

Wacton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at Wacton Village Hall.

At 6.00pm on 5th february 2025.

**Present: - Chair: Gary Mulhall. Councilors: Pete Fraser, Freddie Bone,
Kim Prentice
Parish Clerk: Alan Arber**

Five members of the public were also present.

1. Public Participation

Two parishioners commented that they moved into the village 18 months ago and are willing to undertake Defib and first aid training and this will be an agenda item for the April meeting.

A parishioner said they use the facilities with the WI and feels this is really interesting with the WI.

The course would be free of charge.

2. To consider any apologies for absence

Kat Ireson gave her apologies for family event. All agreed to accept.

3. To receive any disclosures of interest.

Freddie Boone for Land sale. All agreed to accept this declaration.

4. To approve the minutes from the meeting held on 8th January 2025

These were approved as a true record of the meeting dated 8/1/25.

Proposed Cllr Fraser

Seconded Cllr Boone

5. To consider matters arising from the last minutes (for information only).

Matters arising from said minutes.

6. To receive a report from the County councillor.

No Report Received

7. To receive a report from the district councillors.

No Report received.

8. To receive a report from the Village Hall committee.

No report received.

9. To consider planning applications.

- East Pye Solar and Scoping documents comments

The clerk produced the EA scoping assessment that was agreed at Hempnall Parish council meeting for East Pye Solar on 4/2/25 and it was agreed to submit this to the planning inspectorate asap to meet the deadline of 12/2/25.

It was agreed this would be sent by the clerk in the timescale of sending in of 12/2/25 to the planning inspectorate. This is the response that all council feels need adding to the style of the solar farms moving forward to the next stage of planning.

Copy attached as Appendix 1

10. To discuss the community payback details and agree the actions for the team.

The clerk and the chair met with the community payback team leader with regards to them undertaking works in the parish such as bridge repair, tree planting, ditch clearing and many other tasks and it was agreed this would be a great scheme to be involved with even though we pay the costs of materials etc and the payback team provide the labour. The clerk produced the agreement document, and all councillors agreed this was excellent and it should proceed. The clerk signed the document, and this will be returned to the probation service asap.

11. Governance

Nothing to report.

12. Correspondence: -

Community Pay Back meeting held.
Community Pay back paperwork received.
Land sale documents collected and to be re-delivered back to solicitors on Friday 7/2
Spring NPTS seminar booked for clerk and chair.
SLCC Practitioners conference attended.
Email from parishioners on first aid training received.
Precept request submitted to SNDC.
Town and Parish Forum attended virtually.
East Pye Solar Impact assessment received.
Grants for good application submitted.
New Defib for church application submitted.
SNT police meeting attended on rural crime in our area.
Out of office put on parish email system from 10/2/25 to 10/3/25.

13. To note receipts for January

HMRC refund of £174.97 received 7/1/25.

14. Authorization of payments

January Payments

- To approve payment of Clerks Salary and expenses for January £660.35
- To approve payment to Norfolk Pension Scheme for Clerks Pension January £215.75
- To approve payment to HMRC for Tax and NI January £70.43
- To approve payment to Parish online for yearly subscription £96.00
- To approve payment to Unity trust for bank charges £6.00
- Payment to Lloyds for monthly credit card charge January £3.00
- To agree payment to Tharston and Hapton PC for shared clerks training costs. £250.00
- To approve payment to NPTS for chairs training £56.00
- To approve payment to O2 for clerk's mobile January £12.47
- To approve payment to BT for Broadband for defib January £32.53
- To approve any payments on Credit Card for January £0.00

- To note the financial Position of The Parish Council

The balance on the account at the end of January was £12,521.99 and after today's payments of £1402.53 the balance for the end of Feb will be £11,119.46 which is slightly down on last year, but this is due to the works on the bus shelter book exchange.

Proposed Cllr Mulhall Seconded Cllr Fraser

- To agree any Payments are the agenda is posted.

None

15. Report on any ongoing matters:

- The woodland project and Bridge in the Copse repair.
The materials are being costed for the Community payback team to work on once the agreement is finalised and all in place. Chair Gary Mulhall will consult with Megan Holmes for start date etc during clerk's impending leave.
- Councillor and Clerk Training
The clerk recently attended the SLCC practitioners conference in the midlands and found it especially useful as he attended workshops on Devolution, Planning, AI, Resilience planning, collaborating with councillors and parishioners, Grants, Bullying and finally procurement.
- Benches
Deferred till new precept received.
- Book Exchange
Continues to be used by all parishioners from our parish and afar and the new Barry Duffin planter will be in place soon at the front of the building. It also needs more shelving too.
- Biodiversity
Deferred
- Damaged Play Equipment
No new grants at present but the clerk will continue to investigate this moving forward.
- Purchase of New wooden Bench for play area
To be decided if we build one or purchase one. It was agreed that build one ourselves in the first instance. all agreed.

- Purchase of local variety of trees
The clerk had a meeting with Foundry Garden Centre recently and three new trees would cost us £90 then the plants and compost for Barry Duffin memorial planter would be around £200. It was agreed to investigate this when the new precept had been received and the planter finished.
- Land Sale
Almost complete as final paperwork has been signed, and we are close to moving this forward and complete.
- Meeting dates regarding the clerk's holiday
It was agreed that due to the clerks impending leave there would be no meeting in March and a bigger one in early April.

18 Matters raised by councillors and members of the public. (For information only).

Earthenware lane there is a tree down and the rest of the footpath is okay. The area has now been cleaned better.

Water leak by the book stop has been reported and the works will be completed in 10 days but not been done but should be done by Friday 7th Feb as it was not 10 days but ten working days.

The corner by the orchard the area should be completed by the end of the week dated 7/2 but it is felt this date would go on further and the weather permitting.

Pipe into the ditch by the orchard is drainage off the field and not from sewerage.

19. To receive details of the Parish Speed Watch group, plus Volunteers that are needed and SAM data download.

The clerk had downloaded the SAM 2 machine and turned it around for those coming into the village as he was unable to get to the Moulton Road site due to road works. The figures are really encouraging as most vehicles are doing around 33 mph with the average speed being 27.48 mph, but we did have one speeder on 20/10 at 9.55pm at 55mph again. The figure will be sent to the police as normal.

Speed watch group has not been running due to the roadworks and the weather so no report forthcoming.

20. To discuss the need for new parish councillors

We still require new councillors, and it hoped we can get some co-opted moving forward.

21. Items for the next agenda.

Year end
First aid training
Meeting dates
Defib battery

Parish Council meeting 2nd April 2025 6 pm

Suggested amendments to BEPS 3 Page doc: "Proposed Scope of the East Pye Solar EIA"

I suggested some text changes to the full BEPS Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report in regard to references to lighting impacts and impacts on rural tranquillity. Annetta Berry is incorporating these changes in to this document although they are not included in the version you received via Email. In order for the 3 page Proposed Scope document to be consistent with the re-worded longer report the following references to lighting need to be re-worded:

1) "Impacts of any lighting, including temporary lighting on wildlife and communities should be scoped in"

Replace with: "Impacts of any lighting employed during the construction phase, on flora, fauna, dark skies, dark landscapes and residential amenity should be scoped in" (*)

Reason for the change – light pollution concerns extend beyond impacts on ecology and all the negative consequences of introducing artificial light in to an area of rural dark landscape need to be fully assessed.

2) "Impacts of permanent motion-sensor lighting on wildlife and communities should be scoped in"

Replace with: "Impacts of any lighting employed during the 40 to 60 years operational period, on flora, fauna, dark skies, dark landscapes and residential amenity should be scoped in"

Reasons for the change – A) as for 1) above () and B) In light pollution terminology the use of the phrase permanent lighting usually refers to the employment of dusk to dawn lights. Light pollution campaigners advise that, when lighting is deemed necessary as part of a development, motion-sensor lights are used rather than permanent night time dusk to dawn lighting. We don't want to give the impression that dusk to dawn lights would be acceptable.*

I also suggest that impacts on users of PROW is scoped in as an entirely separate topic. These impacts will be huge and an initial study shows that over 22km of PROW will have solar fields along one side or both sides and many more sections of footpaths will have views ruined by the presence of solar panels and the associated infrastructure. I advise each parish council to identify one or more viewpoints from footpaths where the visual impact would be substantial and to ask for the production of photomontages from these locations to be scoped in for inclusion in the ES.

And finally in addition to requesting that cumulative impacts resulting from this scheme together with other renewable projects in the wider area (both built and proposed) are scoped in there is a case for the impacts resulting from the sheer size of the East Pye scheme to be scoped in as a separate topic. No mega solar farm has yet been built in the UK and therefore the overall impact of all the various aspects of this kind of project has yet to be observed. The sum total of all impacts (on PROW, ecology, landscape, etc) over a large area of countryside really should be scoped in and assessed – these combined impacts cannot be covered under individual subject headings.

David Hook (Chairman – Hempnall Parish Council)

Advice from the planning officers at SNC (Claire Curtis) and NCC (Stephen Faulkner) overseeing NSIP projects on what to include in a scoping response

Both advised that responses should be limited to stating which topics should be scoped in that are not already in the list. This can of course include a request to scope in topics that East Pye want scoped out.

As well as identifying a topic / issue to be scoped in Claire and Stephen said it was important to provide a brief explanation as to why you want this topic covered.

Below are 2 examples of how you could phrase your responses – I have chosen Lighting and rural Tranquillity as these are topics on which I have done a considerable amount of work for CPRE both nationally and locally.

Lighting should be scoped in as a separate topic because most of the countryside covered by these proposals is located in an area of Rural Dark Landscape as defined in Norfolk County Council's Environmental Lighting Zones Policy. Residents and visitors alike appreciate the local rural dark landscape and dark skies. The impact of any form of night-time artificial lighting on these treasured assets, ecology and residential amenity needs to be fully assessed.

The impact on Rural Tranquillity should be scoped in as a separate topic because most of the countryside covered by these proposals is defined on the CPRE Tranquillity Map of England as "Most Tranquil" and East Pye admit that: *"this is an undeveloped area with a valued sense of remoteness and tranquillity. It has stayed historically intact and unspoilt because it avoided the effects of the Industrial Revolution."* It is important that these few remaining untouched areas of rural England should be protected from development to preserve their integrity for future generations. The vast scale of this scheme and the distances it stretches across the landscape, some 15 KM, would have a significant impact on the area's *"valued sense of remoteness and tranquillity"* and these aspects should be scoped into the Environmental Impact Assessment.

NB Tranquillity is not just about an absence of noise it also covers an absence of artificial structures, lighting etc.

David Hook (Chairman – Hempnall Parish Council)