**Weston Colville Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 4th November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Reading Room, 46 Chapel Rd, Weston Colville, Weston Green, Cambridge CB21 5NX.**

**Present: Ray Vidler, Bridget Durham, John Garrod, Emma Rayner, Rachael Jennings, Matt Russell, and Jess Ashbridge (Clerk). Also present in part: 26 Parishioners, County Cllr Henry Batchelor, and District Councillor Geoff Harvey.**

[**http://www.westoncolville.org.uk**](http://www.westoncolville.org.uk)

1. **Chairman’s Welcome –** Cllr Vidler welcomed those present, and advised the Kingsway Solar Farm Proposals would be discussed under the Public Participation session.
2. **To accept apologies and reasons for absence –** Apologies were approved from Cllr Pagonis **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**
3. **To make any declarations of interest –** None.
4. **To approve minutes-** The minutes for the meeting of Weston Colville Parish Council on 2nd September 2024 were approved. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Garrod, Abstain: 1, 5 in fav.**
5. **Public Participation Session –** Cllr Vidler started the session by advising that as a break from the norm, up to half an hour would be allowed for the discussion on the Kingsway Solar Farm Proposals. He advised that the company had many proposals across the country, and at this stage they were looking for as many views as possible from residents through the initial consultation, that was running from 31st October to 12th December. Cllr Vidler advised that he had found information online about stopping another solar farm, and that some of the points could be used in this case. The Clerk offered to share this list. Questions raised from parishioners included – concerns over the flooding risk; whether there could be a more public defence, along the lines of ‘Muck Off Haverhill’; how to get as many people engaged as possible to complete the consultation; why Weston Colville was not hosting a public meeting, when Balsham and West Wratting had dates set. It was advised that the PC would try and arrange a meeting with Kingsway in Weston Colville that would be open to the public, but also recommended that people attended the meetings in Balsham or West Wratting. It was also reported that a Balsham Community group had been set up about the Solar Farm, which people could join. The Parish Council welcomed the views of Parishioners. Further information could be found at <https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/information/>
6. **District and County Council reports and items of interest** – Reports appended. The planning application referenced below was raised, as it had been waiting for a decision for a long time – it was reported that the hold up lay with the land owner, and not with SCDC.
7. **7.1 Planning – Decisions with SCDC**

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| **Planning reference** | **Address** | **Proposal** | **Decision** |
| **24/00192/FUL** | Mines Park Chapel Road | [Planning Details](https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage) | **Awaiting decision** |

* 1. **Flooding** – The Stour behind The Green/Horseshoe Lane had been cleared, Cllr Harvey was asked to investigate whether the work would be carried out annually. The ditch by the Reading Room, and along the Recreation Ground had been cleared. The Highways Officer had commissioned a consultant’s report into the flooding on Common Road, seeking longer term solutions. A Parishioner was thanked for clearing the culvert and drainage between Old Orchard and Stour House.
  2. **Footpaths –** 
     1. Bridleway 14 diversion consultation, it was determined to support the proposals, both hedges would remain, but would be faced back to widen the bridleway.
     2. Footpath 16 diversion consultation, no comments were to be made on the proposal, as the footpath would follow the fence line.
  3. **MVAS –** The former Cllr that had been looking after the MVAS (mobile vehicle activation signs) had asked to step back. He was thanked for all his hard work. Cllr Russell volunteered to take them over. The Clerk would put them in touch for the handover. It was proposed that Cllr Russell would take on the responsibility, and present the data at meetings. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.** Stepping back from the shared scheme was also discussed, as the technology was very outdated, and hard to access. The Clerk would raise it with some of the other shared parishes.
  4. **Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership (GCP) Presentation –** Cllr Vidler reported that he had attended a GCP presentation. There would be a new park and ride – transport hub – in Babraham, which would link a guided bus way to the Addenbrooks Campus. The new South Cambridge station was under construction, it would have 4 platforms. Plans for the expansion of the facilities at Addenbrooks were revealed including a new A&E building, plus a children’s hospital and oncology hospital. The campus would extend towards Babraham, and would be completed over the next 15 years.
  5. **Policies –** The biodiversity policy would be determined in January, Cllr Garrod would add content to the policy.
  6. **BT Digital Voice –** Cllr Batchelor was asked to chase this, as the PC were not sure how to proceed.
  7. **Grass Cutting Tenders March 2025 – November 2027 –** The draft letter was received, some amendments were required, Cllrs Garrod and Durham would send these across, and then the Clerk would circulate them to contractors, aiming to make a decision at the next meeting, but allowing time to push it back to March if necessary.
  8. **Dates for meetings 2025 –** 6th January, 3rd March, Wednesday 7th May, 7th July, Wednesday 10th September, 3rd November.
  9. **Poppy Appeal –** It was determined to donate £15 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Wreath. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**
  10. **LOL’s Pizza –** A request had been received for LOL’s Pizza to park in the Reading Room Car Park once a month to serve food. The proposal was approved **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Garrod, All in fav.**
  11. **Challenge Newsletter –** A donation of £150 for annual printing costs was approved **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Jennings, All in fav**.
  12. **Village Event 2025 –** It was reported that the Reading Room Committee would be happy to support an event, if it was organised by the PC. Insurance would need to be checked. It was suggested that there could be a joint celebration of VE Day and officially opening the new playground in May.

1. **Risk Assessment/Health and Safety –** The defibrillator was rescue ready.
2. **Playground –** It was noted that the works for the first stage of the playground renovation were commencing on 11th November – works inside the fenced in area. An update was required for the funding gap for the second stage. It was suggested that the Thurlow Estate of Field Compost could be approached for a donation towards the playground. It was determined that once funding had been sourced, that the deposit could be paid on the second stage of the playground development – works outside the fenced area.
3. **Finance –** 
   1. **To Approve payments –** Payment for laptop to Little Abington PC, £299.66, Challenge Donation £150, Poppy Wreath £15. **P: Cllr Duham, S: Cllr Vidler, All in fav.**
   2. **VAT –** It was noted that a VAT Claim was made for £5,721.55 on 18th October.

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| **Credit Received – £5,000 from Reading Room Trust for Playground, plus £1,870.60 from Community Chest Grant for playground from Reading Room Trust**  **Rural Prosperity Grant for Playground from Reading Room Trust** | £6,870.60  £20,348.00 |
| **Wages s/o** | £235.17 |
| **Balance at Lloyds Current Account 25/10/2024** | £1,654.29 |
| **Balance Lloyds Savings Account** | £49,236.26 |
| **Briggs Gift Account Balance** | £249 |

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| **Date** | **Detail** |  | **Amount** | **VAT** |
| D/D | Street lighting |  | £25.66 | £1.84 |
| 30.09.24 | Setter Play deposit – Itemised amount for Rural Prosperity Grant |  | £24,417 | £4,069 |
| 30.09.24 | Setter Play deposit (to make up to 50%) |  | £8,735.52 | £1,455.92 |
| 12.09.24 | Simon Ratford – grass cutting |  | £375 |  |
| 30.09.24 | Simon Ratford – grass cutting |  | £375 |  |
| **Total** |  |  | £33,928.18 |  |

1. **Matters for next Agenda –** Biodiversity policy, Kingsway.

**13. Employment -** Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and in accordance with 3d pursuant to Standing Order 11, it was resolved that the Public are excluded from any discussion on this item as it concerns employment matters **P: Cllr Durham, S: Cllr Vidler, All in fav.** The NALC National Salary Award pay scales had been released, it was determined that the Clerk would raise to spine point 10 - £13.91 an hour. Pay would be backdated on spine 9 to April 2024.

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**Dates of Parish Council meetings in 2025 are: 6th January, 3rd March, Wednesday 7th May (APM/AGM), 7th July, Wednesday 10th September, 3rd November.**

**District and County Councillor’s Report – November 2024**

**Community Roadshows**

The District Council have organised a series of in-person community roadshows, alongside some of their partners, to showcase the community services and grants that they have available for local communities to apply for. These roadshows are a great opportunity to see exactly what resource the local councils in South Cambridgeshire have for us to tap into, a lot of which we may not know about.

We’re pleased to see that there is one being held in Linton, to cover our area. Please do register to attend if you have an interest in this opportunity.

This event is on November 12th between 7pm and 8pm and you need to register attendance beforehand <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/linton-community-roadshow-tickets-1030034590187?aff=oddtdtcreator>

If people can’t make the Linton event there are two others that anyone can attend:

November 20th – Melbourn Hub – 6:30pm - 7:30pm

November 28th – Impington Village College – 6pm – 7pm

**Residents Parking Scheme Consultation**

There is a consultation opening on October 31st and running until December 12th on proposed changes to the County Council’s policy on Residents Parking Schemes. This is to attempt to make the policy marry up with the new Civil Parking Enforcement officers (traffic wardens) that have been operational in South Cambridgeshire since February this year. Some people approach us about implementing residents parking schemes in specific areas. If you, or anyone you know, feel strongly about this policy, please do comment - <https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/residents-parking-scheme-policy-review>

**Kingsway Solar Farm**

The proposal by Downing Renewables/Kingsway Solar for a very large new solar farm on the land between Balsham, West Wratting and West Colville, will be moving forward for informal public consultation starting on October 31st. This is an ‘informal’ consultation being run by the proposers of the scheme, who are looking to gather local feedback on the plans, as they currently stand. We understand that this consultation will involve public events, an online webinar as well as marketing material to be posted to every property within a kilometre of the proposed site.

It’s worth reiterating that, given the size and scale of this scheme, the decision to approve, or not, will be made by a central government planning inspector, rather than any of the local planning authorities. This will be a major development covering a very large part of our countryside, if it does go ahead, so please do engage if you have any views on this proposal.

**Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) update**

The upgrades that we have seen on our stretch of the A1307 over the past 5 years have been a part of a wider package of upgrades in South Cambridgeshire to improve transport to and from Cambridge and employment sites. Those that have kept tabs on this will recall that there was a proposal for a new Transport Hub (park & ride site) just outside Babraham and a new off-road bus route linking the new Hub to the hospital site. This part of the scheme had stalled over the past few years but is now moving forward, the County Council agreed to proceed to the next stage, which is to present a business case to a government inspector, who will decide whether this proposal is sound or not.

An important part of this scheme is that the Linton Greenway, which currently finishes in Abington, can’t progress until there is an agreed plan for what will be happening on the Cambridge side of the A11.

**Bus Franchising Consultation**

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) launched a consultation on the concept of bus franchising in the county and how the authority can help reform bus travel. It’s a very big step forward, as the idea of introducing a road charge in Cambridge to pay for more buses in Cambridgeshire has been binned, this is a more realistic alternative to improving public transport, but will involve more public funding to get it off the ground and possibly an increase in the Mayor’s precept to help fund it, so please do contribute to the consultation if possible. <https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/>

The consultation runs until November 20th.

**Police Community Engagement Panel**

Cambridgeshire Police hold quarterly public forums where they give updates on the service in South Cambs as well as take questions from the public. The next one is to be held online on November 27th at 7pm. To register for the event, follow this link - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-cambridgeshire-community-engagement-meeting-november-2024-tickets-772923213137?aff=oddtdtcreator>

**Household Support Fund**

Every year the County Council manages a fund called the Household Support Fund which is aimed to support individuals who are in receipt of benefits. The fund has different tranches of application and is currently asking for applications from ‘Trusted Partners’. Direct applications will be opening soon so please do keep an eye on this, as it is a very popular and helpful pot of money that we can tap into. <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/household-support-fund>

**Mobile Warden Scheme**

The District Council has had a scheme running for many years, aimed at supporting mobile warden schemes within South Cambridgeshire. They have just agreed to continue this scheme for another 10 years. Applications to extend existing schemes or start new schemes are now open - <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/mobilecommunity-warden-scheme>

**Winter Gritting Scheme**

The County Council is always looking for people to volunteer to help with community gritting in the winter months. If you’re interested in this, please do register via the website or your local Parish Council - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths/help-with-gritting-and-clearing-snow>

**Small Business Support Grant**

The District Council have announced a new grant which is available to support small businesses in South Cambs. Small businesses can apply for up to £5,000 from a £100,000 pot and is a part of the wider Rural Prosperity Scheme, mentioned below, from the Combined Authority.

SCDC still offers free advice to small businesses and startups. Full detail can be found here - <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/small-business-grant/>

**High Street Improvement Grant**

There is a new grant available from the Combined Authority, facilitated by the District Council, aimed at supporting local business, charities, community groups and parish councils. There is between £5,000 and £20,000 per project available. Please do take a look at the criteria and apply if eligible. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/improving-the-high-street-grant>

**Local Highways Officer Update**

Our local highways officer (LHO), Bradley Southwell, has now moved to cover a different area of Cambridgeshire. This leaves our area without a permanent LHO and the workload is being covered by a collection of other officers until a permanent appointment can be made. The message is keep reporting highway issues via the County Council website.