

Brafferton & Helperby Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 17 January 2024
Held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Nigel Denison (Chairman), Cllr Peter Mitchell, Cllr Pam Jackson-Vickers, Cllr Deirdre Brown, Cllr Mark Darwin, Roger Clements (Clerk) and 10 members of the public (MoP).

1. Apologies for Absence
 - 1.1. Apologies were received from Cllrs Andy Gale and Matt Boyle.
2. Declarations of Interest not already declared under the Council's Code of Conduct or members Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
 - 2.1. No declarations were made but Cllr Denison announced that he would stand aside for item 17.1 as he had submitted the application on behalf of the St Peter's PCC.
3. Chairman's report
4. Public Participation – no topics were raised.
5. News from North Yorkshire Council (NYC) – none was available.
6. The minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 Dec 23 were accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Chairman.
7. New Correspondence – no new correspondence was received.
8. Clerk's report – advertising for the Pilmoor solar farm exhibition in HVH on 8 Feb was about to be distributed.

9. Financial matters

10. Clerk's financial report – Clerk will attend the 'Raising Regular Funds for Community Projects' webinar on 24 Jan.
11. Bank Reconciliation – the Financial Working Group confirmed the bank reconciliation to be in order.
12. Purchase of fencing materials – the initial stretch of trial fencing at the Back Lane allotments was considered successful and a second strip at plot BL8 had been costed – it was resolved to **purchase** the materials for the second stretch of fencing at a cost of £170.
13. Removal of debris from the Back Lane allotments – a considerable amount of debris had accumulated over the years on several of the allotments and much of it was challenging to remove. It was **resolved** to hire a skip to remove the debris.
14. To note Payment Card Purchases (PCP) and note or approve accounts received:
 - 14.1. No purchases were made.

15. Matters for Consideration

- 15.1. Meeting dates in 2024 – it was **resolved** that the Council would continue to meet on the third Wednesday of each month except for May and December when meetings would take place on the second Wednesday.

16. Information on the following ongoing issues and decide further action where necessary

- 16.1. Cobbles project – no updates were received. Chairman reported that discussions continue with NYC on works to cobbles and to improve village wide access for wheelchair users.
- 16.2. Neighbourhood plan – no updates were received.

17. Planning Matters

- 17.1. Planning Application ZB23/02559/CAT, works to trees at St Peter's Church, Brafferton – Cllr Mitchell took the Chair for this topic and Cllr Denison did not vote - it was **resolved** to support the application.
- 17.2. Planning Application ZB23/02461/FUL, proposed installation of solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels and associated infrastructure at OS Field 5220,

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south of Pilmoor Grange, Pilmoor, Brafferton - Chairman chose to take this item after item 8 and to allow members of the public (MoP) present to address the Council. In the light of the government's legal commitment to Net Zero by 2050 it was acknowledged that the proposed solar farm was likely to be approved. However, most speakers believed that the proposal would have a visual impact and would also adversely affect the local ecology in ways which the current plan did not sufficiently mitigate:

- 17.2.1. One householder would be surrounded by the solar panels on 3 sides and expected that their quiet enjoyment of the countryside would be seriously impacted; the site needed more visual masking as glare was thought to be an issue. It was thought that the power output connection (substation) could be moved to the NE corner to reduce electrical noise. More consideration of animal routes was needed.
- 17.2.2. A part owner of Brafferton Spring Woods echoed the wish to see the substation moved to the NE. She believed the planned 15m wildflower buffer was insufficient and awaited details of an ecological survey and the setting up of a biodiversity net-gain assessment - both should aid selection and dimensions of clear boundary edges and animal corridors along Sun Beck and north/south crossing of Westmoor Road.
- 17.2.3. Another Spring Woods part owner concurred with the suggested substation move NE towards the railway line and hoped that noise and light levels, particularly during the construction phase, would be held to a minimum. He would like biodiversity to be improved by thoughtful use of the space between the solar farm and the woodland edge.
- 17.2.4. Another landowner whose plot contains a pond expected the substation to be noisy. This land attracted a variety of birds and was a corridor for deer which route to and from the Westmoor Road.
- 17.2.5. The owner of the land where the solar farm is proposed confirmed the land to be rated as Agricultural Land Classification 3b (moderate quality) and is currently used for growing energy crops. He believed that any noise from the substation would be low.
- 17.2.6. Chairman invited Cllrs to express their opinions which were broadly sympathetic to the views expressed by MoP, while acknowledging that the Country needed an increasing proportion of green energy. In summary the Council **resolved** not to object to the proposal. It will include comments in its response concerning:
 - 17.2.6.1. The design and layout of the solar farm recommending that more work is undertaken to identify the needs of wildlife, especially deer, badgers and other species living in Brafferton Spring Wood.
 - 17.2.6.2. It believes that planned boundary gaps may need widening and animal routes from and around the woodland and along Sun Beck need identifying and kept clear.
 - 17.2.6.3. Additional screening of the site's southern boundary should be considered.
 - 17.2.6.4. If it is likely that the substation will emit sharp electrical noises, consideration should be given to moving the substation NW to be adjacent to the railway line.
 - 17.2.6.5. The Council would also like to see ecological surveys of the area carried out and ecological monitoring continued after the solar panels come into use.
 - 17.2.6.6. Although Bishop House is outside the parish boundary the Council would like NYC to consider the impact the solar farm site will have on the occupants.

18. Planning Decisions/information

- 18.1. Planning Application ZB23/02405/SCR, for an EIA Screening Opinion in accordance with Regulations 2 and 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017 relating to a proposed solar farm at OS Field 5220, south of Pilmoor Grange, Pilmoor, Brafferton – North Yorkshire Council has decided that an Environmental Statement is not required.

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- 18.2. Planning Application ZB23/02278/FUL, replace lounge doors, remove fireplace, install fence and gate at St Cuthberts, Main Street, Helperby - granted by North Yorkshire Council.
 - 18.3. Planning Application ZB23/02384/FUL, proposed creation of a locally equipped play area at the Sports Ground, Back Lane, Helperby - awaiting decision by North Yorkshire Council.
 - 18.4. Planning Application ZB23/02085/FUL – variation to Condition 2 on approved 28-dwelling development on Boroughbridge Road, Brafferton - awaiting decision by North Yorkshire Council.
 - 18.5. Planning Application ZB23/00771/OUT, outline planning application for 1 x dwelling with all matters reserved except access on land at Brafferton Manor, Brafferton – awaiting decision from North Yorkshire Council.
 - 18.6. **Planning Appeal** APP/02750/W/23/3332738 (Ref Planning Application 22/02422/FUL and 23/00058/REFUSE), construction of 4 dwellings adjacent telephone exchange, Back Lane, Helperby - awaiting decision by Government Inspector.
 - 18.7. **Planning Appeal** APP/G2713/W/3330399 (Ref Planning Application 22/02294/OUT and 23/00051/REFUSE), outline application for the construction of 4 x dwellings with all matters reserved except access on OS Field 7346, Boroughbridge Road, Brafferton – awaiting decision by Government Inspector.
19. **Closing Matters**
20. Matters for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting
 - 20.1. None were proposed.
 21. The date of the next Council meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 21 Feb 24.