

HEMPNALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 7:00pm in the Mill Centre

Present

Chairman Mr David Hook, Mr Phil Bates, Mrs Joan Cann, Mr Richard Delf, Mr Robert Elliott, Mr Hamish Rose, Mr Peter Workman and the Clerk Mr Ian Nelson.

Members of the public present

Mrs Nicola Eastell, Mr Stuart Eastell, Ms Kathy Thomson, Mrs Melanie Hook and County Councillor Alison Thomas.

Apologies

Apologies were received from District Councillor Hooton, Mr Hamish Rose, Mr Mike Turner.

Declaration of interests

Mr Hook declared a non-financial interest in the East Pye Solar Project as he is a trustee of CPRE Norfolk.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Mr Elliott proposed, Mrs Cann seconded, and it was unanimously agreed the minutes of the meeting on 17 September 2024 be approved.

Public Participation

All of the public were attending re the East Pye Solar project matter below. See comments in that section.

County Councillor Update

Mrs Thomas reported on the following matters:

A reminder that Morningthorpe household waste centre will be closed on Wednesdays from the end of November and the booking system will also start shortly.

There will be a hazardous waste amnesty on 16 and 17 November at Harford Bridge recycling centre, accepting for example liquid waste paint and chemicals.

Mrs Thomas had asked East Pye Solar developers about, amongst other things, the criteria they used to select land parcels, but her questions appeared to have been evaded. Stephen Faulkner was heading up NCC's planning team on this matter, and she is in communication with him and will share with the Clerk any permitted relevant information.

She explained the work of The Joe Dix Charity for the prevention of child criminal exploitation.

It was noted that the public consultation had started on NCC budget proposals.

District Councillor Update

District Councillor Hooton had sent the Clerk the following report:

There was a presentation to SNC councillors from East Pye on the 9th October. There was nothing new that came up in their presentation. The main points were:

- Approx. 1100 hectares are earmarked
- The Storage facility is for 500 mega watts
- The present plan regarding sites to be used may yet increase
- The non statutory consultation will take place shortly and finish in early December
- It is proposed to have 6 public meetings - dates to be confirmed

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- An environmental impact assessment will take place in February 2025
- Statutory consultation June 2025
- Decision expected early 2027
- Work if approved to begin late 2027
- There will be a necessity to install small sub stations in various fields to cover distance to Main Outlet in Gt Moulton.

Ben Burgess, Head of Planning, has stated each field will have a separate assessment as to its suitability and the impact on neighbourhood amenity.

Planning Applications

New applications since the last meeting:

There were none.

Applications approved since the last meeting:

2024/1498 - Mr J Kirk, The Long House, The Street Hempnall - Installation of solar panels to rear elevations, 4no rooflights in main roof to rear elevation and replacement windows to same style, 4 No. rooflights in main roof on rear elevation.

2024/2214 - Mr J Kirk, The Long House, The Street Hempnall - Installation of solar panels and 3 No. rooflights to rear elevation.

Applications withdrawn since the last meeting:

There were none.

Applications refused since the last meeting:

There were none.

Applications outside the parish boundary since the last meeting

There were none.

Island Green Power's proposals for East Pye Solar Project

The Clerk had posted a copy of the most recent proposed site map from IGP on the website.

The Clerk, with the assistance of Mr Hook had written to all the landowners in the scheme pointing out the serious concerns of residents and councillors about this project stating that it will industrialise and degrade the countryside over a large area. The letter asked them, in view of the severe cumulative impacts of this scheme (which they may not have been aware of when they signed up), to consider withdrawing from the project. No responses had been received.

The Clerk with the assistance of Mr Hook had written to enlist the support of our MP (Ben Goldsborough) in opposing this project and Mr Hook had visited him at his constituency surgery for a 45 minute meeting. Mr Goldsborough sounded sympathetic to the concerns of HPC and local people but it was noted that in a written response to a parishioner he had said he would not stand in the way of the East Pye Solar development but would do his best to obtain local compensation.

The Clerk with the assistance of Mr Hook had written to our District and County Councillors to enlist their support in opposing this project. Both had responded positively.

The Clerk with the assistance of Mr Hook had written to East Pye expressing the concerns of residents and councillors with a request that they withdraw the scheme or at least consider a large reduction in the scale of the proposals. No response had been received.

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Mr Hook reported that a “brochure” with accurate maps, acreages and photographs of the scheme together with an invitation to a public meeting to discuss the concerns of residents, would be available to be delivered to each household in Hempnall (circa 600 copies to be printed) by 26 October. Messrs Hook & Bates to liaise re distribution arrangements. Mr Bates proposed, Mrs Cann seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk book the Village Hall for the public meeting for 8 November at 7.30pm and invite all neighbouring parish councils affected by these proposals and the MP, county and district councillors. The meeting will be widely advertised with posters and via social media and be put in the newsletter and on the parish website and noticeboard.

DH/PB

IN

IN

Mrs Thomas indicated that NCC was collaborating with Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire County Councils in its responses to solar projects.

Mr Bates reported that an action group had been formed called Block East Pye Solar (“BEPS”) headed by a 6-person steering committee including the parish council reps from Brooke and Shotesham and representatives from Lundy Green, Fritton and Hempnall. Mr Bates would be the Hempnall Parish Council representative.

BEPS had spoken to ISG and been informed that the solar panels were 4.5m high (not 2m as in the field on the other side of the A140) however it was not clear if this meant 4.5m high or long so Mr Hook proposed, Mr Elliott seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk will ask ISG for the full dimensions. BEPS had also been informed by ISG that there would be a 50m buffer zone around public footpaths; the sites would be surrounded by deer fencing; mitigation planting would be made but it was noted this would take many years to mature; there would be no compensation for local residents; ISG intended to provide a consultation opportunity in Hempnall on 16 November.

IN

BEPS will also be lobbying Mr Ben Goldsborough MP.

BEPS was encouraged to have representatives on it from all parishes affected.

Mrs Eastell thought there might be a conflict between some of the proposed panel /corridor sites and undertakings made re landscaping in connection with the Long Stratton bypass.

CPRE Norfolk is creating a Norfolk Alliance of parish councils and action groups. Mr Bates proposed, Mr Elliott seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk take steps to ensure Hempnall Parish Council is a member.

IN

UK Solar Alliance is a volunteer led alliance representing over 120 groups fighting solar planning applications across the country from the smallest local authority schemes to the largest NSIPs such as Botley West and Sunnica. Their [website](#) contains a lot of information about their members, what explains what they are about and how to object to applications. There is no cost to join. Mr Elliott proposed, Mr Delf seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk take steps to ensure Hempnall Parish Council is a member.

IN

Mr Hook reported that approximately 30km of footpaths will be going through the solar panel sites or have a solar panel site on one side of them, so the effect on enjoyment of public rights of way would be enormous. EPS had indicated they would re-route footpaths however Mrs Thomas and Mr Hook pointed out that even if this was agreed the process would likely take years to complete and as the sites were so numerous and geographically close it was difficult to imagine how re-routing the footpaths could be done without them still being blighted.

It was suggested that other interested parties to contact could include: Chris Packham, The Green Party, RSPB, The Ramblers Association, the 93rd Bomber Group and Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

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Footpath 6 plank

Mr Bates had found some examples of variable width restriction access gates which would stop bikes but allow pedestrians and would discuss the matter with PROW. PB

Footpath map at Village Hall

Mr Bates had provided a suitable map to be printed and expected to erect it at the Village Hall before the next parish council meeting. PB

Outside Toilets at recreation ground

Mr Bates will make initial enquiries to establish if Village Hall Committee would support the idea. He has asked to be at their next committee meeting. Mrs Cann informed the meeting that the AGM was to be held on 25 November. PB

Nobbs Lane Spur

Mr Hook to progress as soon as possible. DH

Correspondence from parishioners

Remembrance Day

Mrs Jill Turner had enquired if the parish council would lay a wreath on 10 November and would Mr Bates also read the names of those to be remembered? The Clerk had already purchased a wreath and Mr Bates agreed to lay it and read the names. The Clerk to respond accordingly and provide Mr Bates with a suitable wreath card. PB/IN

War Graves paths

Mrs Jill Turner asked the parish council to refresh the cuts to the paths leading to the war graves. The Clerk will ask Mr Whiting to undertake the work. IN

Defibrillator at the Village Hall

Mr Workman reported that the light had stopped working and he proposed, Mrs Cann seconded, and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk arrange a registered contractor to carry out repairs. IN

Gravestone wobble test

Messrs Delf and Workman undertook to perform the wobble safety test and report back to the next meeting. RD/PW

Items for next newsletter

The Clerk to draft and publish, when appropriate, articles on the following:

- Adult Gym
 - Solar project invitation
- IN

Items for next main meeting

- Playing field rental setting
 - Statement Regular Payments
 - Precept
- IN

Date of next meeting

The parish council will host a parish meeting on 8 November at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. The next Parish Council main meeting will take place on 19 November 2024 at 7.00pm in the Mill Centre and the next planning meeting on 17 December 2024 at the Mill Centre at 7:00pm. IN

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20:57

Signed _____ Date 19/11/2024