

UNAPPROVED MINUTES of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Thursday 3rd April 2014 at 7.00pm (19:00hrs) in the Green Room of Meldreth Village Hall.

Present: Mr S Hawkins (SH) – Chairman; Mr R A Searles (RAS) – vice chairman; Mr J Chamberlain (JC); Mrs J Fallon (JF); and Mr D Stewart (DS)

1. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Mr A P Burlton and Mr C A Land

2. To sign and approve Minutes of meeting held on 20th March 2014.

The minutes were proposed by JC and seconded by DS, all agreed. The minutes were then signed as a true record by the Chairman.

3. Public Participation:

(For up to 15 mins members of the public may contribute their views and comments - 3mins per item)

There were 15 members of the public in attendance.

Concern was again raised about the Bury Lane Solar Farm.

The public felt that there was still a hazard concerning overflying helicopters, DS explained that as an ex RAF navigator who has flown in planes and helicopters that pilots were made aware of any hazards on flight paths. RAS said there were much bigger solar farms in e.g. China and this problem has not emerged. It was also felt that there are too many of these developments being proposed in the immediate area. There are presently 6 being looked into at the moment. RAS commented that though the Parish Council were in support of this concern and that they have already raised this matter with SCDC at Cabinet level and SCDC have said they can only work on a case by case approach dealing with each application on its merits. RAS explained that at SCDC there is one planning officer overlooking all the applications (except this one), this may not be satisfactory from the Parish Council perspective but it is how SCDC are conducting their business. MPC can only look at the planning application being presented to the Parish Council at the moment. The loss of grade 2 agriculture land was also of concern with food supplies being stretched. RAS pointed out that a lot of local land, including this, is producing oilseed rape, the majority of which is used for biodiesel production and that solar panels are more efficient at producing energy. Questions were raised as to whether there had been any previous contact between the developers and the Parish Council, the answer is that there was a pre-application presentation in November at a public meeting which has been minuted. At the February SCDC planning meeting we were told that Savill's (developers) had offered to take 100m off the southern field. MPC in their presentation to that meeting made it clear that only removing the whole southern field would address concerns on the size of the application. After that meeting Savills offered to remove half the southern field but MPC voted unanimously to maintain its position. Savills then readdressed the situation and have taken out the southern field from the proposal. This is the amendment being dealt with at this meeting.

4. Councillors to disclose any Pecuniary Interests (disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) include interests held by a member's spouse, civil partner or similar) listed on the Agenda:

There were no interests declared.

5. Request for the following:

**5.1 Bury Lane Solar Farm
E W Pepper Ltd**

S/2616/13/FL

Development of solar photovoltaic panels and ancillary structures including; field transformers, auxiliary transformer, inverter housing, communication room, District Network Operator (DNO) building and switch room building, access tracks, security fencing and security cameras.

The concerns raised from the public were discussed by the planning committee. The proposal of removing the southern field and improving the landscaping has now addressed many of the concerns. All members of the planning committee present had attended a site meeting to view the site from both No 37 Chiswick End and the footpath from Chiswick End to Fieldgate.

While some of the site would be visible from an upstairs window at No 37 only a distant (1.35 km away) glimpse would be seen from the footpath, once the landscaping had reached 3m in height. If a fuller landscaping plan is required by SCDC it was suggested that the Parish Council request that they can see this. It was felt that it would be difficult to refuse this application on planning terms and that solar farms would be a preferable way of gaining green energy to wind turbines.

The questions raised about other solar farms being proposed in the area was discussed and it was reported to the public that anyone has the right to put their concerns to SCDC through the planning process.

It was proposed by RAS, seconded by JC to recommend approval of the application, agreed by all with comments. ' The Parish Council would like to reiterate their concerns that solar farms should be taken as a whole across the district and not seen solely as individual developments. The Parish Council would also like to see any landscaping plans.

6. SCDC Decisions:

S/0155/14/LB, Sheene Manor, 58 Station Road has been granted permission for alterations, demolition of existing conservatory, replacement with new.

S/0115/14/FL, 17 North End has been granted permission for side and rear extensions with detached garage.

7. Other Items:

- 7.1** While contractors are working at 82 High Street they will park vehicles on the remit of the site and not on the public highway as requested.
- 7.2** S/2607/12/VC, Biddalls' Blvd – Adoption of the public open space (play area) by the Parish Council will be discussed at full council.
- 7.3** Appeal: S/1440/13/FL, 97a North End – Appeal APP/W0530/A/13/2209294
There is no documentation yet concerning this appeal on the Planning Inspectorate website. The recommendation of refusal made at the MPC Planning meeting (5.2) on 1st August 2013 will be forwarded to the Inspector and still stands.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.36 (19:36hrs)

Chairman

Date

For the avoidance of doubt the only legally acceptable version of the Minutes of Meldreth Parish Council are those signed in Public Meetings by the Chairman. They are available for public inspection from the Clerk