

Whitstone Parish Council

Minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 12th April 2014

All meetings are open to the press and public unless the Council decides otherwise

The Meeting was opened by Chairman Cllr Furse, with 3 Councillors present; Cllrs Horn, Medland & Adamson. Esther Grieg – Clerk, 11 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence with reasons

Cllr Sutton – holiday, Cllr Collins – no reason for absence given to Clerk.

2. To put for confirmation the:

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 10th April 2013

It was resolved the Minutes be confirmed as a correct record

Proposed: Cllr Furse Seconded: Cllr Horn

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3. Chairman's Report

Cllr Furse welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced the new Clerk, Esther Greig, to the meeting and mentioned the compliance work that she continues to undertake and update on behalf on the Council – HMRC payroll, VAT reclaims, Standing Orders, Freedom of Information, Archives, Bank Account Signatories, Insurance, Data Protection – mundane but necessary work.

Summary of 2103-14

Cllr Furse stated that the PC has limited powers but are keen to take back contracts offered by CC into the Parish. Not only do the PC cut the verges; it has now taken control of the footpath grass cutting. It wants to put back pride and set a good tone in the village. Cllr Furse also noted that the PC have underwritten the high speed broadband connection to the village hall and will continue this into 14-15. It has donated a screen and projector – it hopes that local groups will make full use of this facility. PC has opened dialogue with other local Parish Councils regarding Neighbourhood Plans, and with CC Highways department regarding improving traffic management within the village. The PC has facilitated the purchasing and installing of a Defibrillator at the Parish Hall. New progress is being made with regard to the land at Paradise Park; negotiations are underway with the land agent. Currently boundaries are being discussed: later in the year – the PC will consult the Parish as to the best use of the land. Cllr Furse thanked his fellow Councillors for all their hard work – especially Cllr Sutton. Cllr Furse has introduced Portfolio holders so that individual members are tasked with Planning, Footpaths, Localism, Parish Plan, Parish Hall liaison.

Planning review of 2013. Cllr Horn. WPC has seen approaching 50 planning applications of various kinds in this period. WPC has developed a Wind Turbine Policy this year in order to ensure uniformity of response to any wind turbine application. This policy has been further endorsed by parishioners during the local parish plan update. Cllr Horn explained the WTP. It should be noted that WPC is not the planning authority, just a consultee like many other public bodies who are consulted during the planning process. Support or objection from WPC does not decide whether the application is permitted but does feed an opinion into the decision making process. Cllr Horn reiterated that that he expects to see comments to applications from parishioners – and that these will be noted at the PC meetings and it will respond to applications taking these into account.

Footpaths. Report read out by Cllr Adamson on behalf of Cllr Sutton. Summary - The overall condition of our footpaths has been improved somewhat over the last year due to selective cutting of surface vegetation on some paths and particularly around some of the stiles and gateways which tend to get overgrown in the summer. This has been possible because the PC have entered into a Local Maintenance Partnership with CC whereby the PC out the work in return for a payment from CC. We still have several issues on some paths which have been reported to CC, some of which have been passed to their enforcement team. Some areas of the footpath network are not legally walkable at the moment and these areas cannot be inspected for problems. They say they will progress these issues when resources are available but tell us that that there has been little progress this year due to budget cuts and the recent workload to repair damage to the Southwest Coast Path, which will swallow most

of the budget. The PC will continue to press them to resolve these issues, to carry out their legal responsibilities and to share the budget more equally. Cllr Sutton has had a meeting with the footpath coordinators for Week St Mary and Jacobstow where they have discussed possibilities for joining up the footpath network a bit more so that there are longer distance, and more circular, walks in the area. As part of that process he has been having discussions with the Forestry Commission with the intention of clearing some of the old overgrown paths in Swannacott Wood to enable a route from Whitstone to Week St Mary. This will require a short distance of new path, which will need to be negotiated, and will also make a couple of short circular routes possible within the woods. A member of the public noted the ongoing problems at Hilton Woods and Greens Lanes – both of which are with CC enforcement.

The Clerk noted that Cllr Sutton had produced further reports on behalf of other local groups which were available to view.

4. County Councillor's Report:

Cllr Chopak noted that she is still in her first year of office; she is involved with many areas of CC business including traffic/highways and finance. She has developed a network so she knows who to contact for particular issues. Please do not hesitate to contact her directly – although she has family and work commitments; she will respond. Cllr Chopak mentioned her Community Chest Grants – having already given £1000 towards Whotstone's war memorial; a new tranche of funding is now available.

5. Parish response to Cornwall Council concerning the proposed "Big Field" wind farm at Week St Mary

PA14/02107. The Big Field Wind Farm, Land at and Adjoining Creddacott Farm, Week St.Mary. Holsworthy. Mr John Colombi, Good Energy Generation Ltd. Wind farm development of upto 11 turbines (up to 125m blade tip) along with attendant equipment and infrastructure including 132kV substation, underground cabling, access tracks, crane pads, temporary construction compound, meteorological mast and off site highways work.

Cllr Furse summarised that the Parish has learnt a lot from the past 7 years of renewable energy applications. There was a general feeling that 'proliferation/cumulative effect' is now out of keeping with the landscape and the Parish has to look at them for at least the next 20 years. A member of the public felt disappointed that Parishioners do not have a veto and a 'sweetner' is offered with plans – he felt the this wouldn't be the case in other industries. Cllr Chopak noted that it is the Planning Inspectors that actually make the final decisions; not even CC. Cll Horn referred to the WTP – if we can't stop the applications being approved; lets at least have some gain for the Parish.

It was resolved to object to this application on the following grounds:

There will be a huge visual impact on all surrounding areas as these industrial monsters are out of keeping with the rural area.

There will be a huge impact on the community during the construction phase

This area is overwhelmed with renewable energy schemes which are changing the face of our communities for all our residents

Proposed: Cllr Furse Seconded: Cllr Adamson

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6. Cornwall Council – Mobile Library Consultation

CC are assessing ways that they can halve the mobile library budget. Consultation closes at the end of April. There was a general feeling that the mobile is well used in the Parish and that the statistics quoted by Cllr Chopak were not representative of the actual numbers using the facility. Cllr Horn noted that there could be 40 people using this service? Clerk to investigate. One member of the public said that it would hit his family hard as his wife could not drive and had no means of getting their children to the library; apart from public transport. Cllr Chopak mentioned that if the service was to go – would there be an alternative location for books – Shops, Cafes, Halls?

7. Questions & Observations from the Public

Land at Paradise Park – It is the PC's view that the estate needs to get the road adopted; so they need to get the recreational land handed to the Parish in order for that to happen. The PC have asked for a detailed map of the ownership of the land to assess the access by the gate. There are also 3 more plots to be built on. Land drainage still need remedying and the fence has fallen down – the is rubble in the grass and one child found a rusty saw!! It was noted that this area is not overlooked, so may not be ideal for a playground. The PC felt that once the ownership/land is

handed over then the Parish and Residents of Paradise Park can decide what to do with it – in their deeds it is stated that this will become a recreation area.

AGM meeting time – attendees fed back that an earlier start time than 2030 might have enabled more people to attend.

War Memorial – One member of the public felt that the corner of Oak Lane was totally the wrong place for the memorial – could lead to serious health and safety issues. He felt that it should be in a more quiet and contemplative location – a churchyard or behind the Parish Hall. He objects to that current position.

Meeting closed at 2150hrs with thanks from Cllr Horn to those who attended.