

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

CASTLE EDEN PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER 2013

Present:

Councillor Mrs M Wilmer (Chair)
Councillors D Martin, B Nutter, B Robertson and B Turnbull

Also Present:

PCSO Goodwin and Edson, Mrs A Moon – ACE, Mr Stephenson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs V Robertson and County Councillors Crute and Pounder.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. POLICE REPORT

PCSO Goodwin advised that 17 incidents had been received since the last meeting. There had been 1 personal nuisance ASB, 1 theft of metal fencing and allotments being broken into and vegetables stolen. Allotment watch had been re-established and shed alarms distributed. Regular patrols were also being carried out in the area. Other incidents were road or A19 related. There had been a report of suspicious activity of a man with an air rifle near St James Church. The explanation given was that he was going onto the golf course, with permission to shoot rabbits, crows and squirrels.

Crime was down 4%, vehicle offences down 29% and ASB down 25%.

Speeding on the B1281 near The Village had been identified as a PACT priority. A community speedwatch had taken place the previous day with Parish Councillors, Police Officers, residents and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Ron Hogg. 7 cars were witnessed using excess speed and 2 would receive letters of warning as they were doing more than the speed limit plus 10%.

The Clerk explained that she had witnessed an unmarked police car at the entrance to Burdon Walk the previous Sunday. PCSO Goodwin explained that RPU were conducting speed checks and a report would be received in due course.

Councillor Turnbull explained that there were a lot of willing residents when it came to speeding traffic. In some areas, a traffic gun was given to residents to monitor cars and pass on the registration of vehicles speeding excessively. An email had been sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner requesting that residents of Castle Eden be provided with a speed gun.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had looked at the two roundabouts at the A19 slip road and made comment that the footpath stopped and pedestrians had to cross the roundabouts to get to the other side of the road.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

- 4. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on **21 NOVEMBER 2013**, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Minute No 6 refers – The Clerk advised that she had been copied into 34 emails from residents who objected to the proposed Crematorium. The Chair thanked everyone involved in the distribution of the leaflets.

6. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) **AHM Design**

AHM Design had queried if the Parish Council had any aspirations for the future of the village in terms of its viability and if it was intended to bring forward a Neighbourhood Plan as they had a client wishing to bring forward a planning application for a new dwelling. Discussion had taken place previously with Officers at Durham County Council regarding the merits of neighbourhood planning within Castle Eden. As Castle Eden was in a Conservation Area, it was felt that this was not required at this moment in time.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that a response be given explaining that the Parish Council would welcome informal pre planning discussions but was difficult to pass comment when the location, scale or design of the application was not known

(ii) **Real Care Ltd**

The Clerk gave details of correspondence received from Real Choice College who were requesting a donation.

RESOLVED that the request be noted.

(iii) **Haswell and District Mencap Society**

The Clerk gave details of correspondence received from Haswell and District Mencap who were requesting financial assistance towards a demountable building to enable the furniture recycling business to continue.

It was suggested that a policy for donations be formulated and residents be consulted on whether they would like the Parish Council to make charitable donations.

RESOLVED that the request be noted.

(iv) **East Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils Traveler Encampments and The Annual Horse Fair**

Jeanette Stephenson, Community Safety and Involvement, Durham County Council had requested details of Parish Council meetings in 2014 and she was interested in visiting to discuss the issues of traveler encampments and the Annual Horse Fair.

RESOLVED that dates of Parish Council meetings be forwarded.

7. **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Councillor Crute had submitted his apologies but had advised that B&J Commercials had placed the successful bid for Wellfield Highways Depot. The site was identified for industrial use, however the full details of use for the site would not be known until a planning application was received.

Concerns were expressed that B&J Commercials were not registered at Companies House.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

8. **PLANNING PROPOSALS**

- a) CE/13/01502/FPA Erection of wind and installation of associated equipment and infrastructure including access track at Approximately 220 Metres to the East Of Dene Leazes Farm Hesleden Durham TS27 4PD for Eden Farm Ltd

Mr Stephenson, the applicant explained that he had a well-established family business between Castle Eden and Monk Hesleden Parish Councils that was established in 1963. The land was between 2 nature reserves. As a successful farming and cold storage enterprise it was an important contributor to the local economy employing up to 145 people and bringing over £40m pa into the region which also supported many local jobs, trades and services, apart from direct employees.

The reasons for requirement of the turbine were the escalating electricity costs, after wages and diesel, electricity was the biggest overhead. Last year costs rose to more than £360,000; £1000 per day, making them less able to compete nationally in the industry. Generating their own electricity would feed into the grid to help offset the huge charges.

A wind turbine was decided on only after detailed research was carried out into all other possibilities. Durham University Business School after 3 months detailed research both in 2010 and 2012 concluded that only a wind turbine could come anywhere near producing the figures that was required.

Installing a turbine on the industrial estate was explored but was not viable as it would be too close to buildings, roads, and Shotton airfield and that several large established business located on the industrial estate had previously had applications refused.

Mr Stephenson felt that the proposal was suitable as follows:

- The scale of the single turbine was very suitable to be situated on a farm.
- Its scale was easily absorbed by the surrounding landscape.
- The application has been clearly thought out and was supported by justification.
- Apart from all else it had significant benefits with renewable energy offsetting carbon emissions.
- It was clean - using only wind - with no diesel fumes, smoke, or radiation produced by coal, oil and nuclear power.
- The proposal was within the guidelines supported by planning policies.
- It would not be permanent, with a maximum life of 25 years after which it had to be removed. By that time fuel technology will have moved on.
- From a purely economics point it would have been better sited on a hill further west but out of concern for the area we have researched and chosen the best, least obtrusive, position well away from all dwellings and roads.

The farm had a long track record of improving the local environment in Hesleden and Castle Eden. A 10 year Countryside Stewardship Scheme restored the hedges and since 1979 and they had planted 40,000 trees with a minimum target of 1000 trees each year. This year 6000 were planted to restore the Parish Boundary between Castle Eden and Monk Hesleden Parishes through a Durham County Council initiative.

Councillor Robertson explained that the turbine would be close to The Village and none of the residents had been consulted on the planning application by DCC. It was suggested that the matter be deferred to give DCC the opportunity to consult with residents in The Village area of Castle Eden.

RESOLVED that comments on the application be deferred until the next meeting and DCC be requested to consult with residents of The Village in Castle Eden.

- b) CE/13/01477/FPA Erection of a dormer bungalow with associated hardstanding and landscaping (Resubmission) at land at Stockton Road, Castle Eden for Mr C Seymour

Consideration was given to the above planning application which was a resubmission of an application previously withdrawn by the applicant.

Members felt that the original concerns that had been raised regarding the impact the proposal would have on the highway as well as drainage and flooding had not been sufficiently addressed. The existing properties in The Foundry suffered from flooding and drainage problems and it was felt that the proposal would exacerbate the problem. Further concerns were also expressed regarding the impact the proposal would have on residential amenity.

RESOLVED that an objection be made based on the grounds of highway safety, drainage and flooding.

9. **FINANCE REPORT**

a) Balance at Bank as at 19 December 2013 £11,300.08

Expenditure

Clerks Expenses Oct/Nov £89.40

Balance at Bank £11,210.68

- b) Precept 2014/15

The notification of the Tax Base and request for Precept for 2014/15 had now been received from Durham County Council. The Clerk circulated a draft budget for consideration.

RESOLVED that an informal meeting be held to discuss the budget in more detail.

10. **VILLAGE MATTERS**

- (i) **ACE Report**

Amanda Moon circulated the key points from the last ACE meeting and gave an update on progress.

- (ii) **War Memorial**

Councillor Robertson explained that a schedule of work had been drawn up. A quote received from a restoration firm amounted to £3000. A pre-application to the War Memorials Trust had been submitted and the outcome would be known in 3/4 weeks. An estimation for the full works was £23000. Only 75% of the funding could be provided.

The land which the war memorial stood on was unregistered with the Land Registry and would cost approximately £130 to commence the process.

RESOLVED that the process be commenced to register the land in the ownership of the Parish Council.

- (iii) **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)**
An application had been submitted to the Co Durham Community Foundation for the funding required for the AED.
- (iv) **Coal recovery/reclamation of the site at Hesleden**
Councillors Martin and Turnbull attended the consultation event. The combustable material equated to ¼ million tonnes of coal to be removed off site. The work that needed to be completed would cause a lot of problems for residents of Castle Eden in terms of noise and increase in traffic. Concerns were raised regarding Hesleden Road and the 40mph speed limit. The company had indicated that they would contribute to traffic management through the village.
- (v) **Community Speedwatch**
This item had been dealt with under the Police Report.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.