

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

WHEATLEY HILL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 11 JULY 2011

Present: Councillor M Nicholls (Chair)
Councillors Mrs E Carr, Mrs M Goyns, E Goyns,
J R Lamb, B Maddison, Mrs M Nicholls,
Mrs L Stewart and Mrs C Stogdale

1 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 13 June 2011, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were approved and signed by the Chair.

2 PROPOSED WIND FARM - WINGATE GRANGE FARM, WINGATE

At a previous meeting Members were advised that Infinis Wind Holdings Limited had submitted a planning application to Durham County Council for an anemometer mast to be erected south of the A181 on land at Wingate Grange Farm to the north of Deaf Hill and west of Wingate.

Members were advised that this was the preliminary step in the development process to determine whether the land at Wingate Grange Farm was an appropriate site for a small wind farm.

The Chair introduced S Side, Project Director, T Mockridge, Project Developer and R Fellows, Communications, representatives from Infinis who were present at the meeting to provide details of the proposal and answer questions.

T Mockridge proceeded to give a short presentation on the proposals and referenced a scoping report which had been produced in relation to the proposed wind farm.

The Chair asked how many turbines were proposed for the site. T Mockridge advised that the application would be for the erection of 5 turbines.

The Chair made reference to the proposal to hold a public exhibition during the month of August and suggested that this may be a bad month as many people were on holiday at this time.

Councillor Lamb asked how many additional sites Infinis would be applying for in the area. T Mockridge advised that it was an ongoing process and the Company were always looking for potential new sites.

The Chair referred to a waterbed that ran across the land at Wingate Grange Farm and referenced a proposal for land fill which had been refused because of this. T Mockridge advised that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would look at

this type of issue. However, following an initial desk top exercise it appeared that the water bed would not affect the proposals.

Councillor Mrs Stogdale referred to access at the site, particularly as it was off a busy main road. T Mockridge advised that Infinis were looking at a number of different options with regard to access to the proposed site.

Councillor Goyns made reference to the level of noise generated by the turbines and if it would cause a disturbance to residents. T Mockridge advised that the blades of the turbine did create a “whoosh”, however, over distance the noise was significantly reduced. He explained that Government regulations stated that noise levels from the turbines could not break the maximum noise levels. He acknowledged that noise was a common concern from residents and communities and whilst each site was different, the noise made by the turbines was consistent. He gave an assurance that all the necessary background noise checks would be undertaken as part of the development process.

Councillor Mrs Goyns referred to the size of the turbine and asked how it would be transported onto site, particularly as it was so large. T Mockridge advised that the largest part of the turbine was the blade and the tower came in 3 to 4 sections.

The Chair suggested that Infinis could use Wheatley Hill Workmen’s Club as a venue to hold a public exhibition for local residents. T Mockridge agreed to look into this and stated that Infinis were happy to meet with community groups to discuss the proposals.

The Chair made reference to the grants Infinis awarded to local communities where they received approval for the erection of the wind turbines. T Mockridge advised that for an average site with 5 turbines, which was the number proposed at Wingate, the community would receive approximately £20,000 annually for the life of the project. Normally a Trust Fund would be established which would be managed by representatives from the community and the money could be spent on various community projects.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted and further developments be awaited.

3. COMMUNITY POLICING

The Chair welcomed PC Melenthin to the meeting.

The Officer advised that since the last meeting there had been 103 incidences reported which included 2 burglaries, 7 thefts, 1 criminal damage, 1 theft from motor vehicle and 25 anti social behaviour. The Officer advised that the 25 incidences related to anti-social behaviour were broken down to 17 environmental related issues, 7 personal and 1 of a nuisance nature.

The Officer advised that the 7 thefts were related to lead and metal, which was a continuing problem being experienced throughout the County. A number of Police Operations had already taken place and the Police would continue to work in partnership with organisations to combat this widespread problem.

Councillor Lamb advised that there had been a theft of lead flashing at Peterlee Cottages. The Officer advised that it was important that all incidences were reported, particularly in relation to the theft of lead and metal.

Councillor Maddison made reference to a property in Granville Terrace which had previously been boarded up and was now subject to fly tipping. The Officer advised that he would contact the Beat Officer and Street Wardens about this property.

Councillor Mrs Goyns referred to the 'Rock the Barn' monthly events held at Wingate Grange Farm and stated that at the last event, music was played loudly till 3am. The Officer advised that he would speak to the Street Wardens who would have further information regarding these events.

Reference was made to the allotments at Dunelm Road; Quad bikes were accessing a locked gate and causing a nuisance. The Officer advised that he would request the off-road Officer to investigate.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

4 STREET WARDENS

There were no Street Wardens present at the meeting.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Requests for Financial Assistance

(i) Wheatley Hill Rockets Football Club

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from Wheatley Hill Rockets Football Club.

RESOLVED that a donation of £300 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(ii) East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau.

Members were advised that the Parish Council gave an annual donation of £600. However, East Durham Citizens Advice Bureau had advised that based on the number of clients using the service

from Wheatley Hill they were requesting a grant of £800 for 2011/2012.

Following consideration of this item it was **RESOLVED** that the matter be deferred to the September meeting.

(iii) **County of Durham School Benevolent Fund**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from the County of Durham School Benevolent Fund.

RESOLVED that a donation of £50 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(iv) **Wheatley Hill All Saints Church**

The Clerk reported the receipt of a request for financial assistance from All Saints Church towards grounds maintenance work.

RESOLVED that a donation of £500 be made from the Section 137 Budget.

(2) **Letters of Thanks**

The Clerk reported the receipt of the following letters of thanks: -

Wheatley Hill Sure Start Children's Centre
Wheatley Hill Women's Section - Royal British Legion

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(3) **Wheatley Hill Roundabout**

The Clerk advised that Trimdon Foundry Parish Council had been approached by the owner of Green Lane Nurseries with an offer to plant up the roundabout where the pit pony was formerly located. Members were advised that if this was to be pursued, permission would be required from Durham County Council.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that Trimdon Foundry Parish Council be advised that Wheatley Hill Parish Council had no objections to the proposals.

(4) **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

The Clerk advised that the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 required Durham County Council

to carry out a review of its polling districts and polling places on a regular 4 yearly cycle. The initial review took place in 2007.

Durham County Council was looking for feedback on any aspect of polling districts and/or polling places currently used. The consultation period would run from the 1 July to 31 August 2011.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(5) Complaint

The Clerk provided details of a complaint received from a local resident.

RESOLVED that the letter be received.

6 PLANNING MATTERS

Applications

Consideration was given to the following planning applications received from Durham County Council: -

Rear Conservatory at 29 Dodds Close for Mr T Rowley

Temporary building for training room and facilities (relocation of portable building) at Wheatley Hill Community Centre, Stephens Terrace for Woodcraft for Landscapes.

RESOLVED that no objection or comment be made to Durham County Council.

7 DELEGATES REPORTS

(i) Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils

Councillor Mrs Goyns advised that she had attended a meeting of the Durham Association of Town and Parish Councils at Haswell.

Members were advised that at the meeting held in December it was agreed that in future agendas and minutes would be e-mailed to the Clerk for distribution to Members. This had been agreed in order to save the Association money.

The main issue discussed at the meeting was an update report from S Pearce, AAP Co-ordinator, which provided details of how successful the AAP's had been in receiving matched funding.

Members were advised that as the Association no longer had the use of the former Easington District Council Offices, they were looking for a free venue

to hold their next meeting. Unfortunately there were no suitable venues within Wheatley Hill.

(ii) **Clinic**

The Chair provided an update on the current situation with regard to the new clinic.

(iii) **Wheatley House**

The Chair provided an update on the proposal to undertake a survey at Wheatley House.

(iv) **West House**

The Chair provided an update on the current situation with regard to West House which had been demolished.

(v) **Cain/Henderson Terrace**

The Chair provided an update on the current situation.

8 HEAD GROUNDSPERSONS REPORT

The Clerk advised that routine work had been undertaken in the Cemetery since the last meeting, details of which were outlined to Members.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

9 CLERK'S REPORT

(1) **Allotments**

The Clerk provided an update on the following allotments and stable blocks: -

Allotment No 7 - Mr M Kelsey (Jnr)

The Clerk advised that Mr M Kelsey (Jnr) had confirmed that he lived in Wheatley Hill at the address the tenancy was registered to.

Both Mr M Kelsey Senior and Junior had requested that the tenancy be put in the name of Mr M Kelsey (Snr) as he paid the rent.

RESOLVED that allotment No 7 be transferred into the name of Mr M Kelsey (Snr).

Stable Block No 17 - Mr R Cowie

The Clerk advised that there had been no response to the letter sent to Mr Cowie and it was assumed that he wished to retain the plot.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

Stable Block No 22 - Mr W Thompson and Mr Newton

The Clerk advised that Mr Newton had claimed that the plot was well used and that he kept chickens and a horse on site. He also claimed that the rubbish outside the plot was flytipped and had not come from the stable block.

In addition he also advised that the locked gate at the end of the track had been erected by Mr Anderson who rented stable block No 23.

In addition it had come to light that Mr Thompson and Mr Newton had installed an extension pipe from the allotment water tap into their plot. As the Parish Council had recently received a water bill in excess of £1,200, it was considered this could be attributed to the extension pipe into this stable block.

RESOLVED that the tenant be advised that the extension pipe must be removed immediately.

Stable Block No 23 - Mr P Anderson

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had previously queried the use of this block and was concerned that sub-letting was taking place. It had subsequently come to light that Mr P Anderson no longer resided at Black Lane Bungalow, Wheatley Hill and the property was occupied by Mr D Watson.

Allegations had also been made that Mr Watson was currently the tenant of stable block No 23. Mr Watson had also been witnessed at the water tap at the Parish Council allotments filling up water butts which again could in some way explain the excessive water bill at the allotments.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Mr Anderson and advise that as he no longer lived at Black Lane Bungalow, Wheatley Hill and had sub-let to Mr Watson, he was in breach of his tenancy agreement and the tenancy would be terminated as he had previously been advised.

Allotment No 14 - Mr A Stevenson

The Clerk advised that it had come to light that Mr Stevenson had sold the tenancy of allotment No 14 for a sum of £200.

RESOLVED that Mr Stevenson be advised that he had breached his tenancy agreement and his tenancy would be terminated.

(2) Annual Audit 2011

The Clerk advised that BDO LLP had completed the Annual Audit for the year ended 31 March 2011 and there were no separate issues that required attention.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 the Notice of Conclusion of Audit would be displayed for a minimum of 14 days.

The cost of the Annual Audit was £660.00.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

10 PAYMENTS AND ORDERS

The Clerk presented Members with a written report of all payments and receipts made since the last meeting.

Members were also provided with details of the financial position of the Parish Council in comparison with the Annual Budget.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the payments itemised be approved.

11 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Clerk advised that there was nothing to report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Hanging Baskets

Members advised that a request had been received for a hanging basket to be erected at Wheatley House and the hairdressers at the top of Church Street.

It was reported that hanging baskets had been erected at the knoll. Last year Durham County Council had advised that they were unable to gain access to

the Knoll to water the hanging baskets. As this was a private property it was agreed that the baskets would be removed and no further baskets would be erected at this location.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Durham County Council and advise that the hanging baskets be removed from the Knoll, as it was a private property and erected elsewhere in the village.

(ii) **Potholes**

Councillor Mrs Stewart advised that there were potholes in the road at the bottom of Dodds Close leaving Wheatley Hill towards Gowland House.

Councillor Mrs Stogdale also reported a pothole at the bottom of Gable Terrace, to the front of numbers 6 and 8.

RESOLVED that both issues be reported to Durham County Council.

..... **Signed**

..... **Dated**