

# TACKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 held at Tackley Village Hall

**Present:** Councillors Liz Marshall (LM) (Chair), Angus Paxton (AP), June Collier (JC), Richard Holland-Oakes (RHO). Tim Sumner (WODC Candidate).  
Cherie Carruthers (CC) (Clerk to the Council)  
8 Members of the public

**TACKLEY PARISH COUNCIL WISH TO STATE THAT THE BELOW REPORT IS FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, IT IS ONE POINT OF VIEW AND THE STATEMENTS MADE WITHIN THE REPORT HAVE NOT BEEN VERIFIED AND CHECKED BY THE PC. WE THEREFORE TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS CONTENT AND ACCURACY.**

- i) **22/056:Public Participation:** Tim Sumner addressed the meeting in relation to Botley West Solar Farm proposal. He read out the following statement:

### ***Botley West Solar Farm Facts, Stats & Solutions mainly relating to the Northern Plan***

*The 'headlines' of Botley West Solar Farm plans:*

- *The Botley West Project is run by a German Company called Photovolt Development Partners (PDP). It is based in Berlin*
- *At 840 MW this will be the largest solar farm proposal ever in Europe. The current largest is Nunez de Bilbao plant in Spain supplying 500 MW's. It is situated in desert land away from any houses*
- *The Botley West project is over 11 times larger than the UK's current largest solar farm - Shotwick Solar Park, Wales - at a mere 72.2 MW's*
- *It will cover 1,000 hectares of land (2,471.052 acres). The size of the project is so enormous – equal to 100 international rugby pitches in total – that it would be considered a national infrastructure project.*
- *West Oxfordshire will, on the above figures alone, provide 8 times its fair share of green energy to the National Grid*

*So, as other Counties step up with wind, solar and wave power to meet a non-carbon future, history will record that West Oxfordshire gave away too much –*

*(a) Of its unique heritage sites – lost forever*

*(b) The biodiversity of these fields (a preservation policy encouraged by the Government and many landowners*

*(c) An unforgivable reduction in our food contribution - just as it was officially recognised we must, as a nation, increase our home food production on the grounds of Food Security.*

- *The electricity will NOT feed directly into homes in Oxfordshire. There is no infrastructure to allow this. The output will feed into the national grid providing Blenheim and (we assume) the German Company a sizeable income. There will be no direct benefit to West Oxfordshire residents.*
- *It will not encourage free roaming wildlife. Each field will be heavily fenced with high stock proof fencing as is happening already at current*
- *The fields that Blenheim have allocated are classified as Grade 3 meaning, by Government definition, they are best suited to supply the nation's food.*
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- The **British energy security strategy**, last updated in April this year, encourages “largescale projects to locate on previously developed, or lower value land, where possible, and ensure projects are designed to avoid the impacts of using greenfield sites.”  
*British Food Security in these troubled times is a government priority*

Sansoms Platt:

- *Sansoms Platt and its adjoining field, is a National Heritage site as it contains the remains of a Roman town including a Temple.*  
*Latest Satellite images on Google Earth, taken 2 years ago, clearly show the field across the other side of Akeman street as containing roads, buildings and enclosures which would make the whole area - around The Oxford School of Drama (who unearthed Roman Floors when rebuilding Studios) and Sansoms Cottage - a site of even larger national importance than is currently recognised - containing a large and significant Roman town built alongside Akeman Street itself a major Roman road linking Cirencester with St Albans*

*It is of-course illogical to suppose the Roman’s only built along one side of a major road! So, just by the laws of probability there will be evidence of another section of ‘Sansoms’ Roman Town*

*But, these fields, in an act of irreversible cultural vandalism, are to have solar panels on them meaning, once fields are allowed structures on them, we have lost them forever - possibly, eventually to housing at a time when there are already plans to add to eight villages and create two new ones in West Oxfordshire. Even the protected Roman road Akeman Street is to be dug up to lay electricity feed lines*

*We must preserve these fields around Sansoms Platt as a National Heritage site for future generations.*

National Heritage:

*From English Heritage’s website: “English Heritage is the Government’s statutory adviser on the historic environment. Responsibilities include ..... **the historic aspects of the wider landscape’** - under which the adjoining fields to Sansoms Platt would fall (my italics).*

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs:

*The Department states: ‘Protected Species: Has a survey been carried out that identifies the presence of Protected Species on the site which could be affected by the proposal?’*

*Every year the protected Canada Geese (Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981) stopover in this field next to Sansoms Platt at night. Blenheim may choose to forget the Wootton petition to stop their gamekeepers shooting the protected species as they came in to rest for the night*

*In summation, the irony of Blenheim, in receipt of World Heritage Status, building on land next to a National Heritage site, land which is now seen, from satellite imagery, to possibly contain a major part of the Roman Town, is too painful.*

In conclusion:

- *Our planet faces two main demands upon its resources. Food and Energy.*
- *The two must be balanced – food security is a priority as is reducing our carbon emissions*
- *In taking agricultural land out of use we will be cutting back on producing food in favour of energy. This is not a balanced approach*
- *As custodians of a National Heritage site, we have a duty to preserve the newly discovered extra sites for future generations. Anything less is unforgivable vandalism*
- *Blenheim have plenty of more suitable areas for solar panels*

*Blenheim are forcing through their current solar plans based on land availability not land suitability*

*I say this because the Northern plans for Botley West fall on and around Lower Dornford Farm land. The tenant farmer is retiring which means Blenheim has an 'empty farm' to easily take out of use. The farmhouse itself could then be utilised for either holiday letting or long term leasing similar to Blenheim's Hordley Barns across the road.*

*As a member of Greenpeace, dedicated to Green Energy and aware of alternative, community based solar energy solutions, I ask you to fight for a balanced approach between food, our heritage legacy and solar power.*

*All three can and must be accommodated in West Oxfordshire.*

- *So, in place of Botley West .....? :*

*Offering a practical way forward –*

*(a) Solar roof panels linked to home batteries means folk have total control over their power supply and costs (Blenheim has not, unlike other housebuilders, included these on their new builds).*

*(b) Community solar panel ownership schemes which bring solar power directly to communities under their ownership and costs. This latter solution is increasing in Europe and is being investigated for an area in West Oxfordshire alongside realistic self-funding proposals.*

*I hope the above outlines a better and more holistic alternative to benefit our communities and not just Blenheim and the German Development Company*

*The sun is ours and its free*

The members thanked Mr Sumners and asked what the timescale is for the proposal, he replied that the community consultation is in autumn 2022, 2022-23 winters months relates to the scoping of the project, approx. 3 years according to the developers.

It was queried whether this would set a precedent for future projects like this elsewhere, Mr Sumners noted that Botley West is the blueprint for further development.

#### **22/057: Matters from the floor:**

- Barbara Summers, Captain of Tackley Bell Tower, spoke to the members in relation to the £200 annual grant request to help with the maintenance and upkeep of the bells. She noted that the bells do not belong to the church and that they are not paid for by the church either. This is item agenda number 12.iv, the members unanimously **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the £200 annual grant.

**22/058: Apologies for absence:** Councillors Andrew Lines, Richard Jackson, Martin Mahon, Andy Graham (OCC), Nathalie Chapple (WODC) and Mathew Parkinson (WODC).

**22/059: Declaration of interest:** LM declared an interest in item 11.iv – as a family member has applied for the position.

**22/060:** Minutes of Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were carried over to December's meeting as not all members had read them.

## **22/061: Matters arising from minutes of October 2022 meeting:**

- i. Section 106 Consultation results: Following the public consultation sent out to all residents via leaflet and posting to the villages social media and email list, the number of responses were fairly low.

TPC held a face-to-face consultation on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November, to display the results of the survey and to gauge residents' opinion on the results.

The top four responses were purchase of the old skittle alley, receiving 18 votes, a skate park at 12 votes, exercise trim trails and bike/scooter circuit both receiving 10 votes.

Following feedback from residents it was concluded that the bike/scooter circuit and skate park could be amalgamated into one, therefore becoming one project.

Concerns from residents regarding noise and anti-social behaviour were considered, but the members believed the pros outweighed the cons in this instance.

Therefore, it was AGREED to proceed and obtain quotations for a circuit/skate park and trim trail.

The purchase of the skittle alley would require further investigation and more discussion.

- ii. Open Space Chaundy Road: CC had chased WODC – no further updates.
- iii. Land for churchyard: CC had been in contact with CDS Group, who have experience in project managing new cemeteries in the local government sector. They will undertake sift searches of any identified pieces of land TPC can find, including a “fit for purpose” survey for free. A rough estimate of cost for the entire project is approx. £19,000. It was agreed that CC would arrange a working party meeting to discuss this.
- iv. Marquee at Village Hall: Following further information on the location of the marquee, the members requested that the hirer find an alternative route for the footpath. They did not feel comfortable that the main access route be closed at all during the event. CC to go request this information.
- v. CCTV in car park: The shop is waiting for a full breakdown of costs so they can identify the single camera costs for the car park.
- vi. Footpath Fortnight: Ongoing
- vii. Streetlights: Ongoing, CC had chased OCC on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Nov and received no response.

**22/062: To consider District Council matters:** None.

**22/063: To consider County Council matters:** None. AG sent apologies for the meeting

**22/064: To consider planning matters:**

- i. **22/03047/CND** Middlefield House Lower Whitehill Tackley Kidlington Oxfordshire OX5 3AA  
Discharge of conditions 5 (contamination storage) and 6 (details of floodlighting and external lighting) of planning permission 21/01582/FUL – *noted*
- ii. **22/03108/FUL** 32 Medcroft Road Tackley Kidlington Oxfordshire OX5 3AH  
Erection of a two-storey dwelling, parking, and associated works  
*Comment that there is a concern about the parking of vehicles during the day and ensure the water from the development stay onsite and is not discharged to Medcroft Road.*

**22/065: Botley West Solar Park:** Discussed under minute ref 22/056 with some additional input from John Winn from Charlbury. LM noted that the PC would make further comment once the public exhibition had taken place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November. Mr Winn had spoken with the German company proposing the development and he believed they were NOT adverse to community lead projects and that Blenheim did not have a hold on the project as would like to lead the public to believe.

AP asked what Botley West's business model was, it was replied that National Grid were reinforcing the infractsturce in Oxfordshire and resilience in the system.

AP concluded that the National Grid needed a super grid.

**22/066:Parish amenities:**

i. 20mph scheme update: No further update, Andy Graham had notified RHO that it was ongoing. JC proposed, seconded by RHO that the PC purchase 2 VAR signs and set them at 30mph. This motion was PASSED. RHO will obtain quotes for the December meeting.

ii. Heath update: Rachel Strachen updated the meeting from the June and Sept Committee minutes. There has been 5 working party sessions, April showing the highest turnout of 17 people, the following sessions have seen approx. 3 to 4 people plus committee members. The sessions have focused on the core paths, bracken clearing and overgrowth. This is an ongoing exercise and needs to be done 2-3 times a year. The Committee asked that the PC purchase a brush cutter. Along with the relevant safety equipment and a selection of hand tools. These will allow for faster clearing.

The hard standing project has been suspended due to the possible encouragement of inconsiderate behaviour, but costs were obtained at approx. £9,300 for a 3m x 50m area. A request for annual maintenance budget of £2,000 be added to the council's revenue costs, along with a possible pot of £4,000 for initial set up.

Andrew Peake agreed that the styles on the footpath from Ball Lane up to the Heath could be replaced by kissing gates, funding for this will be via grants.

JC proposed the purchase of 2 brush cutter, seconded by RHO – **AGREED** and **APPROVED**.

iii. Dog Poo Bins: Jubilee Gardens bin is due to be replaced by the end of the week, although it is unlikely the bus shelter bin will be reinstated. Crecy Hill bin is still ongoing.

***LM abstained from discussion on the next item***

iv. Playground bin emptying: The PC had received 4 applications; it was AGREED that the position be split between 2 school children. CC will contact them, giving AL's details for a handover.

v. Bench for Richard Banbury: It was agreed that CC will go ahead and purchase the bench. A composite one was the preferred option.

vi. Flooding and Sandbags: CC will contact Mathew Parkinson (WODC) and ask for more sandbags. Andrew Peake was in attendance and updated the members that he had undertaken a drain inspection, this had identified a blockage in one of the chambers. This will be dealt with.

Steven Fairhurst from OCC had confirmed to CC that he would not personally be part of the catchment study meeting so had handed it over to his colleagues for actioning. CC has requested the names of the other Officers so she can chase them up.

Neil Wilson expressed his concern regarding the surface water run off at Little Manor, he has contacted Building Control at WODC and asked them to investigate this as he is convinced it is being drained directly into the ditch.

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- vii. Rail crossing update: No update received.

**22/067: To consider matters of finance and policies:**

- i. It was approved that the following payments were ratified and the impact the payment would have on the budget and reserves.

Proposed: RHO, seconded: JC: **APPROVED**

Online	Gross Amount (£)	VAT Value (£)	Payee	Details	Power
	50.00		OCC	Allotment Rent	Open Spaces Act
	1576.08	262.68	Greenscythe Ltd	Oct & Nov Maintenance	Open Spaces Act
	131.38	21.89	Mailchimp	Website & Notices	LGA 1972 S112
	162.50		SLCC	Annual Subscription	LGA 1972 S112
	1057.33		Clerks Pay	October salary	LGA 1972 S111
	84.00	14.00	Playground Facilities	Quarterly inspection	Open Spaces Act

- ii. Joining the LGPS: Deferred to December meeting, AL not present.
- iii. 2023-2024 Budget: The members received a finance report to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, showing the budget v actual for the current year along with a bank reconciliation and payments list, all were noted and approved, with no areas of concern. The current year is in line with expected budget and the finances look healthy.

CC had previously circulated Version 1 of the 2023-24 budget, and recommended a Nil increase per household per annum, the members noted this and agreed to discuss in full at the December meeting where the precept will be agreed.

- iv. Tackley Bell Ringers grant: Dealt with under minute ref 22/54.

**22/068: To consider other matters:**

- i. Christmas Tree on Green: JC confirmed the switch on would take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 22.
- ii. Mosaic Money: Mr John Perkins had sent a note to LM to remind the PC that we had agreed to ringfence money for the mosaic, they noted this and confirmed that £2,000 was already sat in a pot and further money would be allocated form the S106 fund for this important project.
- iii. Whytham Woods Oak Trees: Alan Diver emailed the PC to make us aware that Whytham Woods are providing acorns for people to grow and return as young trees. He wondered if this would be something the village could do to extend our woodland. Andrew Peake agreed to make contact in regard to his land.
- iv. Play area: LM updated that the post with the opening day plaque had started to fall over, this needed removing along with 2 dead trees, RJ to ask Greenscythe to do this.
- v. Welcome to Tackley booklet: It was agreed a reprint of the booklet be reprinted and distributed. LM to contact Chris Matthews.

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- vi. Request for French drain at first school entrance: LM asked if costs could be obtained for installing a drain at the entrance to the forest school bridge. Agreed to go ahead.

**Next meeting:** 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 9:08pm.

Signed as a true record of the Tackley Parish Council Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

..... Date.....