**ASHREIGNEY PARISH COUNCIL.**

Minutes of the meeting of Ashreigney Parish Council which was held on

Tuesday, 21st September 2021 at 8pm in Ashreigney Village Hall.

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| **Present:** | **Agenda:** |
| Mr. D. Hellyer – Chairman.  Mr. J. Parfitt  Mr. R. Cole.  Mr. S. Johns.  Mr. P. Middleton.  Mr. A. Thorne.  Mrs. S. Tillyer.  County Councillor Saywell.  District Councillor Newton.  12 Members of the Parish were at the meeting.  Representatives from BSR Energy. | 1. Chairman’s welcome.  2. Planning.  3. Apologies.  4. Approval of minutes.  5. Matters arising.  6. Correspondence.  7. Financials.  8. Hybrid meeting facility.  9. Reports.  10. Date of next meeting. |

1. **Chairman’s welcome:** The Chairman welcomed all attendees to the meeting and opened the meeting by introducing the representatives of BSR Energy the company involved in the proposed solar park development at Coldharbour Farm. It was agreed to discuss the planning items listed on the agenda and then revert to the remaining agenda items.

2. **Planning:**

2.1: Planning Application 1/0823/2021/FUL – Development of ground mounted solar photovoltaic array with associated equipment mainly on land at Coldharbour Farm.

Parish Councillors had conducted a site visit at the Coldharbour Solar Park site prior to the meeting.

Mr. Richard Morgan of BSR Energy addressed the meeting and confirmed the predicted figures associated with the development. The lifespan of the project was confirmed as 35 years with an option to renew for a longer period of time. Mr. Morgan reiterated the public consultation procedure which has been carried out. This consisted of a remote presentation carried out within a Parish Council meeting and mailing literature to households.

Councillors and members of the public were invited to ask the BSR Representatives any questions relating to the development which led to an extensive question and answer session.

The Chairman raised the subject of a potential Community Benefit Payment and the current offer of £50 000 upon completion of the project. This offer was compared to considerably higher offer made to the Parishes involved in a project of near identical size and capacity at Litchadon Cross. The matter was discussed at length with Mr. Morgan confirming that the current offer is already at maximum and will not be increased.

District Councillor Newton addressed the meeting at this point and thanked Mr. Morgan for pre-briefing himself and County Councillor Saywell on the proposed development. DC Newton went on to explain that he has researched the complex situation regarding Community Benefit Payments. There are no regulations or guidelines in place to adhere to, and any payment is discretionary and in the hands of the developers and the communities involved. There is no Section 106 requirement

with a solar park development, and it is a completely unregulated area leading to massive disparity in community benefit payments.

Mrs. Tillyer raised concerns regarding the Public Consultation process, particularly the reliance on a remote presentation when internet access is poor and sometimes unreliable. Mrs. Tillyer added that taking the demographic of age groups in the Parish this was not an ideal means of communication.

Concerns were also raised that literature mailed to residents did not reach all households.

***1.***

The Chairman requested that BSR Energy reconsider their decision not to hold a face to face consultation event, as well as reviewing their Community Benefit Payment offer.

Parish Councillors then discussed the Planning Application on merit.

Declarations of interest were made by Mr. P. Middleton (pecuniary) and Mr. Parfitt (personal).

Concerns were raised at the effectiveness of the public consultation process which does not compare favourably with the process described within the planning application.

There are also items included in the reports submitted in the planning applications which suggest that owing to faulty equipment, and livestock in fields, some reports were not completed efficiently and effectively for purpose.

Councillors agreed that they were unable to make a decision on the application on the basis of the information provided.

The Clerk to respond to TDC.

2.2: Planning Application 1/0783/2021/FUL – The construction of a worker’s dwelling on land at Dolton Beacon.

The Chairman welcomed the applicants Mr. & Mrs. Elliot to the meeting.

Mr. Elliot explained that owing to the nature of thair expanding business at Dolton Beacon it is essential that there is a dwelling on site.

Mr. Parfitt and Mr. Thorne had carried out a site visit on behalf of the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

Mr. Parfitt reported that he considered an expanding business of this nature will be good for the area and local economy. No problems were seen from a planning prospective and Mr. Parfitt and

Mr. Thorne recommended the Parish Council support the application.

All Councillors agreed and the Clerk is to provide a response to Torridge District Council.

3. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Dr. Kirkup.

4. **Approval of minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held in August 2021 has been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman signed them as an accurate record of events.

5. **Matters arising:**

5.1: Bus Shelter repair: The Clerk confirmed that she has received a quote for repairs to the bus shelter roof. Mr. Thorne volunteered to ask a second builder to quote. This was agreed.

6. **Correspondence:**

7. **Financials:** There were no invoices to be paid.

8. **Creation of a hybrid meeting facility in Ashreigney Village Hall:**

8.1: The Clerk reported that she has met with Alan Ladd at Crediton. There are decisions to be made regarding internet provision and suitable storage of the equipment. Mr. Ladd to quote for a custom built cabinet designed for the purpose.

9. **Reports:**

9.1: County Councillor’s Report:

County Councillor Saywell reported that he is enjoying his new role at Devon County Council.

Covid is still evident in the County though the rates are falling. (Devon is classified as an ‘Enhanced Support Area’).

Focus will shift to community testing with testing vans doubling up as mobile vaccination centres.

There have been no significant outbreaks and the return of pupils to learning establishments may have an impact on rates. Hospitalisation rates remain low.

A demand has built up for adult care around the county.

Measures have been passed to improve the recruitment and retention of social workers for children, and attention is turning to adult social care.

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The County Council Devolution Bill will give Devon and local councils more contril on building, training etc.

9.2: **District Councillors Report:**

District Councillor Newton reported that a group of interested parties were brought together at Roborough Village Hall to be updated on the Eaglescott situation. The aim was to update

Geoffrey Cox MP on developments.

Solicitors from North Devon Council agree with the findings of Clarke Willmott and this is likely to see use of the airfield limited to recreational/sporting use only.

The activity associated with helicopter flights has been deemed unlawful. (Helicopter activity has ceased).

Legal opinion is beginning to be made clear which should resolve outstanding issues.

DC Newton reported that there has been an issue at Winkleigh Parish Council. Councillor Hodgson is acting as Chairman for the time being.

There is a major overall of the combined North Devon and Torridge Neighbourhood Plan with all identified development areas up for review. A joint committee is in place to oversee the procedure.

Torridge District Council are employing a group of experts to look into the housing crisis with building social housing an option.

The Domestic Abuse Policy is being reviewed with the aim of establishing appropriate systems amd support.

9.3: Village Hall Report:

The Chairman provided a report from the Ashreigney Village Hall Committee Meeting:

It was reported that events are resuming again. The Saturday Market is popular and the Garden Show was a success. Coffee mornings are being held on Fridays to coincide with Post Office service.

The Chairman of the Hall Committee has resigned for the time being owing to personal reasons.

10: **Date of the next meeting:**

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting will be held on 19th October 2021.

The meeting was declared closed at 10pm after the Chairman had thanked everyone for their attendance.

Signed:

Dated:

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