**Weston Colville Parish Council**

**Minutes from the meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 6th January 2025, at 7.30pm, in the Reading Room,** **46 Chapel Rd, Weston Colville, Weston Green, Cambridge CB21 5NX . Meeting documents were found on** [**http://www.westoncolville.org.uk**](http://www.westoncolville.org.uk).

**Present: Ray Vidler (Chairman), Bridget Durham, John Garrod, Rachel Jennings, Constantine Pagonis, Matt Russell, and Jessica Ashbridge (Clerk). Also present in part:**

**15 parishioners, Sarah Lees from Age UK, District County Cllr Geoff Harvey, County Cllr Henry Batchelor, and Simon Chandler (Chairman of West Wratting PC)**

1. **Chairman’s Welcome –** The Chairman welcomed those present, and wished them a Happy New Year.
2. **To accept apologies and reasons for absence –** Apologies were received from Cllr Rayner. **P: Cllr Vidler S: Cllr Durham, All in fav.**
3. **To make any declarations of interest –** None.
4. **To approve minutes-** For the meeting of Weston Colville Parish Council on 4th November. P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Russell, Abstain: 1, 5 in fav.
5. **Age UK –** A short presentation from the Age UK Warden Scheme was received from Sarah Lees. 12 schemes were covered in South Cambridgeshire. The Small Villages Warden had capacity to care for 16 people. Currently 12 people were looked after by the warden, 2 lived in Weston Colville. The Wardens aimed to reduce loneliness, isolation, collect prescriptions, signpost to other organisations, and support people and their families. The service worked particularly well if family members were not local. The scheme aimed to build relationships, Wardens were mental health trained, dealt with bereavement, and were dementia friendly. A recent report conducted by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) demonstrated social value return, the warden scheme offered high value for money. 10 yr funding support was offered through SCDC on a sliding scale, however there was a £6,000 deficit for 2025-26. SCDC had dropped their funding for this financial year, and wanted them to increase their clients. Sarah Lees was hoping that members of the PC or Parishioners would join a steering group. Due to the deficit, she hoped there would be an increased contribution from WCPC, but she was grateful for all donations so far. Currently there was a deficit £500 per client. It was discussed that the Warden Scheme did not receive direct money from the main Age UK charity, despite being under their umbrella. Sarah Lees was thanked for her presentation, it was determined to discuss funding, when the budget was discussed.
6. **Public Participation Session –** All Parishioners attended for information on the Solar Farm.
7. **District and County Council reports and items of interest** – Report appended. Cllr Batchelor advised that SCDC had committed funds to the Age UK Warden Scheme over the last 20 years, however they had not increased their fees over that time, so SCDC were trying to get them to be self-sufficient. The new Local Highways Officer would be in place February 2025. It was hoped that joint parish meetings could resume quarterly. A question was raised about BT Digital Voice, Cllr Batchelor had sent an email after the November meeting. The Clerk would find and circulate it.

 **8.1 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** |

**Enforcement**

* 1. **Flooding** – Flooding had been better on Common Road, since the culvert was cleared by a parishioner, but the PC was still waiting for a Floods Risk Officer to bring a consultant out to create a long term solution. Flooding had been high at Horseshoe Lane ford, the day before the meeting. Debris had been found in the culverts.
	2. **Footpaths –** Requests had been made from a number of Parishioners for a dog waste bin at the bottom of Horseshoe Lane. The Clerk would enquire, although previous applications to SCDC had been unsuccessful.
	3. **MVAS –** Cllr Russell had now taken over the MVAS, further handover for data handling would be taking place. The devices would be moved to Chapel Road, and Brinkly Road coming into the village. There were spare brackets, so they could go in different locations.
	4. **Kingsway Solar Farm Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) –** A letter was received from the Planning Inspectorate requesting comments for the Environment Impact Assessment, as a consultee of the application. Cllr Durham had attended a joint PC meeting 5th Dec, a representative from Stop Sunnica was present, they had won their case, with planning inspectorate etc, however Ed Miliband had pushed the proposal through in 2 days and Stop Sunnica, SCDC and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) did not appeal due to the legal costs involved.

Kingsway Solar Community group (KSCG), were acting as a really good resource. It was important to collaborate between the PCs. Cllr Vidler had created a document for EIA scoping document – he had used West Wratting PC’s document as a basis. Cllr Vidler’s document was specific to Weston Colville. The reasons for objection were based on planning objections. It was clear that Kingsway Solar had not surveyed Area C, due to the unsuitability of the area, such as roads, flooding, battery electric storage risk, landscape and visual amenity. There were lots of mistakes, listed buildings not incorporated etc. Cllr Pagonis proposed an opening for the document, adding major concerns in bullet points.

Cllr Garrod thanked Cllr Vidler, for the amount of work carried out in a very short amount of time from 17th Dec to 14th Jan. There would be a list of pictures appendices, views from listed buildings were required, and photographs from heritage settings. Listed properties and views: Weston Colville Hall, 3 Horseshoes Farmhouse, Church, Lane Cottage, Pathways, Pound Farm, Pound Farm Barns. KSCG had Map Capture What 3 Words with views, just for parcel C, for Weston Colville. Simon Chandler West Wratting PC Chairman – asked that endorsements were made for West Wratting’s report, there was a draft map from WW with photos. It was suggested including a reference to the Environment Agency flood plan. It was reported that Weston Colville was not listed as a residential area, in the Kingsway Solar documents.

Setting up a Working group was discussed – 2 Cllrs, 3 parishioners – Kingsway Action member, moved to March. Different skill sets would be required. It would be a long term project, over at least next 3-5 years. Cllrs Batchelor and Harvey were very supportive. Cllr Batchelor suggested having a joint meeting with planners involved with the Sunnica application, before the formal consultation.

* 1. **Policies –** It was determined to bring the biodiversity policy back in March. Cllr Garrod would amend the policy using CCC and SCDC policies to aid the proposal. It was suggested liaising with local bodies – land owners, PCC, and Woodland Trust etc. Hedging for new area round pond had been ordered from the Woodland Trust, by Cllr Jennings.
	2. **BT Digital Voice –** The Clerk would take action on the email sent by Cllr Batchelor.
	3. **Village Event 2025 –** To be moved to March. To celebrate 80th VE Day and official opening of Playground.
1. **Risk Assessment/Health and Safety –** The defibrillator was rescue ready.
2. **Playground –** It was noted that the works for fenced area were completed in November. The deposit had been paid for the second stage, which would be installed in mid/late January. Funds from Thalia, had been received. The Clerk had secured a donation of £1,000 from Field Compost Ltd. Final costs for playground due were £18,057.50, plus VAT. It was proposed to acquire signage for sponsorship/inspection signs, budget up to £200. **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav.** Picnic benches would be discussed in March.
3. **Finance –**
	1. **To Approve payments –** T Potter grass cutting £2000 or less **P: Cllr Garrod, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav**, Elevate Play balance of playground works following completion £18,507.50 + VAT (£3,611.50). Age UK Warden Scheme £500. **P: Cllr Durham, S: Cllr Vidler, All in fav.**
	2. **Accounts –** Accepted **P: Cllr Pagonis, S: Cllr Vidler, All in fav.**
	3. **Budget 2025-26 –** The budget was approved **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Russell, All in fav.**
	4. **Precept 2025-26 –** The precept was determined at £15,000 **P:Cllr Pagonis, S: Cllr Vidler,** **Abstain: 2, 4 in fav**. It was noted that £2,000 was budgeted to start a fund for fighting Kingsway Solar proposals. It was reported that SCDC had made an error on the precept last year, and although the PC had received the correct amount of the precept, Parishioners were charged a reduced rate, and therefore it would appear that there would be a large increase this year.

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| **Credit Received – VAT refund****Field Compost Donation for Playground** | £9,137.03£1,000 |
| **Wages s/o**  | £250.18 |
| **Balance at Lloyds Current Account 30/12/24** | £7,080.29 |
| **Balance Lloyds Savings Account** | £22.67 |
| **Briggs Gift Account Balance**  | £249 |

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| **Date** | **Detail** |  | **Amount** | **VAT** |
| D/D | Street lighting  |  | £25.66 | £1.84 |
| 22.11.24 | Elevate Play deposit  |  | £21,669 | £3,611.50 |
| 02.12.24 | DM Payroll |  | £63 |  |
| 02.12.24 | Setter Play final payment |  | £33,153.15 | £5,525.53 |
| 11.12.24 | Thalia payment to release grant funding |  | £2,750 |  |
| 20.11.24 | Clerk’s wages and back pay due to pay scale rise |  | £322.71 |  |
| **Total** |  |  | £57,983.52 | £9138.87 |

1. **Matters for next Agenda – Committee for Kingsway Solar formation/terms of reference**

**14. Grass Cutting Tender -** 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 tenders **P: Cllr Vidler, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav.** Four grass cutting tenders were received. It was determined to instruct Simon Ratford for Section 1, and Trevor Potter for Section 2&3 **P: Cllr Pagonis, S: Cllr Garrod, All in fav**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.16pm.

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**Dates of Parish Council meetings in 2025 are: 3rd March, Wednesday 7th May, 7th July, Wednesday 10th September, 3rd November.**

**District and County Councillor’s Report – January 2025**

**Kingsway Solar Farm**

The proposal by Downing Renewables/Kingsway Solar for a very large new solar farm on parcels of land between Balsham, West Wratting and West Colville, has completed the ‘informal consultation’ stage at the back end of 2024 and thank you to everyone that has engaged with this process.

Shortly before the Christmas break, Kingsway Solar released their ‘Environmental Impact Assessment’ (EIA) document, which outlines what the applicants’ environmental consultants see the environmental challenges and concerns to be. You can see this, plus all the other documents currently in the public domain, on their website - <https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk/>

The next stage of the process, once Kingsway Solar have digested all of the initial feedback, will be that they will hold a ‘formal consultation’ which will be asking for much of the same responses to the proposals, should they be more detailed, that they will present at this point. Again, we encourage everyone to engage with this process, as the scheme will impact everyone in this area, directly or indirectly.

It’s worth reiterating that, given the size and scale of this scheme, the ultimate 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.

**4 Day Week Consultation**

The District Council has been trialling a 4-day work week for their staff since January 2023. The trail was supposed to last for a shorter period of time but the previous government had indicated that they would be levying financial penalties to the Council for running this trial, but wouldn’t say how much this would be, therefore the Council couldn’t make a decision on whether to make the trial permanent. However, the new government has said they won’t be applying any financial penalties on the Council, so SCDC are now in a position to come to a decision on this. This will likely include a formal consultation where people can give their views on the scheme since its inception.

**Local Government Reorganisation**

Before the Christmas break there was an announcement by central government that there would be a reorganisation of local government in the coming years with the thrust on there being much larger councils, run by elected Mayors, and doing away with smaller councils, such as District and possibly County councils.

It’s unlikely that there will be anything happening in Cambridgeshire for some years, if at all, as we already have a directly elected Mayor in our county and have been designated as a ‘non-priority’ area for reorganisation.

**Greenway progress**

The ‘greenway’ that runs between Linton and Abington has made some progress over the past few months. The foot/cycle/horse path between Granta Park and runs down the side of Newmarket Road in Little Abington has been completed. This is the latest stage of upgrades to the stretch of the road. Future phases include a new Travel Hub at Babraham and an upgraded bridge crossing of the A11 to access this.

**Average Speed Camera & Accident Data**

We have recently been sent the traffic data for the stretch of the A1307 between Linton and Cardinals Green – this shows the accident data as well as the number of tickets issued for people exceeding the speed limit. We’re happy to provide these to people that are interested.

**Happy New Year**

As this is our first report of the 2025, we’d like to wish you all a Happy New Year and we look forward to working with you all throughout the next 12 months.