

LIGHTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of The Ordinary Meeting of Lighthorne Parish Council - Held at Lighthorne Village Hall -
On Tuesday 14th May 2024 At 6.45pm

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Cllr Lewis, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Reynolds, Cllr Hickman, & Cllr Parry (SDC).

IN ATTENDANCE: 13 members of the public.

1. **Apologies**

Cllr Driver, Cllr Eason and Cllr Mills (WCC).

2. **Declarations of interests and consideration of dispensation requests**

None.

3. **Acceptance of minutes from April.**

The minutes were agreed.

4. **Public Participation**

None.

5. **To agree the AGAR 2023/2024.**

It was unanimously agreed. *Item closed.*

6. **To hear a presentation from Innova regarding the proposed Deer's Leap Solar Farm.**

Innova were represented by James Ratcliffe (Project Manager), Alex LeGoater (Asst man and cable routes etc) and Shaherah Jordan (Community Manager). The presentation (uploaded to LPC's website) was gone through. It was confirmed that our site had been chosen due to grid capacity, which would allow instant access to the grid upon completion. It would be a 20MW site provided electricity for approx. 4,600 homes and 7.5% of SDC. There will be additional planting not in the original plan, this will be forwarded to LPC. Planning application would be submitted in August 2024, estimated approx. 12 months in application process. Construction estimated to commence spring/summer 2026 - est. 4 to 6 months for construction. Deliveries would be front loaded. The planning application will include more view points of the proposed site. The community aspect remains £5,000p/a split between LPC and MMPC. Innova invite suggestions for where the additional charity donation would go as they wish it to be as local as possible.

There were a number of questions from residents:

Q. Why is working on a Saturday included in the scheme?

A. To complete the construction as soon as possible.

Q. Safety re: vehs. on the Fosse was raised - the proposed entrance is at a spot where vehs. travelling at at least 50mph and is a very dangerous spot.

A. They will liaise with Highways (for their est. 10 deliveries a day on arctic HGVs and the vans bringing in staff of usually max 20 people) and could put traffic lights in if necessary.

Q. Will there be people living on site in temporary accommodation as there on the Elms site?

A. Not aware of any plans for workers to live on site - will clarify and get back to us.

Q. Questions about when the speed/veh number assessment was done and whether Sunday/half term was to show reduced cars/speed.

A. Believed that traffic is faster in half term so more realistic. Visibility was done on the access points which is why a new access point has been chosen and there will be further improvements to this new access point, including removal of hedgerow (as little as possible) - concerns about removing established hedgerow - Innova say they will plant over 100m of new hedgerows.

Q. Concerns raised re noise from the site during construction, especially if its 6 days a week. The current Elms site produces daily relentless intolerable noise from its construction process.

A. Conceded that the noise produced during construction is not great but claimed that the overall benefit of the site once completed outweighs these issues.

Q. Elms construction started Nov 2023 and is about half way through at this point - challenges the 4 to 6 month estimate and argues that it could be double.

A. They will speak to the Elms site and establish what if any problems there have been.

Q. Will the panels etc last the 40 years or will there be a complete repeat of the construction process 20 years in?

A. The panels will have to be replaced but not all at the same time. Est life span 25 to 30 years and they are recyclable. The stands in the ground are expected to last the full 40 years. The steel bar supports might need replacing, but again not all at the same time. (The 25 to 30 life span was challenged by a resident - more like 15. Agreed ground supports could last but there might be need for concrete in the ground to shore them up).

Q. What is being done to protect the deer population? The site blocks off a huge part of the natural daily routes for numerous herds. Number of residents from both sides of the Fosse support that all of these fields in the proposed site are a daily route for many deer and different breeds of deer - there is nothing in place to allow their natural migration around the area or indeed for them to access their natural routes from adjoining woodlands - the high fencing could push them onto the Fosse way as they will have no other means of accessing their natural habitats. Whilst the welfare of the deer population is paramount there are also concerns for the danger to vehicles on the Fosse is wildlife is driven out onto the road.

A. Innova don't think the deer are impeded! Admitted that their Eco reports mainly deal with species that can't move! They will take the comments back to their experts.

Q. We need a light management plan (for the whole 40 years), not least to maintain dark skies in our rural setting.

A. The only light, once construction is complete, is the door of the substation which is motion sensitive. They will come back to us with a lighting plan for the construction stage.

Q. Landscaping plan requested, and landscaping to be pre construction to help mitigate the noise levels for the construction stage.

A. They will ask about landscaping and the stage at which it will be commencing and get back to us. (There has been NO landscaping at Elms yet in spite of construction starting in Nov 23 - it was pointed out that once their perimeter fence has gone up that there is no excuse for not implementing the full landscaping before construction occurs.) It was confirmed that the entire site will have high security fencing for the entirety of the 40 year project (also with warning signs in regular positions) - it was also conceded that the failure to produce any imagery with these fences on was not very transparent.

Q. Request for exact mapping of cable routes etc.

A. Cable routes not yet finalised.

Q. If the site is sold etc what is to prevent us being left with a derelict site requiring funding to decommission at the end of the 40 years?

A. There will be a de-commissioning fund paid into every year as part of the scheme - there will be sufficient funds to fully decommission the site at the end of the 40 year period. It will be contractually binding. Worked out with solicitors of the land owner, not part of the planning application process per se.

Q. The dusts levels from the Fosse are well above what would normally be expected - how are the panels cleaned and can they cope?

A. Panels from 2025 are full self cleaning. They self clean with water. The site is checked monthly. If there was a dip in output, cleaning would be one of the issues looked into.

Q. The donation to the community fund - what guarantees do we have? If there was a default the PCs do not have the funding to fight for legal enforcement of the agreement.

A. The first payment is paid 10 days after the site goes live. There is a legal agreement for the whole 40 years. Innova are happy to consider an upfront payment if that was what the PCs wanted.

Q. Funding to the community is a PR exercise and this offer is not a generous one at all. Example of Blandford put forward where they have been given £1,500 per MW (6 times more than we are being offered). Suggested that our offer is not generous at all and they should be offering more.

A. The details of this site requested and will be looked into. But, the figure offered is what Innova consider they can afford etc.

Q. What are the ownership plans for the site? The Elms site (which is not even finished) has just been sold!

A. Confirmed that Innova Schrodinger Investments have purchased Elms site. Also confirmed that the plan is for the same company to own all of their sites going forward. Multimillion pound investment company partnership with Innova and they believe it guarantees the future of all of their sites.

It was emphasised that if planning permission is obtained, it must have upfront landscaping as a condition before any construction can commence.

The cumulative impact of all developments currently underway in the area was raised. This site cannot be looked at in isolation. When we look at the huge scale of development already underway in our area - other solar farms, GLH, HS2 etc. we are in danger of this small and exclusively rural area being overly commercialised/built up with a disproportionate density of non rural development. Our area is extremely rural countryside and the gateway to the Cotswolds and an AOOB.

The representatives from Innova were thanked for their time and answering questions. LPC look forward to receiving all of the further plans mentioned tonight.

Item closed.

7. To consider folded aluminium roof and door trims to be fitted at the Pavilion North entrance.

Written quote to be obtained. Confirmation of what else might need spending at the Pavilion before final decision made. *Carried forward.*

8. To consider fitting a single separate toilet unit in the sports shower/changing area at the pavilion.

Written quote to be obtained. Confirmation of what else might need spending at the Pavilion before final decision made. *Carried forward.*

9. To consider renewing the annual insurance policy for 3 years.

Committing to 3 years rather than an annual agreement saves £50 p/a. It also protects against price increases for 3 years. Unanimously agreed. *Item closed.*

10. Matters arising from the minutes and previous meetings

(a) David Wilson Barrett Homes & Taylor Wimpey.

The matter is being finalised at Director level. *Carried forward.*

(b) To consider LPC's response to the issue of Primary Healthcare at GLH
Andy Smith reported: St Wulfstan Surgery in Southam has been selected by the ICB to provide primary healthcare services in the new permanent health facility at Upper Lighthorne. Andy Smith has met with the lead practitioner and the practice manager and is arranging introductions with the two main developer representatives with a view to exploring options for a temporary GP service to be established in Upper Lighthorne. St Wulfstan have expressed a desire to establish a presence as soon as possible. St Wulfstan will join the Upper Lighthorne Support Partnership call on 17th May in order to introduce themselves to more community representatives. All very encouraging, but work still to be done to bring this to a successful conclusion.

A web site has been created as a one-stop-shop for the background and current status of this issue - smithdom.uk/ulnhs. LPC gives their thanks to Andy Smith for all of his hard work on this project. *Carried forward.*

(c) To consider a scheme to use the £19,000 CIL grant.

Outstanding is the moving of the large container to the far side of the outfield and creation of further spaces where the container had previously been. *Carried forward.*

(d) To consider a new fence and gate (with padlock) at the pavilion car park – adjacent to new netball area, additional security for the outfield.

Given expense, unlikely to be proceeded with at this time. *Item closed.*

(e) To consider repair of The Broadwell.

Cllr Hickman will liaise with Farm Services to consider a plan going forward. *Carried forward.*

11. Planning

(a) Applications for comment since last meeting

- i. 24/00855/TREE Stone House Fell trees

(b) Decisions to note since last meeting

- ii. 24/00580/TREE 22 Mountford Rise Granted
iii. 24/00855/TREE Stone House Granted

(c) Enforcement.

12. Parish Council Reports – To receive reports on:

- (a) Playground – A team have cut back the worst of the overgrowing vegetation, but will arrange another working party to complete the cutting back.

13. Reports from Ward Representatives of SDC and WCC – on website.

14. Financial Administration

- (a) Lighthorne cash book balances at 5th May 2024

i. Current account	£7272.65
ii. Allocated reserves account	£21101.17
Total	£28373.82
(b) Income since last meeting	
i. May rent from Pavilion Café	£740.00
ii. Precept	£8000.00
(c) Expenditure since last meeting	
i. Clerks wages 30 hours @ £17.34	£520.83
ii. Water	£0.68
iii. Yu Energy (April)	£125.08
iv. Yu Energy (April)	£15.24
v. Yu Energy (May)	£112.17
vi. Yu Energy (May)	£14.70
vii. Nick Jenvey grass 9 & 10 April	£572.00
viii. Nick Jenvey 23 & 24 April	£572.00
ix. Helen Smith - Pavilion rear door contribution	£450.00
x. Helen Smith - Pavilion new locks	£346.00
xi. WALC/NALC annual subscription	£264.80
xii. Mid Fosse Parish Mag annual subscription	£200.00
xiii. Clear Councils annual subscription	£858.11
xiv. Trevor Gill - internal audit	£470.00

(d) Agreeing accounts for payment

15. Correspondence.

A huge thanks to everyone who helped spring clean the village on Saturday 11th May - cleaning signs and road furniture, weeding the Broadwell and cutting back the playground. A special thanks to Richard and Gina Jackson for donating slate roof tiles to replace the old roof on the bus shelter and to the amazing team of roof replacers, Greg Hickman, James Newberry & Steve Fincher - lead by Nick Barrows-Rudd - the new bus shelter roof rivals any roof in the village!

16. Other reports and items for future agendas.

17. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 11th June 2024 at 6:45pm.

MEETING CLOSES at 8-25pm