SUTTON-ON-TRENT PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at the Methodist Community Centre on Tuesday, 9th July 2024 at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor M Allen (arr 7.11pm)
Councillor B Blanchard
Councillor S Hadley
Councillor P Hibberd (Chair)
Councillor J Keeton
Councillor P Marshall
Councillor A Smith
Councillor S Tyers
Councillor Walker

In Attendance 9 members of the public together with Mark Noone, John Hetherton, Elena Sarieva (Elements Green) and Liam Nevins (Raincloud Consultancy)

24/034 Apologies for Absence
Received and accepted from Councillors Sloan and Moody, District Councillor Mrs Michael and County Councillor Laughton.

24/035 Public 10 Minute Forum
The Chair suspended the meeting at 6.32pm for the public session.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for the work done by the contractors on painting the Cemetery railings and acknowledged the Clerk's email sent regarding provision of the brown bin. The resident expressed concern at what appeared to be an excessive use of weed killer that had killed off potted plants and grass, and asked whether there was an alternative method of control that could be used.

The Clerk advised that weedkiller had not been applied by anyone associated with the Parish Council. Investigations would be made to try and establish who had applied it.

A resident asked if the Parish Council were aware of the field on Ingram Lane that appeared to being used as a disposal yard, with holes dug and debris being buried. The Clerk confirmed that no planning application had been received for change of use and would undertake further investigation.

The Chair thanked residents for their participation and reconvened the meeting at 6.36pm.

24/036 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th June 2024
After discussion, it was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2024 be deferred to the 10th September meeting to allow the Clerk to review her notes following comments submitted by Councillor Smith.

24/037 To welcome representatives from Elements Green and NG+ to discuss the Great North Road Solar Park and Community Benefit Scheme
The Chair suspended the meeting at 6.40pm to welcome representatives from Elements Green, developers of the Great North Road Solar Park.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council currently sat in a neutral position at the moment. Members had discussed the response from the recent survey and had picked out some common themes from those responses.

The Chair introduced five themes:

- A level of reassurance required around flooding
- Concerns around the impact on wildlife

- Clarification on decommissioning
- Landscaping
- Concerns around the loss of high quality farmland

Flooding was a big concern with two dykes that bring a significant amount of water into the village. The Internal Drainage Board had fitted pumps that helped during flood events, but there had been properties that had suffered repeat flooding. Residents were concerned that changes upstream from the solar park would impact on the village.

Elements Green advised that solar panels did not increase flooding. Only 2% of the frames would be going directly into the ground. Water goes underneath the panels. Elements Green advised that there were specific areas that they have to mitigate against. They do not legally have to do anything to mitigate against flooding, but were trying to identify key issues around the development through hydraulic modelling for Sutton-on-Trent that would drive mitigation measures. The NG+ scheme could look at flooding and what could be done.

At the invitation of the Chair, Elements Green then gave a presentation on hydrology and what modelling had been undertaken. It was explained that surface water flooding had to be assessed for the application. Surface water would be reviewed as would any flooding from the River Trent.

The Chair explained the relationship the Parish Council had with the Internal Drainage Board and that the village had suffered substantial flooding in 2018, with properties again flooded recently. There were residents in the village with substantial knowledge and information that may be able to assist with feeding that into the modelling.

The model showed that flooding would reduce with solar panels. Elements Green had met with the IDB regarding another area and had presented proposals to that parish.

In terms of wildlife, Elements Green had undertaken over 2 years of ecology work to fully understand the baseline position. That data would form part of the design process for higher sensitive ecology enhancement areas. 850 acres were currently dedicated for ecology enhancements. That area may increase, but was unlikely to decrease. It was also intended that 50,000 trees be planted, together with an extra 25km of hedges, and existing hedges left. Panels would be placed around existing hedgerows. Elements Green advised that there would always be an initial impact on wildlife, but there should be a bio-diversity net gain against what was previously there.

There will be a footpath strategy, with Elements Green seeking to introduce new permissive routes where people can see and enjoy those areas. A lot of feedback had been received on how footpaths were used. Elements Green were looking at doing more targeted engagement with parishes on footpaths and have a consultant working locally. A final design should be available by December. Effort was being undertaken to try to get footpaths as far as possible away from panels, and to have high quality footpaths to attract tourists into the area.

Elements Green have carried out detailed surveys on multiple site visits and spent a lot of time visiting various fields in the area. This information would be in documents issued later in the year. Panels had been designed at least 100m away from residential properties.

The NG+ fund was an annual £1m fund that would be available for improvements to homes and businesses. There would be the opportunity for grants to be provided to residential properties and businesses to look at their energy efficiency.

Councillor Keeton asked if the NG+ was investing in any community projects now. Elements Green confirmed there was a light touch in the terms of investment this year, but from 2026 it then starts to get up to £1m mark.

Elements Green stated that the company wanted to provide a cost benefit across all parishes with the NG+ community benefit trust and to ensure that everyone understood what solar was. Elements Green were in the process of setting up a trust for the NG+ fund with a Board of Directors.

Elements Green advised that the scheme would cover 5% of Newark & Sherwood District land. There would be 460 jobs created, 400 during the construction scheme with 60 being permanent. Elements Green were looking to have as many local suppliers as possible. If approved, there would be construction traffic in and around the area for two years.

With regard to decommissioning, Elements Green confirmed that arrangements for that process would have to be assessed as part of the planning application. The company were legally bound to put funds aside to enable removal of the panels and equipment at the end of the 40 year term. Funding was independently assessed to ensure there were sufficient funds available.

Elements Green acknowledged the concerns around the loss of high quality farmland, but advised that very little best most valuable land would be lost. The loss of land would form part of the planning process. Elements Green were not 'kicking out' any tenant farmers in this scheme.

It was the view of Elements Green that solar farms do not degrade food security and would furnish a document to reassure on that.

Councillor Smith advised there were a lot of people worried about the development and asked how people could be sure that what Elements Green were saying was factual, correct and accurate.

Elements Green confirmed they would share information regarding the agricultural land to reassure people. There will be further community consultation exercises to provide factual information. All of the process will be examined through the planning process and information will be publicly available in reports. All information will be shared on the Elements Green website.

Elements Green advised that the next stage of consultation was yet to be confirmed. The latest view was that it would be in October. Elements Green would be liaising with Newark & Sherwood District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council on the statement of community involvement and would then release dates.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for participating in the meeting and reconvened the meeting at 8.30pm.

24/038 District Councillor Report

(a) No report was presented as District Councillor Mrs Michael had given her apologies.

To note the Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement

Members noted the Statement of Community Involvement had been adopted by the District Council.

24/039 County Councillor Report

No report was presented as County Councillor Laughton had given his apologies.

24/040 Planning

Applications

(a) **FOR NOTING - 24/01004/LDCP – Norwood, Carlton Lane, Sutton-on-Trent - Lawful Development Certificate for Proposed single storey side extension to existing property**

Members noted the application as outlined.

Decision Notices

(b) **24/00807/HOUSE – Church Cottage, 9 Church Street, Sutton-on-Trent – Single Storey Rear Extension**

Members noted the decision notice granting planning permission for the development as outlined.

(c) **23/01785/FUL – 23 Great North Road, Sutton-on-Trent – Conversion of barn into a separate dwelling and the erection of a detached garage and workshop**
Members noted the decision notice refusing planning permission for the development as outlined.

Tree Works

(d) **24/01084/TWCA – White Cottage, 47 Main Street, Sutton-on-Trent - Remove Pyrus salicifolia under 5-day notice**

(e) **24/01042/TWCA – 32 Old Great North Road, Sutton-on-Trent - Remove conifer tree with suitable replacement to be planted**

(f) **24/01022/TWCA – Mill View, 51 Main Street, Sutton-on-Trent - Fell Cedar Tree**

(g) **24/01071/TWCA – The Grange, 49 Main Street, Sutton-on-Trent - Remove to ground level 2 large Conifers (Leylandii)**
Members received and noted the applications for tree works.

24/041 Financial Issues

(a) To record Receipts -

- E Gill & Sons – Cemetery Fees - £67
- Randall – Allotment Fee - £7

(b) The following invoices were approved for payment:

- Clerk's Wages – June 2024 - £304.25
- HMRC – June PAYE - £76
- Future Farming – InvS166 - £1,060.80
- Future Farming – InvS237 - £1,060.80
- Glosscalm Limited – Cemetery Railings - £1,737.47
- Sage - £9.60
- NALC Invs 3340 & 3353 – Cllr Training - £90
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(c) **Financial Report as at 30th June 2024**
Members noted the financial report which showed a balance on the current account of £83,797.10 and £104,152.78 in the deposit account.

24/042 Parish Council Matters

(a) To receive the minutes from the Trentside Parishes Meeting held on 12th June 2024
The minutes from the Trentside Parishes Meeting held on 12th June 2024 were received and noted.

(b) To receive the notes of the meeting of the Safer Neighbourhood Group held on 18th April 2024
Members received the notes of the meeting of the Safer Neighbourhood Group held on 18th April 2024. Councillor Hadley advised that he would be attending the next meeting on the 11th July 2024.

(c) To receive Notification of Essential Maintenance Works on the A1 – Upgrade to LED Lighting with overnight closures
Correspondence had been received from National Highways relating to works on the A1 to upgrade to LED lighting. Works commenced on the 8th July and would run for a 6 week period. Overnight closures were planned during the period. Diversions would be in place as necessary.

24/043 To receive updates and agree actions on the following matters:

- **Playing Field**
  Councillor Allen would liaise with the Clerk in issuing a letter of authority to the contractor. The shape had been agreed with the contractor and the surface would be yellow mulch.
- **Cemetery**
  (a) To note the completion of work on the Cemetery railings
  Members noted the completion of the work and were pleased with the quality of the finish which had enhanced the entrance to the Cemetery.

- **Highways**
  (a) <u>To receive an update from Cllr Moody</u>
  Cllr Moody had provided an update on the meeting held with Officers from Via on 19th June. A multi-phase approach was discussed with different types of repair. Since the meeting Via had confirmed they would be undertaking work in two phases. The first phase should be in August to patch the main problem areas, with a second phase later in the year. Cllr Moody was pleased that there was now some movement on the repairs.
- **Community Speed Watch**
  Councillor Hadley reported that drivers did slow down when they saw the Speed Watch signs, so the monitoring was effective.
- **Public Footpaths**
  Councillor Moody reported that a fence was falling away on the right hand side of FP8. The Clerk would report to the Rights of Way team.
- **Churchyard**
  Councillor Blanchard asked if the Council's contractor could strim after every cut. The Clerk would raise this with the contractor.
- **Village Hall**
  The Clerk advised that chaser emails had been sent in relation to the Section 106 Agreement.
- **Sports Club**
  Councillor Smith advised that works were well underway.
- **Library Support Group**
  There were no matters to report.
- **War Memorial**
  It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Keeton, that delegated authority be given to the Clerk to progress pre-applications for the two locations – Sternthorpe Close playing field and the Strawberry Field verge, including payment of any fee.
- **Any other reports**
  Councillor Walker advised that the interactive speed sign was not working. The Clerk would log with Via.

24/044 Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils

(a) <u>July Newsletter</u>
A copy of the July Newsletter had been circulated to Members for information.

24/045 Correspondence

(a) <u>To note a report received on a visit to the Egmanton Solar Park</u>
Members noted the report as circulated.

24/056 Items for Notification

The Clerk advised that there may need to be an interim meeting purely to consider any planning applications that came in during recess.

Close: There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at

Next Meeting will be on Tuesday, 10th September 2024 at 7.30pm in the Methodist Community Centre.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT MINUTES WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPROVED.