|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Swardeston Parish Council**  **Minutes of the December 2023 Parish Council Meeting**  **At Swardeston village hall, on Thursday 14th December 2023 at 7.30PM**  **Meeting 12/2023** | | |
| Present:  Members - Derek Barber, Nigel Legg, Graham Jermy, and Dominic Everett  Cllr Webber  Clerk - Carole Jowett  2 members of the public attended | | |
|  | **To consider apologies for absence**  Mr J Barber and Mrs Middleton had sent their apologies for absence. |  |
|  | **To co-opt member to fill vacancy following election**  There were no nominations to fill the vacancy. |  |
|  | **To receive declaration of interests in items on agenda**  There were no declarations of interest. |  |
|  | **Resolution to adjourn the meeting for public participation and district/county councillor reports**  **Public Participation**  Concerns were expressed about the flooding on the B1113. Mr D Barber explained that the construction site was using the A47 drainage to clear the site but the drains were blocked although this had not been confirmed by National Highways to Norfolk County Council. Highways was in the process of putting together a claim against the wind farm for the costs of call outs of the emergency services. Anyone with damaged vehicles should report it to the highways depot at Ketteringham.  Intwood and Keswick PC were asking about parish councils joining forces and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to get other parishes to join together to strengthen the argument, the clerk would respond to the request.  Cllr Webber reported the district councillors had written to Cllr Elmer but had not received a response. He said he had visited the site and spoken to workers who reported that the speed of development was slower than anticipated. Drainage was being created with an attenuation pond and a sunken tank for the longer term. The plans had required new drainage to the river but the route had not been identified. There was a permanent tanker on site and discussions about removing water from site by road.  Dr Legg had raised this at the last drainage board, he said that a drain to the river would probably need approval from the Environment Agency.  **Councillor reports**  Cllr Webber had sent a report which is attached at appendix A.  He had attended the National Grid event and reported that most issues raised were about battery storage, wind farms and flooding.  There had been a workshop on the planned changes to the A140. | **CJ** |
|  | **To confirm minutes of the last meeting held on 9th November 2023 and review matters arising.**  The minutes of the November meeting were proposed as an accurate record by Mr Jermy, Dr Legg seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed, and the chairman signed them.  **Matters arising**  The parish partnership bid had been submitted, the outcome would not be known until March.  The playground hedge had not been cut but it was likely to done between Christmas and new year. The outside and top would be cut from the road to avoid damaging the grass. The inside would be done later by a volunteer working party.  The planning application for Almond Villa had been approved.  A house in the village which had been self-build was on the market and had therefore become liable for CIL the parish council share was expected in April 2024.  The new VAS sign was working and data being collected speed of 60mph had already been recorded.  A meeting had been arranged to meet with the speed watch team to identify suitable sites and more volunteers would be welcomed.  The garage sign on the pavement was now a planning enforcement case. |  |
|  | **To consider the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan - Alternative Sites & Focused Changes consultation**  The allocation of 30 houses on site SWA2 was proposed to increase from 30 to 40 in the consultation.  A response would be put together to address the lack of amenity, unsuitable access to amenities in Mulbarton and the lack of road crossing. There were no shops in the village other than a bakery open 3 days per week. This would be discussed further at the January meeting. |  |
|  | **To review and adopt the biodiversity policy and action plan**  A draft policy had been circulated which was reviewed and would be reviewed and adopted at a future meeting. |  |
|  | **To consider planning applications and agree any comments**  No applications had been received. |  |
|  | **To consider possible road-crossing options for the Main Road**  There had been no updates. |  |
|  | **To consider any action on the offshore wind and solar farms and Norwich-Tilbury**  A presentation took place in the village hall from National Grid on 21/11/23. |  |
|  | **To receive an update on the defibrillator**  The defibrillator had been checked 14/12/23 and the Circuit updated. There had been an alarm for new pads these had been ordered and would be fitted on receipt. |  |
|  | **Finance**   * 1. **To review and agree financial statement to 14th December 2023**   The financial statement was reviewed. Mr D Everett proposed it was accepted as a true record of the accounts, this was seconded by Dr Legg and unanimously agreed.   * 1. **To consider and agree budget requirements for 2024/25**   Mr D Barber had circulated a draft budget which was reviewed and would give a surplus of £150 with some contingency built in.  Mr Jermy proposed that the budget was set, Dr Legg seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.   * 1. **To set the precept for 2024/25**   After discussion it was proposed by Mr Everett that the council tax payable by a band D property be kept the same as the previous year. Dr Legg seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.  The precept required to achieve this was £6670.00   * 1. **To agree invoices for payment in accordance with budget**   BACS £242.86 Norse Eastern Ltd Grounds maintenance  BACS £188.08 C Jowett Clerks salary  BACS £124.80 HMRC PAYE  BACS £208.00 Swardeston village hall Room hire  BACS £71.94 Mr D Barber Defibrillator pads  The payments were reviewed Mr Everett proposed they were made Dr Legg seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed. |  |
|  | **To consider correspondence received**  An email had been received about battery storage which was discussed and it was agreed there was no requirement to take any action. The clerk would respond and thank the author. | **CJ** |
|  | **To adjourn the meeting for public participation**  Cllr Webber said that there was little known clean-up and bloom grant and he would forward the information. |  |
|  | **To agree agenda items for the next meeting on 11th January 2024 at 7:30**  To consider possible road-crossing options for the Main Road and issues with speeding traffic  To consider any action on national energy infrastructure projects  To confirm the check on the defibrillator  To review and adopt the biodiversity policy and action plan  To consider the clean-up and bloom grant  To consider speed watch in Swardeston and agree any action  **The meeting closed at 21.35 pm** |  |
| Signed: Mr D Barber  Chairman to Swardeston Parish Council  [https://swardeston-parish-council.norfolkparishes.gov.uk](https://swardeston-parish-council.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/) | | |

Appendix a

**Swardeston Parish Council – 11 December 2023**

**District Councillor Report**

**Grants**

Applications for Pride in Place grants are now open. Applications must be in by end January. Significant funds are available for the support of new or developing community projects, and for capital projects of up to £25,000. Further details can be found on the South Norfolk Council (SNC) website.

Members Ward Grants of up to £1,000 are available for community organisations needing a small amount of financial help. Any organisation interested should approach one of the councillors listed below.

**National Grid – Proposed Norwich Main Substation Extension**

Your councillors attended the initial consultation meetings at Swardeston and Stole Holy Cross. Little information was available at this stage. A planning application is planned for 2024 and construction would take around 2 years starting in 2025. The development will link power from the 3 offshore wind farms to the National Grid. The online consultation is open until 8th December 2023.

**Greater Norwich Plan – Village Clusters**

SNC is re-consulting on the village clusters housing allocations for 8 weeks starting December 11. An increase from 30 houses to approximately 40 houses on site SWA2 (the land on Main Road at the NE end of Swardeston) is one of the options. The current planning application is for 46 houses on the site.

**A140 North of Long Stratton Workshop**

Jim Webber attended an online workshop organised by the County Council. Most contributors were from Parish Council’s bordering the A140. Congestion, economic growth and business needs, housing delivery and connectivity including sustainable transport were discussed. A report will be available in the new year.

**Flooding on B1113**

District Councillors are still active in attempting to resolve this. We understand that a new drain is being planned to better manage run off from the site into the river. A new temporary attenuation pond is being dug to improve on site water storage while the new drainage system is being installed. As this appears to be primarily the responsibility of Highways, your County Councillor has been emailed. We are still waiting for a response to emails originally sent on the 8th November. A further email was recently sent to County Councillor Graham Plant, the cabinet lead for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.

**‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update**

A report commissioned by the County Councils of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk has found that the 2030 target date for new transmission as cited by National Grid is not required. The current grid can cope until 2035 or later. There is therefore more time to consider alternative options to the proposed pylons.

In the recent Autumn Statement, the Government announced the new 'Critical National Priority' (CNP) infrastructure policy and stated that communities near new pylons are likely to be offered discounts on their bills. CNP is a kind of fast-track planning category for wind farms and associated infrastructure but it’s not completely clear whether this will include the Norwich to Tilbury project.

On the 5 December, the Government published a statement confirming further funding for the investigation of offshore co-ordination between the North Falls and Five Estuaries offshore wind farms and National Grid , potentially avoiding the need for underground cabling or pylons across Essex. This could force a rethink of the Norwich Tilbury proposal. An initial report is expected in March next year.

A recent email from the Pylons East Anglia pressure group is copied below.

**Bob McClenning, Ian Spratt & Jim Webber**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Councillor Contact Details** |  |
| Cllr. Jim Webber | [jim.webber@southnorfolkandbraodland.gov.uk](mailto:jim.webber@southnorfolkandbraodland.gov.uk) | 07394 323215 |
| Cllr. Ian Spratt | [ian.spratt@southnorfolkandbraodland.gov.uk](mailto:ian.spratt@southnorfolkandbraodland.gov.uk) | 07554 668337 |
| Cllr. Bob McClenning | [bob.mcclenning@southnorfolkandbraodland.gov.uk](mailto:bob.mcclenning@southnorfolkandbraodland.gov.uk) | 07769 030926 |

**Email From Pylons East Anglia pressure group** (<https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk> )

***Urgent reconsideration of Autumn Statement's Critical National Priority infrastructure and community benefits****.'Critical National Priority' (CNP) policy and the ‘community benefits’ scheme, likely to be announced in the Autumn Statement, present legal and environmental risks. We urge you to consider the following crucial points:*

***Lack of transparency in consultation responses****. The non-disclosure of the relevant consultation responses undermines the legitimacy of the CNP policy. It ignores widespread regional opposition, including comprehensive feedback from our campaign, from residents, community representatives, academics, and council officers, and raises serious legal concerns relating to the Gunning Principles. This opacity suggests a disregard for community voices and a potential breach of legal protocol.*

***Flawed CNP approach****. The CNP simply magnifies and exacerbates the current fragmented, costly approach to grid development, potentially leading to an unnecessary £6 billion expense. Conversely, an integrated offshore grid solution enjoys widespread public support, as evidenced by a 27,000-signature petition, and statements from regional MPs, councils, and other statutory bodies.*

*Moreover, the CNP's approach significantly harms environmental habitats, including the proposed UNESCO East Atlantic Flyway Natural World Heritage Site and many priority habitats.  This contradicts the Environmental Principles National Policy Statement which requires policy makers to avoid harm.*

*The CNP ignores a number of studies, not least the National Grid ESO’s own report which set out the harms of the piecemeal approach and, significantly, the many benefits of an integrated approach.*

***Community Benefits – a misguided approach****. The community benefits under the current proposal are wholly inadequate and trivialise the substantial losses faced by homeowners and businesses. These benefits cannot and will not substitute for true comprehensive compensation and are perceived as a nothing more than a “Band-Aid” to cover-up deeper infrastructural and environmental issues.*

***The alternative. An Integrated offshore grid – faster, better, and cheaper.*** *We propose an integrated offshore grid as a superior alternative. This approach aligns with the government's environmental commitments, saves £6 billion nationally, and enjoys broad public and political support. It represents a sustainable, economically sound, and environmentally responsible path forward. We urge you to pivot towards this internationally recognised (and implemented), solution in the Autumn Statement. Choosing the integrated offshore grid will signal the UK's commitment to responsible energy infrastructure development, attracting wind farm developers and benefiting the environment, local communities, and the taxpayer.*

*We hope for your thoughtful consideration of these pressing issues.*