

AUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 10 AUGUST 2015, IN AUGHTON VILLAGE HALL ANNEXE, COMMENCING AT 7.30pm

CHAIRMAN: Councillor Ian Grant

MEMBERS PRESENT: As recorded in the Register of Attendance

10472 APOLOGIES were tendered on behalf of:

Councillor Mrs Atherley - personal commitment

APOLOGIES were READ and APPROVED.

10473 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – members were reminded to declare their interests before the start of each Agenda Item or when appropriate.

10474 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 13 JULY 2015, copies circulated prior to meeting, were APPROVED and SIGNED as a correct record.

10475 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

a) WLBC Housing Land: Grass Verges on Town Green Lane – confirmation that low level ‘birds mouth’ fencing would be erected before the end of August. NOTED

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this stage and invited comments/questions from members of the public present.

A representative of the newly formed residents group, Protect Aughton’s Landscape Together (PALT), spoke about the latest planning applications for the development of two solar farms on land to the West of Back Lane and to the South of Formby Lane. She iterated details of the objections relevant to the current and original applications submitted in May (withdrawn by the applicant for further information - refer Minutes June 2015), the main points being inappropriate use of Green Belt; inappropriate use of high grade agricultural land; loss of visual and residential amenity; ecological impact; lack of public consultation. (a Briefing Note had been provided for circulation to members).

A resident from the Serpentine and residents from Long Lane (including the Chairman of ARG 2012) gave their views and lent their support in opposing the proposed developments.

A resident from the Serpentine spoke about the loss of the 311 bus service from 30 August which travelled from Bold Lane, Town Green Lane, Prescott Road to Ormskirk and the introduction of the 310 service which would travel from Bold Lane, Winifred Lane, Liverpool Road to Ormskirk . He said there would be no bus through Town Green and residents would have to walk to Winifred Lane to catch the 310 bus. This would also affect patients to Aughton Surgery.

The Chairman said representations would be made to Lancashire County Council.

There being no further comments, the Chairman resumed the meeting.

(Councillor Grant declared a NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST in 2015/0713/FUL as he was known to the applicant)

10476 PLANNING

a) Weekly List Items (items marked* were considered under the Parish Council Prior Notification Procedure (PCPNP) to meet the deadline for response)

There were NO COMMENTS in the cases of:

(Para. 10476 Continued)

2015/0646/FUL 0769 0777

In the case of:

*2015/0274/FUL Land at the junction with Long Lane, Aughton Park Drive (Amendment) – the amendment to the original design of the roof of buildings and the inclusion of one additional disabled parking space was noted. Members, however, maintained their objections to the proposal as detailed in letter dated 29 April 2015 in respect of Policies EN3, GN1 & GN5 and ‘highway issues’.

2015/0700/FUL 4 Norris House Drive – members wished to ensure the proposals would not result in loss of privacy or residential amenity to adjacent neighbours.

2015/0709/FUL Robbins Bridge Farm, Springfield Road – should a decision be made by the Local Planning Authority to grant planning permission for a generator housing in this Green Belt location, members considered conditions be imposed in respect of ‘usage times’ of the generator to avoid nuisance and annoyance to nearby residents and, in particular, the adjacent Springfield Montessori Nursery.

2015/0743/FUL Thorn Tree Farm, Prescott Road – members could not support any reason to vary the conditions imposed on the original planning permission.

(Councillor Grant left the meeting at this stage and Councillor Jones took the Chair)

2015/0713/FUL 54 New Lane – no comments.

(Councillor Grant resumed the Chair)

2015/0805/PNT – Telecommunication Station at Aughton Park Railway Station, Long Lane – development by Telecommunications Code System Operator – members noted the prior notification of a further ‘height increase’ for this established use at the Rail Station site.

2015/0759/FUL Land to the West of Back Lane – installation of ground mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar arrays to provide – 5MWp generation capacity together with transformer stations; internal access track; electricity sub-station; landscaping; fencing; security measures; access gate; ancillary infrastructure – members strongly objected to the proposal on the following grounds:

‘WLLP Policy EN2 – the proposed development would have a detrimental impact upon biodiversity of the land – it could destroy or adversely affect important wildlife habitats.

WLLP Policy EN1 – the Green Belt safeguards the countryside from encroachment of development. The NPPF also recognises that many renewable energy projects will constitute inappropriate development. The size and scale of the proposed Solar Farm would not, therefore, constitute ‘very special circumstances’ for destroying the openness, character, and landscape of this important Green Belt location. The Parish Council took the view that clearly, in this case, the disadvantages arising out of the proposal outweigh any potential benefits.

NPPF – Green Belt

The proposed development would have a detrimental affect on the overall character of this Green Belt location. The proposed development would have a significant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and represents encroachment in the countryside. Loss of openness would result from the size and scale of the proposed Solar Farm. The loss of high grade agricultural land would be of more than low significance and contrary to Government Policy. The proposed development would affect the use of Public Rights of Way Nos. 15 & 30 and the experience of people using the land.

The site was in one of the most picturesque rural locations in the Parish and was regularly used for the various leisure activities, ie walking, cycling, groups of ramblers etc and by local residents and visitors enjoying the countryside. The proposed Solar Farm would be harmful to the Green Belt, have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties and local businesses by way of noise and the generation of traffic and there would be a significant loss of visual amenity.

With another Solar Farm planning application submitted (2015/0760/FUL) in close proximity at Formby Lane, there would be a significant cumulative impact on the character and openness of Aughton’s Green Belt. It would appear that Government support for developing Solar Farms on Green Belt land is waning.

Previously developed land or use of roofspace on public buildings, schools, community halls, etc was gaining support.

Finally, it was noted that the previous application 2015/0424/FUL for development of this site was Withdrawn by the applicant to await consultants’ reports on heritage, ecology and transport issues. The additional supporting information submitted with the current application, has not persuaded the Parish

Council to change its views and it was hoped, therefore, that a decision would be made to refuse this planning application.’

2015/0760/FUL Land to the rear of Old Waggoners Cottage, Formby Lane – installation of ground mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar arrays to provide – 5 MWp generation capacity together with transformer stations; internal access track; electricity sub-station; landscaping; fencing; security measures; access gate; ancillary infrastructure. Members strongly objected to the proposal on the following grounds:

‘WLLP Policy EN2 – the proposed development would have a detrimental impact upon biodiversity of the land – it could destroy or adversely affect important wildlife habitats.

WLLP Policy EN1 – the Green Belt safeguards the countryside from encroachment of development. The NPPF also recognises that many renewable energy projects will constitute inappropriate development. The size and scale of the proposed Solar Farm would not, therefore constitute ‘very special circumstances’ for destroying the openness, character, and landscape of this important Green Belt location. The Parish Council took the view that clearly, in this case, the disadvantages arising out of the proposal outweigh any potential benefits.

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The proposed development would have a detrimental affect on the overall character of this Green Belt location. The proposed development would have a significant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and represents encroachment in the countryside. Loss of openness would result from the size and scale of the proposed Solar Farm. The loss of high grade agricultural land would be of more than low significance and contrary to Government Policy.

The proposed site, with an access onto the busy Formby Lane, occupies a low lying area and is susceptible to flooding. The proposed Solar Farm would be harmful to the Green Belt, have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties and local businesses by way of noise and the generation of traffic and there would be a significant loss of visual amenity.

With another Solar Farm planning application submitted (2015/0759/FUL) in close proximity at Back Lane, there would be a significant cumulative impact on the character and openness of Aughton’s Green Belt. It would appear that Government support for developing Solar Farms on Green Belt land is waning.

Previously developed land or use of roofspace on public buildings, schools, community halls etc was gaining support.

Finally, it was noted that the previous application 2015/0425/FUL for development of this site was Withdrawn by the applicant to await consultants’ reports on heritage, ecology and transport issues. The additional supporting information submitted with the current application, has not persuaded the Parish Council to change its views and it was hoped, therefore, that a decision would be made to refuse this planning application’.

b) Appeals/Planning Control – none.

c) Planning Committee Meeting held 30 July 2015 – the RECOMMENDATIONS were READ and the RESULTS noted. 2015/0274/FUL Land at the junction with Long Lane/Aughton Park Drive - Planning permission was granted subject to 26 conditions including: Condition 26 – the proposed retail unit shall not be occupied until the proposed medical centre has been built in accordance with the approved plan.

10477 LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY: POLICING OF AUGHTON – Police & Communities Together (PACT) – a brief report was given on the PACT Panel Meeting held 4 August 2015. There had been 7 crimes reported since the last meeting including 1 criminal damage to a vehicle (Swan Delph); 1 youth referral incident (park off Swanpool Lane); 1 youth referral incident (Winifred Lane car park); 1 damage to property (other than a dwelling) – Aughton Village Hall; 1 stealing of a vehicle (Whiterails Farm); 1 case of exposure (park off Winifred Lane); 1 burglary (other than a dwelling) – Scarth Hill Lane Garage.

Additional information, on a comparison of reported crimes in Southern Parishes, there had been 20 reported crimes with 7 of those being in Aughton. In respect of the number of incidents dealt with, other than reported crimes, there had been 200 incidents with 85 of those in Aughton. Items reported at the PACT Panel Meeting included a) inconsiderate parking around Aughton Park Drive/Railway Station area and the local police

agreed to look into this matter b) further problems at Winifred Lane site and other open spaces with regard to ASB and drug taking – the local police confirmed they were making fairly regular checks.

Following discussion on ‘policing’, it was agreed to invite the ‘Neighbourhood Watch Schemes Liaison Officer’ to a future meeting..

10478 BOUNDARY COMMISSION: ELECTORAL REVIEW OF LANCASHIRE (information circulated prior to meeting) – consultation. After discussion, it was agreed not to make any representations on this phase of the consultation but to request notice of the published draft recommendations in due course.

10479 PARISH FINANCE:

a) Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting held 16 July 2015 – to consider and approve the Accounts for the year ending 30 June 2015, copies circulated prior to meeting, were APPROVED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman of the Meeting, Councillor Jones.

b) Independent Internal Audit – Mr A Gore MCIPD CILCA of Ormskirk (an ex Parish Clerk) had carried out a satisfactory completion of an internal audit of the council’s books and records and completed and signed the Annual Return Part IV for the year ending 31 March 2015. There were no matters arising. It was RESOLVED to approve payment to Mr A J Gore for carrying out the internal audit in the sum of £100.

c) Playareas (notes circulated prior to meeting):

i) Inspection Reports for all four sites, were received and noted and it was RESOLVED to approve payment to Yates Playgrounds Ltd in the sum of £200 (plus VAT).

ii) The recommendations for carrying out essential repairs were approved totalling approximately £570 (budget allocation).

iii) Completion of Capital Scheme – it was RESOLVED to approve the final payment to Yates Playgrounds Ltd in the sum of £2,440 (plus VAT).

d) West Lancashire Borough Council: charge for Parish Council uncontested election 7 May 2015 (notes circulated prior to meeting) – it was RESOLVED to approve payment to WLBC in the sum of £600 from Allocated Fund at Bank (5 wards @ £120 = £600 - RO fee £35.50; Clerical £33; Printing/stationary £51.50).

10480 ACCOUNTS (circulated to members)

Income

| | |
|--|----------|
| Aughton Sports Association – income from sport | 2,150.00 |
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Expenditure

(includes VAT)

| | |
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| Imprest Renewal | 56.63 |
| Mr A Gore – internal audit fee | 100.00 |
| Yates Playgrounds Ltd – playarea inspections and reports | 240.00 |
| WLBC – uncontested election 2015 fee | 600.00 |
| Yates Playgrounds Ltd – completion of Capital Scheme | 2,928.00 |
| S Moorcroft (part-time Park-keeper) – expenses 1 month | 30.07 |
| S R Moorcroft (Contractor) – timber seat and minor repairs | 143.50 |
| Lancashire Turf Supplies Ltd – intensive bowling green maintenance | 148.32 |
| Rawsthorne Commercial Landscaping – grounds maintenance | 1,979.00 |
| Salaries – part-time Clerk/part-time Park-keeper | 1,282.72 |
| HM Revenue & Customs – Income Tax & NIC | 173.21 |

It was RESOLVED that all the foregoing accounts be paid.

10481 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 14 September 2015.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm.