

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2023.**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and provided an update on the improvement in his health following his recent illness, as well as thanking Councillors Hay and Paynter for having stepped into the chair for past meetings. He wished everyone a Happy New Year and also welcomed PCSO Trebble to the meeting along with the public present.

## **00/01**

### **Public Forum**

Comment was made that the varied proposals concerning new masts to connect the proposed solar farm were not an improvement on what had originally been put forward. Councillor Jones advised the application would be considered and discussed in full later during the meeting.

Cllr Braidford raised a matter on behalf of a resident, not present, who had observed construction work ongoing within the grounds of the Whitminster Inn although no planning consent had been determined. This was noted.

Grit bin locations, past and present, were discussed and Cllr Jones highlighted a supply of grit located within the Village Hall car park.

Mrs Jones, on behalf of the Whitminster Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee, made a request that the Parish Council and other village organisations work together to put on something special for the forthcoming Coronation.

## **01/01**

### **Present**

There were 7 Parish Councillors present for the meeting including Councillors Jones (Chairman), Hay (Vice Chair), Paynter, Braidford, Douglas, Mrs Gilmore & Mrs Younger.

## **02/01**

### **Apologies**

There were no apologies received from Council members as all were present but it was noted that County & District Councillor Stephen Davies had sent his apologies for being unable to attend.

## **03/01**

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest relating to known agenda items.

## **04/01**

### **Minutes**

The Minutes of the December 2022 meeting were signed as a true record of the proceedings without amendment.

## **05/01**

### **Matters Arising**

Cllr Braidford confirmed that he would take forward the planting of the two Jubilee Trees and would liaising with John Mason at Highfield Garden World.

There had been no response to posters seeking to identify additional schoolchildren for the distribution of Jubilee Mugs and further efforts would be made.

## **06/01**

### **Police & Community Safety Issues**

PCSO Trebble was in attendance and advised that during 2021 there had been 51 crimes within the Parish and during 2022 there had been 66. He stated that the upturn following the end of lockdown restrictions was low compared with elsewhere and the Parish therefore suffered little crime. However, there has been 2 burglaries. He had no further update to give concerning the pavilion break-in. There was then some discussion concerning the A38 crossroads and the recent works to strengthen the left turn restriction that were being ignored. He advised that he would try to obtain resources to monitor the situation. He informed the Council that he was unsure as to what traffic law was being broken and these comments caused some concern. There had been no feedback in regard to the mobile CCTV camera deployed to combat antisocial behaviour in the Parish and PCSO Trebble advised that this was because it had done its job in acting as a deterrent.

On the matter of the Emergency Plan and a potential review/update, details of the existing plan were circulated and guidance would be sought. The matter would remain on the agenda for future meetings.

It was noted the play area safety inspection would soon be due.

## **07/01**

### **Planning**

#### Decisions to Note

There were no decisions to note.

#### Applications to Consider

S.22/2098/VAR Land Parcels A & B Near Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

Section 73 Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of Application Reference Number: S21/0465/FUL (The construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning for a renewable energy scheme

of up to a 49.9 megawatt (MW) solar farm and up to a 49.9MW battery storage facility). Variation to consist of two point-of-contact solar arrays and addition of spare containers.

In regard to this revised application, Council was concerned that the consultation being carried out was flawed once again. This was because that whilst the application relates to variations to the proposed development located wholly within the Parish, the application was not listed on the planning portal when searching for applications in Whitminster. This meant that those signed up for planning alerts were not notified and those wishing to submit comments, if informed of the application, were unable to find the details when searching for it.

After due deliberation Council resolved to oppose the application for the following reasons:

- As the applicant would have anticipated the need for the proposed infrastructure when submitting their original application, Council was of the view that if the detail had been submitted, pertaining to a particularly sensitive part of the overall site, and had been considered within the totality of the impact then it would have affected the original decision reached. Therefore, a wider consideration of the application should be undertaken.

- The proposed structures, as a grouped cluster adjacent to an existing pylon, would be a significant visual intrusion into the landscape that could not be mitigated. This impact would intrude on new views and at a greater distance from those matters considered in relation to the original application.

- The proposal would impact to the detriment of the setting of a group of highly graded Listed Buildings, including Whitminster Church, and also impact on the vistas to and from the Industrial Heritage Conservation Corridor close by. It would also neither preserve nor enhance the Conservation Area. The point of connection is, as advised by Historic England, the closest possible point to the most highly graded heritage assets across the whole site area. There is a great potential for harm.

S.22/2381/VAR Whitminster Park, Bristol Road, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

Section 73 application to remove conditions 6 (cabin use) & 7 (occupancy and register) from the application S.19/1439/VAR (S.13/1508/FUL) to allow for the siting of 16 holiday log cabins to exist independently from the Whitminster Inn and/or Marquee and a variation to condition 1 (approved plans) to allow for replacement holiday units.

After due deliberation Council resolved to oppose the application and to highlight that the application formed one of a number recently submitted concerning the site that sought to create several independent business entities. It was noted that all utilise the same proposed means of access and egress across the car park serving the Whitminster Inn as well as the variety of businesses developed recently without planning permission. Whilst it was appreciated that every application must be considered on its own merits, Council considered there to be an unavoidable degree of interlinking in regard to the impact on car parking and vehicular movements to and from the A38 in the proximity of a junction with a known injury accident record. Each application looked to lay claim to the access and the volume of vehicular movements could more than triple without any control or measures of mitigation applied. Therefore, Council would request that no variations be permitted and that the proposals submitted for holiday homes be determined as a standalone planning application considering the merits of the site independently from the hotel and other business activities.

Council also thought the application to be confusing, especially in regard to the reference to 'replacement holiday units' and would ask for clarification as to what this meant in practice. The accompanying site plan was thought to appear incorrect as it showed, enclosed by the red line, the exit from the Whitminster Inn car park as the only means of vehicular access and egress. Currently the site is accessed through an 'in' and 'out' route separated by a central island and the A38 carriageway features reflect this. Utilising the exit for two-way traffic, as the site plan implies, would have a notable impact on highway safety.

In addition, whilst the application sought to separate the site from the marquee, the plans submitted showed the marquee as still forming part of the site and hence it was assumed the marquee would remain and its removal was not proposed as a condition. However, the landscaping, roadways and cabins would remove all parking currently allocated to the structure and hence Council would query how this would be addressed. On parking, it was not clear what parking was proposed in regard to the new cabin units but as they were suggested as being two-bedroom units Council would ask that a minimum of two spaces per unit be provided along with additional visitor parking and that this be clearly identified.

Returning to the application in principle, the original application was for additional accommodation to support the hotel business and the weddings operated within the hotel and marquee. Separating the accommodation from the hotel would remove this factor, that could be claimed to support the local economy. As a standalone enterprise the holiday accommodation would simply be new commercial development in the countryside and outside of the defined settlement boundary. Furthermore, the design was not in accordance with the Whitminster Village Design Statement that is adopted supplementary planning guidance.

#### Local Plan & Other Planning Matters

It was noted that there was still no update received from planning enforcement concerning the Whitminster Inn and Old Stables at Kidnams Farm.

It was noted that the solar farm application submitted for Arlingham Parish had been withdrawn.

A response had been received from Helen Cooper advising that the issue with planning alerts relating to applications straddling parishes had been raised before and the matter along with other uploading issues was being investigated by the ICT department at SDC. She advised that applications are advertised in newspapers but obviously this does not overcome the issue when residents have signed up for alerts concerning the parish in which they live and do not then receive them.

On the Local Plan, the Clerk had been in touch again with the programme manager for the planning inquiry, Charlotte Clancy, and details had been received concerning the Examination in Public. Whilst the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions document had not produced anything of

notable concern to suggest that proposed sites would be overturned, it was still not clear what opportunity the Parish would have to make further representations or indeed if it would prove necessary. Advice on the timing and process would therefore be sought from the relevant District Council officers.

## **08/01**

### **Highways & Byways**

There had been nothing further heard in regard to the grant application for Community Speedwatch Fund support for a vehicle activated sign and this was to be investigated.

Similarly there has been nothing heard from Yakub Mullah following his return from extended leave. As advised, Gary Wilson was taking over the role and a meeting was to be arranged once he was in post.

It was noted that all footpaths had been sprayed out and there were no new issues of concern.

## **09/01**

### **Skate Ramp**

A date was proposed for a site meeting with Fisher German on behalf of Exolum subject to final confirmation. The results of grant applications were to be expected in due course and a further application would be submitted to Urbaser.

## **10/01**

### **Solar Farm**

A further response had been received from Michael Baker of JBM Solar focusing on the changes being made to the planning application for variations to the consented scheme. He was highlighting changes that he felt might address Council's concerns. The Clerk was to follow up concerning the community contribution and would also submit the relevant comments concerning the application.

## **11/01**

### **Accounts**

#### **Accounts for Payment**

The following accounts were approved for payment:

None.

The following invoice remained outstanding:

|                    |                               |           |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| T W Hawkins & Sons | Grass cutting and maintenance | £1,046:60 |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|

A revised invoice had been received with a charge for line marking removed but the new invoice still seemed high given the hot summer and the impact on grass growth. This was queried and it was confirmed that on cut had been charged for by mistake and a credit note had been received for £75.58 including VAT along with a request for bank account details for a refund to be processed. However, this was confusing as no payment had yet been made and hence a revised invoice would be requested.

#### **Other Financial Matters**

The balance at the bank stood at £51,425.90 as per the last received statement.

It was confirmed that the CIL payment of £2,023.83 had been received and Cllr hay had uploaded the necessary reporting form to the Parish website.

The setting of the Precept for 2023/2024 would be undertaken at the February meeting.

## **12/01**

### **Correspondence**

The following items of correspondence were received:

Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine.

Trow Magazine.

Christmas card and note of thanks for community service from Siobhan Baillie MP.

Christmas card from Chris Nelson – Police & Crime Commissioner.

An invitation had been received to a Strategic Forum meeting of Stroud District Council for Parish & Town Councils but the details had been received late and it had clashed with the December meeting of the Parish Council in any case.

Email of thanks and update from Simon Maher, Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer at SDC, concerning the recent Stroud District Walking and Cycling Event.

Other electronic correspondence had been circulated between meetings.

### **13/01**

#### **Chairman's Items, District Councillor's Report & County Councillor's Report**

An apology was received from County Councillor Stephen Davies who was not present at the meeting and there were no County Council matters noted. Due to District Councillor Jones' recent ill health he had not been particularly involved with District Council matters and had none to raise other than issues that had been dealt with elsewhere during the meeting. Similarly, he had no Chairman's Items that had not already been considered.

### **14/01**

#### **Other Business**

Coronation Celebration – There was a general discussion concerning possible activities to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. It was felt that any event on the day may not be well attended but that the village should find a way to come together over the Bank Holiday weekend. Council agreed to consider a financial contribution to help support plans that might develop for an event.

### **15/01**

#### **Future Agenda Items**

None that were not previously noted.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.23pm.

**CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2023.**