



## **CRESSING PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7.00pm at St Barnabas, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing.**

**Present:** Cllr John Lawton – Chairman  
Cllr Colin Haines  
Cllr Harvey Porrett

**In attendance:**

Mrs Christine Marshall (Parish Clerk/RFO and Proper Officer)  
Mr Zak Reid, Community Liaison & Stakeholder Manager, Low Carbon Links Solar Farm  
4 members of the public

**23-4/073 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The Chairman declared the meeting open and reported as follows:

- i. After publishing detailed copies of correspondence regarding the numerous recent and continuing road closures affecting Cressing (sent to Essex highways Portfolio Holder, Cllr Lee Scott, together with MPs James Cleverly and Priti Patel, and the Braintree & Witham Times) he was disappointed to see the negative comments posted on Cressing Facebook pages. Road closures and roadworks are entirely outside the control of the Parish Council and Cllrs find it as frustrating as residents that this situation continues despite the efforts of the Parish Clerk to get them addressed.
- ii. Work to replace the changing rooms at the Playing field commences 16<sup>th</sup> October and is due to completion end March 2024. This is being funded through S.106 monies as well as grants and Parish Council Reserves. This is a community facility and when complete efforts to attract other sporting clubs to use the facilities will begin. This has taken over two years of work by the Parish Clerk with surveyors/architects, BDC and external organisations to begin at last to see the project start. The Chairman stressed that this is a community facility for every sport or group in the area and is not solely for the use of football teams.
- iii. Grass cutting has presented a problem in the last few months due to the previous contractor moving out of this business. Due to timing, it has also been difficult to engage a new contractor. The Parish Handyman has undertaken as much grass cutting, weed clearance and bramble cutting as possible to the areas accessed by residents.

**23-4/074 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no Cllr absences, but neither County nor District Cllrs were able to attend.

**23-4/075 LINKS SOLAR FARM**

The Chairman introduced Zak Reid (ZR) and invited him to begin his presentation.

- i. Mr Reid began by giving a brief overview of the company and stated that whilst the original proposal allowed for the site to be handed over to another company to manage, this will now be undertaken by Low Carbon. A British owned investment and asset management company.
- ii. Currently manage in excess of 1 gigawatt of renewable energy across more than 100 sites in the UK.
- iii. ZR will be the main point of contact for queries, concerns or issues relating to the development of the Solar Farm off Links Road.
- iv. Site situated between Bradwell, Cressing and Silver End and the final plan was shown.

- v. Size, approximately 48 hectares (111 acres), agricultural grade 2 land. The meeting raised its concerns at the removal of yet more productive land being given up when there are brown field sites in the area that could be used.
  - vi. LSF will supply clean power into the local distribution network.
  - vii. Public footpaths that cross or boundary the site will have temporary closure orders during construction and then have security fences either side when re-opened. Security cameras will be installed for the security of the site only, none will include areas of the public footpaths nor houses.
  - viii. Traffic Management plan allows for 4-6 HGV loads per day during construction work. Approved route to the site is: Long Green/Ashes Road to Ashes Corner, left into Lanham Green Road, right into Boars Tye Road and then left into Links Road and the site. The meeting raised the major issue of HGVs turning at Ashes Corner and warned that there could be numerous traffic incidents if this was the final plan. ZR replied to a question that so far the route had not been tested by HGV and would take back the suggestion that this should be done before any trips are planned. Low Carbon were also requested to consider that if this route remains, then either escort vehicles or road marshals are essential to manage the difficult situations that will occur.
  - ix. Road sweepers will be operational to clean routes used by the solar farm.
  - x. ZR confirmed that the intention after completion is for re-wilding the area, erecting beehives and providing grazing for sheep
  - xi. The solar panels have a life-span of 40 years, when they will be removed and the land reverts back to previous condition. The meeting raised concerns about how these would be disposed of and the impact of materials being non-recyclable. ZR was requested to provide information on the de-commissioning of site.
  - xii. In response to an enquiry about future roadworks to install cables to the electricity sub-station, ZR advised that this work had been done when Keir, on behalf of UKPN, had been installing their new ducts and cables.
  - xiii. Work commences end November/early December and lasts for 16 weeks (2 weeks closure over Christmas period).
  - xiv. Roadworks within site to be completed before end December.
- A copy of the presentation will be available on the Parish Council website in due course.

#### **23-4/076 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the council are subject to the Local Authorities Code of Conduct Order 2007 (SI 2007/1159) (The Revised Code) with the additional, non-mandatory, section 12(2).

There were no pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests to be recorded in relation to items on the agenda.

#### **23-4/077 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Clerk confirmed that no items had been received for discussion at this meeting, however, and despite responding to one resident on a number of subjects (referred to at the last meeting), a further enquiry had been received and will be responded to in due course.

A member of the public raised planning application 23/02052/TPO that was discussed by Cllrs at the August meeting and their comments submitted. It was explained that as BDC had already granted approval, the Parish Council could not submit any further comments.

Two members of the public now left the meeting.

#### **23-4/078 REPORTS OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Although neither County nor District Cllrs were able to attend due to other commitments, they had submitted reports on the following:

District Cllr Abbott:

- i. Recycling calendars are now available on BDC website, but residents can phone them to request a copy.

- ii. Garden waste collections – to date only about 15% of residents have signed up for the scheme.
- iii. Oak tree – BDC asked for details of process for the decision to grant approval for the removal of a mature tree in Mill Lane.
- iv. Road closures – see Chairman's report above.
- v. Cycling – new route from Witham to Braintree via Cressing and Silver End to be included in the Essex Cycling Projects list. No details of funding and timing yet available.
- vi. Ivy Cottage – BDC remain of the view that there are no enforcement issues.
- vii. Incinerator – construction continuing and developers have confirmed they will be bidding for the ECC black bin disposal contracts. The bridge over the River Blackwater in Bradwell that provides the haul road into the site, will be redesigned, but should not interrupt usage by HGVs during replacement works.

County Cllr Paul Thorogood:

- i. Building of the incinerator is currently four weeks behind schedule, but the company is still aiming to be fully operational by May 16th 2026.
- ii. There will be an application to ECC for some of the cranes used in the construction of the new bridge to go through Woodhouse Lane, Kelvedon and possibly Cressing and Silver End as they are too big to go over the existing bridge.
- iii. Essex County Council has indicated that it wishes to switch its 350,000 tonnes of black bin residual waste (waste that can't be recycled) from landfill to incineration; Essex doesn't name Rivenhall, but the operator has indicated that it is already in talks with Essex to have seven-year rolling contracts. Hertfordshire has already signed up to send 40,000 tonnes per year to Rivenhall and the site will also take 100,000 tonnes of commercial waste per year. That leaves 105,000 tonnes of capacity left.
- iv. It is understood that the new dual-carriageway A120 from Galleys Corner to A12 has slipped from Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS 3 2025-30) to RIS 4 2030 and beyond.

#### 23-4/079 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023 were confirmed as a correct record. **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Haines**

The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

#### 23-4/080 PLAYING FIELD

- i. The Clerk advised that work was due to begin on the new changing rooms on 16<sup>th</sup> October and will continue until end of March 2024. The Chairman and Clerk will be meeting the contractor and Social Club Chairman and Secretary to finalise access and parking arrangements.
- ii. Councillors re-iterated that this is a community facility available for all groups using the field and is not restricted to use by football teams. A new lease needs to be agreed over the next six months and prior to the changing rooms being declared open for use.
- iii. Notices have appeared in the Community Magazine as well as on Cressing Facebook pages that car parking at the field will be restricted throughout this work.
- iv. The Clerk advised that an approach had been made to the companies responsible for the recent road closures for a contribution towards this facility. Only UKPN had replied and whilst they do not make grant donations, they and their contractor, Keir, are prepared to provide the assistance of some of their workmen in undertaking some works in the area. The Clerk was requested to follow up. **Proposed: Cllr Haines, seconded: Cllr Porrett** **Action: Clerk**

#### 23-4/081 FINANCE

- i. **Financial statements:** The Clerk/RFO referred to the September reports issued to

Cllrs. There were no queries, and **it was resolved** to accept the reports.

**Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Lawton, all in favour**

- ii. **A motion to approve bank reconciliation at 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023: It was resolved** that the bank reconciliation statement be approved. **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Lawton, all in favour**
- iii. **A motion to approve payments for September 2023: Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded Cllr Lawton, all in favour.** Cllrs signed the cheques.

**Action: Clerk**

#### 23-4/082 **PLANNING**

**Appeals** – no appeals had been notified.

**Applications determined:**

- i. 23/02052/TPO | Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 8/88 T3 Oak - removal | The New Bungalow Mill Lane Cressing Essex CM77 8HN – GRANTED
- ii. 23/01251/DAC | Application for approval of details as reserved by condition 3 of approved application 23/00309/HH | New House Barn Church Road Cressing Essex CM77 8PF - GRANTED

**Applications received:**

- i. 23/02123/FUL | Erection of single storey garages to Plots 7 & 8. | Land Adjacent Leyfield Braintree Road Cressing Essex (25/10/2023). Cllrs had no comments to make as this did not extend the existing development approval.

There were no applications to note in neighbouring parishes.

#### **Enforcement Enquiries**

BDC had confirmed that The Willows had now closed following the Enforcement Appeal and was no longer trading. However, Cllrs advised that some further complaints had been received that showed the property was still opening and trading. The Clerk was requested to advise BDC accordingly and also to look into whether any licensing laws are being broken. **Proposed: Cllr Porrett, seconded: Cllr Lawton.**

**Action: Clerk**

#### 23-4/083 **Local Highways Panel**

As Cllr Thorogood was not at the meeting, this item to be dealt with outside of this meeting. The Clerk will look into the possibility of double yellow lines being defined at the junction of Mill Lane and B1018 (east junction) to stop vehicles parking so close to the junction causing a real traffic hazard.

**Action: Clerk**

#### 23-4/084 **Christmas**

- i. Cllrs discussed the location for a Parish Christmas Tree and agreed that, subject to Highways' approval, two would be erected: one on the green at the top of Polecat Road (Hawbush), the other on the green at the junction of Mill Lane and Braintree Road. The Clerk will seek the appropriate permissions and arrange. **Action: Clerk**
- ii. Cllrs discussed the possibility of hosting a joint event at St Barnabas. This was declined.

#### 23-4/085 **Verge cutting**

It was agreed that no response was required to the County Cllr written question. The Clerk advised that the Parish Handyman had helped to cut back shrubbery and grass at Hawbush Green and along the B1018. Cllrs agreed that this made the village look much better and it was hoped that the vehicles that park on the greensward along the B1018 would not do so during the winter months to prevent the areas becoming rutted.

#### 23-4/086 **Underground Power Cable Planning Application**

Cllrs had note the information.

#### 23-4/087 **Councillor vacancies**

Deferred to November meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

**23-4/088 Information exchange and agenda items for next meeting**

- i. Appletree Close – Cllr Haines asked if 20mph limits for all new developments were in place. Clerk to seek clarification.

**Action: Clerk**

**23-4/089 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at **7.00pm at St Barnabas Hall, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing, CM77 8HG.**

Any items for inclusion on the Agenda to be sent to the Parish Clerk to be received no later than 12 noon on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

| 2023 meetings |    |                 |  |           |    |
|---------------|----|-----------------|--|-----------|----|
| DECEMBER      | 13 | 7.00pm          |  |           |    |
| 2024 meetings |    |                 |  |           |    |
| JANUARY       | 10 |                 |  | JULY      | 10 |
| FEBRUARY      | 14 |                 |  | AUGUST    | 14 |
| MARCH         | 13 |                 |  | SEPTEMBER | 11 |
| APRIL         | 10 |                 |  | OCTOBER   | 9  |
| MAY           | 8  | ANNUAL MEETINGS |  | NOVEMBER  | 13 |
| JUNE          | 12 |                 |  | DECEMBER  | 11 |