

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 20 November 2013 in the Reading Room at 8.00pm.**

**Apologies:** Cllr B Smith

**Present:** Mr Martin, Mr Sole, Mr Wheeler, Mr Friend, Mrs Norie, Cllr Kindersley, seven members of public and the Clerk.

**Minutes:** of the October meeting, previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

**Declarations of Interest:** None received

### **Planning:**

The Chairman brought this item forward as many of those present had come to participate.

### **Solar Farm at Church Farm, Croydon**

#### **Application number: S/2293/13FL**

Change of use of land from (1) agriculture to (2) mixed use for agriculture and use of renewable energy (solar)

There was lively discussion on the application, and after this it was apparent that the village opinion was not in favour of the development. It was proposed by Mr Martin and seconded by Mr Sole that Council refuse the application - all in favour; comments made at the meeting are to be assembled and circulated for Council's approval prior to submission. Approval was obtained for the following submission to the Planners.

Croydon Parish Council refuses the application, with the following comments:-

- the public consultation meeting was held in Arrington, and was for a much smaller development of 12.8Mw
- the meeting was held with very little notice
- questionnaires available at the meeting had to be completed and returned before leaving
- there were only 10 responses
- the current proposal is for a much larger site, estimated at 21.6Mw. There has been no public consultation on this larger proposal.
- no mention of noise levels from the invertors - application states "minimal noise."
- Council would like to see a projected noise pattern plan
- suggest the substation on the site could be moved
- views from the footpaths around the area would be seriously spoiled by this development
- traffic movements - proposed amount of traffic is far too much for the narrow road between Asa Mia and the war memorial.
- The war memorial could be in danger of damage from large vehicles.
- Church Lane is already in a terrible state of disrepair and Council has been trying to get it resurfaced - an alternative route for construction traffic?
- All Saints' church could be in danger from the vibrations caused by heavy traffic.
- no mention of security lighting. Croydon has very little light pollution and would not appreciate high level security lighting on the site.
- there is scope to enlarge the site even further - in the case of the application being successful, a caveat to prevent this is needed

There was strong feeling from the public at the meeting that the countryside should not be covered in metal structures, especially when the time of maximum energy need is the time when there is least sunlight.

**Rouse's Wood:** The application has been refused. Council understands that there is still some concern over structures in the wood.

**Caravan at Lower Manor:** Following the enquiry to check on the caravan sited at Tru-light, the following information was received:-

- the caravan has been on the property since 2006
- it was in use when the family home was being constructed
- the caravan is not occupied now
- the caravan has been in position over 4 years and is immune from any enforcement action.
- the owner's intention is to eventually remove it
- the touring caravan on the site does not require planning permission.

**Portelet:** The dog breeding business being run from Portelet has caused a lot of concern in the village. Apparently Mrs Wood should have applied for a Change of Use for the property and has not done so. She believed that as the buildings are not permanent she did not need a Change of Use, but she is currently in the process of applying for this. Mrs Grace said that Mrs Wood has a licence issued by Martin Johnson, but believes it is only for the welfare of the animals. Following the enquiry made after the last meeting, the information below was received from Charles Swain:-

- the matter has already been investigated by both the environmental protection team and planning enforcement
- Colleagues in environmental health have not established a statutory noise nuisance but have been monitoring the property. Stephen Broadbelt is the officer dealing with this side of the complaint
- the property does not have the benefit of a planning permission for the current change of use however the owner Mrs Wood is currently in the process of submitting a retrospective planning application
- should the application not be received or if the application is not successful then enforcement action will be considered based on the planning harm.

Council will monitor the situation.

#### **Matters Arising:**

**Dog Bin:** Heidi Duffett from SCDC Dog Bin section rang the Clerk and explained that the delay is due to the loss of their sub-contractor, no bins in stock (but soon to be ordered) and the relocation of the Depot. Cllr Smith continues to see if she can expedite matters.

**Reading Room:** After many months and a lot of negotiation, Mr Friend has obtained the transfer of the ownership of the land on which the Reading Room stands from Downing College to the Reading Room Trustees. There are some conditions - the Room must not be used for political or commercial purposes - but otherwise it is up to the Trustees. The Sunday Market is able to continue. Thanks for Mr Friend's sterling efforts and Mr Friend in turn thanked Mrs Janet Wheeler for instigating the original resurrection of the Reading Room. He also mentioned that the Trustees need Committee members.

**Steering Group:** A budget proposal will be made to Council, in time for the setting of the precept.

**Community Asset:** The QA has been sold and the new owner appears to want to keep it as a pub, and put in a manager for the day-to-day running.

**Lower Road:** The proposal to extend the speed limit on Lower Road could cost between £2,500 - £5,000. David Lines of CCC suggested that it could be applied for as a Minor Highways Initiative, and Cllr Kindersley said that if the request appeared enough times, there is a chance it could be noticed eventually - Chairman and Clerk to complete the application form

**Notice Board:** The notice board has arrived. It will be fitted to the Reading Room wall shortly, so that an End of Project report can be sent in to SCDC. As part of the agreement, a notice must be displayed in the board to indicate that it was purchased with funds from SCDC Community Chest

Cllr Kindersley gave a brief verbal report to the meeting:

**SCDC:** The District Council is now a landlord and is in the process of purchasing 40 properties at a cost of £7 million; they are also beginning to build Council houses again, with the first houses being built in Linton and the next development site at Robinson Court in Gamlingay. Other items are in the main report.

Report from Cllrs Kindersley and Smith, previously circulated:-

### **Speed Limits & the Police**

At the recent Gamlingay Police Panel (every 4 months alternating between Gamlingay and Haslingfield – any and all members of the public welcome to attend and participate) speeding was discussed but for the first time ever was not made a Panel Priority. This is partly because so many Parishes locally have either put in places reduced speed limits or have a cunning plan to do so. Gamlingay Parish Council is being extremely proactive in addressing residents' concerns about speed limits. There is strong support for proposals to reduce the limit to 20mph around the village college and to 40mph around the Iron Church junction at The Heath. We are aware that some people are frustrated that the limit at The Heath cannot be more extensive or lower but unfortunately we are stuck with quite inflexible guidelines. Hatley Parish Council is seeking support to reduce the main road from 40mph to 30mph and others – Arrington, Croydon, Longstowe, Barrington, Haslingfield, Harlton – either have reduced their limits or are discussing it.

Our problem now is that of enforcement. How do we encourage the Police to do spot checks, speed surveys and the like? In these austere times policing must focus on serious crime and so much of the discussion at the Police Panel was about changing the mindset of drivers. Like campaigns around drink driving or wearing seat belts there has to be a public will to change and to make speeding socially unacceptable. But there will always be speeding drivers like there are always drink drivers and many drivers on the phone and/or not wearing seatbelts. So just to be sure there will be quite a lot of Police activity around speeding – from time to time!

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Many Parishes are struggling at the moment with the County Council's decision to reduce youth work to a bare minimum – to nothing in some places. So it's good to note the significant impact of Forward Gamlingay's efforts in the substantial decrease in anti-social behaviour in Gamlingay over the past few years. However, these things never go away completely and it was disappointing that some bright sparks had climbed onto the Eco Hub roof and that a fire had been set near the bike track. Anyone one of these offenders could have been injured (which is really not a good thing) so please if you see anything untoward report it straight away to the police on 999.

### **Longstowe Drains**

More problems with the vacuum system in the High Street in Longstowe. I stopped to chat with some Anglian Water chaps who had the manhole up and were waiting for a tanker to arrive and clear the sewer before they could get to work. This system has been overhauled but still plays up, it seems – and they were anxious to sort it out. Please get in touch if the issue remains.

### **South Cambridgeshire Council Tax**

South Cambridgeshire has the 13th lowest council tax in the country. Unfortunately this means that future cuts in funding hit us especially hard. The Council will be looking to make a further £1.7m in savings in the next 6-18 months. Since we seem to be cut to the quick already we are struggling to see where future savings are to come from. The Parish Councils will already be discussing the precepts for the forthcoming year – if you want to have input then please do consider coming along to the meetings. Every Parish Council has a part of the Agenda for public participation where you can ask questions and/or make comments.

### **St Denis' Church East Hatley**

Many thanks to the Parish Council which has offered a £500 contribution to the dowry required from South Cambs by Friends of Friendless Churches. Thanks also to the residents who have made substantial commitments to funding that dowry as well. The Portfolio-holder at SCDC has agreed the transfer and asked his Finance colleague to find the money! Assuming all goes well the District Council ratepayer will no longer have to foot the bill for this building....

### **Planning & Conservation**

South Cambs is having huge difficulty in recruiting and retaining planning officers – it's hard to resist a £40k + a car bump in your local government salary as offered by local businesses in the development industry (you know who you are) no matter how dedicated to public service you might be. Vacancies in the planning department mean that we regularly fail to meet our targets for processing applications which is tiresome and can result in extra expense for applicants. If you are experiencing difficulties please do let us know and we will do our best to chivvy things along for you. The Conservation section – well known and beloved of many local homeowners – is shortly to be reorganised following feedback from the Agents Forum – which was very complimentary of SCDC's approach to conservation btw. We

have also suggested that the Council might want to set up a Listed Buildings Forum where owners can meet to give feedback to the Council – they are considering this.

### **Gamlingay Green Day**

Many congratulations to GEAG, SPEP and most particularly to John Mossman for organising a really terrific Green Day at the Eco Hub. This event is becoming ever more important to a wider and wider area. Gamlingay is truly leading the way in community uptake of carbon reduction and of minimising our ever increasing fuel bills..

### **Children's Centre Restructure**

It is very concerning that following on from a very recent reorganisation of Children's Centres in the region in which most universal service was withdrawn and the focus was very firmly on those with highest need, that we are facing further need to save £6m by 2018 from the aptly named Enhanced and Preventative Services. These services play a key role in providing support and services to children and families, often targeted on the basis of need and seeking to prevent need from escalating. £1.5 m of these savings are to be made from the already laughably small budget for children's centres. This represents a staggering 22% of the current budget. The proposal is to move from the current 40 centres throughout the county to a 'cluster' model of Hub and Spoke design. The Hub being located in areas of highest need providing outreach 'spoke' service to surrounding areas. The initial information document says that 'Clearly savings of this scale will result in a reduction in services to families. Where possible closure of Children's Centres will be avoided, but opening hours will be reduced in many'. A consultation is to be launched this November for local members. We shall keep you posted about Gamlingay and Bassingbourn Centres.

### **Changes from the Health & Social Care Act**

Yes this IS interesting. Following the recent changes local authorities now have a much bigger role in public health. The County Council has the specific responsibility for this, but the district council is closely involved at all levels. It will certainly take on more functions in public health and social care. Secondly, there is a new body, Healthwatch, which will act as the principal representative of patient views. It is much stronger than previous such bodies (the demise of which was much regretted). Lastly, the GP-led local commissioning consortia are now set up. I wonder how that's going.....

### **Arrington Planning Matters....**

The Planning Inspectorate has dismissed the planning application for a wind measuring mast at Arrington on grounds of danger to aircraft (only). This is good news for those who were anxious about the implications for a wind farm at the site. The Enforcement Notice served by SCDC on Arrington Car Sales has had an impact with the site now closed up save the car wash company.

### **Housing Support for Older People**

Some time ago we told you that changes were to be made to the support offered to elderly people living in their own or sheltered housing. The services for most of Cambridgeshire are going out to tender, but South Cambs and City are being consulted with to see if they can deliver this support themselves. The rationale behind the reorganisation is that traditionally support was only offered to elderly people living in local authority sheltered housing but as this is only 5% of our elderly population in the county one has to accept that lots of people who may benefit from support are not getting it. The public consultation we reported on in Sept 2012 assessed what support elderly people said they wanted in order to live happy, healthy and independent lives. Not surprisingly most people wanted to remain in their own homes. With this in mind the new service aims to provide support to all elderly people assessed as needing it regardless of where they live, and to target those who need it most. Much of this support has been assessed as being short term or one off so the fundamental ethos is that a preventative service is designed that will keep people in their own homes and avoid hospital and care service admissions. So, all good in theory – let's see how it goes in practice.

### **Barrington's New Woodland**

It was great to see the new Queen Elizabeth Jubilee woodland at Barrington between Heselton Way and the back of the school. What a brilliant place for residents to go – and a safe adventure playground for children... Do pop in if you're passing – it's a brilliant project.

### **Homelessness**

Homelessness is becoming a much bigger problem now with changes to welfare and the young and single and middle aged suffer the most. South Cambs is looking at ways in which it can increase the number of temporary homes it has available to avoid putting people into B&Bs which is incredibly expensive. Part of the problem is that we have 4000 families on Housing List for local authority housing and private landlords are very often unwilling to rent to people in receipt of benefits even though the council will pay the deposits for homeless people. So we have a Catch 22 exacerbated by the high

rents in this region. With this in mind, a move back to the days when people routinely rented out their spare rooms would go a small way to helping. Is this something you would be prepared to consider? If so, you may like to contact us or a homelessness officer at the District Council.

**Well, well – who knew?....**

From 1st January 2013 the UK harmonised its pet travel controls with Europe allowing pet dogs, cats and ferrets to enter the UK from approved routes without undergoing quarantine. Since then the County Council's Supporting Businesses and Communities Team (SBC) have seen an increase in pets that have been imported without a valid Rabies vaccination, most of which have been from Eastern Europe. So if you get bitten by a dog, cat or ferret get down to the Doctors pronto....

**Correspondence:**

**Register of Electors:** 2 amendments to the Register were received.

**CCC:** A new Constitution is in the process of being written. There will be time to comment on this before it is ratified.

**Police:** SCDC has joined the Police Panel and it has been decided that the number of Panel meetings will be reduced to three a year. Cllr Kindersley did not feel this was the correct thing to do, as the areas become unwieldy.

**The Police Report from PCSO Mahoney:** There have been 4 burglaries reported and 1 criminal damage to a vehicle since the beginning of November.....

**11/11/13** (12pm-3pm) – Ermine way, Arrington - Unknown offender/s have opened double doors of workshop and stolen electric bike. Offender/s have also pulled at exposed copper piping, pulling it out about 2-3 ft then gave up.

**11/11/13** (7pm and 7.20pm) – Ermine way - Unknown offenders have reversed 4X4 vehicle through front gates of nursery. Once inside they have bolt cropped off a padlock to the gates to an internal compound, padlocks to containers, the padlock to the security device on the horse box, and damaged a further padlock to another set of gates to the compound. No items appear to have been taken.

**11/11/13 – 12/11/13** – Birchmead, Gamlingay – Unknown offender/s have scratched both sides of a vehicle parked outside of victims address.

**17/11/13** (12pm-11pm) – Church lane, Arrington - Unknown suspects have gained access to the location by removing a section of the concrete wall cladding on the right hand perimeter wall of the building. This has caused damage valued at approximately £150. Once inside an untidy search has been conducted and items moved but no items appear to have been stolen.

**17/11/13 – 18/11/13** (4pm -8pm) – Old North Road, Longstowe – Entry gained to stables by unknown offender/s, access gained by damaging/removing approximately 4ft of fencing. Nothing appears to have been taken at this time.

If you have any information that may help us with our enquiries please call 101.

**Orwell PC:** There is a lot of sheltered housing in Orwell, and residents are visited regularly. However, there are many elderly in the locality - only 5% of them in sheltered accommodation, and the remaining 95% who live in their own homes have no such visits. Maybe something could be organised, dispensing help and information to enable the elderly to remain in their own homes for longer? Clerk to invite Wayne Talbot to the next meeting - or there is a meeting at Lordship Close in Orwell on 26 November from 5 - 7pm which Councillors might like to attend. Clerk to invite Mr Talbot to the next meeting.

**AON Insurance:** Information received on Council clearing snow and gritting from Council property - this does not apply in Croydon

**Finance:**

**Bank Statement:** Following receipt of the second instalment of the precept, the October balance is £2691 - 81

**Royal British Legion:** An invoice for £17-00 was presented for the Royal British Legion Poppy Wreath, which the Mr Sole laid at the war memorial, on behalf of the village. It was resolved that, in pursuance of the power conferred by Section 137 (4) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, the Council approves the payment of the sum of £17-00 in respect of a wreath for Remembrance Sunday. All in favour.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 18 December 2013 in the Reading Room starting at 8.00pm.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 10.00pm

Signed .....

Date .....