plans were poor and lacking detail / evidence.

3D Plans might have been helpful.

Would any planting be a planning condition?

Would the equipment be operational at night, thus still producing noise?

Would the fence be 1-5 or 2.7 metres high?

Would sparks from electrical equipment ignite the methane?

Many commented that they felt they couldn't make a comment as so many questions have still not been answered.

Cllr Mrs Hardstaff advised that the scheme went against the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and cited an area on the Thames Estuary, a landfill site closed approximately 10 years ago, that was already being used for leisure purposes. Green lungs were very important. She was also concerned that it could exacerbate flooding in the area.

Andrew Blanchard from the public gallery, suggested that the Solar Panels on the Hangars at Goodwood, had little effect on aviation, as aircraft near to them were already near to the ground anyway, also asking how many other Solar Farms were so near to housing?

Bob Holman from the public gallery, advised that the RSPB had yet to advise whether they thought the Skylarks would return post-works.

Dis Cllr Hall advised that the scheme would generate 7.5 MW. An Ecology Survey was still awaited. He commented that the one site had produced gravel, been used to bury waste and would now produce Solar energy!

Cty Cllr Hunt said he was disappointed that so many reports that should have accompanied the application, were still awaited and as such, he would be asking WSCC to withdraw the application, until such time that a complete application could be lodged.

Tom Coates replied:

It was intended that the scheme could dovetail into long term uses.

The level of Methane at the site precluded it from being used for leisure purposes at the present time.

Ballasts under the panels would weigh them down so ground fixings would not damage the cap.

The plan was evolving, it could change.

There were no significant drainage problems on the site.

The site would generate approximately £3-400,000 p.a.

The Council then discussed the application, the closing date for comments having been extended by WSCC. **RESOLVED** that the Council **OBJECTS** to the scheme primarily for reasons of loss of amenity for local residents and lack of information. Clerk to draft comments accordingly.

5. Community Hall

Further to the position reported at the meeting the previous week, the Chair and Vice Chair had met Bellway, who had been unable to supply the cost breakdown requested. We were still waiting on a local contractor to provide a quote, which would enable the Council to decide whether Bellway should build the hall, or we contract directly with our own builder. Bellway were offering £450,000 should we *go it alone*, plus or minus a further £50k depending on who lays on the services.

The meeting finished at 8.40pm.