

South Muskham/Little Carlton Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 31st July 2024 at 7pm in the Small Hall, South Muskham Village Hall

Membership: C Briggs-Price, K Brown, D Catanach, R Gill, P Jarvis and G Shearing

Also Present: 39 members of the public and County Councillor Laughton together with Mark Noone, David Cowley and Elena Sarieva from Elements Green

33.24/25 **Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies – received and accepted from Councillor Tilbury and District Councillor Mrs Saddington.

34.24/25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were none to record.

35.24/25 **To welcome representatives from Elements Green and NG+ to discuss the Great North Road Solar Park**

The Chair suspended the meeting at 7.01pm and welcomed Elena Sarieva from Elements Green, developers of the Great North Road Solar Park. (Joined by Mark Noone and David Cowling later in the meeting).

The Chair outlined that, prior to the meeting, all properties in Little Carlton and South Muskham had received a letter (which included a plan of the whole GNR development and a more focused parish plan) inviting residents to attend the meeting and including a simple survey asking whether they were “currently for/against/undecided on the proposed scheme”.

40 responses had been received which showed 6 for, 33 against and 1 undecided. Residents would be asked to repeat the exercise as they left the meeting, after hearing from and questioning/expressing their views to Elements Green.

Elements Green explained that the interim consultation report, which detailed responses to the consultations held so far, was now available. A postcard would be delivered to all 5,500 properties in the area signposting them to that report. Main areas of concern were landscape and visual concerns, bio-diversity, flooding and flood alleviation.

A suppliers portal had also been launched for companies to register their interest in being involved as a supplier should the development be approved.

The Chair reminded everyone that a time limit would be placed on this part of the meeting and, prior to opening the floor, asked residents to keep their questions short and courteous. If there were any questions that could not be answered during the meeting, the Parish Council would endeavour to get an answer and feedback to them.

Residents were concerned at the impact that the size and scale of the proposals would have on the people that live within the villages, especially with regard to the environmental impact and safety impact.

Elements Green acknowledged that construction traffic would impact, but it would be arranged in 4 phases over 4 different areas, with each stage lasting between 9-12 months. Traffic management plans would be put in place.

Residents were interested to know where the main service area would be. Elements Green undertook to provide a fact sheet to inform residents.

A question was asked regarding the funding of Elements Green, which was confirmed as being funded from the UK. Information was requested on Elements Green Ltd and the Parent Company.

A particular concern from residents was around flooding, and the increased risk it was considered the solar park would cause.

Elements Green asserted that solar parks did not increase flooding when built in the way the GNR Solar Park was intended to be built. The panels would not be built on concrete, but would be directly into the land, with a penetration of 1%. Planning permission would not be granted if the proposals increased flooding. Discussions could be held with the Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency. The NG+ fund could be used to alleviate pre-existing flooding issues.

In other parishes what was reassuring people around the scheme were flood alleviation matters. Hydrological assessments have to be undertaken, and Elements Green would like to do that for the parish as it has done in other parishes. Elements Green would then be able to demonstrate how they could resolve issues.

Residents were concerned at the amount of land being taken out of agricultural production. It was not considered that there was any justification for using agricultural land. This would lead to more imports, creating food miles and causing pollution.

Elements Green advised it was about finding the cheapest way to get to net zero. The company weren't against roof top solar, but there was a climate change target to meet. There were insufficient brownfield sites available in the area. Elements Green stated that the biggest threat to food security, as stated by the UN and NFU, was climate change. It was also about connection to the National Grid, which the park needs to be next to in order to work. The Trent Valley was well placed for connectivity.

A resident asked how much power the country generated from solar at the moment, as Germany provide 70% of their power on roof tops, creating 14GB.

Elements Green advised it was 16GB.

Clarification was sought on where the BESS storage was for this development.

Elements Green advised it was at Staythorpe.

Concern was expressed at the impact the development would have on tenant farmers and the loss of livelihood.

Elements Green advised that there were 23 land owners throughout the scheme, some of which were small and looking to diversify by releasing their land. A %age breakdown of the impact on farmers could be provided. Where tenant farmers were involved that was a matter for the tenant and the land owner.

Questions were asked around the arrangements for decommissioning at the end of the scheme.

Elements Green advised that there was an agreement with each land owner that specified Elements Green set aside a bond to cover decommissioning. The amount in that bond would be updated every 5-10 years. The panels degrade 0.3% each year so the panels would either be re-used or recycled. The soil structure, which degrades over time due to over farming, will have regenerated and be in a better condition when it returns to the land owner.

With regard to flooding, a resident referred to the £28m scheme currently being installed at Lowdham by the Environment Agency and suggested that £1m a year NG+ fund would not go very far in alleviating flooding.

Councillor Laughton advised that the lead local authority was Nottinghamshire County Council who would be looking at all information logged over the last 4 years.

In response to a question raised by a resident regarding the proposed visitor centre at the end of Crow Lane, the Chair advised this was not wanted in the parish and the Parish Council would be seeking to get it removed from the master plan. Crow Lane was a narrow country lane which exited onto a busy road. It was a wholly inappropriate place.

Concern was expressed at the impact the development would have on house prices.

Elements Green advised that there would be compensatory measures available for people directly impacted. Impact would be assessed as part of the application.

A resident referred to the scheme being for 800mw and asked whether capacity had been secured at Staythorpe. They also asked if Elements Green needed all the land shown on the map to make 800mw.

Elements Green confirmed that capacity had been secured at Staythorpe. They also confirmed they would need all the land, but were looking to reduce. The land on the map would not increase.

In terms of the panels, a resident asked where they were produced.

Elements Green advised they were manufactured in China. Carbon payback would be between one and four years. Elements Green were exploring whether the panels could be constructed on site.

It was confirmed that 60 permanent jobs would be created, with 400 being created during construction. Elements Green would try and use local suppliers.

Elements Green advised that the NG+ fund could be used to provide grants to residents and businesses that were wanting to make their properties more energy efficient by installing solar panels, etc. Information could be provided if this were something residents would be interested in.

Members of the public were encouraged to review the Interim Consultation Report, with all households in the catchment area expected to receive a postcard shortly detailing how this could be accessed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for demonstrating their passion on the subject. As outlined by Elements Green, a planning application would be submitted for the development. The Parish Council would look to work with Elements Green to make the impact of the development as low as possible, should it be granted permission. The meeting was reinstated at 8.46pm.

Given the level of input from members of the public present, the Parish Council would seek a separate meeting with Elements Green to discuss areas of concern.

The exit poll from those that completed it showed that 2 were for the proposal, with 27 against.

Chair's Report

The Chair had no issues to report.

Open Session

The Chair suspended the meeting at 8.50pm for Cllr Laughton's report.

Cllr Laughton referred to the installation of the interactive speed sign at Little Carlton. Councillor Jarvis confirmed that the speedwatch team had noticed a decrease in speed of vehicles approaching the village from Newark.

Construction of the new offices for Nottinghamshire County Council at Top Wig Hey was progressing, with February 2025 as a target date for completion and occupation.

The Chair thanked Cllr Laughton for his report and reconvened the meeting at 8.55pm.

37.24/25 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2024 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

38.24/25 Matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

There were none.

39.24/25 **Planning**

39.1 Notification of Planning Appeal - 23/01329/FUL – Land at Former Ashleigh, Great North Road, South Muskham - Erection of 3 dwellings. Resubmission of approved application 19/00782/FUL to allow extended time to commence works.
Members received the notification of a Planning Appeal as outlined. The Clerk confirmed that the comments previously submitted to Newark & Sherwood District Council would be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate.

39.2 24/00504/HOUSE – The Jays, Great North Road, South Muskham - Demolition of rear garage and part of rear extension. New single storey rear and one and a half storey side extensions.
After discussion, it was unanimously AGREED that the application be supported.

40.24/25 **Financial Issues**

40.1 To record Receipts
There were none.

40.2 Invoices for payment:

- Clerk's Wages (July) - £318.60
- HMRC PAYE (July) - £79.60
- Norwell Groundcare – Inv 1116 - £90
- Bank Charges - £8.00
- EDF – Electricity Charges - £38.30
- Names – Premium Hosting - £369.74
- WaterPlus - £14.63

Members noted that the Parish Council's balance as at 30th June 2024 was £58,958.22.

40.3 To receive an update on the opening of a new Business Account
The Clerk advised that signed documentation had been now been sent to NatWest.

41.24/25 **Parish Council Matters**

41.1 To receive the notes of the Safer Neighbourhood Group meeting held on 18th April 2024
Members received and noted the notes as circulated. Councillor Jarvis would attend the next meeting scheduled to be held on 10th October 2024.

42.24/25 **Beckett Field**

42.1 To consider a quotation for new windows
Members noted that additional quotations for new windows at the Beckett Field pavilion would be brought to the September meeting for consideration.

42.2 Muskham Cougars

The Chair referred to information from the Muskham Cougars who were looking to secure funding from the NG+ arm of Elements Green for a recreation centre in the locality.

Members were asked to consider renewal of the licence for the 2024/25 season. The Cougars were looking to train on a Wednesday and a Friday, with matches on a Saturday morning.

After discussion, an increase of the fee to £200 per season was AGREED given the additional use of the field on a Friday evening.

The Clerk was asked to confirm with the Council's contractor that the field would be cut on a fortnightly basis between April and September.

Defib Pads

42.3 Councillor Jarvis asked for replacement Defib pads to be ordered for the Little Carlton Defib. The Clerk to progress, with delivery to Councillor Jarvis' address.

43.24/25 **Flooding, Drainage & Emergency Planning**

43.1 There were no issues to raise. All outstanding matters would be reported to the September meeting.

44.24/25 **Highways**

44.1 Highways Issues Logged

The Clerk advised that no further update had been received regarding the issues logged with the drains. A further chaser email would be sent to Via.

44.2 Interactive Speed Sign

This item had been covered during the Open Session by Councillor Laughton.

45.24/25 **Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils**

45.1 July Newsletter

Members received and noted the Newsletter as circulated.

46.24/25 **Correspondence Received**

46.1 Footpath Survey

The Clerk clarified the status of the resident who had circulated a survey regarding footpath access in relation to the GNR Solar Park.

46.2 Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan

Correspondence received regarding the consultation on the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan had been circulated to Members for information.

46.3 Public Consultation on the Draft Interim Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and Draft Solar Energy Supplementary Planning Document (2024)

The Clerk referred to the two public consultations recently launched by Newark & Sherwood District Council. Information had been circulated to Members with a request to review prior to consideration of a response at the September meeting.

47.24/25 **Other matters arising not on the agenda**

47.1 Overhanging Hedges

Cllr Shearing advised that residents had contacted him to express concern at the boundary hedge of the Village Hall encroaching on to the road. The Clerk was asked to seek a timeline for when it would be cut back.

Cllr Briggs-Price referred to the same situation at the bus stop on the left hand side of the road towards North Muskham. Cllr Briggs-Price would try and engage with the landowner, if not the Clerk advised it could be logged on the MyNotts App.

Next Meeting – Parish Council - Wednesday, 18th September 2024 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall, South Muskham

The meeting was closed at 9.15pm

Minutes approved as a true record –