

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Staploe Parish Council Held at 7.45pm on Thursday 30th June 2022 in the Village Hall at Wyboston Village Hall

Present: Cllr. J. Ibbett (Chair), Cllr. G. Meola, Cllr. D. Smith, Lucy Crawford (Clerk) and one member of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllr. V. Zwetsloot, Cllr. J. Thomson, Cllr. E. Meola, Cllr. P. Yockney

2022/050. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. G. Meola declared an interest in the playing field as she lives opposite.

2022/051. Public Open Forum

Ben Whetstone of Finsbury Designs who is developing the barns at Lower Goodwick in Begwary presented the revised plans for the new reduced residential curtilage to the Council. The curtilage is significantly larger than the footprint of the buildings which were converted under Class Q. Class Q conversions from agricultural buildings to residential properties do not require planning permission but they only permit the garden to be the same size as the footprint of the building. Finsbury Designs have applied for planning permission to extend the curtilage beyond the footprint of the building. Ben explained that the driveway had to be included in the curtilage and therefore a Class Q conversion would only permit a very small garden. They applied for an extension to the curtilage in application 22/00325/FUL in March and the Parish Council objected as they felt the extension was too large and a resident had objected. The new application is a significant reduction compared to the previous application and the neighbours support the new application. Ben presented aerial photographs demonstrating that the curtilage involved had been mown grass not productive arable land since well before the planning applications for the conversion of the barns.

The Clerk presented letters from the neighbours supporting the application.

Cllr. J. Ibbett reported that the bank of the brook at 4, Chapel Close is collapsing. The occupants of 4, Chapel Close have reported it to Bedford Borough Council but nothing has been done. The Clerk will also report this and chase it.

The Clerk has received two complaints from residents about an increase in aircraft noise as a result of the new Luton airport stack – some of which were thought to be lower than the 8000 feet proposed in the

2022/052. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2022

Having been previously circulated the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr. G. Meola and seconded by Cllr. J. Ibbett.

2022/053. Planning Applications

Consider how to respond to the following planning applications:

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
22/01384/FUL	Full planning application	Demolition of existing barn and outbuildings. Reconfiguration and alterations to existing dwelling to include single storey side/rear extension to form kitchen, entrance hallway, indoor swimming pool, fitness room, orangery and ancillary accommodation. Conversion of barn to form garage/annexe including alterations.	Falling Water House 34 Staploe Lane Staploe St Neots Bedfordshire PE19 5JA	11/07/2022	22/01384/FUL
It was resolved to support this application with the following comments: “It looks like a well designed scheme and the changes will be very limited when viewed from the road. The new garage will be an aesthetic improvement compared to the existing building and only marginally higher. The building which hosts our very old postbox and our noticeboard will not be altered.” The decision was unanimous.					

Application number	Type	Description	Location	Deadline	Link
22/01268/FUL	Full planning application	Change of Use of Agricultural Land to form residential garden land associated with the three dwellings approved under 19/02526/CPNQ, and associated landscaping, hardstanding and fencing/gates.	Barns At Lower Goodwick Farm Begwary Lane Begwary Bedford MK44 2NX	01/07/2022	22/01268/FUL
It was resolved not to object to this application with the following comments: “We acknowledge that the garden will be larger than the footprint of the converted barns which is what is permitted under Class Q. However, we do not object to this for the following reasons: • The size of the garden has now been significantly reduced in comparison to the previous application (to which we objected). • The neighbours are happy with the application. • The land involved was not agriculturally productive land – it has been mown grass for many years • We feel that it would be rather incongruous to leave small strips of non-garden land between the garden and the boundary as they might become unkempt.					

- A substantial amount of the garden land permitted under class Q will need to be used for driveways and parking because of the format of the site therefore some extra garden land seems reasonable.
- The dwellings are no larger than the original footprint.”

- **Battery Energy Storage System at Cobholden Farm – report from the Clerk**

On 9th June two representatives from Cambridge Power (Neil Waterson (Head of Planning) and Nicola Thornton (Senior Planner) met with several representatives of Staploe Parish Council at 49, Woodhouse Lane to discuss their forthcoming planning application to install a battery energy storage system at Cobholden Farm. Cllr. E. Meola, Cllr. G. Meola, Cllr. V. Zwetsloot, and Cllr. P. Yockney attended from the Parish Council along with the Parish Clerk.

The system is designed to store electricity from the grid at peak production times and discharge it back into the grid at times of low production and high demand. This will be particularly important as we move further toward renewable energy because wind and solar generation in particular has peaks and troughs. The environmental screening opinion for the solar farm at Cobholden has been held up as it has been suggested that there may not be sufficient capacity at Eaton Socon Substation. The battery energy storage system could help overcome this problem but it could also be developed as a stand alone project as it would not manage energy exclusively from the solar farm – it would just help manage peaks and troughs in the national power grid.

Cambridge Power explained that 35GW of battery storage will be needed nationally by 2050. This proposal is for a 100MW storage facility. 50MW is typical but this is a good location as it is near a substation with capacity – hence the larger size. They do not anticipate further expansion because the scheme will be designed to minimise impacts but they cannot make guarantees that it won't expand in the future.

UK Power Networks and National Grid are not permitted to invest in battery energy storage.

The site will be set back from the Bushmead Road and the tallest structures (eg. the 5-6m transformer) will be in a hidden part of the site with landscaping used for screening. The batteries will be 3m tall. There may be a low hum but it is sufficiently far from residential properties not to have an impact and there is already background noise from the A1. Councillors urged them to do professional noise assessments to support the plan. Some were concerned that this could encourage further expansion of solar farms which they believe would be better delivered on all new residential and industrial developments.

The system uses lithium batteries with extensive fire safety precautions and temperature monitoring.

Cambridge Power have been in operation for 2.5 years and have one other battery storage site operational at Burwell in Cambridgeshire. They aim for more than the recommended 10% biodiversity net gain and they actively maintain and manage it. They support local projects which support the move to net zero emissions. The lifespan of the batteries is 40 years and Cambridge Power would be responsible for decommissioning. Lucy Crawford suggested the decommissioning costs should be set aside in an ESCROW account to ensure the funds are available in the event that Cambridge Power went into administration.

There is very little government regulation of these battery storage facilities but they follow best practice.

The Parish Council will have an opportunity to comment on this when we are notified of a formal planning application.

2022/054. Community Cabins and Playing Field

- It was resolved to prohibit charcoal barbecues on the playing field but permit gas barbecues for those hiring the cabins. This is to prevent damage to the grass and to prevent hot charcoal barbecues being left unattended after use or disposed of inappropriately leading to a risk of fire, risk to other users of the field or damage to the bins.
- Decking – a hole appeared after the decking was used by a group after the jubilee events (not a formal hire). It has been repaired at a cost of £14 for a replacement decking plank. The Parish Council would like to thank Adam Tarran for repairing this for us. He has advised that many of the supports are rotten and the decking will soon need to be replaced. The Clerk is seeking quotes but has yet to receive them. Cllr. D. Smith suggested that the Ward Fund may be a suitable source of funds for this.
- Terms of hire for cabins. Having been previously circulated the terms of hire were approved and will be published on the website and can now be promoted for hire. Unanimous.
- It was resolved to spend up to £75 on replacement locks for the chain and drop-down post at the playing field and to install a post between the car park railings and the hedge to prevent vehicle access. Unanimous.
- It was resolved to seek quotes for a post and path from the car park to the decking.

2022/055. Response to Bedford Borough Council's Draft Local Plan

Bedford Borough Council are consulting on their Local Plan 2040 which they are preparing for submission. They are only consulting on whether the plan is legal, sound and complies with the duty to cooperate at this stage. The consultation closes at 5pm on Friday 29th July.

It was resolved to support the draft plan which does not include any development in our parish. New settlements are proposed on brownfield sites, at south Kempston and at Little Barford. It was resolved to respond to this consultation to say that we support it and believe it to be legal, sound and compliant with the duty to cooperate. However, we decided to comment that we had previously raised concerns about the legality and soundness of previous consultations which formed part of the preparation of the plan but we are happy with the outcome which does not include the sites to which these concerns apply so we believe the plan to be legal and sound. This is just in case Little Barford falls through for some reason and Bedford Borough Council start looking at developments in our parish again.

It was resolved to comment on paragraph 1.4 which refers to the previous consultations and paragraph 4.4 which describes the sites to be allocated. We will tick "yes" for legal compliance, soundness and the duty to cooperate.

The following comments will be made in our response to paragraph 1.4: *"We were concerned that the issues and options consultation was not compliant and therefore the plan would not be justified because it relied on this consultation. It described our parish as a brownfield, urban site with under utilised land when actually it is a greenfield site in open countryside with highly productive grade 2 agricultural land. However, the Borough Council appear to have listened to our concerns and so we are happy with the outcome and believe the plan to be compliant and sound. Little Barford is a more suitable location than any of the sites in our parish (which include Dennybrook and Eaton Bank) as it is closer to the new rail station and much of it is on grade 3 agricultural land."*

Similarly we were concerned that the “Draft Plan: Strategy options and draft policies” consultation in July 2021 was not compliant because it referred to Dennybrook (the largest of the proposed new settlements) as a development of only 2,500 homes when in fact the development would eventually be 11,500 homes – this was not made clear in the consultation. However, the Borough Council appear to have discounted this settlement so we believe the outcome is compliant and sound.

The transport modelling for the settlement at Wyboston (Dennybrook) was flawed in that there were errors in the number of transport movements stated. However, as this settlement has not been proposed in this final plan we believe the outcome is compliant and sound.

Finally, we were concerned that the “Draft Plan: Strategy options and draft policies” consultation in July 2021 included a call for sites and sites such as an expansion of Dennybrook and a new site (Eaton Bank) were considered even though they were submitted well after the submission deadline (and in the case of Eaton Bank it was submitted on the last day of the consultation). This gave little if any opportunity for residents to comment on them. However, since these sites have not been included in the final plan we believe the outcome is compliant and sound.

The Duty to Cooperate statement demonstrates that meetings have been held with Central Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Councils and with many relevant agencies but little detail has been given about how they will manage the level of development planned for the area around St Neots. This is going to be important for St. Neots with the proposed new settlement at Little Barford. St Neots are also developing to the east at Loves Farm and Wintringham Park. It will also be very close to new developments proposed in Central Bedfordshire at Tempsford so we would like to see more in the plan about how Little Barford will integrate with these sites and how it will affect St Neots town’s services, town centre and the surrounding road network.”

The following comments will be made in response to paragraph 4.4: “We support this policy which proposes growth on brownfield sites, sites south of Bedford and at a new settlement in Little Barford. This is in keeping with the NPPF which states that brownfield sites, and sites with sustainable transport links are preferred and that grade 1 and 2 agricultural land should be avoided.”

The decision was unanimous.

2022/056. Luton Airport Stack

- Consider how the increase in air traffic is affecting the parish and whether the Parish Council can / should take any action. The Clerk referred to the messages of complaint received from two residents of Honeydon of an increase in aircraft noise and low flying aircraft which they believed to be flying below 8000 feet. Councillors reported noticing an increase in the number of aircraft in recent months as holiday flights have increased.
- Cllr. G. Meola agreed to research this and make a proposal for the next meeting. She is particularly concerned about pollution and would like it monitored. She recommended the site Flight Radar 24.

2022/057. Receipts and Payments

The receipts and payments were reported by the Clerk and approved for payment. Councillors agreed to check them against the schedule of payments and invoices at the July meeting as this was an extraordinary meeting. The receipts and payments are presented on p6-7

2022/058. Clerk’s Report

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- Bank signatories. After the Parish Council meeting in May the mandate change forms were submitted to Barclays. However, they have noticed a change in Cllr. J. Thomson's signature vs the one they hold on record so they have asked for some clarification from her.
- Police road safety grant. The fixed speed indicator has been purchased and will be delivered and installed shortly.
- New printer. The new printer (an Epson Ecotank) has been purchased and set up. The Lexmark laser printer will be taken to the tip as it has no residual value because it requires a replacement imaging kit which is worth more than the printer (over £200).
- The Jubilee events were well attended. We had around 50 people for the Jubilee beacon, around 25 for the barbecue lunch (some of the 30 who had booked did not attend as it rained during the lunch) and around 50 for the dog show. The Parish Councillors thanked the Clerk and all those who helped make it happen (including fellow Councillors).

Next meeting: 20th July 7.45pm, Wyboston Village Hall meeting room

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

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Summary of Transactions for Staploe Parish Council for Approval at Meeting on:						30/06/2022
Main Account Payments						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Cheque / Ref Number	Amount
28	23/05/2022	SSE Energy	Power to Street Lights 2nd Apr to 3rd May	Direct debit	0	£30.96
29	26/05/2022	BHIB Insurance	Annual PC insurance	BACS	0	£506.24
41	06/06/2022	British Gas Trading	Electricity for cabins	Direct debit	0	£36.84
44	13/06/2022	BATPC	New Councillor Induction Training	BACS	0	£60.00
47	20/06/2022	Bradgate Fencing	Grass cutting playing field & Common 2 of 8	Standing order	0	£162.00
48	20/06/2022	SSE Energy	Power to Street Lights 4th May	Direct debit	0	£28.61
49	31/05/2022	Wyboston Village Hall	Parish Council Meeting 19th May	BACS	0	£12.00
50	27/06/2022	Bedfordshire Pension Fund	Clerk's Pension Q2 paid early in error	BACS	0	£343.18
51	27/06/2022	Kim Webb	Internal audit fees	BACS	0	£70.00
52	27/06/2022	Jane Arnold	Jubilee lunch payment	BACS	0	£30.00
53	27/06/2022	Morelock Signs	Speed indicator device for Duloe (fixed)	BACS	0	£4,668.00
54	29/06/2022	Play Safety Ltd	Annual play area inspection	BACS	0	£84.00
Total						£6,031.83
Debit Card Account Payments						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Cheque / Ref Number	Amount
34	30/05/2022	Amazon	Bunting for Jubilee	Debit card	0	£14.68
35	30/05/2022	Amazon	Paper cups for Jubilee	Debit card	0	£22.96
36	30/05/2022	Amazon	Union jack ribbon for Jubilee	Debit card	0	£24.99
37	30/05/2022	Coop	Napkins for Jubilee	Debit card	0	£3.00
38	31/05/2022	Amazon	Banqueting roll for Jubilee	Debit card	0	£12.19
42	07/06/2022	B&Q	Decking piece to repair hole in decking at cabins	Debit card	0	£14.00
Total						£269.14

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Main Account Receipts						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Reference	Amount
40	06/06/2022	Richard Squire	Jubilee lunch payment	Credit	0	£30.00
43	08/06/2022	Cash receipts	Proceeds from Jubilee lunch	Credit	0	£35.89
46	16/06/2022	Bedfordshire Police BGC	Road Safety Grant for speed indicator	Credit	0	£3,890.00
Total						£3,955.89
Savings Account Receipts						
Ref	Date	Payee	Details	Type of transaction	Reference	Amount
39	01/06/2022	Barclays	Interest on savings	Credit	0	£0.09
Total						£0.09
Transfers						
Ref	Date	Recipient	Details	CommAcc	Debit Card Account	Savings Account
30	26/05/2022	Staploe Main to Payments	Transfer for purchase of printer	-£240.00	£0.00	£0.00
31	26/05/2022	Staploe Payments to Main	Transfer for purchase of printer	£0.00	£240.00	£0.00
32	26/05/2022	Staploe Main to Payments	Transfer for Jubilee purchases	-£132.00	£0.00	£0.00
33	26/05/2022	Staploe Payments to Main	Transfer for Jubilee purchases	£0.00	£132.00	£0.00
Total				-372	372	0
Posted balances after the above transactions clear						
Community Account 30833940				£5,906.25		
Debit Card Acc 13099075				£40.23		
Base Rate Savings 43461580				£10,890.29		