

OULTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 5th April 2022

MINUTES

At the meeting of the Oulton Parish Council held at the Old Congregational Chapel, Oulton on Tuesday 5th

April 2022, 19.30 the following members were present:

Mrs S Mather (chair)
Mr P Killingback, Ms A Shaw

In Attendance

Mrs W Murphy (Clerk of the Council)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr A Nash
Cllr S Riley
Cllr S Catchpole

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd February 2022, having previously been circulated to all members, were APPROVED as an accurate record, and signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

None to report

5. To discuss co-opting a resident to the Parish Council

The resident was not well so this would be discussed at another meeting

6. REPORTS

Police: The clerk had received a report from PC Lucas Ward as he was unable to attend. He confirmed that there had been no crimes or incidents reported to police in the 28 days prior to the meeting, Blickling, Itteringham and Heydon have had nothing of interest to report to Oulton Councilors

District and County Councilor: The clerk confirmed that Cllr D Harrison is not well so will not be able to attend any meeting for the foreseeable future.

No members of the public attended

7. FINANCE

(i) ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

Cheque Number 100620 Defib Store £3141.60 this had already been signed and sent off to secure a discount
Cheque Number 100621 HMRC £2.40
Cheque Number 100622 Clerk Wages backdated pay rise 1.75% £10.20

(ii) The Clerk confirmed that Barclays is now all set up and BACS payments can now be arranged. Mr P Killingback will meet with the clerk so that he will be able to access the Bank account online.

(iii) The clerk has received the renewal instructions for the Councils Insurance. It was agreed to go for a 3-year LTA premium at £320.32 proposed by Mr P Killingback and seconded by Ms A Shaw and all in favour

(iv) The clerk confirmed that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has agreed the new payrates applicable from 1st April 2021. The pay rise is 1.75%

8. PLANNING UPDATES

Solar Farm Appeal Hearing 20201776 on 5th April 2022

Alison Shaw, Paul Killingback and Susan Mather attended and participated in the Solar Farm planning appeal *APP/K2610/W/21/3278065 (BDC 20201776)*.

Also in attendance was one resident, the Principal Planning Officer for Broadland District Council, the agent representing the Appellants, and an inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. The hearing was held at Broadland District Council, Thorpe Lodge, Norwich. The hearing lasted the whole day, and was followed by an unaccompanied site visit, carried out by the planning inspector alone.

The appeal is for the original (larger) site layout, which was refused planning permission in 2021. It should be noted that a revised (slightly smaller) application proposal (*20211249 /20211288*) was subsequently granted planning permission on 26th January 2022.

The appellant's case centered around the four reasons for refusal by Broadland District Council: the impact on food production, asserting that the loss of BMV land would outweigh the benefits of the scheme; that the inclusion of best and most versatile agricultural land has not been justified by the most compelling evidence; cumulative environmental impacts; the failure of the scheme to comply with policy.

The decision on this appeal will not be known for several weeks.

Wind Farm Updates

Equinor held a public information day about its Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Project (SEP/DEP) in Aylsham Town Hall on March 22nd 2022. Alison Shaw, Greg Peck and Susan Mather attended from Oulton Parish Council.

Equinor had updated their maps which now see the removal of some access routes, road closures and diversions. Equinor have decided to use the Horizontal Directional Digging (HDD) method under ALL roads.

This means that there will be no road closures and diversions locally in connection with this project, although a need to access part of Blickling Rd near to Saxthorpe roundabout remains. Equinor state that they intend to use the 'haul road', alongside the trench, to greater effect. They also state that the haul road may also not have to be constructed in places, as they suggest they may run construction traffic (LCVs) directly on fields alongside the cable trench.

OPC councillors challenged many of these statements, as they found them difficult to square with the arguments put forward relentlessly by the other developers (Orsted and Vattenfall), who have persisted in maintaining that a haul road involving the laying down of aggregate is regrettably necessary, and that HDD is far too expensive to use except under rivers and A roads.

Considerable clarification will be needed on these major construction issues, if Equinor's 'new' approach is to survive a proper analysis of their costs.

A sustained discussion therefore took place in Aylsham Town Hall, during which parish councillors from at least 4 PCs, and members of the public, challenged the Project Director and other members of Equinor's team, to adopt a much better approach immediately, before it is too late. The suggestion was strongly made, again, that the developer should use its significant bargaining power to return to BEIS and the National Grid and request a better grid connection. The potential simple scenario was put forward, of a marine export cable along the coast (avoiding Marine Conservation Zones) and thence into the Wash, to join the main North-South onshore grid at Walpole.

No engineering obstacles were put forward by Equinor against the feasibility of this scenario.

Equinor's Public Information Day: Additional Notes

There will still be a need to see how the project will impact cumulatively with the other projects' construction timelines and traffic numbers.

OPC were told that the full details of Equinor's traffic numbers will only be available when the DCO application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate later this year - which is too late to effect significant changes.

Equinor were asked about the solar farm and its implications for access and cumulative impact, especially with Equinor's cable route construction. OPC have been told by Equinor that there is currently no commercial agreement between them and the solar farm developers.

Equinor intend to use HDD under the solar farm site. They understand that the revised site layout has been granted planning permission and that there is a planning appeal ongoing which if successful could see the site layout change. OPC will again seek clarification on how this will impact the nearest neighbours when HDD is used, as it is OPC's understanding from previous projects that HDD can be a 24hr operation - Equinor seem to be suggesting it may not be.

OPC noted from Equinor's now updated map that there are two access points from B1149 to access the cable route. One will be to access the cable route via the triangular field, where the proposed solar farm starts, and the second will be to access a temporary compound off the B1149. Equinor were asked if NCC Highways had been consulted on this as there had been previous issues with a suggested access route off this part of the B1149. NCC have told Equinor that only one access can be used at any one time; they cannot use both together. Equinor suggested that there may be a need for traffic signalling to be used at these points.

Further clarification will be needed on this, and the implications for cumulative traffic impacts with the other wind farm projects.

9. TO RECEIVED UPDATES RE DEFIBRILLATOR

A cheque had already been signed and sent off and two defibs will be arriving on Thursday. The clerk will speak to Gavin Watson the electrician to make arrangement with Mr P Killingback to get this installed. The other one will be kept at the Clerks offices until it has been confirmed if this can be installed near the church.

10. TO RECEIVE UPDATES RE TREES

A Meeting was held with Stuart Banks from the National trust and it was agreed that a volunteer's day would be arranged in November to help the council with hedge/tree planning in the playground. This would need approx. 10 parishioners and it was agreed that this would be mention at the Annual Village meeting.

11. To discuss Box Day

This has been arranged for September 4th 2022– Mr P Killingback will not be available to help with the marquee. It was agreed to mention this at the Annual Meeting to see if anybody is able to help with the moving and erecting of the marquee

12. To discuss Annual Village meeting/Parish Archive

This will be on Tuesday 17th May 2022. The Clerk will send out invitations to PC Lucas Ward and the District and County councillors. The Chair will send out invitations to the businesses that donated for the Def-fibs so they can publicly be thanked. There will also be a Parish Archives presentation

13. To Note items of information/future agenda

The Clerk confirmed that The Town Clerk of Aylsham was meeting with the Highway engineer and if there was anything Oulton Parish Council needed to be done. It was mentioned that the village gates needed cleaning along with all the highway signs in the village. The Slow signs near the Railway Gate House have also worn away and need repainting. The Clerk will mention this.

14. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Tuesday 17th May at 7.00pm
Annual Parish Meeting to follow, commencing no earlier than 7.30pm

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR THANKED EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING AND DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 21.11