

West Crewkerne Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of West Crewkerne Parish Council held at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall on Tuesday 12th March 2013.

(7.00 p.m. – 8.50 p.m.)

Present:-

Members

Mrs J Borland (Chairman)

Mr F Broom

Mr H Ploszek

Mrs S Swaffield

Mr J Wyatt

Also Present:-

Mrs S Osborne, District Councillor, SSDC

Mrs A Cox, Democratic Services Manager, SSDC (acting as Clerk)

52 members of the public

Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Wetherall and the Clerk, Mr C D Payne.

Absent: Mrs K Turner, County Councillor

Public Open Forum (Agenda item 2)

It was agreed that those members of the public who wished to speak regarding the review of the wind turbine planning application at Highlands Dairy Farm would do so at the time the item was considered.

The following members of the public then addressed the Parish Council on other matters:-

Mr C Taylor asked why a new property being built on the site of a garage at Glen View, Clapton had installed its own sewage system when there was a mains sewer running outside the property. He felt this was a retrograde step. The Chairman said a reply would be provided at the next meeting.

Mr M Wilson commented on the condition of the lanes in the parish and particularly the increased incidences of fly tipping. He asked if it was possible to ask if the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Crewkerne could be made free to enter again? The Chairman replied that the District Council usually responded to reports of fly tipping within two days but she would provide a fuller answer at the next meeting of the Parish Council

Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Mrs S Swaffield declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, Planning Application 12/04648/FUL at Highlands Dairy Farm, Hewish review and Agenda item 8 (a),

Planning matters relating to 13/00321/FUL for Land at Lower Coombe farm, Roundham as her son occupied a property owned by the applicants.

Mr J Wyatt also declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, Planning Application 12/04648/FUL at Highlands Dairy Farm, Hewish review and Agenda item 8 (a), Planning matters relating to 13/00321/FUL for Land at Lower Coombe farm, Roundham as joint applicant.

Approve the Minutes (Agenda item 4)

The minutes of the meetings held on 8th January and 28th January 2013, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true record of the meetings.

Matters arising from the Minutes (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council website <http://westcrewkerne-pc.org.uk/> was now operating and she thanked Councillor Ploszek for his work in setting this up.

Councillor Ploszek expressed his thanks to Mr Marcus Barrett who had assisted him to set up the website at a minimal cost of £30 for registering the domain name and he asked for local photographs and information to be sent to him to be displayed on the website.

Review of Planning Application 12/04648/FUL Highlands Dairy Farm (Agenda item 6)

The Democratic Services Manager, SSDC, read out a brief summary of the planning application process for the benefit of the public present. She also advised that, having spoken to the planning officer, Mr Millar, he had recently requested further information from the applicants in the form of an ecology and bat survey of the area. Bat surveys were normally conducted between April and October and therefore it was probable the information would not be produced before October 2013 at the earliest.

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council were statutory consultees on planning applications submitted within the parish and were asked for observations on the applications. For this reason, a vote by show of hands was not taken by Councillors, but their overall observations were submitted. She confirmed that in January 2013, when the planning application for the wind turbine at Highlands Dairy Farm was received, Councillors could see no material planning grounds on which to recommend refusal of the application. Since then, comments by both the Highway Authority and the SSDC Landscape Architect had been submitted which raised material planning considerations. Councillor Ploszek had also researched noise separation levels of wind turbines and it was considered that this was also a material planning consideration. Therefore, the Parish Council would now be submitting the following revised observations to the SSDC planning officer:-

["The West Crewkerne Parish Council, on the knowledge available at the time, could not honestly and properly find objection on Material Planning Considerations, to the thorough and professional planning application, that had been submitted for the installation of a wind turbine at Highlands Dairy Farm. It is only now that scrutiny of officials' responses and a](#)

review, have highlighted considerations, which the Parish Council now feels, need supporting. They are:

1. Highway Authority's comments of 21st February 2013.
2. All the Landscape Architect's comments.

Also the Parish Council noted an apparent inconsistency in submitted noise level Separation Distances being at variance with published distances of measured noise levels from equivalent sized wind turbines, in that the application shows a 30dB noise level at approximately 700m, whereas an actual recorded noise level of 32dB of an equivalent turbine was measured at 1,500m.

In view of this, it is highly recommended that SSDC defers this and any other future applications for wind turbines, until Government guide lines on noise separation distances are passed, or publish interim regulations similar to ones that have been produced by Wiltshire Council (*Core Policy 42 amendment*), Lincolnshire County Council (*located sufficient distance from town and villages so as not to be too prominent, for example, outside of 2km from defined settlement boundaries (those in the development plan)*), and Milton Keynes Council.

Additionally the Council finds that should the application be approved, the temporary access track should immediately be removed, and land made good, upon the delivery of the tower, generator, and sail components, for the wind turbine, on to the site. Access then should only be by the short permanent maintenance access track in the application."

The Council were then addressed by Mr Davis, Mr R Franklin, Mr D Yeomans, Mr M Wilson, Mr R Jeffery, Mrs H Griffiths, and Mr I Redding. Their comments included:-

- One of the joint applicants, WRS Highlands Ltd, had been dissolved as a company on 27th November 2012, so how could they apply for planning permission in the name of a company which did not exist?
- Disappointed that the Parish Council had raised no planning objections to the wind turbine application without seeking mitigating factors.
- The Parish Council had failed the local electorate as the application would have on-going harm to the local villages and it should be challenged and overturned.
- No account had been taken of the objections raised by the public to the wind turbine planning application at the previous Parish Council meeting, there had been no discussion by the Parish Councillors and no vote had been taken on the matter.
- The Parish Council had claimed there were no material planning reasons on which to base a refusal but a browse of the SSDC website relating to the application showed many reasons.
- Councillors should vote on whether they were in favour of the application or not.
- The village hall would not exist without the support of the Parish Council and if members of the public were unhappy with their Parish Council then they should consider standing in the Parish Council elections in 2015.
- More people should attend the Parish Council meetings on a regular basis.

- Local people had not been fully informed about something which would affect them all and consultation letters had only been sent to 3 local residents.
- There were issues in accessing information on the SSDC planning application webpages.
- In order for 20% of Britain's energy to be generated by wind turbines, then 1/8th of Britain would have to be covered by them.

The Chairman asked that the issues regarding the dissolved company and SSDC webpage issues be fed back to the planning officer, Mr Millar.

District Councillor Sue Osborne confirmed that she would request that the application be determined by the Area West Committee and she outlined the procedure for public speaking at a Committee meeting.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman confirmed that if the planning application was heard by the SSDC Area West Committee then she would ask the Committee to take into account the strong opposition of the local community and she would reiterate the Parish Council's support of the Highway Authority and SSDC Landscape Officer objections together with their own information on noise separation levels of wind turbines.

(The meeting was adjourned at 8.15p.m. for 5 minutes to allow those members of the public who wished to leave).

Police Report (Agenda item 7)

The Chairman read out a short written report from the police, which noted there had been one theft of metal posts and cables from a field and the attempted theft of a staddle stone from outside a property in the village. The report also stated that thieves were targeting churches and oil from domestic heating oil tanks and asked the public to be vigilant to this.

Planning Matters (Agenda item 8)

The Chairman advised that the following planning consultation comments would be submitted to the district council:-

- A) 13/00321/FUL – Land at Lower Coombe Farm, Roundham, Crewkerne Somerset TA18 8RL - The installation of photovoltaic array, installation of additional panels to existing array (retrospective) (GR 341675/109760) No planning objections, but observation regarding retrospective application by this applicant.
- B) 12/04542/ADV – Land at junction of Liddon Hill and the A30, Mangle Cave Hill, West Crewkerne, Crewkerne, Somerset - The display of 2 No. Non-illuminated directional signs. GR 341719/110132) APPLICATION PERMITTED WITH CONDITIONS.
- C) 13/00501/FUL – Land at Higher Purtington. Windwhistle, Cricket St. Thomas, Chard Somerset TA18 8QY - Change of use of land to an equestrian showground and riding facility. The erection of a stable block to accommodate 20 No. stables and 1 storage

building with associated parking and landscaping (Part retrospective). (GR 33698/10904)) WCPC objection in that access needs detailed Highways evaluation. (Highways refused in their consultation). This consultation is made as an adjacent parish consultee.

Highway Matters (Agenda item 9)

The Chairman advised that Mike Fear, Assistant Highways Service Manager at Somerset County Council, had visited the parish on 30th January with District Councillor Sue Osborne to make an inspection of the roads in the parish. The specific roads inspected in West Crewkerne and Wayford were the B3165 (flooding near Coppersfield), Dunsham Lane, Chard Lane and Wayford Hill.

The Assistant Highways Service Manager had informed them that:-

- The contractor concerned with the resurfacing last year was now in consultation with Highways with a view to correcting their poor work.
- Gully cleaning was now carried out every two years and Somerset County Council would only deviate from this if the blocked drain was causing a health and safety issue.
- Finances restricted the County Highways from undertaking the work they acknowledged was necessary. They were actively trying to make the best use of the money available and were seeking ways to address the rural roads problems.

Councillor Broom asked if directional arrows could be placed on the B3165 Clapton Road out of Crewkerne at the first right hand corner after the Hewish cross roads as several accidents had occurred there due to speeding vehicles.

It was reported that County Highways had confirmed they were to undertake the necessary repairs to Dunsham Lane.

Councillor Ploszek recorded his thanks to local residents Barry Beeson and Glen Sansom who had cleared drains close to their properties and reduced the risk of local flooding.

Reports from Councillors, Including District and County Councillors and the Burial Board (Agenda item 10)

In the continued absence of County Councillor Kim Turner, due to ill health, it was asked if another County Councillor could attend to update the parish on County matters? The Chairman agreed to ask Crewkerne County Councillor, John Dyke, if he would be available to attend the Parish Council meetings in the future.

Finance (Agenda item 11)

It was agreed to pay the following remittances:

A. Clerks salary of £361.18 less tax being £288.98.

Clerks expenses: £86.58.

B. Income tax: £72.20

C. Cheque for Councillor Ploszek for website domain: £30.00

D. Affiliation fee for SALC: £133.20

Correspondence (Agenda item 12)

The following correspondence received was noted:

1. South Somerset District Council had requested comments from Parish Councils on the recent flooding in the area, to be fed into a Flooding Summit on 15th March. The Parish Council had responded, requesting that proper road contractors be used for road repairs and the gullies should be cleaned out more often.
2. English Tourism week was running from 16th to 24th March 2013.
3. Refuse Collection dates during forthcoming Bank Holiday weekends would be posted onto the Parish Council website and the Parish noticeboard.
4. Chubb Almshouse in Crewkerne currently had a vacancy and was undergoing renovation work. It was noted that in order to be eligible, applicants must have lived the majority of their working life in the parish and be a single occupant. The vacancy would be advertised on the Parish Council website if anyone wished to apply.
5. Late correspondence – a leaflet offering free tree health survey training for Tree Wardens to recognise tree pests was being run by Opal. The information would be placed on the Parish Council website if anyone was interested in attending.

The next meeting of the Parish Council was arranged for Tuesday 14th May 2013 at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

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Chairman