

DRAFT MINUTES
SOUTH WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2021

Present:

Cllr P Elliott (Chair)

Cllr D Challenger

Cllr P Ferguson

Cllr M Ferguson

Cllr R Fry (ELDC)

Clerk - S Asquith

Residents' Forum:

The Residents' Forum was attended by Mr Nick Bodian, Chair of the Community Liaison Group, which is opposing the planning application by Egdon Resources, planning reference: PL/0037/21: Development: for a side-track drilling operation, associated testing and long-term oil production at location: land off High Street, Biscathorpe. Mr Bodian is also vice-chair of Donington-on-Bain Parish Council. He began by stating that his position on the matter was as a vehement opponent of the development.

He summarised the history of the application as follows. Egdon Resources made an exploratory drill in December 2018 and did not find what they were looking for. The site was capped and they said that they would re-examine their data. They have just submitted planning for a side-track drill 2000m underground in order to go into production, which Mr Bodian explained was a very rare application. This underground drill would take the exploration into South Willingham parish about 300m west of Belmont tower.

The planning consultation is now 'live' on the ELDC planning portal. All individuals are invited to comment. There is a local group opposing the application which wants to ensure it comes before the Council planning committee as part of a formal response following full debate. Mr Bodian has written to ELDC requesting this but has had no reply to date. His opinion is that 15-20 years of drilling and gas flaring should be subject to full democratic scrutiny. He said it seemed that no one was willing to put their head above the parapet: a previous dispute had left North

Lincolnshire County Council with £500,000 of costs when they lost the case against development in Wressle.

He added that there was the issue of proliferation of such development both locally and nationally should the application be approved. Both Welton-le-Wold and South Elkington are possible sites. Mr Bodian had feedback from other areas that had approved the development who now said that they wished they had not.

Environmentally the site is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and extremely close to the River Bain, which is a very rare chalk stream habitat. The Environment Agency is to monitor pollution levels but, because of the chemicals pumped underground, Mr Bodian said he found it highly unlikely that the 'purified' run-off would not affect the stream although the Environment Agency said that it was 'extremely unlikely' that it would. They would be commenting in full at the planning application hearing.

Regarding local benefits there will be two permanent jobs created over the 15 years of production. Mr Bodian felt that the disadvantages to the area in relation to local jobs related to tourism and visitor accommodation would greatly outweigh this negligible benefit. His opinion was that Egdon Resources were not interested in any benefit to the local area but were operating only to benefit their shareholders. Any production is calculated as being a mere .028% of national onshore oil, which is a resource that the Government should be moving away from as part of their climate change policy, he said.

Mr Bodian requested that SWPC ensure that all residents knew of the development and of their chance to make their voice heard. This could be via the ELDC planning portal, by writing directly to Victoria Atkins MP and the Leader of Lincolnshire County Council or, better still, by doing both.

Cllr Elliott said that he was very strongly against the application. He said that South Willingham residents would see, hear and smell it and have to deal with increased development and tanker traffic in the area. He felt the area had nothing to gain and everything to lose.

Mr Bodian said that he would appreciate any support from the Parish Council and that he would send copies of bulletins and posters for circulation.

Cllr Elliott thanked Mr Bodian for attending and said that the response of the Parish Council was a later agenda item for full discussion.

1 Apologies for absence:

Cllr M Edmundson – unable to attend

Cllr P Bradwell (LCC) – unable to attend

2 Declarations of interest in any items on this agenda:

None.

3 To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021

The minutes were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair at the next suitable meeting.

4 Matters arising from the meeting held on 20 January 2021

On the agenda.

5 Financial matters

The financial report had been circulated by email prior to the meeting and the Chair confirmed that the bank statement tallied. The report was approved.

A cheque for the solar light for the bus stop for £141.36 and a cheque for £50 for bulb planting, both already signed outside of the meeting, were approved. A cheque for £52 for printing of the last newsletter was approved and would be signed outside of the meeting.

6 Budget 2021/2022

The finalised budget had been circulated prior to the meeting. Leftover money from previous projects had been ringfenced and carried forward. The £165 councillor grant from Cllr Fry had mostly been spent and the remainder would buy the bracket for the solar panel on the bus stop. Cllr P Ferguson would endeavour to do this prior to the end of the financial year of 31 March. Cllr Elliott had slightly rejigged the layout and had included £100 for the newsletter. He hoped that there might be some sponsorship attracted to help fund it. The budget was signed off.

7 Biscathorpe oil drilling application

Cllr Elliott said that he fully agreed with Mr Bodian and proposed that the Parish Council put in an objection. The meeting supported this proposal. **Action: Cllr Elliott would compose letters to LCC and ELDC and respond via the planning portal. Content would be circulated for approval. He would print leaflets for circulation to those people without known email addresses. All Councillors were asked to discuss the matter with residents and encourage them to put in a response to the consultation.**

8 Litter/dog fouling

It had been noticed that dog fouling had been increasing recently. Some deposits had been left in residents' driveways. The South Willingham facebook page had hosted some lively comment and a suggestion for dog poo bins had been raised. This had already been discussed at a previous meeting and decided against. It was felt that those people not picking up their deposits would be unlikely to use a bin, apart from

the fact that the bins were ugly and smelled. Cllr Fry said the fine for dog fouling was £80 but that it was difficult to enforce. His ward of Binbrook had bins but he agreed that they were not always used. Signage was discussed but felt to be ugly and not much of a deterrent. The meeting agreed however that temporary signs would be erected for a period of six months. **Action: Cllr Elliott to create temporary anti-dog fouling signs.**

Cllr Elliott proposed that the annual Village Tidy Up be held on Sunday 28th March. He felt that it could be carried out according to Covid-19 protocols. He would circulate arrangements and coordinate with ELDC. The meeting agreed to the proposal. Cllr Fry said that Binbrook had just held theirs. **Action: Cllr Elliott to organise the Village Tidy Up.**

9 Potholes

Despite being logged on 'Fix My Street' the potholes on Barkwith Road have not yet been dealt with. There is no other way to expedite repair.

The bollards opposite the planter on the Barkwith Road have disappeared. A turning van nearly went down the ditch that they were marking. This would be a Highways issue. **Action: Cllr Elliott will contact Cllr Bradwell to see if she could help speed a response.**

Cllr P Ferguson said he would take a spade down to clear the footpath on the Barkwith Road that has got overgrown and slippery.

10 Newsletter

Cllr P Ferguson had discussed production of the next newsletter, as requested, with Nigel Spencer, editor of the previous edition. Mr Spencer said he would not be able to edit any further editions. Chris Washer and Dave Nutten were still interested in producing a newsletter and Cllr P Ferguson thought that there would be other people who would be interested in joining the editorial team. He said that he was prepared to pull the newsletter together. The format would be an A3 sheet folded. Topics would include newcomers to the village, events, parish council issues and history group input. He suggested four issues a year. The meeting agreed to continue to fund a newsletter under these terms.

Paul Fuller had alerted the Parish Council to Harold Bray's being 100 years old in May. Councillors agreed that it would be nice to mark this in some way. Cllr Elliott suggested putting together a display about Harold and Alice in the phone box. **Action: Shirley Asquith is to contact Alan Bray to discuss a possible way of marking the occasion.**

11 Risk Management

No issues were raised.

Cllr P Ferguson had cleaned the moss from the bus stop roof prior to the fitting of the solar light.

12 Planning matters

Cllr P Ferguson said that there might be someone interested in becoming the village tree officer and that he would pursue this.

Cllr Elliott was aware of an application in Benniworth to increase the size of the small caravan park on the edge of the village to accommodate 30 pitches. Benniworth Parish Council is to oppose the application and Cllr Elliott said that he was willing to support them. If anyone wished to object, the application is on the planning portal.

13 Parish Council initiatives

Planters: Bulbs have been planted and there may be a revamp of current content in the offering.

Phone box: Awaiting input from the History Group.

Bus shelter: Cllr P Ferguson is to begin installation of the solar light. He commented that the solar panel incorporated a USB charging point and said it might be nice to offer this facility to passing visitors and cyclists. There was discussion about installing some low-impact bike racks next to the bus shelter with a notice offering a charging facility. Cllr Fry thought this was a good idea. The cork tiles on the bus shelter noticeboard needed attention but would probably be tackled in the next financial year. Cllr P Ferguson though this might cost about £110. **Action: Cllr P Ferguson will price up a bike rack.**

The permissive footpath signs are falling over and it is believed to be in the remit of the Parish Council to repair them. **Action: Cllr Elliott will look at repairing the footpath signs.**

There was discussion about locals not necessarily knowing the routes of the paths and that maps could be put up in the bus stop or phone box. Shirley Asquith suggested that the footpaths could be sketched out by the Art Group personalising them with local landmarks. **Action: Shirley Asquith will discuss footpath map drawing with the Art Group.**

Cllr Fry said that there would be another opportunity to bid for grant monies from him in the coming financial year.

Cllr Elliott said that 2022 would be the Queen's platinum jubilee (70 years on the throne) and that there was to be a long weekend in June to celebrate. He suggested that the village mark it in some way and discussion included plans to take another photograph of the village residents in front of the parish hall.

14 Correspondence

The LALC newsletter had been circulated which advertised the Parish Hall Doomsday Book idea. The meeting agreed to provide input from South Willingham on the prescribed topics of history and the village during the Covid pandemic. **Action: Cllrs Ferguson to arrange a submission to the Doomsday book.**

15 Items for next agenda

It was agreed to go ahead with the Annual Parish Meeting in May if it met with Covid-19 restrictions.

16 Date of next meeting

It was agreed to move the next meeting from 12 May to 19 May to take the opportunity to meet in person albeit under Covid restrictions.

The Chair thanked Cllr Fry for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chairman: