

## MINUTES OF COOKLEY & WALPOLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE PAVILION 16 SEPTEMBER 2014

**Present:** Cllrs. Mike Porter (Vice-Chairman) (MP), David Whitwood (DW), Nick Jarvis (NJ), Zoé Mair (ZM), Ian Newton (IN), John Winter (JW). In attendance: District & County Cllr Stephen Burroughes, Raymond Catchpole (Clerk) and about 50 public.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. David Cask, Anne Thomas, Bill Camplin, PCSO Julie Hinton.

*Clerk's Note: clerk announced availability of agendas and printed extracts from minutes of the previous solar farm presentation by Kinetica in April 2014. Current application was tabled for inspection and had been so throughout the afternoon.*

**14/118 Chairman:** in the previously notified absence of David Cask, Cllr Mike Porter took the chair with unanimous agreement of members.

**14/119 Declarations of Interest:** MP declared continuing pecuniary interests in any Cookpole and Walpole & Cookley Playing Field Trust matters, ZM in any Cookpole or CEA matters, but these members will be permitted to discuss and vote on these matters by clerk and members through a previous resolution. IN declared a pecuniary interest in matters relating to the proposed solar farm at Hill Farm, Cookley as an adjacent landowner, but was also permitted to take part in discussion and vote, should he wish, by clerk and members. NJ declared a non-pecuniary interest in the same matter.

**14/120 Public Participation: (a)** Cllr Stephen Burroughes had provided his **County Council Report**, which the clerk will circulate to members and is reproduced below:

**PLEASEING RISE IN SUFFOLK'S GCSE RESULTS** Suffolk's 16 year-olds achieved higher than expected levels of GCSE attainment. Provisional results collated from 4 out of 5 secondary schools suggest a 1% rise in the number of students getting five or more A\*-C grades, including English and Maths. It means 56 per cent of Suffolk's year 11's achieved the expected level of attainment. In 2013, it was 55 per cent. Some schools have made significant gains on last year. For example, at Hadleigh High School, 69% of students achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades (including English and Maths), up 25 per cent on last year. At St Benedict's Catholic School, 71% achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades (including English and maths), up 18% on last year. Meanwhile, at Westbourne Academy, 52% achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades (including English and Maths). This is up from 31 per cent last year. This improvement is testament to the hard work and dedication of teachers, heads, governors, parents and, most importantly, Suffolk's students. We will continue to work with, and challenge schools to drive up educational attainment. That is the precise direction we set with our 'Raising the Bar' initiative.

**NO 'CASH' NEEDED WITH THE ENDEAVOUR CARD** Young people aged 16–19 can now use cashless payments with their Endeavour Card when they pay for a single or return fare on Ipswich Buses. To get started cardholders are asked to register their card first on the [Endeavour Card website](#). (make sure you have the 18 digit card number and postcode available) after registration, the card can start to be 'topped-up' in much the same way as the Oyster Card used in London. The Endeavour Card, launched in 2013, is for any person aged 16-19. It is valid for any single or return adult journey, 7 days a week, on participating bus operators. Cardholders receive a minimum discount of 25% off full price adult bus fares only. Young people can apply up to 1 month before your 16th birthday and no less than 1 month before your 20th birthday. There is

no fee. We are determined to help young people negotiate the barriers to further education, training and employment. The difficulties in travelling to and from education and training opportunities can be significant. The Endeavour Card is our way of helping them over this barrier, and so enables them to pursue the opportunities that will help them to build a successful career.

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES CONSULTATION STOPPED** A public consultation seeking people's views on where to create 3 official Gypsy and Traveller stopping sites in Suffolk has been stopped. The consultation, launched earlier in August, identified seven potential sites - with the aim of selecting 3 in the areas where unauthorised encampments usually occur. However, following a number of landowners coming forward with other potential sites and early feedback from councillors and residents, Suffolk's council and policing leaders have decided to halt the current process to enable it to be reconsidered. It means the seven sites previously identified have therefore been dropped and a fresh list of sites will be worked on prior to public consultation. No timescales have been set for when a new consultation will be launched.

**SUFFOLK ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT WEBSITE GOES LIVE FOR CENTENARY** The Suffolk Armed Forces Community Covenant goes from strength to strength through the launch of a new website. The launch of [www.suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk](http://www.suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk), which ties into the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, aims to reflect the partnership activity that's taken place since the Suffolk Armed Forces Community Covenant was signed in October 2012. The website highlights projects that have been delivered and the key issues where the partnership looks to influence action. These projects include looking at and improving veterans' support needs, supporting armed forces' families by linking them into community service provision or with new partners, and improving information services so soldiers and their families thus better enjoying what Suffolk has to offer. Suffolk has a strong and proud link with the armed forces, and we were proud to sign up to the military covenant and the commitment it entails. We will continue to work with our partners to provide the support to members of our armed forces and their families that they deserve.

**SUFFOLK ENERGY ACTION 'GREEN DEAL' IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS** The Home Improvement Fund may be closed to 'new' applications, but if you are a Suffolk resident you can still get up to £6000 of funding for home improvements. The government's Green Deal Home Improvement Fund, which offered grants to make homes more energy-efficient, closed last month after the £120m allocated for it ran out in six weeks due to demand. Suffolk residents can still get funding for home improvements thanks to a successful bid to the government of £5.7million for the Suffolk Energy Action scheme. This scheme will provide funding and advice for the installation of energy efficiency improvements to help Suffolk homeowners and private-renting tenants save money. Roadshows to help raise awareness about the scheme are taking place as follows: 8 and 15 September, Lowestoft Asda am/ Library pm; 26 September Haverhill Market 08.30-15.00; 30 September Newmarket Market 08.30-14.30; 8 October Debenham, outside Neaves Butchers 0900-16.30; 16 October Sudbury Market 08.30 – 1600; 24 October Haverhill Market 09.00-16.00. The Suffolk Energy Action team will spend a week in different areas on a rolling programme which started back in July and runs until 17th November. Suffolk Energy Action is part of our ambition to create the Greenest County and support the growth of a green economy in Suffolk. Insulating your home could save you hundreds of pounds each year in reduced energy bills, and as summer is nearly over, now is the time to start planning.

**NEW RAIL LINK REPRESENTS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR SUFFOLK** The East-West Rail Consortium has published a report that shows that extending the East-West Rail line from Oxford to Cambridge has real potential. The report shows that the delivery of attractive new rail services between key locations could deliver substantial economic benefits and support significant growth in the East-West rail corridor. The aim is to establish a scheme with a robust and convincing business case that can be submitted to Government in 2016 to secure inclusion of the scheme, subject to funding availability, in the 2019-24 investment plans for the rail industry.

**2 MONTH SENTENCE FOR ONLINE FRAUDSTER** A fraudster who made over £220,000 selling fake branded clothing via eBay has been sentenced to 12 months in prison. John Young, of Sotterley Road, Hulver, in Beccles, was sentenced at Ipswich Crown Court following a 16-month investigation by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards team. He pleaded guilty to 13 counts of fraud and breaching trademarks and consumer protection from 'unfair trading' regulations. The advice to consumers is to use the Brand-i shopping directory to find items such as designer or branded clothing. The online stores listed can be trusted as they have been

provided with the consent of the brands themselves. Anyone who suspects they have been sold counterfeit goods can report it to Suffolk Trading Standards on 03454 040506. Suffolk's trading standards team is committed to keeping counterfeit goods off the streets, and this case should act as a stark warning to other rogue businesses and individuals selling through eBay or other online methods such as Facebook. Counterfeit goods undermine legitimate businesses and their sale will not be tolerated in Suffolk.

**(b)** Cllr Stephen Burroughes had provided his **District Council Report**, which the clerk will circulate to members and is reproduced below:

**DISTRICT GETS GO AHEAD FOR BOUNDARY CHANGES** Suffolk Coastal been given the go ahead by the boundary commission to proceed with it's review for the new warding arrangements and the reduction of Councillors from 55 to 42. Reducing the number of councillors will save money and more fully engage councillors in the day to day running of the council. The changes will come into effect after the district council elections which will be held next May.

**SUFFOLK COASTAL COUNCILLORS APPROVE MOVE TO NEW HQ** Councillors last night gave approval for negotiations to commence on moving it's operations to a new site based in Melton. The move to a new site and the construction of state of the art office space will take the best part of 2 years, but will enable the council to change the way it works, and become a new and contemporary local authority building. The cost of the build will be met mainly through the sale of the Melton Hill offices and land for development. The existing office are becoming increasingly costly to run, are not particularly accessible or 'fit for purpose'. Suffolk Coastal's Full Council members gave approval at a special 'extraordinary' meeting held yesterday in Woodbridge.

**NEW LEISURE STRATEGY OUT FOR CONSULTATION** A new coastal leisure strategy is out for consultation to parish councils and community groups looking at assessing what the capability is locally for providing leisure opportunities and gathering evidence of exactly where facilities are located in order to help it identify and focus on local needs etc. It is important to pull together all the leisure assets we have throughout Suffolk Coastal, particularly in the more remote rural areas and add this to the whole offer for a joined up and effective leisure service. Hopefully all parishes will look at the strategy and feedback information and details particularly the areas they feel are relevant for them.

Cllr Burroughes spoke briefly to his submitted reports, given the amount of discussion to be covered in this public participation section. There were no questions.

**(c)** In the absence of PCSO Julie Hinton, there was no verbal **Police Report**, but the clerk will circulate this to members and the gist is reproduced below.

This report has been prepared by: PCSO 3195 Julie Hinton based at Framlingham Safer Neighbourhood Team. There have been no reported crimes of interest to Cookley & Walpole during the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014

**SUFFOLK SAFE KEY** Suffolk SAFE Key is a comprehensive key holder service offered by Suffolk Police, which helps support local charities. It is available to residential and business owners within the county, providing protection and assistance should you lose your keys. Signing up for SAFE Key allows the police access to your property in the event of an incident occurring while your property is unattended. They do this by contacting the person you have nominated as a key holder for the property. By registering for the service, you will have peace of mind knowing that your home or property will be in safe hands when you are not there. In addition to the key holder database provision, we also offer a key fob recovery service, which means that all SAFE Key members are issued a with key fob, featuring the force crest and a unique identifying number. People who find lost keys with the Suffolk SAFE Key fob are encouraged, through a £10 finder's fee, to hand the keys to the police or send them to a secure postal address. This allows for the keys to be returned to their rightful owner. You can sign up for the scheme by phone, post or online and any money above that's required to operate the scheme is used to fund community projects. There will be accessible emergency

contact and key holder details recorded on our secure database letting the police know who to call in the event of an incident at your unattended property – your nominated key holder is someone you trust and lives in the vicinity of your property. A window sticker to confirm your membership to officers attending your unattended property meaning reduced risk of forced entry and potential incurred costs. Details on the Suffolk Constabulary Website or contact your local SNT on 101.

**POLICE DIRECT** For those of you that haven't signed up for Police Direct yet, please don't forget about it! The service is free, easy to use and is proving to be a very valuable policing tool. The service doesn't just assist us it also benefits you. You will receive regular updates either via text, email or landline letting you know what is happening in your area. Leaflets are available at all police stations or visit our website.

**(d) DC/14/2150/FUL Hill Farm Cookley: proposed solar farm:** public participation now moved to comments on this planning application to be considered by the council as a subsequent agenda item. MP invited the public to comment, stating their names.

*Clerk's note: throughout this part of the public participation, members of the public voiced their opinions volubly and resorted to shouting each other down occasionally. The chairman called the meeting to order several times and even threatened that some speakers would have to leave the meeting if they did not come to order or moderate their delivery. The minutes that follow ignore such outbursts and warnings and attempt only to provide content.*

Fiona Mewton was first to speak, commenting on the industrial scale of the development covering the hillside and using valuable agricultural land. Government was against use of grades 1,2 and 3a for such purposes. Agricultural use employs labour, not so solar farming; tourism is also adversely affected. Listed buildings and the landscape would be affected as would the Blyth SLA and she asked that the application be refused.

Chris Leggett asked for planning balance to be considered: power plant on one side producing £1.7m of which £1m comes from electricity bills with an electricity demand already met, against development that would be visible for miles around on contours that do not permit adequate screening, losing land and view in exchange for industrialism.

Bill Jackson asked about access to the site and the effect of construction traffic on his sensitive computer equipment essential to his global work. He was also concerned as to the effect of such traffic on his alpaca herd. ZM thought this to be an important aspect and perhaps alternative routes could be considered.

Paul Trigg objected to this line of discussion and accused the parish council of having reached a decision already by even considering these matters which would only be relevant after an approval.

Cllr Burroughes intervened to say that all these points will be considered by the District Council before the application is determined. He acknowledged having received much correspondence on this application and whilst that is acknowledged, he must remain impartial until the meeting.

Mark Stephen was pleased with Cllr Burroughes reply. He has communicated with the planners, but is concerned as to grading of the agricultural site. Cllr Burroughes

confirmed the planners were waiting for further information and further confirmed to a question from MP that it would be a survey, not a desktop report. Clerk also reported he had the same confirmation from the planners in answer to his questions.

ZM brought discussion back to agricultural use; sheep grazing as proposed would manure the land, keep grass short and provide food. This could be seen as an extension of crop rotation and retain the land in agricultural use throughout.

Chris Stewart asked how we are supposed to see the wildflower meadow the developers refer to as growing beneath their privately located panels. Are we to destroy all these acres just for the birds and bees? Chris Stewart considered these proposals by Kinetica were worthless.

JW confirmed that sheep will graze under and between the panels; his own panel array has sufficient space.

Wendy Taylor said appearance is important; this is the gateway to a medieval hamlet. That Kinetica offer mitigating proposals at all implies they are already aware of the scheme's negative impact.

A member of the public said renewable energy was needed right across the country and this scheme helped. Paul Trigg said a different approach to the usage of electricity itself was needed, not solar farm increase. MP quoted some statistics from Reuters and other sources which set out the need for energy. Chris Taylor said the proposed panels were not going to see us through a winter.

Margaret Mander said the location was wrong, there were plenty of other brown field sites; holiday makers don't want solar arrays, they want countryside.

Jon Lewis said he had farmed and lived in the countryside; he wanted a safe planet for his progeny and electricity is needed. The site will not be sterile, sheep grazing is good. Referring back to a concern of Bill Jackson's, he said he had kept llamas and they enjoyed the traffic passing. Construction traffic is a short limited period only.

Wendy Taylor said the appropriateness of the site had not been considered. Member of the public suggested the site will harm numerous listed buildings, there were 39 buildings at risk and a heritage building is its environment as well as the building. There was the SLA to be considered also.

Mike Bygrave said UK Solar PV Strategy was to increase production tenfold, however big ambition was to be matched by local sensitivity. He listed ten Solar Trade Association commitments which this development did not appear to meet. The development affected the Blyth SLA and does not tick the planning requirements of AP13 (SP98).

Paul Trigg said the parish council was not impartial.

Rob Chase said we have fantastic panoply of wildlife due to heritage of enlightened husbandry; we have a duty to leave the environment better than we found it. He fears the proposal will block wild life movement from other valleys. NJ thought if this goes ahead it will surely become a nature reserve by having no public access. Rob Chase wants future public to appreciate all this naturally, not in zoos and parks. NJ

said this is what the solar farm will produce. MP exemplified a PV array on 40 acres on the edge of an estate in Cambridgeshire where wildlife has quadrupled.

Discussion having drawn to a close, the chairman closed this part of the public forum so that it could move on to another planning application.

**(e) DC/14/2781/FUL South View Halesworth Road Walpole.** The chairman opened this subject for discussion and the applicant indicated she was prepared to answer questions. ZM asked if the development was further back from the rim of the site; confirmed by the applicant. The proposed house is unlikely to be seen from The Clink as in the original permission. JW confirmed the house had been pulled back towards Halesworth. Applicant added that mature trees had already started to be planted on site.

Patrick Elder saw no problem with the application given the increase in existing building in the immediate area. Fiona Mewton would like to support the application.

*The chairman took the meeting into council mode and most of the public left.*

**14/121 Approval of Minutes:** deferred in the absence of the chairman of the meeting of 21 July 2014.

**14/122 Matters arising from Minutes:** deferred.

**14/123 Planning: (a) DC/14/2150/FUL Hill Farm, Cookley:** construction of a renewable energy solar farm, to include the installation of solar panels, DNO switchgear room, control room and inverter housings with associated plant, on-site access tracks, security fencing and cameras, landscaping and other associated works. Plans had been displayed at Walpole Pavilion during the afternoon and the matter had been discussed in public forum at the beginning of the meeting. The chairman invited individual response from councillors.

ZM felt that while the strength of feeling must be taken on board, the land will not degrade over the years and the solar array will eventually be dismantled. ZM has spoken to villagers who are in support of a solar farm and our vote as councillors must reflect these views as well. Subsidies had been mentioned in the public forum, but these are nothing compared to huge incentives offered to Sizewell C. The country generally hasn't taken all this on board and it generates a lot of feeling. The Theoretical Visibility Zone is just that – theoretical. Parts of it are in Halesworth.

MP commented on earlier public references to industrial. The fencing proposed is similar to a deer park. JW said it is not industrial and not permanent and has to be located specifically in relation to a grid network. MP felt there would never be such a thing as an ideal site.

IN said his landholding at Bucks Farm abuts the solar farm. He is pro renewable energy, but considers the sheer scale of this too large and is concerned about the effect on his holiday guests. He would be in favour of a smaller array, but concerns continue over this site. However, he trusts the parish council to reflect all views.

Cllr Burroughes interjected with the consent of the chairman to point out this is a maximisation of the site. JW was concerned as to it being put back to original use, but Cllr Burroughes confirmed this would happen.

DW felt everybody seems to be against these proposals so how do we get green energy? He was also concerned as to the possibility of a renewal of the lease of the site in 22 years and extended use.

With the consent of the chairman, a member of the public asked if Kinetica would consider a smaller scheme. MP and Cllr Burroughes commented that this was not part of the current application process and decisions must rest on the application as submitted.

The chairman took a vote of members by show of hands: three in favour of the application, none against and three abstentions.

Abstainers indicated their abstentions reflected the strength of local feeling, whilst recognising the wider remit of the parish council.

**(b) DC/14/2781/FUL South View, Halesworth Road, Walpole:** new residential dwelling with detached garage and studio space (resubmission). Plans had been displayed at Walpole Pavilion during the afternoon and the matter discussed in public forum. The chairman called for a vote by show of hands: all in favour, unanimous.

Clerk will, however, approach Cllr Burroughes with regard to accessing funds for road signage here from his highways budget.

**(c) DC/14/2461/VOC The Elms, Halesworth Road, Walpole:** ratification of decision taken between meetings to agree to extension of holiday letting period in line with SDC Development Plan, but to continue to object to any permanent independent disposal of the holiday unit; approved unanimously by show of hands.

**14/124 Finance: RFO Report:** clerk presented his report and financial statement.

The following invoices were approved and paid:

Clerk's Expenses	£	42.60
Will's (grass cutting)	£	650.00
W&CPFT Hire of Pavilion Jan to Jun 2014	£	144.00
Ladywell Accountancy Services (PAYE)	£	28.00
LJ Sutton (Internal audit)	£	50.00
Clerk's salary	£	525.00

Balances to carry forward were submitted as under, taking into account the above:

Community Account	£4,202.37	
Business Saver	£1,094.65	£5,297.02

Financial statement was approved unanimously by show of hands.

*As anticipated in the agenda, all other agenda items scheduled for this evening were deferred, save the following:*

**14/125 Matters for Future Agenda:** (a) **Parish Churchyard:** clerk to chase up SCDC care of the churchyard where growth is attacking the fabric of the building, as well as the collapsing retaining wall. Clerk will also follow up with diocese in absence of a PCC. (b) **Speed Indicator Signs:** Cllr Burroughes indicated he would be happy to follow up funding, but there are current policy difficulties. Clerk will follow up prices related to his recent circulation to members. (c) **Trees:** in view of promised delivery of further tree whips from Woodland Trust, clerk will ask Will to find those already planted and cut round them. (d) **Councillor Training:** ZM asked about SALC Planning Training.

**14/126 Next Meeting:** Tuesday 21 October 2014.

*The meeting closed at 9.05pm*

**Chairman**

**Date**