

ASHWELLTHORPE AND FUNDENHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 18th April 2023 at 7pm
Meeting held at Thorpe Hall Ashwellthorpe

A minute's silence was held in memory of former Parish Chairman and County Councillor Barry Duffin who passed away suddenly over Easter

Present: J Ives (Chair)
N de Spon
G Williams
R Burridge
S Allen
C Leggett
S Engamba
Alan Arber Parish Clerk

1 member of the public plus

District Councillors Mr I Spratt, Mr Legg, and Cllr Francis.

- 1) Apologies for Absence
No apologies received
- 2) Declarations of Interest
All members of the village hall committee declared an interest
S Allen for a payment
All agreed to accept.
- 3) Minutes of the Meeting on 18th April 2023
Agreed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of the meeting.
Proposed. Cllr Despon Seconded Cllr Allen
- 4) Public Open Forum
Councillor Legg gave the following report
County Councillor Alison Thomas is taking on the councils that Barry Duffin used to represent and it was asked that she only be contacted in an emergency due to the number of parishes she must represent. The clerk commented that he had discussed this with Alison already. The sale of Cygnet House in Long Stratton was subject of a debate at Thorpe Lodge recently and a few bids from developers were discussed along with a community bid which was supported by Long Stratton Town Council. Unfortunately, they do not have the necessary £2 million funding to continue with the bid but it was hoped with the incoming CIL monies from the new Housing and Bypass that they will have the necessary funds to continue with their plans.

Chair.....

Councillor Spratt made the following report
 Mindful Town and village programme around mental health have been released by SNDC and details can be found on their website around the training that is provided on this scheme. An extra-ordinary meeting was held at Thorpe Lodge recently on the proposed sale of Cygnet House in Long Stratton and much discussion was entered into with the press and public excluded and a decision was deferred till after the May elections. It looks like Nutrient Neutrality issue is close to be resolved using the proposed credits scheme. With the elections coming up people are reminded that Voter ID is needed to vote and this can be done via an elector's identity form scheme (can be applied for on SNDC Website) and other forms of ID. The clerk commented that this information is on our website. Bird Flu is still prevalent and everyone is urged to take care. It is hoped that a Mardle will be done for the end of June early July and a meeting will take place on how we can do an addition to go on the website. Finally, the recent correspondence around the pylons is attached as [Appendix 1](#)

5). Planning

The following applications were received

a). 2023/0788 No comment

A Tree Preservation Order (SN0598) for trees on Land West of New Road Ashwellthorpe. These are 6 healthy oaks and in land designated for the clusters housing allocations and after a discussion the council agreed to support the application on the trees and the clerk was tasked with returning the form duly completed supporting the TPO.

6). Matters Arising from previous Minutes,

a) speed awareness machines and battery faults

The clerk commented that he had received a quote for a new SAM machine including Bluetooth capability from Westcotec and a discussion was held on this and it is hoped the funding can be found to fund this vital resource. The quote was for £3319.00 plus vat had been received with delivery in 6-8 weeks. It was agreed the clerk would deal with this urgently.

Cllr Williams looked both old speed signs and could only get one working. Cllrs would look at this asap to see if they could be adapted.

7). Finance

a) Payments Since Last Meeting

None

b). To consider payment of the following:

A Arber	March Salary	£508.26
EE	Mobile Internet for Clerk's office march	£36.00
Npower	Street Lights march	£32.46
	NPTS for annual subscription	£105.13
	Norfolk ALC for annual subscription	£290.38
	Mardens gardens for grass cutting	£75.50
	Simon Allen for Lifebuoys and Bench siting on the pond area	£127.66
	Npower for march street lights cost	£30.37

Chair.....

EE for Mobile internet

£36.00

Proposed Cllr Legget

Seconded Cllr Williams

c). Receipts since last meeting

£3409.24 final vat refund for 2022-2023

d). Councils current financial standing and year end accounts

The clerk took the council through these and it was noted we finished with a year-end balance of £6397.06 and a current balance after the meeting a total of £8827.03 being the total of both community account and savings account.

e). To receive and approve section one of the AGAR Annual Governance Statements 2022-23

The clerk took the meeting through the statements and all agreed they were correct and duly signed by the Chair witnessed by the clerk

Proposed Cllr Williams

Seconded Cllr Engamba

f). To receive and approve section 2 of the AGAR Accounting Statements 2022-23

The clerk took the meeting through the statements and all agreed they were correct and duly signed by the Chair witnessed by the clerk

Proposed Cllr Allen

Seconded Cllr Burridge

g). To receive the Internal Control Report

Councillor Leggett had Completed the Internal control report and found all in order and the clerk was thanked for his good work and is very thorough on what he undertakes

Councillor Chris Leggett left the meeting for a personal matter

8). To hear an update on Thorpe Hall and the drainage outside the Patio
A French drain is in place but is inadequate and when we get heavy rain it is a clay site meaning there is issues with this. More bookings are coming on board and the hall moves forward.

9). To receive a report and to consider any necessary action regarding:

a). Footpaths

The maps passed to Cllr Engamba from the clerk and he has found them very helpful. The clerk commented he could set up a QR code for these and it was agreed that we would have both and the clerk will work with Cllr Engamba on this. The new notices would be looked at and done asap. Most footpaths are in good order.

Julian VINCENT-BUNN cuts the grass and he will be put in touch with Cllr Engamba regarding the footpaths.

b). Village maintenance

Cllr Simon Allen was thanked for his work with erecting the bench and lifebuoys at the pond area. A date was agreed for Tuesday 25th April and all volunteers are welcome to help with this. Village Hall sign to go up asap.

c). Community speed watch

Still trying to get the new people ready and then they will get their training done and we can start the speed watch events.

d). To receive the village hall report including the warm space and future events

Chair.....

The warm space has been completed and the end of grant paperwork submitted to the relevant agencies as required. Coronation event in hand with 14 volunteers in place including councillors. No BBQ yet but people have been asked to bring food themselves. The kebab van will be asked to see if he would like to attend.

e). To discuss the purchase of litter bins for the playing field

The clerk to look at this and get prices for all councillors to agree the type and costs before we order these. A discussion ensued on this and the litter bins by the village hall kitchen door could be used. It was agreed to keep an eye on this before a final decision to be made.

f). To discuss Defibrillator Training

Cllr Engamba will run this and will open this up to the whole parish including CPR training as well. The clerk will work with Cllr Engamba to get him enrolled with the circuit system.

g). To discuss the fencing of the Play Area

A discussion ensued on this issue and after many points were raised on both sides of the debate and it was agreed after this discussion that the following motion would be voted on by all councillor's present

It was agreed that if the funding was available and could be accessed then the Play Area would be fenced in asap.

the vote was taken and it was voted fence the play area if the funding was proposed. The vote was taken and it was 4 for 1 against and 1 abstained and councillor Chris Leggett had left the building so his vote could not be counted.

The motion was passed

h). To discuss the allocation of roles to councillors.

Deferred till may after the elections.

i). To discuss the light on Knyvett Green

The clerk had received a quote from TT Jones but this was quite a lot of money so a new quote is being sourced

10). To note correspondence received

Election notification of uncontested election received

Life buoys installed at the pond

Bench installed at the pond

PFK Littlejohn paperwork received

Year-end done

Nalc Training emails received

NPTS training emails received

TT Jones quote received

Website updated

Westcotec quote received

Planning application received as discussed earlier

TPO notification received

Chair.....

- New spreadsheets set up
 - Website updated
 - Quote for fencing received
 - New Insurance quote received
 - Emails on Barry Duffin passing received
 - Phone call to the bank reference new signatories
 - Final Vat Reclaim for 2022 -23 submitted
 - Warm space end of grant forms submitted
 - NALC subscription received
 - NPTS subscription received
 - Play area inspection completed
 - New Accounts file made up ready for the new year
 - Letter regarding CIL Payment received
- 11). Items for the Next Meeting:
- Internal audit report and actions
 - Insurance for 2023-2024
 - Bank signatories for 2023-24
 - Contractors for 2023-24
 - Update all policies that need updated

12). Date and Place of the Next Meeting:

- 16th May Annual Meeting of the Parish 2023 at Thorpe Hall at 6.30pm
- 16th May Annual Parish Meeting 2023 at Thorpe Hall at 7pm

Meeting closed at 8.14pm

Chair.....



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
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30th March 2023

Dear East Anglian community groups,

CONSULTATION ON COMMUNITY BENEFITS FOR ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

I'm writing to notify you of our consultation on Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission Network Infrastructure, which opens for views today. We are publishing this consultation alongside our Powering Up Britain Plan, which set out how we are taking bold action to achieve our energy security and net zero objectives.

We know how passionately you and your members feel about the inclusion of community voices in transmission infrastructure policy, and therefore are keen to have your and their inputs into this consultation.

The consultation will gather views on how communities can benefit from hosting electricity transmission infrastructure across Great Britain, recognising the role they play in delivering cheaper, more secure and low carbon energy. It suggests introducing voluntary guidance for industry and local communities setting out the offer they should make to affected communities. We recommend this includes direct payments and wider community benefits, so benefit packages can be tailored to local preferences. The proposed scope includes all onshore transmission network infrastructure, including onshore infrastructure associated with offshore wind and interconnectors (e.g. substations and converter stations). The consultation can be found [here](#).

Engaging with the consultation

We would encourage you to respond to the consultation. We will also be hosting public webinars. The dates and joining details for the webinars can be found on the consultation webpage.

Alongside the consultation, through consultants CEPA and Locality, we will be delivering engagement events over the next few months for industry and community stakeholders to help develop the guidance.

We are also planning to seek the views of communities surrounding a number of proposed future network infrastructure projects, using surveys, workshops and interviews to understand views on community benefits. Potential participants will be contacted by a third-party research company that is delivering this on behalf of the department.

My officials are also happy to meet directly. If you would like to speak to the team, would like to be involved in the engagement events, or if you have any questions please email cbnetworks@beis.gov.uk. The consultation will close on 25th May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Grant Shapps". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Grant" and the last name "Shapps" clearly legible.

RT HON GRANT SHAPPS MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero

ASTWOLLETTERS

Good morning to all.

There's a lot to announce this morning, so apologies for those who I know don't really like long emails, but these are important issues and deserve some time and attention.

1. **The Grant Shapps letter.**

You may be aware that during the recent Cabinet re-shuffle, Grant Shapps MP was given the job of Secretary Of State within the newly created Department for Energy Security & Net Zero. That means that any final decision on infrastructure projects, such as the EA GREEN proposals, will be taken by him (assuming that his party are still in power of course).

On Thursday, various organisations and individuals in our region received a letter from Mr. Shapps, announcing what is described as a "Consultation on Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission Network Infrastructure". The consultation seeks suggestions for how communities can receive financial benefit if energy infrastructure affects them, saying that consumers everywhere should subsidise these payments, essentially offering - for want of a better phrase - "payment for pylons".

We find this letter and the basis of the consultation to be extremely insulting. The very notion that somehow some financial incentives - as yet unspecified in type and value - but for example let's assume something like contribution to community buildings such as village halls - could be adequate compensation for the blight that a pylon run would bring to the community would be laughable if it wasn't so serious. We are responding, as a campaign group, and will be offering suggestions as to how you can respond yourselves, to make sure Mr Shapps - in the job for five minutes - is left in no doubt as to our view on this nonsense proposal.

The letter from Mr Shapps is attached as PDF file, and the full text is copied at the end of this email. A link to the Government site for participation is contained within the letter, and also reproduced here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-benefits-for-electricity-transmission-network-infrastructure>

2. **The "other" consultation.**

Also announced on Thursday, and conveniently overshadowed by the Shapps letter, is a second consultation, which proposes a far-reaching and potentially highly damaging change to national energy policy which would allow National Grid and wind farm operators to build what they want, where they want, anywhere in the country, without consideration for anything else. This clearly comes as part of the headlong rush to "Net Zero", with no thought or concern as to how such changes could adversely affect the communities and environment unlucky enough to be caught in the headlights of any such proposals.

The full text of the proposal, which runs to 37 pages - a little light reading for those who are interested to see the kind of detail the campaign is working against - may be found at the following link -

[Planning for New Energy Infrastructure: Revised draft National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

This encompasses the long-awaited revision of Energy Policy Statements – the guidelines by which significant energy infrastructure projects must abide.

Whilst not legally qualified, the campaign committee is of the view that some of the proposals with the document may well be illegal - such big changes in such a short time, with such potentially huge adverse impacts would normally require sustainability assessments, which are omitted from the consultation documents. We have sought the advice of our K.C., Charles Banner, and will pass on his opinion when received.

We have also written to members of the OffSET group of MPs, to seek their response to both consultations.

3. Our Press Release

We have released the following statement to the press yesterday –

PRESS RELEASE 31/3/23

Government ‘payment for pylons scheme’ is a smokescreen, says action group.

Pylon-blight campaigners have strongly rejected government proposals for payments for pylons.

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero, has written to pylon-blight campaigners and East Anglian community groups about a new consultation on ‘community benefits’ for electricity transmission infrastructure. The consultation seeks suggestions for how communities can receive financial benefit if energy infrastructure affects them, saying that consumers everywhere should subsidise these payments.

Pylon-blight campaigner, Rosie Pearson, of Essex Suffolk Norfolk Pylons, immediately kicked back, saying,

“The letter from Mr Shapps is very insulting. While recognizing our desire for community engagement on the one hand it not only misses the point that we can’t be bribed to accept the wrong infrastructure, but also neglects to mention a much more important consultation that was also launched yesterday. This second consultation proposes a far-reaching and potentially highly damaging change to national energy policy which would allow National Grid and wind farm operators to build what they want, where they want, anywhere in the country, without consideration for anything else. We have referred it immediately to our leading planning barrister, Charles Banner KC, for comment as we question its lawfulness.

We had hoped that the energy policy consultation would reflect the concerns of campaigners all over the region (and Lincolnshire and Wales), about the damage caused by the lack of coordination in wind farm planning.

When Minister Graham Stuart visited Essex in February, he heard from campaigners that community benefit is not the answer. No so-called community benefit will compensate for the effects. The answer is for Minister to wake up and smell the coffee: a coordinated offshore grid is good for consumers, communities and the environment. Bribing us to accept the worst of all solutions makes us extremely angry.”

Additionally, we expect to feature in a national press article , possibly on Monday – more details as it becomes available.

4. **A request to contact your MP.**

So, the fight continues, and we continue to need your help to maintain the fight. We will advise on suggested responses to the various consultations in due course, but in the meantime a letter or an email to your MP (Richard Bacon for most here) will help to keep our presence strong.

We suggest the following content –

“In light of the recent announcements from the Department for Energy and Net Zero –

- What’s happening with the NG ESO review? it has gone quiet, and we need to know communities are being listened to about the need to broaden the scope of the review.

- What is the government up to with its new energy policy consultation proposal to allow so-called ‘critical’ transmission infrastructure pretty much anywhere? We need strategy and coordination from our leaders, not a free for all at the expense of heritage, countryside, countryside, and habitats.

These developments are not acceptable, what will you do to help stop this.”

So, lots to digest this weekend. Thank you all for the support so far – let’s continue to take this fight to NG and the Government and stop these ruinous proposals.

Best wishes, and apologies again for the lengthy missive.

Martin.

Here is the text of the Shapps letter –

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Yours sincerely,

RT HON GRANT SHAPPS MP

Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero