

WARTLING PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF

3rd November 2021

This meeting was held at the Reid Hall in Boreham Street.

36 Present

Councillors K Stevens (Chairman), C Paterson, E Ashley and W Reid.

Mr Roy Amner (Intelligent Alternatives Ltd), County Councillor B Bowdler, District Councillor R Cade, A Stevens (Clerk) and fifty seven members of the public were also in attendance.

37 Apologies for Absence

District Councillor P Doodes sent apologies for her absence.

38 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 1st September 2021.

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 1st September 2021, were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

39 Clerk's Report on Matters' Arising

All matters arising were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

40 Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest on any items on this agenda nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

The meeting was then suspended.

41 Intelligent Alternatives Limited

Mr Amner explained that his company has submitted an EIA Screening Option request to the District Council for a proposed Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage Scheme (BESS) on land south of Boreham Street.

He said;

- No planning applications have been submitted yet but the company is hoping to submit two, one for the BESS and another after for the Solar Farm.
- Boreham Street has been selected because the National Grid and UK Power has the capacity here. Capacity has been identified for a 100MW BESS and a 50MW Solar Farm.
- The first planning application would be for a Battery Operated Scheme (BESS). Battery Operated Schemes consist of a collection of ground mounted containers (in this case 90) containing batteries which store and release electricity. They are charged when there is a low demand for electricity but generation is high (eg: when the sun is shining) and released when demand is high and generation is low (eg: evenings/dinner times) and they contribute to realising the UK's Net Zero Carbon emissions target by 2050.
- Battery life span is usually ten years. The site is only temporary and will have to be reinstated after 40 years.
- The equipment will be positioned away from housing to minimise the impact of any noise emissions.
- The site will be surrounded by fencing and hedging so that it blends in with its surroundings.
- Once built the site will be unmanned but an operative will visit once or twice a month.
- There will be no lighting and therefore no light pollution.

- The second planning application would be for a Solar Farm. The solar panels would be up to 3m high with an 80cm gap under them to allow sheep to graze underneath. There would also be a gap between each panel.
- Agricultural Land Grade Assessments, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Ecology Surveys and a Flood Risk Assessment are currently being carried out. The Ecology Survey has already found a badger sett which will be avoided. The land is thought to be reasonable grade agricultural land.
- There would only be one access road and access to existing footpaths will be maintained.
- Any lost habitat will be reinstated because the site will have 10% a net gain to comply with the latest Environment Act.
- There will be an opportunity for residents to comment in the usual way if a planning application is submitted.

In answer to residents' questions, Mr Amner said;

- A Geophysical Survey will be carried out if a planning application is submitted. He is aware of the channels from Boreham Street to Pevensey and the roman croft opposite the site.
- Discussions will be taking place to see if there is a shorter route in which to run the cable. The initial connection point was suggested by the UK Power Networks.
- The site has been assessed as Flood Plain 1, only the southern fringes are at risk of flooding circa 0.35m in a 1 in 1000 year climate change event.
- Screening will consist of 2.4m high post and wire fencing and hedging which will be planted before the work takes place. He agreed to take residents' concerns that it will not be high enough back to the office.
- There are expected to be around 100,000 panels but there may be less by the time the work begins because panels are already increasing in size. The legs for the panels will be fitted like fence panels are and will not be concreted in. Any use of concrete will be kept to an absolute minimum because it will need to be removed when the site is reinstated.
- The current access plan and access location will be reassessed to see if there is a more suitable/alternative access point, and the details of this will form part of any subsequent planning application. Within the application, they will be required to provide a Traffic Management Plan, which ensures their vehicle movements comply with the County's road management requirements.
- There will be no glint and glare issues from the panels. There is no legal restriction governing their proximity to housing but any housing will be at least 14m away. This was disputed by a resident who said they have to be at least 1km away.
- Strong winds will not be a problem because the cable will be run in underground trenches.
- Tidal power is another option but it is still very much in its infancy.
- If the planning applications are successful his company will build no more sites here.
- A proposed community benefit fund is being offered to Wartling Parish Council in conjunction with the application. This is offered by the applicant (Pelagic Energy) who would own and operate the proposed Solar and BESS scheme. The offer is made irrespective of whether or not the Parish Council supports the application.

In answer Councillor Reid's questions, Mr Amner also confirmed the proposals will cover 150 acres and the higher tier payments which were due to run out shortly will be enhanced.

42 Reports from the County Councillor on matters from the County Council affecting this Parish.

County Councillor Bowdler sent the following report before the meeting;

'Adult Social Care and Health

East Sussex gains nearly £4million from government to help households through winter

Vulnerable households in East Sussex will be able to access financial help to support them with essentials such as food and utility bills over the coming months as part of the government's Household Support Fund. East Sussex councils will receive £3,896,783.88 of the fund. Those who

think they could benefit should contact the council for more details on what will be available in their community.

Children's Services

New Eastbourne special needs school to open in Autumn 2022

A new special needs school for children aged 5-16 is set to open its doors in Autumn 2022. The new school will create 135 local school places for children with autism and/or complex learning and medical needs. The school will be managed by the Southfield Trust on behalf of East Sussex County Council.

Apprenticeship scheme for vulnerable residents launched

An innovative pilot scheme to boost apprenticeships and training vulnerable residents has launched. The Moving On Up Employment and Apprenticeship Scheme will help those in supported and temporary accommodation or at risk of homelessness access apprenticeship placements and vocational training. Participants will receive mentoring support to help with their individual learning, and financial support will be provided so employers can pay a sufficient wage to apprentices so they can ultimately live independently. The pilot scheme will be managed by the council's new Employability for Supported and Temporary Accommodation and Refuges (ESTAR) initiative

Communities, Economy and Transport

East Sussex County Council announces additional funds in fight against climate change

Councillors have affirmed the importance of ecological planning and protecting natural diversity as the authority continues its efforts to tackle climate change.

At a meeting of the council on Tuesday 14 October, councillors agreed to set aside an extra £8.85 million to be spent on reducing climate change and in improving the county's highways for walkers, cyclists, and motorists. The council has also agreed to write to the county's MPs asking them to press ministers for greater direction, detail, and support to assist the council in delivering on its net-zero target.

Green light for new cycling and walking plan

The council's East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which proposes an ambitious network of preferred cycling and walking routes across the county, was agreed by councillors last month.

The county's first plan focuses on areas where there is the greatest opportunity to increase levels of cycling and walking and therefore, to attract external funding, such as the coastal strip and larger market towns in the county. In rural areas, the council will look at how walking and cycling can be supported through its local transport plan.

Ambitious plans to improve bus services in East Sussex

The council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been backed by the lead member for Transport & Environment ahead of its submission to government. The plan sets out the council's strategy to significantly increase bus use around the county by improving the overall network, making it more reliable, more affordable, and more accessible.

One of the most significant changes proposed is the replacement of many traditional bus routes with Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) schemes, which would see fixed bus routes replaced with routes which change day-to-day based on passengers booking journeys.

Cash boost for Seaford tree project

The national Local Authority Treescapes Fund has awarded over £299,000 to Seaford to renovate and plant trees across the town.

The successful bid by East Sussex County Council will see over 150 new trees planted by the end of February 2022, and the grant includes three years of follow up maintenance to ensure the saplings are successfully established. The grant also includes a contribution of £2,000 for the local community group 'Trees for Seaford' to help them purchase 90 trees to be planted this season.'

43 Report from the District Councillors on matters from the District Council affecting this Parish.

District Councillor Cade said;

- Wealden is still struggling to find reasonably priced rented accommodation in the private sector for Afghan refugees. It particularly needs more three and four bedroom houses.
- District Councillor Doodes and he have introduced regular informal meetings with Parish Chairmen and Clerks. They met the Chairman and Clerk of Wartling Parish Council on the 28th October and, as a result, understand the two main issues which cause concern here are the future of The Lamb public house and traffic speeding. They (District Councillor Doodes and District Councillor Cade) are 'keeping pace' with The Lamb and Huw Merriman MP has agreed to walk the Parish and check out the speeding issues for himself.

In answer to a resident's question he confirmed he will find out if a village would be reclassified as a hamlet if it loses its pub.

44 Questions from Members of the Public

One resident asked for the vegetation around a bus stop pole to be cleared, as the pole has disappeared into recent tree growth. The pole is on the south side of Boreham Street just before the junction with Wartling Road. The Clerk agreed to ask Highways.

Another residents said that she reported six very deep potholes to District Councillor Doodes and was very impressed when they were repaired within two weeks of her reporting them.

The meeting was then re-opened.

45 Reports

a) Planning – There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

b) Environment North

There was nothing new to report on this occasion

c) Footpaths

Residents are asked to contact the Clerk with any path or pavement issues. The Clerk will then forward them on to the responsible authority for action.

d) Environment South

This was covered under 'Footpaths'.

e) Highways

This was covered later on in the meeting.

f) Police

There was nothing new to report on this occasion.

g) Communication

Councillor Reid sent out a list of bin collection dates over the Christmas period via the village email distribution list. A copy of the list is available from the Parish Clerk.

h) Speedwatch

The next Speedwatch Sessions are due to take place later this month.

i) Trees

This tree which was lying on the bank at Wartling Hill has now been removed.

46 Reports from outside meetings and courses attended

Councillor Stevens attended the South East Parish Cluster Meeting which was held in September. Those who attended were told the revised Local Plan is due out for consultation, early next year.

47 Finance Report

Councillors resolved;

- To agree the payments list to the 3rd November 2021.
- To agree the accounts to date.
- To appoint HM Bookkeeping and Payroll Services as its Payroll Administrator following the retirement of Mr Simon Goacher.
- To continue with the existing verge cutting arrangements for 2022 (Option 2).
- The precept for 2022-2023 will be £7500. This equates to an approximate 72p increase per Council Band D Tax Payer per annum.

At previous meetings Councillors considered suggestions on how best to spend the CIL and commissioned a Feasibility Study to go through the options and find out which are the most viable. Councillor Stevens and the Clerk then met the Project Manager on site who confirmed that ESCC will consider;

- 1: A Boreham Street pedestrian crossing – crossing in the area east of the Bulls Head, not far from where the new houses have been built.
- 2: Gateways – these already exist but additional enhancements such as picket fence details. New gateways require separate approval and are not included within the Community Match scheme. The Project Manager will confirm whether adjustments to existing gateways fall under the same remit. New gateways located at the parish boundaries are unlikely to be granted.
- 3: Traffic calming – white lines down the edge of the road, additional red patches and roundels and speed limit signs within the 30mph zone.

All three proposals have been met with broad approval and providing the detail is correct and design guides are adhered to, would not meet opposition from the ESCC Traffic and Safety Team.

The Parish Council now awaits the Feasibility Study which will provide more detail.

The Project Manager has also;

- reported the broken drain cover and the pothole, both near the existing crossing just east of Reid Hall, to the Reactive Maintenance team.

- asked for the footway scheme to be placed on the Footway Programme for early next year. He said the team will not be able to address every issue on the footways but may be able to start with the obvious sections.

48 Parish Council Vacancies

Councillors resolved to hold an informal meeting in January to try and recruit more councillors. Refreshments will be provided by the Parish Council.

49 Questions from Parish Councillors

There were no further questions from the Parish Councillors.

50 Planning Applications

Councillors commented on the following planning application;

WD/2021/2520/F - Land adjoining Tara House, The Strait, Boreham Street, Wartling, BN27 4SE - Proposed new 4-bed dwelling, with associated parking and landscaping – Wartling Parish Council supports this application but has concerns about the access.

There was no further business so the meeting closed at 9.00pm.