

# Draft Copy

## BERDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 12th July 2021, 8.00pm

Present: John Burton, Amanda Coomber, Duncan Murdoch (8.25pm), John Riddell, Diane Holt, Pete Hewitt, Laura Free Public: Bob Mason, Claire Russell

<b>211.0</b>	<b>Apologies:</b> Ian Stumpf, Cllr Loughlin
<b>211.1</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest:</b> Public Solar Farm, Benskins Close Noticeboard. Bob Mason to repair
<b>211.2</b>	<b>Public Participation.</b> See later.
<b>211.3</b>	<b>Ratify Decisions and Approve Minutes of last Berden Parish Council Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</b> Ratified and Approved.
<b>211.4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be signed 13/7/21 by JB</li></ul>
	<b>Clerk's Report</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All agreed</li></ul>
<b>211.5</b>	<b>Pelham Spring Solar Facility:</b>
	<b>Crabbs Green Battery Unit</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application not yet submitted to the council. This will go through to East Herts council.</li></ul>
	<b>East End Battery Unit</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning has been submitted. All four local councils (Berden, Manuden, Furneux &amp; Stocking Pelham) together have submitted a letter of objection to the East End BU.</li><li>• 120 plus letters of objection have been issued to the council.</li><li>• Furneux Parish Council at first didn't want to discuss the battery unit but are now involved.</li><li>• A lady from Stocking Pelham was interviewed by the Mail on Sunday, which was published Sunday 11th July.</li></ul>

### **Battles Farm Solar Facility**

- Low Carbon have opened a revised consultation, to include The Watson's land which has been made available to host the cable. This will make the proposed site considerably bigger, approx 251 acres.
- The Brick House End area will be completely surrounded. With Watson's land this will give access, the panels are on a slope so will be visible, the area is surrounded by many listed buildings so this is a major concern.
- Having Watson's land will make things a lot less complex for Low Carbon. They are asking for opinions but we believe they know what they want the outcome to be.
- Even if moved it will still be very close to Brick House End.
- With all three solar farms taken into consideration this poses a major concern as they are very close to each other.
- All farms are under the 50mw threshold otherwise they would have to be considered under projects of national importance. This must raise an eyebrow.
- Might be of interest to listen to the UDC recording of the planning meeting in regard to the Thaxted Solar Farm, no debate and very concerning as it seems UDC don't know what they are doing.
- In the letter to the MP's, the point to raise is what is their overview/master plan for the area in the future. Which areas work best?
- Do we make suggestions for alternative sites/locations/configuration? Low Carbon, Stratera and UDC will ignore any/all suggestions. Every Parish Council will have a different view on where the Solar Farms should be sighted.
- Low Carbon will suit themselves, they are determined that Watson's land be part of the plan/solution.
- DM view is the highest harmful areas in Low Carbon's plan are 1,2,4,7, southern areas not as harmful.
- There is a 4 week window in which this can be reviewed and suggestions put forward i.e ask for extra screening etc.
- CR concerned that other PCs wouldn't have the same view.
- Really need to point out that these developments need to be reviewed as a whole.
- CR stated that in 2016 a PC in Hertfordshire managed to call in a proposed site.
- Geoff Gardner is still involved albeit not recently. CR to make contact hopefully with a Barrister friend to discuss the

situation.

### **Park Green Solar Facility**

- Screening application submitted. This means they are asking if they require EIO: Environmental Impact Opinion
- Duncan to write a response, will combine all three applications
- Consultation closes 20th July.
- Reference has been made to the Pelham Springs application.
- Historic England has responded.
- CR has written to Historic England in relation to these developments.
- Has Michelle Noris/ Fergus McMullin passed a comment? JB to investigate.
- Space has been left for the Inertia Stability unit adjacent to the existing battery unit.
- JRussell considering possible leaflets that could be distributed to the village and surrounding areas.

### **General Comments**

- John Riddell to do some research on the Health and Safety aspect of Battery Units.
- Claire Russell to send the information she has to JR
- Oxford Professor has stated that the Battery Units are potentially as dangerous as bombs.
- Map currently in circulation, can this be extended to show the A120 plans? CR to check with JR.
- Planning application for the A120/Bishops Stortford is due to be submitted early August.
- A facebook plea to object to the A120 plans was met with mostly positive comments in favour of the Solar Farm.
- Violets Lane application not yet submitted.
- John Riddell to email Sir Alan Hazelhurst to see if he can help.
- Local Conservative office has been contacted to comment on the situation.
- MP surgery should start up again. DH to keep an eye on this.
- What can we do to raise awareness?
- 2nd August there is a meeting in Manuden Village Hall regarding Battles Farm Solar Park, also a virtual webinar.
- Bob Mason stated not much awareness yet but there was a residents/management meeting proceeding the same night as this PC meeting.

**Saffron Walden Reporter**

- A Lot of confusion from their end. Claire has gone through the text again and hopefully it will be ready to be published soon.

**Letter to UDC & CEO of Uttlesford**

- Ongoing

**Letter to MP's**

- Ongoing

**To Do:**

1. Draft Letter to MP's to include Park Green SF
2. Letter to go to leader of UDC re lack of communication
3. Letter to UDC re screening PGSF
4. Response to LC re new proposal
5. H&S assessment of Battery Unit
6. Map extended to include A120
7. Possible Leaflet campaign to raise awareness.
8. Publish LC information of new consultation via Website and bus stop.
9. JB to see Michelle Norris/Fergus McMullin

211.6	<p><b>Finance Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accounts sent and agreed.</li> <li>● Payment of Mortimer Contracts Ltd. Approved and Ratified</li> <li>● UDC Grant received.</li> <li>● Playground fund now depleted. Fundraising starts again.</li> </ul>
211.7	<p><b>Planning &amp; Enforcement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Screening for PGSF- see notes above.</li> </ul>
211.8	<p><b>Playground Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trail- need to start raising funds</li> <li>● Zip wire now complete after a 3 week closure</li> <li>● Sanitiser- has been stolen. We await the Government announcement. Believe it's now down to the public to ensure hand sanitiser is complete.</li> </ul>
211.9	<p><b>Village Hall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lights have been discussed with VHC they are sorting</li> <li>● Boule now agreed with VHC</li> <li>● Charity Trustees Report for 2021 approved for sign off.</li> </ul>
211.10	<p><b>Highways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No communication with RG</li> <li>● Community Speedwatch- Two sites have been approved and training can commence. JR to contact Highways to discuss as we are not convinced of the sites put forward.</li> </ul>
211.11	<p><b>Footpaths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contract has been agreed and order will be issued to Frank Tinney</li> </ul>

211.12	<p><b>Dog Waste</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pete to erect just passed the entrance to the barns. Near the Laurels.</li> </ul>
211.14	<p><b>Street Party</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Awaiting confirmation from UDC.</li> </ul>
211.15	<p><b>Tree Planting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moved to September meeting.</li> </ul>
211.16	<p><b>Scams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moved to September meeting.</li> </ul>
211.17	<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moved to September meeting.</li> </ul>
211.18	<p>Cllr Loughlin- not in attendance</p>
211.19	<p>Cllr Gooding -not in attendance</p>
	<p><b><u>Items for September Agenda</u></b></p> <p>Campaign against Solar Facilities</p>

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