

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DYRHAM AND HINTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 2016

Members of the Public

“No one came from the Village Hall Committee to talk about a grant so Ben Stokes came and answered questions and Informed Councillors of other funding opportunities. KS asked if they were to have a Public Meeting to show their Plans to the local people for their input, BS was not sure. It was also mentioned perhaps a member of the council could attend one of their meetings. They did need £30,000 for an update to car park, wall and putting a multiuse surface and new entry to car park. The Clerk agreed to look and see if a quote had been received via Andrew Hedges”.

Comment: Do I detect a note of irritation here? Were other VHC members unable to attend for legitimate reasons that the council failed to determine? Anyway, Ben Stokes is the chairman of the Village Hall Committee! I hope this will be rephrased when the Minutes are approved.

(29.11.16: I understand the PC will amend this minute at their next meeting)

7. Planning Applications

Comment: We need a more democratic system here.

i. The PC should consult neighbours adjacent to any property where a planning permission application might adversely affect them. The only recorded instance where they did this was when an application affected the chairperson's property but she correctly declared an interest (26 May 2016 item 2). However, it was not made plain in the minutes whether she withdrew from the discussion about this application (PK16/2875/F Green Gates) especially as the PC objected to this application at this meeting. A reason given was that was not “in keeping with the neighbours (sic) property” but it didn't specify which neighbour. On other occasion, councillors were not recorded as having withdrawn for the discussion after they had declared an interest (cf Planning Applications 28th July 2016). I am sure they didn't join in the discussion but it would be good to know for certain they were out of the room.

ii. Some applications may have implications for more than the immediate neighbours. The solar farm was an example. Here, the current views of parishioners should be sought. The PC has the email addresses of many parishioners and could encourage others to participate in such a questionnaire.

10 Community Benefit Money

Comment: We also need a more democratic system here. Whereas the PC could consider themselves as the final arbiter in the parish of local planning applications on historical grounds, there is no precedent for rules for distributing windfall funds. Of course, a conduit is needed for the money arriving from the turbine and solar farm but it should not be up to the PC alone how to distribute the money. Projects should be proposed by the PC or by parishioners and put to a vote. After all, it's the parishioners' money not the PC's.

Also, not to be forgotten, the PC objected to Talbot Turbine and neither supported or objected to the solar farm, yet now they are now happy to take the money.

Hardly anyone in the parish is affected by either of these projects so this money is not really compensation but a windfall. OK, both projects are unsightly but mostly only M4 users are affected by them. If anyone in the parish is affected, they should be compensated with this money. Next, the PC should refund their Precept money to SGC before they distribute the balance to parish projects. As we know, SGC is strapped for cash and the precept money could be better used in the wider community – the Library Service for example – cf Item 20.

Church

Comment: The award of the substantial sum of £5500 to the church should have been approved by the parishioners. One hopes they would have approved.

Unlike in the case of the Village Hall Committee where the PC proposed a parish councillor should attend meetings and accounts be viewed, no such restraints seem to have been put on the Parochial Council Committee.

12. Future Daffodil Planting

Comment: How does the PC know if this is what residents in Dyrham want? Does this project require conservation area approval, given that daffodils are not a natural species in Dyrham