

## TERLING AND FAIRSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting of Terling and Fairstead Parish Council held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.30pm, (Remote Meeting by Zoom)

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Present: Mrs S McNamara (Chairman) Mr A Dyke  
Mrs S Alder Mr R Dixon  
Mr S Thatcher Mr M Tugwell  
Mrs J Long Mr C Barker  
Mrs L Sime

Cllr Bebb

F Killby – Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

8 members of the public

SM welcomed all to the meeting.

24.91 ***Apologies for Absence-*** Cllr Abbott, Cllr Dervish, M Webster and P Bird.

24.92 ***Declaration of Interests*** – Although no longer employed, AD declared a non-pecuniary interest in all Agenda items relating to his past employer Lord Rayleigh’s Farms Limited, Lord Rayleigh and Lord Rayleigh’s family, and stated in particular that he would not be participating in any debate relating to Longfield Solar Farm.

24.93 ***Meeting Open to the Public*** –

Comments on Longfield Solar Farm

A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for the enormous amount of work it had done. They wished to make a comment on the non-statutory booklet sent out to the community which lacked vital details and information that was available as it was published almost simultaneously in the Scoping Report. She felt that few people in the community will have read the Scoping Report and will not have an idea of what is involved particularly in relation to the size of the batteries, the enormous substation and the total size of the proposed farm, as there was a big difference of up to 50% in the figures quoted in the non-statutory booklet and the Scoping Report. The member of the public asked if the Parish Council would agree that it was disingenuous of the applicant to seek comments from the community without giving it all the known facts, was this a box ticking exercise, and if so why?

A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for all the work that had gone into the Scoping Report response. He was concerned at the sheer size of the scheme which is completely inappropriate and will change the face of the countryside forever and the impact it will have on residents who are already very anxious and upset about this. He is concerned about the inconsistency between the two documents as stated above, and with the information being distributed as it has been, the majority of people would believe that the map in the non-statutory booklet is the correct one, as it says it includes sub stations and battery storage, and in the Scoping Report there is a more accurate map which includes the substation and the battery storage. He believes this is the main difference in the size and to start proceedings with a 200 hectare error with a scheme of this size does not instill confidence at the beginning of a project such as this. The member of the public is not against solar and wanted to try and support this scheme and has researched PS Renewables. This is a scheme that is much larger than anything they have done in the

past and there does not seem to be a lot of information about batteries. The Sunnica scheme is a year ahead and they are still struggling with the same lack of information and responses to queries, and people are questioning if they are capable of producing something on this scale. The questionnaire asks for a lot of information that has not been presented yet, eg cabling for example, there is no information about these in the non-statutory booklet, so how can we comment on this? Finally, are landowners genuinely happy about the impact this will have on the people that will be affected by this development?

Two members of the public who live in Little Waltham and who will be totally surrounded by solar panels attended the meeting as they are not getting any information from Longfield. They understand that this was spoken about at a Parish Council meeting a month before they were told it was happening. They receive nothing from Newgate Communications so are hearing all this second hand and are attending the meeting in the hope that they may be kept informed as this is severely going to affect their lives and this seems to be the only way to get information.

SM suggested they contact their Parish Council. They stated that this is where the information comes to and this is where they need to be to get any information.

A member of the public queried as to who had declared an interest on this matter at the beginning of the meeting. SM clarified that it was Councillor Dyke and that the representative from Lord Rayleigh's Farms was attending as a member of the public.

24.94 ***Minutes of Last Meeting –***

It was proposed by CB and seconded by JL that the Chairman should sign a copy of the minutes of the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 as a true and accurate record of the meeting with the following amendments:

Minute 24.76 - Paragraph 16 – AD asked Cllr Abbott about the problem of heavy traffic in Ranks Green.

Minute 24.76 - Paragraph 3 - RD asked if some of the centres were potentially earmarked for permanent closure.

Minute 24.84 - the proposed Abbatoir Extension at Blixes was approved under delegated powers and RD stated that this was a good example of liaison between the applicant and the Parish Council.

Unanimously approved.

24.95 ***District and County Councillors' Reports –***

Cllr Bebb – attended last night's Local Plan committee – The Planning Inspectorate has now agreed that Section 1 has been found to be sound and councils can now move forward to Section 2 with the caveat that government funding is provided for the link road for A133.

The housing number of 716 in the Local Plan is also a concern as BDC is near its maximum allocation. This is being clarified but it is hoped there will be enough capacity. Two planning inspectors are going to be examining all three Section 2 Local plans and it is hoped that it will be in place in the autumn.

Covid 19 – BDC is currently dealing with 25 different government grant schemes which is causing a huge amount of work. The Council has not yet been fully refunded by the Government for all extra costs incurred. There has been some negative press regarding

the budget as the suggestion is a 2% increase in line with recent years. A letter is to be sent to the Braintree and Witham Times explaining the rationale behind the increase.

Cllr Bebb attended the A12 forum meeting with Highways England. He is concerned that they are in denial regarding any work that is not on the main route and that they do not seem to recognize the problems relating to Maldon Road in Hatfield Peverel. The very complicated design that they presented had omitted to include the access from the Kennels just outside Hatfield Peverel and was generally not well thought out. RD stated that there seemed to be a disconnect between Essex Highways and Highways England. Cllr Bebb wants Maldon District Council to be more involved and he is also pushing Hatfield Peverel Parish Council on this as well.

RD stated that the Planning Committee was very concerned that Braintree District Council is changing the way it deals with planning applications under delegated powers. After scanning through the paper that was presented to Full Council he feels there is a lot of disquiet amongst this parish council and others concerning the pre application process with ward councillors being present and how that was going to go forward and the amount of time this will take, but he needs to look at this in more detail.

DB agreed some people have some concerns. There is going to be a member's forum to look at the pre application stage, but the benefit side would be for parish councils to get involved at an earlier stage.

AD has looked through the report and he commented in synopsis that he understands that Full Council has approved the amended changes that Cllr Paggi put forward and therefore the new scheme of delegation will start from 1st January 2021. As far as the member's forum is concerned, it has been left that they have effectively in principle given approval, but the full details of how it will work, what its remit will be, etc, is to be hardened up between now and spring 2021 when they expect it to come into play.

Cllr Bebb understood the Planning Committee's concerns but said there was not much that could be done to stop it happening.

AD commented that as far the changing of the way decisions are delegated nothing could be done. He believed that further consultation on way the way the forums are conducted was possible going forward and commented that the Parish Council's submission against the original concept was noted as was other parish councils.

Cllr Bebb stated that some of the points made by parish councils were taken on board, including some made by Terling and Fairstead.

In response to a query from councillor he confirmed that Civic Amenity points would remain open in Tier 3.

#### Cllr Abbott

SM reported that Cllr Abbott had sent a report which was quite detailed and many matters will be covered in the Agenda.

Other points to note – He has been talking to a lead police officer re speed enforcement and discussing work that can be done regarding speeding traffic.

The Climate Action Commission of ECC has published its Interim Report which includes initiatives on solar energy (the opportunity to use commercial roofing such as on industrial estates for solar PV), the need to connect up and create new cycleways (including rural areas), tree planting and the need to reduce light pollution.

Funding is available to support local initiatives such as food distribution if there is a need in the Parish.

At a recent ECC meeting a motion for debate on pedestrian safety, focusing on vulnerable pedestrians, was passed with good support.

Cllr Dervish The clerk reported that Cllr Dervish is chasing comments from Braintree District Council on Longfield Solar Farm and also investigating if there are any pre-applications for the United Reformed Church building in Terling.

24.96 **Chairman's Report** – SM stated that this meeting would normally be held in the Square & Compasses with drinks to thank all the volunteers but was not possible due to Covid 19. She asked that thanks be recorded to everyone who helps – Daphne Parris for organising buses, Debbie Dunning for maintaining the defibrillator, Alan Jiggins for all his work in the parish maintaining the footpaths and other areas, Colin Cutler for administration and organization of the community website, Heather Cutler for producing and distributing the Parish News, Lord Rayleigh's Farms for the huge amount of support they give to the Parish Council and the community in general and the pubs, shop and tea rooms, and lastly to the councillors and the clerk for all their work. C Cutler also proposed a vote of thanks to Sarah McNamara for all her efforts on behalf of the village.

24.97 **Finance**

Copies of Receipts, Payments, Bank Reconciliation, Budgets and Forecast for the current financial year were distributed prior to the meeting to all councillors. SA proposed that the following cheques/direct debits be approved for payment with the exception of Arrowmail, clerk will investigate this invoice with C Cutler and report back to Council. JL queried the payment of netting damage, Clerk explained that it was paid in error to LRF and subsequently refunded. Seconded by RD, unanimously approved:

9 Nov	BACS	F Killby	Salary	791.81
9 Nov	BACS	F Killby	Expenses	164.23
9 Nov	BACS	Inland Revenue	PAYE/Tax	251.48
9 Nov	BACS	Essex Pension Fund	Clerk's Pension	292.14
9 Nov	BACS	Lord Rayleigh's Farms	Garage Rental/Grass Cutting	145.00
9 Nov	BACS	A H Jiggins	Handyman Services	175.48
9 Nov	BACS	Anglian Water	Water Recreation Ground	11.40
9 Nov	BACS	E.on	Street Lighting	84.47
9 Nov	BACS	C Humphries	Netting Damage	450.00
18 Nov	DD	EDF Energy	Elec Recreation Ground	19.00
18 Nov	DD	British Telecom	Clerk's Phone Line	42.06
4 Dec	BACS	F Killby	Salary	967.51
4 Dec	BACS	F Killby	Expenses	147.57
4 Dec	BACS	Inland Revenue	PAYE/Tax	376.12

4 Dec	BACS	Essex Pension Fund	Clerk's Pension	373.11
4 Dec	BACS	Lord Rayleigh's Farms	Garage Rental	25.00
4 Dec	BACS	A H Jiggins	Handyman Services	186.88
4 Dec	BACS	Terling Village Hall	Room Hire	15.60
4 Dec	BACS	Arrowmail Ltd	Annual Fee Email Hosting	56.16

Budget 2021-22 this needs to be approved at the next meeting, a draft budget will be proposed at a Finance meeting (to be arranged). The draft budget will be circulated to all. ST suggested that previous years are included for comparison to pre Covid 19 expenditure.

24.98 ***Environmental and Footpaths***

Parish Map – on hold until after Xmas.

Dog Waste Bag Dispensers – SM thanked CB for the installation and JL for arranging it. CB was concerned that it is not being particularly well used and wondered if some signage advertising it would be useful.

Water Quality, Sewage Plants, River Ter - RD suggested a Freedom of Information request as no response had been received from Great Leighs Parish Council or the Company Secretaries at Anglian Water. SA recently visited the treatment centre with Paul Guppy and noted that the equipment is run down. The manager of the plant also said that the water discharge would be much purer if the equipment was more modern, SA was concerned as to how the system will work with further development as this is unclear, and presumes that is why Chelmsford City Council provided their recent report. SA was also told that there is one ecologist at the Environment Agency who tests water quality for the whole of East Anglia, and as far as SA understands, testing is only carried out in Hatfield Peverel which is a long way from the treatment works. Paul Guppy is still waiting for the Environment Agency to deal with his complaint. RD stated that they have water quality ambassadors. SA is not sure that the EA are obliged to give FOI. Clerk stated that Cllr Abbott confirmed that Anglian Water are exempt from FOI requests but are covered by EIR data regulations and sent a link on this. AD asked why nothing has been received from Great Leighs Parish Council on this but they have responded with information on Longfield Solar Farm and suggested going to councillors direct or attending their next Parish Council meeting. Clerk to get a list of councillors from Chelmsford City Council's website. As LS is technically part of the parish and has already had an introduction to a parish councillor she will pursue this contact.

Replacement of Litter Bin in Owls Hill – Clerk to calculate the amount left over from Cllr Abbott's grant in order to purchase this and ascertain if BDC will install it free of charge.

Repair of Noticeboard and Installation of Posts opposite school – CB apologised as he has been very busy at work but there is also a wood shortage. He will action asap.

CB queried street lighting charge in Finance, clerk clarified this was a typo and will be corrected, the Ford light cost should go down as it is an LED.

24.99 ***Estate Liaison*** – nothing to report.

25.00 ***Health and Welfare***

New Defibrillators – clerk still waiting to hear from National Lottery, the case for the Humphreys defibrillator should be purchased with a grant. RD clarified that a simple one can be purchased but it does need to be accessible only via the code supplied through the Ambulance service.

Playground - Clerk will chase delivery of the rocker. RD asked if quotes were available for sails and poles and the new climbing frame as this would be needed for the budget meeting in January 2021. CB asked if the new rope section would be in addition to the climbing frame, which it is. It is hoped that the climbing frame can be funded in part by the CIF grant as the Parish Council will be eligible in the next financial year.

25.01 ***IT & Publicity*** – C Cutler had received an email from British Telecom stating that they were aware of the crackling lines in the Terling area. They had accepted it was their problem, were working on it and that everyone affected should continue to report it as a fault.

25.02 ***Planning and Highways***

Planning App: 20/00462/FUL - Demolition of bungalow and erection of 2 No. dwellings, The Lincoln, New Road, Terling. - Both adjoining residents have made formal complaints to Planning Ombudsman. No response to the Parish Council's complaint to date. JL asked if contact could be made with developer to ask them to keep the pavement and road clean and tidy as this is a daily problem. Clerk to action.

Planning App: 20/00161/VAR – Great Warley Hall, Ranks Green, Fairstead - Removal of Condition 2 'Annex Occupancy Restriction' of approved permission 06/01863/FUL granted 03/11/06 for rebuild of existing barn into 2 bed annex - RD has looked at this on the BDC website and it is still awaiting a decision. The Council's latest comments have been added to the application but the planning officer has not responded to requests for clarification of this point.

Planning applications for Hull Lane and Viners Cottages have both been approved under delegated powers, the Council supported both these applications.

- Oakfield Lane parking – SM stated that this is a private road and as such the Parish Council cannot get involved in a private matter. RD stated that councillors had received copies of the communication from a resident attaching an Essex Highways document classifying Oakfield Lane as private. AD stated that in his understanding Oakfield Lane is a private road, it belongs to the residents and it is just not registered. Those that have an interest therefore have a right to stop people parking there and that we cannot get involved in this as it is a private matter.
- Waltham Road flooding – Cllr Abbott reported that he has had a look at the surface drains in Waltham Road and they looked clear, but ECC has also said they will reinspect. As previously reported to the Clerk, there could be a complication in that ECC says the drain pipe runs towards Oakfield Lane where it would no longer be an ECC responsibility. Cllr Abbott also sent a map for information. AD stated that he believed the drainage was changed, but under Riperian Law it is the responsibility of people downstream to receive and take the water away, so Essex Highways has every responsibility to be ensuring that it happens. They should be enforcing the various people that have an interest in Oakfield Lane but they need to prove that they are the receiving body for that water, because the public highway is being flooded as a result of it. RD will call Cllr Abbott to see if he can action this with Highways.

- Fuller Street flooding – SA reported that there are no problems at the moment as ditches and streams have been dug out. Highways have done nothing so far, Cllr Abbott has done everything he can to help. SA is to contact Cllr Bentley directly as a parishioner. The drains are blocked but it is impossible to keep these clear. SA also reported that the stream which starts opposite the noticeboard is back.
- River Hill – this is still a problem, Clerk to advance with Essex Highways.
- Road Repairs – JA has completed the autumn survey for potholes and other defects. Some potholes in Crow Pond Road are really bad now, and most of the road markings put in by Highways for defects have been washed away.
- United Reformed Church – Clerk has made enquiries and has been informed it is still on the market, it is also still listed as for sale with the estate agent. JFS reported that D Brien had been informed it was off the market. Clerk has also written to the head office of the URC for clarification. JFS will make further enquiries and report back if relevant.
- Local Plan – see Minute 24.95.
- Directional Signs – Cllr Abbott has completed a new survey of broken signs. He is still waiting for a quote from Highways on the cost of replacing the metal signs. The wooden signs will be replaced by Highways at their expense. Councillors are very concerned that the broken post in the centre of the village is still not fixed. This has been scheduled for work, unfortunately the Council is not allowed to remove it, even if it is an eyesore. SA reported that a Fuller Street sign has been replaced with a plastic sign (not a Highways sign).

25.03 **Recreation Ground** – A youth team has requested to use the pitch at a reduced rate. Councillors were happy for the team to use the pitch but felt the price of £25 per use was competitive. Councillors were concerned that players and spectators were parking in the road. Clerk to clarify who was using the pitch and remind them that it is a condition of hire that all vehicles are parked in the area provided and not in the road. If this continues the arrangement with this team will be terminated.

25.04 **Longfield Solar Farm**

Cllr Abbott reported that he had sent the Clerk a statement on the proposal. He has received many calls and has been lobbied by agents for the applicant. He strongly supports solar in principle but feels that this scheme is too large and would have an undue impact on the landscape and loss of farmland.

SM thanked RD and the Clerk for collating all the comments received on the EIA Scoping Report. There were approximately forty (10% of households). All information is available on the Village Hub, the Community Website and in the Parish News. SM asked that thanks to Colin and Heather Cutler be recorded for arranging this.

RD stated that he would be continuing weekly updates on Solar Farm as necessary. RD has also arranged for the Reference to Chapter 3 of the Chancellor's Autumn statement about carbon and carbon efficiency and the government policy regarding alternative means of electricity production, and the Secretary of State for Business and Employment's statement on 60,000 job creation in the alternative energy section by 2025, to be uploaded to the community website for information.

SM commented that the Parish Council will now wait for the next stage of the consultation process and will keep parishioners informed as and when necessary.

25.05 ***Councillors' Reports, including Village Hall Report, School Report and Church Liaison***

SM – attended a village hall meeting where thanks were recorded to the clerk for passing on the grant information.

JL – asked whose responsibility it is to do odd jobs in village as a few jobs such as painting the railings by the Ford and installing the new bin need to be done. Clerk to ask Alan Jiggins but if he is unable to do these jobs, JL is happy to organise a volunteer painting party in the spring. If a contractor is needed to carry out this work, the Parish Council has to go through a quote process in order to be compliant.

RD asked if he could attend the EALC conference on climate change and suggested SA accompany him. The cost of £50 per delegate could be covered by the £100 allocated to councillors' expenses in the budget. Councillors were happy to agree this.

CB – has spoken to the Tennis Club Chairman regarding the contribution from the Parish Council. The Council is happy to make a contribution but it would prefer an item that it could purchase rather than a contribution to costs. CB explained that some remedial repairs had been carried out but the oak tree remains an issue and could this be taken in to consideration when it was surveyed. Clerk reported that the TPO Officer had already looked at the problem and advised that it needed more work than that proposed by the Tennis Club. This information was forwarded to the Tennis Club. RD asked if there was budget re the MUGA court. MT said Tennis Club needed to get permission from LRF to see if it is possible, one option was to look at doing it in stages, getting it cleaned up and tidied and if it is an option to go further with the MUGA court. JFS will talk to Tennis club about it.

25.06 ***Clerk's Report***

Oak Tree Survey – have chased BDC on this.

Terling Ford Light – have requested a new switch be installed by UK Power Networks as per CB's request.

25.07 ***Information exchange / next agenda items*** – Scoping report - Terling Area Conservation statement not available for their consideration.

25.08 ***Date of next meeting, including committees:*** - Parish council meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 7.30 pm (remote meeting by Zoom)

Meeting closed at 09.40 pm