

GEDDINGTON, NEWTON AND LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th DECEMBER 2024 at 7.30pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors M Rowley (Chair), C Buckseall, J Padwick, D Lomasney, C Wrighting.

The meeting was not quorate until 8.20pm.

APOLOGIES: Councillors B McCreery and T Bailey.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

None

057/25: PUBLIC SESSION.

Eight members of the public were present.

- a) A presentation was carried out by two managers from Boughton Estates concerning the solar farm application that had been submitted to NNC Planning.

The Renewables Development Manager (Energy) showed the location plan and explained the layout of the proposed solar farm near Newton. He explained and summarised each separate section of the Environment Statement and related it to the relevant areas on the location plan. The site of the proposed new sub-station was also shown.

Consideration for alternatives to the present proposal were listed (in chapter 2 of the Environmental Statement). The power line and its voltage were the main considerations, to eliminate extra pylons being built. Searches were therefore carried out along the line of the pylons. The proposed site of the solar farm hugs the pylon route to prevent spreading of the site.

Items and issues queried or explained include the following:

- There should be clover grass mats for possible sheep grazing under the solar panels.
- A meeting with NNC archaeology department will be held in January to find out the mitigation of anything that has been found on the site.
- There will two main accesses to the site including the opening opposite Dove Farm.
- A conversation is needed with Highways as road passing places will be needed. A traffic light system will be needed as a temporary measure whilst the site is being constructed. It was emphasised that Highways have not given their input yet.
- S106 money may be available to improve the Newton junction – the condition of consent would be a legal condition, but it cannot be connected to the solar farm scheme. Boughton Estates can carry out the works, but need the permission to do so.
- The panels are 3.5 metres high.
- Noise levels – there would be 18 months of construction with 12 months for the actual site construction.
- Working hours would be 7.00am to 7.00pm.
- Flood risks were of concern to Newton residents, as the ground slopes towards Newton. The grass will absorb water and there will be two ponds and a scrape pond.
- There are three existing footpaths, one of which cuts through the middle of the site. The proposal was to divert the footpath to link up with another footpath. A further hedgerow will be planted by the footpath to provide additional screening as you exit out of Newton.
- The height of the hedgerow will probably be three metres.
- There is no glare from solar panels.
- There will be additional tree planting.
- All the power generated will go into the National Grid.
- The application is for a solar farm for up to 40 years.

- Construction time-line:- there is a two-year wait for a transformer, another year for construction, so potentially early 2027 .
- Platform build would take place first, then the sub-station, then the transformer would be built and installed on site. Diversion of footpaths, construction of fencing, tracks built also need to take place at an early stage. Then the solar panels would be installed.
- 6 – 8 HGV vehicles would be present during construction.
- Noise – the only source of noise will be the power blocks.

Members of the public were advised that there is a solar farm at Desborough (going towards Pipewell), over the bridge and to the right. The height of the panels is unknown however.

The meeting became quorate within the course of the Boughton Estates presentation.

The public session discussing the solar farm planning application ended and councillor comments included the following:-

- Loss of green space in terms of the wildlife nature of Newton, between Newton and Great Oakley specifically. Changing environment from the present green landscape remains a concern for Newton residents.
- The bio-diversity net gain is over 50% with an intention of enhancing the existing habitats with wildflower seeding and tree planting.
- The land appears to be low grade agricultural land.
- If the UK wants clean energy, you cannot rely solely on wind power.
- The triangle from Corby, Geddington and then to the doughnut roundabout form the green wedge that relevant bodies have been trying to protect. The area for the solar panel is the northern corner of the wedge. This would add another boundary for development to add to the A43 relief road boundary.
- Traffic on the access road. the traffic on the A4300 and Newton Road is of concern. Cllr Rowley added here that he can contact Cllr Binley (portfolio for Highways) who liaises with Highways to ensure the highways elements were looks at properly within the traffic management plan and look at the concerns that have been raised.

Cllr Rowley proposed that a “no objection” be submitted but with several caveats and requests for conditions – speed, Newton junction, flooding, passing places, concern of potential noise for 12 hours a day.

Also to be added within comments submitted to NNC Planning that councillors recognise and were happy with the significant biodiversity net gains.

Seconded by Cllr Wrighting. All councillors present were in favour.

b) Questions sent in by the public

Any questions are dealt with under agenda item 062/25: “Correspondence”.

b) Reports from North Northants Councillors

Fly tipping – Fines for fly tipping have been substantially increased. The message will be that fly tippers are not welcome in North Northants.

058/25: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

a) Approval of minutes for the Monthly Parish Council Meeting held 11th November 2024.

Subject to one amendment being made, it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting were correct.

b) Matters arising; progress on outstanding actions.

11.11.24, action 1: The clerk to ask the Cricket Club what the dimensions of the grass cuttings container will be, and to ask them if it can be sited off the grass in the nettles in the spinney area.

The Cricket Club are happy with the suggested area, and they will let the Parish Council know the dimensions that they wish to work to when the construction commences in the Spring.

11.11.24, action 2: The clerk to apply for an account with Unity bank.

The application has been started.

11.11.24, action 3: The clerk to contact Kensigns to cost and then update the board before it is hung in the Village Hall foyer.

Kensigns has been contacted but a reply has not yet been received.

11.11.24, action 4: Cllr Rowley to also ask Kier to inspect the Little Oakley area when the Queen Street/ West Street inspection is carried out. Cllr Rowley updated that he is waiting for the date of the walk-around to be arranged by Highways.

11.11.24, action 5: Cllr Lomasney reported that residents had still not had defibrillator training from a first responder or any information concerning a chain of command. The chain system will therefore not go ahead.

ACTION 1: Cllr Lomasney will chase (for the third time) the First Responder he previously contacted, or contact a resident who has provided training to residents of a nearby village.

11.11.24, action 6: Cllr Rowley to send some information about charging points to the clerk. The information has been downloaded but not sent.

ACTION 2: The clerk to remind Cllr Rowley of the above information if it is not received for the next meeting.

11.11.24, action 7: Cllr Rowley to check what happens when a councillor leaves within six months of the elections (May 2025). This relates to can a council carry on co-opting. This has been checked and a council can carry on co-opting.

11.11.24, action 8: Cllr Padwick and Cllr Rowley will write a report for the next newsletter which is due out in December, centred on a campaign for recruitment. Cllr Padwick reported that this had been written and he had received some responses as a result of the article being in the newsletter.

11.11.24, action 9: Cllr Bailey to send a draft letter to the clerk arranging another meeting with the Youth Club. This had not been actioned as a letter had been received from the Youth Club.

11.11.24, action 10: Request from Northamptonshire ACRE (24.10.24) to complete a short membership survey. Cllr Rowley offered to complete the survey. This was not completed as it was deemed to be irrelevant.

11.11.24, action 11: Request by Ncalc to complete a survey “the role of parish and town councils in health and wellbeing”, sent 25.10.24. (Follow on from a survey carried out in 2020). Cllr Rowley offered to complete this or make a judgement on whether this Parish Council would benefit by it being completed. The judgement was made that this Parish Council did not have the capacity to take on the mental health work that was being suggested.

11.11.24, action 12: (Percentage of disabled car park spaced should increase. Two more car park spaces of 2.6 metres wide including the hatching are needed). Cllr Lomasney will measure up two spaces near the Village Hall and action this.
This has not yet been actioned.

LITTLE OAKLEY.

No matters reported.

NEWTON

No matters reported.

059/25: FINANCE

a) Bank statements. –

Community account statement	18 October - 15 November	£32,996.11
Business Saver account	18 October - 15 November	£15.48

b) Accounts received

National Grid – Wayleave payment £11.92

c) Accounts for payment : -

Requisite Safety Group Ltd	Qtrly rental of defibrillator equipment (Newton).	151.20
Mr T W Harker	Gate repairs to the dog walking area in the meadow.	216.00
Information Commissioner's Office	ICO - Renewal confirmation ICO:00018596937 Yearly data protection (<i>Paid by direct debit</i>)	35.00
Anita Curtis	Clerk's quarterly salary Oct - Dec 2024	£1318.34
Anita Curtis	PAYE made to HMRC Oct - Dec 24	£329.59
Anita Curtis	Agreed depreciation of equipment Oct - Dec 24	£60.00
Anita Curtis	Expenses Oct – Dec 2024 . Printer ink £16.47, Files 6.99, stamps (8x2nd class) 6.80. . Total £30.26	£30.26

Proposed by Cllr Lomasney that the paymentss be authorised, seconded by Cllr Padwick, with all councillors in agreement to authorise but with one abstention.

d) 2024-5 budget update – projected income and expenditure to 31.3.25.

Bank balances as at 19.12.24 and estimated expenditure to 31.3.25 had been circulated, showing a surplus at end March 2025 of £22,000.00 – £25,000.00.

e) 2025-6 budget update-feedback from Finance Committee, further discussion.

The Committee has a draft budget which keeps the precept at £30,000.00. This will be further discussed and a decision made for both the budget and level of precept, in the January meeting.

The level at which auditor fees had to be paid to PKF Littlejohn had been checked: it is when income or expenditure is over £25,000.00.

It was agreed that the category A trees on Stonepit land would be carried out by the end of the financial year.

It had been previously discussed that a donation for £1000.00 should be given to GVFB as they are collating and purchasing flood equipment for the village. Further donations are being received from two other sources.

The above two further items of expenditure were proposed by Cllr Rowley, seconded by Cllr Padwick, agreed by all councillors present.

There was some concern that further fees would be payable to Tollers for the further work that had been carried out to the Stonepit land leases.

Noted at this stage that the old millennium garden has been cleared out and wood chippings laid.

f) Precept – discussion as to level of precept required.

This will be decided at the January meeting.

060/25: STONEPIT LAND – updates.

a) A letter had been received from the Youth Club stating that their most significant objection concerns the proposed length of the lease (seven years). If it is over seven years, the lease has to be registered with Land Registry. This is an additional legal cost, with solicitors fees as well as the Land Registry cost.

ACTION 3: The clerk to contact Tollers to ask them what are the costs going to be if the Parish Council offers over a seven years lease.

b) No other updates.

PLANNING

a) NNC Decision notices

No decision notices had been received.

b) Planning Applications - for comments.

NK/2024/0667, Mr & Mrs Mulot, 10 New Road, Geddington.

Garage conversion. Full Application

Not attached to but facing the house. Set back from the road. Garage door to be changed to a window.

Cllr Buckseall proposed no objection, seconded by Cllr Lomasney, with all councillors present in favour.

c) Solar farm application.

This was discussed at some length and comments proposed and approved at 057/25a).

061/25: Flood working group.

The Flood working group met last week.

a) Feedback of flooding and near flooding from late November.

A few new areas appear to have been affected this time. Measures that have been put in place for some of the areas normally prone to flooding seem to have worked. The bund did not cause any problems which may have been helped by the recent work in the field by Boughton Estates. The river coped with the volume of water to a large extent, although four properties were flooded. However, it was thought that there was a lack of sand bags available for village use.

Some were filled and ready to transport to where they were needed but residents were not aware of this. Other GVFB equipment tends to work better than sandbags though.

It was stated that residents also need to take responsibility for their own properties.

b) Email from resident – overgrowth in channels at bridge on New Road, and obstruction to drainage pipes under the road.

A Skeffington Close resident explained the problems experienced to his and four other properties, to the garden areas. This happened in 2020, there was a near miss in 2022, and again in November 2024 with the water coming right up to the house.

Two large pipes under New Road by the bridge appear to be blocked by vegetation and water does not flow into them.

Councillors stated that under the bridge is Highways responsibility, either side of the bridge is riparity responsibility – in this case Boughton Estates for one side and a resident (who has just passed away) on the other side. The river may be the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

ACTION 4: Cllr Rowley will go back to the NNC Environmental team to see if brambles in the vicinity of the pipes can be cut back or cut down or ask if they have another suggestion for clearing the pipes, particularly in the dog walking area.

Stamford Road had some problems, with the water running from high up on Stamford Road. Highways have recently cleared the gullies but only those by the kerbstone, as any other drains are the landowners' responsibility. This area needs to be further explored to find out where the water is coming off the road and flowing into the gullies, and if it is going into a ditch that has also been cleared out and then into a main drain.

ACTION 5: Contact NNC to ask them to clear the pipe from the top of Stamford Road down to the river. To also clear the pipe in Wood Street from the bund down to the river. To check and see if they are clear of silt and debris. To inform them that it is believed that water is backing up with both of these pipes. To send a robot down which can check the whole length for silt or to see if the pipe has collapsed.

c) Email from Environment agency 28.11.24 – includes links to resources.

d) Any other updates.

Noted that the resident who monitors the river height (1.85 is the critical height) , locks the berm access gates and puts the barriers across the ford slip roads, does an excellent job.

062/25: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AND CIRCULATED - for any action.

a) Email from resident 12.11.24 asking if a 4th birthday party/small bouncy castle could be held on the recreation field on 16.11.24

This had already been addressed. (addressed).

b) Email from resident 18.11.24 querying correspondence from Kier group – damaged gate by Newton church work.

This had already been addressed. (addressed).

c) CONSULTATIONS – for discussion and possible completion.

Councillors were advised that if they would like to complete any of the consultations they are welcome to do so.

i) Consultation from: Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

Subject: draft police, fire and crime plan, received 28.11.24

sets the blueprint for police and fire services in Northamptonshire.

Deadline: 5.1.25

ii) Consultation from: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Subject: Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings

Deadline: 19 December 2024

Who should respond: Councils and/or individual councillors and clerks

Further information: <https://tinyurl.com/376x9v7j>

iii) Consultation from: Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC)

Subject: Safe & Sound - Public Safety Plan and 2025/26 precept

Deadline: 11.59pm on Sunday 5 January 2025

Who should respond: Councils and/or individual councillors and clerks

Further information: <https://tinyurl.com/4887v8wt>

iv) Consultation from: West Northamptonshire Council (WNC)

Subject: Draft Climate Change Strategy

Deadline: 19 Jan 2025

Who should respond: Councils and/or individual councillors and clerks in West Northamptonshire

Further information: https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/climate-change/draft_climate_change_strategy

v) Consultation from: North Northamptonshire Council (NNC)

Subject: Local Nature Recovery Strategy for North Northamptonshire

Deadline: 9 Dec 2024 (quick!)

Who should respond: Councils and/or individual councillors and clerks in North Northamptonshire

Further information: <https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/place-and-economy/lnrs/>

AOB.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.35pm.