

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF NEWTON & NOSS PARISH COUNCIL

Held on 26 February 2015

PRESENT Cllr. Cooper Mr. Cooper Mr. Matthews Mr. Lyndon Mr. Stitson Mrs. Ansell

ALSO Miss. Cove Mr. Carter Mr. Hussell Mr. Tubb Mrs. McDonough
PRESENT 14 Parishioners (Clerk)

OPEN FORUM

Potential solar site at Newton Downs – Lorna Good, a representative from Good Energy, gave a short presentation regarding their plans for a possible small solar farm.

The company had been founded in 1999 and was the UK's first dedicated supplier of 100% renewable electricity. It had 50,500 electricity customers, 24,000 gas customers and 73,000 Feed in Tariff (FIT) sites in the UK. The company was the owner of Delabole Wind Farm (9.2MW) in Cornwall, the UK's first commercial wind farm. It also owned and operated Hampole Wind Farm (8.2MW), near Doncaster. It owned and operated three solar farms – Woolbridge in Dorset (5MW), Rook Wood in Wiltshire (4.9MW) and Creathorne Farm in North Cornwall (1.8MW).

Good Energy was proposing to build a solar farm at Newton Downs Farm, near Butts Park. They had begun to explore the project in 2012, initially looking at a slightly larger site, but have since scaled back their proposal. They had submitted a screening request to South Hams Planning Authority. The screening response confirmed that there was no need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Miss Good advised that the South Hams enjoyed some of the highest levels of sunshine in the country. The solar farm would be naturally screened from view by existing hedgerows, woodland and the natural undulations in the surrounding landscape. The site was accessible to the national electricity grid and road network minimising disruption during the construction phase. The land was Grade 3b (of lower agricultural productivity) and was grazed by horses and sheep - the farmland could still be grazed by sheep. The site lent itself to a wide range of measures to enhance biodiversity, including wildflower meadows, hedgerow planting and bird and bat boxes in the nearby woodland.

The proposed design provided for 19,000 solar panels installed on ground-mounted solar PV arrays standing 2.8 metres high, across one and a half fields with a total area of 25 acres. Arrays arranged would be in rows at least six metres apart to enable sheep to graze. Deer fencing 2.4 metres high would be erected surrounding the solar panels with gaps at the bottom to allow small mammals to pass. Wildflower meadows, hedgerow planting and other ecological measures would significantly enhance the wildlife value of the site. All components of the solar farm would be removed at the end of the project lifetime with the majority of materials recycled, and site returned to current use.

It was anticipated that a public exhibition would be given in April 2015, followed by the submission of a planning application that same month. It was anticipated that the application would be determined in June 2015. If successful work would commence in September 2015.

Good Energy expected the construction would last approximately 16 weeks. Traffic to site would be vehicles bringing the workforce to and from site and up to 5 articulated lorries each day. There would be noise in the first weeks caused by the piling machinery. Good Energy would aim to use local contractors for the civil engineering works: tracks, trenching and fencing etc. The work force would require accommodation and sustenance during the build that would create local income. Building materials, such as aggregates would be sourced locally

Miss Good confirmed their community commitment to consult widely and to listen to feedback and amend their proposals wherever possible. The company would work with the community to develop ways of sharing the benefits of their developments, e.g. through a local fund and to offer communities the opportunity to invest in their projects where there was local demand and where it was commercially viable.

The Potential community benefits included the possibility of:

- Their traditional approach: a community fund worth at least £4,700pa for the lifetime of the solar farm controlled by local people to fund local projects or
- New opportunity under investigation: a community investment scheme enabling local people to take a financial stake in the project. It was anticipated that the yearly rate of return over 19 year term would be 6-7% together with the return of the original investment.

• Option for a stake to be gifted to the community to provide income to fund energy efficiency / fuel poverty measures
There had been initial discussions with Yealm Community Energy, but any proposal would be open to wider consultation. The final investment offer would be subject to detailed financial modelling to ensure terms did not affect the viability of the solar farm.

Solar farm facts and figures;

Total installed capacity 4.7 megawatts peak

MWh produced each year 5,217 Megawatt hours

Carbon abated annually 2190 tonnes

Numbers of homes supplied 1,245

A number of questions were raised;

1/26February2015.....Chairman

-Miss Good confirmed that the £4700pa community fund would be index linked.

-The landowner would be paid an annual rent for use of his land which was anticipated to be slightly in excess of agricultural rent. Comments were made about the loss of grazing land in an AONB area.

-Mr. Peter Brown from the Yealm Environment Group suggested that it was a good site involving poor quality agricultural land hidden away and visible from the Equestrian Centre only. It could still be used for sheep grazing. Mr. Brown had no details of the proposed financial arrangements for the benefit of the community. He suggested that he would not be satisfied with the proposed £4700pa to a community fund advising of the various Government initiatives providing more generous offers to communities. If more generous proposals were forthcoming to the community he would be minded to support the plans.

-A parishioner suggested he would be more minded to support such a local scheme which could serve to reduce solar panels on houses. It would cause less damage in an AONB.

-Mr. Matthews enquired about the permissive footpath from Gunsey Lane to the woods. The site owner advised that they tried to keep the path open. The owner wanted to continue with dual pasture use of the land, to specify conservation mix on the land. It was hoped to subsidise the farm. The site already had access for articulated grain lorries. The owner suggested that he should be contacted if any mess was caused on the roads as a result of construction traffic.

-Mr. Brown advised that it had been estimated that the four local parishes spent around 6 million pounds on energy, in the main going to foreign companies. Yealm Energy Community had forwarded their concept note and supporting documents to the Parish Council which had been circulated to the Members. Devon County Council had emphasized how much more beneficial it was to spend money locally.

-Miss Good confirmed the lifetime of the solar farm would be thirty years. It would be a 19 year term of investment. Solar panels did degenerate over time but there were panels in Germany that had lasted for over forty years. It was unlikely that it would be economically viable to renew the panels. The total capital cost of the project was likely to be 5 million pounds. No funding was received from Rural Development Growth. The solar industry was subsidised on a decreasing basis to stimulate the industry.

-A parishioner commented that the solar farm would be a blot on the landscape. Miss Good advised that there would be a public exhibition in April and that she would be happy to answer questions by email.

36/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE- there were apologies from Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Evans.

37/15 MINUTES –the Minutes of the 22 January Meeting were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

38/15 INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED - members were invited to declare interests in the items for discussion during the course of the Meeting. Mr. Matthews declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Twinning signage.

39/15 DISPENSATION REQUESTS- none.

40/15. VARIATION OF AGENDA- RESOLVED; Consideration of a quotation for additional drainage work and Twinning signage should be considered in Committee. (*Vote; Unanimous.*)

RESOLVED; Consideration of planning enforcement matters and pre applications should be considered in Committee. (*Vote; Unanimous.*)

41/15. PLANNING

Planning decisions

41.1 Orchard Brook, 21 Yealm Road 37/3142/14/ F-householder application for alterations and extension to dwelling. Application affected the setting of a Conservation Area. **SHDC:** Granted.

41.2 Proposed New Dwelling at SX 548 480 Orchard Brook, 21 Yealm Road 37/3141/14/F-construction of new three bedroom dwelling with 4th bed/study. Application affected the setting of a Conservation Area. **SHDC:** Granted

41.3 29 Court Road 37/2994/14/F-householder application for alterations and extension to dwelling (amendments to planning approval 37/1998/11/F.) **SHDC:** Granted

41.4 The Bower, Parsonage Road 37/3035/14/F- demolition of existing single storey bungalow to provide a 1 1/2 storey 3 bedroom dwelling and construction of 1 1/2 storey garage to house vehicles at ground level and provide storey on first floor. **SHDC:** Refused.

41.5 Cherry Trees, 58 Yealm Road 37/2749/14/F-householder application for proposed rear extension, conversion of roof space and construction of garage. **SHDC:** Granted.

41.6 Waterside, Court Wood 37/2803/14/F-demolition of existing and construction of replacement dwelling with associated landscaping and access. Affected a public footpath or right of way. **SHDC:** Granted

41.7 37 Yealm Road 37/2993/14/F-householder application for extension and alterations with associated landscaping works. Application affected the setting of a Conservation Area. Application affected the setting of a Listed Building. **SHDC:** Granted.

41.8 Rear of 17 Perches Close, Membland 37/3135/14/tw South Hams District Council (Parish of Newton & Noss) (No.7) Tree Preservation Order 1983. Work to Tree Preservation Order Trees. **SHDC:** Refused.

Planning applications received including

41.9 Revelarc, Riverside Road East 37/0249/VAR-variation of condition 14 (Landscaping) of planning consent 37/0262/13/F for the demolition of existing units and associated garages and the erection of 3 cottages with garages and associated external works. Application affected a Conservation Area. Affected a public footpath or right of way. The Vice Chairman, Mrs. Ansell, Miss Cove and Mr. Matthews had been to look at the development in response to an invitation from the developers to a show home opening event. The builder had been thanked for their consideration to local people during construction. DECISION; No objection. (Vote; unanimous.)

41.10 The Ship Inn 37/0340/15/F- retrospective creation of single garage (resubmission of 37/1948/14/F.)Affected the setting of a Listed Building. Affected the setting of a Conservation area. Affected a public footpath or right of way. DECISION; No objection subject to the Conservation Officer being satisfied. (Vote; 9 in favour, 1 abstention.)

41.11 Development site to the east of 85 Court Road 37/0355/15/F -erection of dwelling with 2 No parking spaces. Affected a public footpath or right of way. DECISION; No objection subject to Tree Preservation Orders being upheld. (Vote; 9 in favour, 1 abstention)

41.12 Development Management Committee Meeting- would be held on18 February 2015 relating to 97 Court Road 37/2600/14/F

41.13 Neighbourhood Plan –a letter dated 21 February from the RYDA Chairman clarifying the RYDA’s position with respect to the Neighbourhood Plan was noted. The RYDA Chairman confirmed that the RYDA and Neighbourhood Plan were not synonymous although some individuals were active in both organisations. The RYDA was not, and would not be running the Neighbourhood Plan but would be happy to consider supporting both the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan team in any appropriate way. It was for that reason that he had agreed that the RYDA would hold and distribute the CDF Funding in the apparent absence of an agreed, more appropriate account.

42/15. COUNTY and DISTRICT COUNCILS

42.1 Highways/Transport

i) Butts Park Playing field warning signs- DCC Highways representative had checked old video footage of the road between The Butts and Newton Downs and unfortunately there were no pre-existing warning signs which he thought he had recalled. Therefore he was unable to replace them as missing. The signs would need to funded externally as there was no budget allocation for new signing. He estimated costs currently in the region of £560.00 for two signs and could provide exact costs before ordering but did not believe it would exceed £600.00.If the Parish council was happy to fund the signs and wished to proceed he suggested it would be best to wait until April to order them being the new financial year for DCC. RESOLVED: To ask Devon County Council to obtain an exact pricing for playing field warning signs either side of the playing field on the road leading from Butts Park to the junction with Newton Downs Farm and to establish whether it would be more cost effective to wait until the new financial year.(Vote; 9 in favour, 1 abstention.)

ii) B3186/Parsonage Road- upon Mr. Lyndon’s request it was agreed to ask Devon County Council to relocate the flashing 30mph sign to the water tower end of Butts Park.

42.2 SHDC Asset Transfer/Parish Asset Land Registration- the signed Agreement or Sale had been returned to Curtis Whiteford Crocker with a request that the sale not be completed until after 2 April. The Clerk had also reminded the solicitors of the need to register the Parish Council’s ownership of the existing land assets at the Land Registry.

42.3 District/County Council Locality Budget- Cllr. Cooper advised that the £1000 remaining under her Locality Budget had already been allocated to assist with the publication costs of a book about the villages. Miss Cove put forward a request for £800 to support the establishment of a sustainable community market for Newton & Noss from the County Council Locality Budget. RESOLVED; to support an application to the County Councillor’s Locality Budget for a grant of £800 towards the establishment of a sustainable community market for Newton & Noss. (Vote; Unanimous.) The form would be sent to the Clerk for forwarding to the Cllr. Hosking.

43/15. CORRESPONDENCE/CONSULTATION

Neighbourhood Health Watch- Mrs. Ansell advised that she would attend the meeting on 17 March.

44/15 AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS –. Cheque payments were authorised and signed in accordance with the schedule prepared by the Clerk, checked by Mr. Hussell and listed in Minute 45/15

45/15 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following cheques were authorised totalling: £227.80

Chq No	PAYEE		AMOUNT
1913	A. Cooper	Travel expenses reimbursement	£51.30
1914	South west Water Ltd	Public Tap Pillory Hill 21/11/14-9/2/15	£10.76
1915	Ricoh UK Ltd	Photocopier rent 1/1/15-31/3/15	£133.74
1916	D. Goodchild	Grass cutting; The green 13 & 27 November 2014	£32.00

3/26February2015.....Chairman

*Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 payments:£0 total to date;£437

46/15. MAINTENANCE

46.1 Pope’s Quay-Mr. Stitson had inspected the slipway. The slipway was clear of weed. The footpath led up the steps. It was agreed no further action would be taken.

46.2 Other areas for consideration

i) Doctor’s Steps- Mr. Carter would take a look at the handrail.

ii) Area adjacent to steps from Passage Road to Noss Voss- Mr. Steve Shepherd had tidied up the land which it was felt had led to a slight improvement. Mrs. Ansell advised that there were some interested parishioners in Noss who may be prepared to undertake further improvement work themselves.

iii) Display panels- the Primary School had requested to hire the panels for three weeks for a school production. In light of their considerable help in providing a venue for a recent Parish Council Meeting at short notice it was agreed to waive the fee so long as the panels were returned in the same condition.

iv) South West Water- Mrs. Ansell had reported a sewage leak from a manhole cover below Point House on Sunday 8 March. The leak had been traced back to the Pumping Station – salt water ingress. South West Water was investigating.

In Committee

46.3 TAP funding 2014/2015–

i) Members discussed the drainage work undertaken by South West Highways under the terms of the joint contract. RESOLVED; to authorise the work undertaken by South West Highways under the joint contract with Wembury, Brixton and Yealmpton. *(Vote; 9 in favour, 1 abstention)*

ii) RESOLVED; to accept the quotation provided by South West Highways to undertake drainage improvement work by the Pollexfen Archer bus stop at The Green, in the sum of £885.89 plus VAT. *(Vote; Unanimous.)*

46.4 Twinning Signage- RESOLVED; to accept the quotation from South West Highways for two Twinning signs at the entrances to Newton & Noss in the sum of £210 plus VAT. *(Vote; 9 in favour, 1 abstention)*

47/15 PRE APPLICATIONS/PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Members discussed an invitation to meet with a house owner to discuss a potential planning application. It was agreed Mrs. Ansell, Cllr. Cooper and Miss Cove would attend on the basis that it was an informal meeting and not to be taken as any indication of the Parish Councils likely decision.

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm