



Dodington Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES of the Meeting of the **Planning & Transport Committee** held in the Council Chambers at Dodington Parish Hall on **Monday 17th March 2025** at **7.30pm**.

PRESENT: Councillors Richard Evans, David Fitt, Bob Graham, Christine Howard (Chair of meeting), Paul Hulbert, Sarah Hurley, Adrian Hutton, Sandra Jee, Jean Thomas and Chris Zapata

Also present: Clerk to the Council – Hannah Saunders (Clerk for meeting)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Oliver Lodge.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Clerk had received a phone call – followed up by a letter - from local resident on Birds Estate – who was very concerned about the lack of buses. In particular resident (and neighbours) are upset about the Y1 service – that no longer goes to Chipping Sodbury.

Over the winter – since September last year – residents young and old have struggled with fact have had to walk to Yate for onward connections or to do shopping. In winter it is dark and hill up to Birds estate from Yate is deceptive.

It was hoped that come April – there would be improvements – but the advertised changes for 6th April show that Y1 doesn't come as far as Chipping Sodbury and the Y6 (bus to hospital) is still only every 1.5 hours – again making it not only difficult getting to and from Southmead but also making the service very crowded (particularly at certain times of the day).

Clerk had emailed Cllr Chris Willmore to try and see if she had any further updates on the matter (at time of meeting Clerk hadn't heard back from Cllr Willmore – but a PMN can be found **Appendix 1** attached to these minutes as Cllr Willmore updated Clerk / Council later in week).

Cllr Paul Hulbert stated would need to see what the timetables look like from April – to compare and see if any changes.

Matter is included later in agenda.

4. MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 10th FEBRUARY 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes, as printed and circulated, be confirmed as a true record. Cllr Christine Howard signed a copy of the minutes.

Matters arising – not covered during course of agenda: -

- **Item 3** – Bristol Energy Co-operative (BEC) – following their attendance at meeting – Clerk asked for clarification on a few matters – which John Malone provided....(this was around cost of project and funding / whether agreement had been gained to connect to grid / about Community Benefit Fund – and examples of similar funds – and how decommissioning would be planned for / funded) responses can be viewed in **Appendix 2** attached to these minutes. To date BEC haven't had any further meetings / engagement – but they were trying to contact Cllr Laura Pearson Tong to discuss matter further – and deputy clerk is going to contact them following recent Climate & Nature Emergency meeting.
- **Item 8** – Rural Ward Traffic / Road Consultation – a teams meeting was held on 13th March 2025 between S Glos Council Officers (Neil Trotter and Mark Shearman), Ward Councillors Becky Romaine, Marilyn Palmer and Bens Stokes with Liz Hazelby (DPC) in attendance in Clerks absence. This was to discuss further the Catchpot Lane / Dodington Lane Speed Limit Investigation. Brief notes from this meeting can be viewed in **Appendix 2** attached to these minutes.
- **Item 11** – Community Emergency Plan Meeting – Clerk had circulated notes following this meeting to members and was pleased to confirm that Simon Hailwood from SGC Emergency Planning Team had been in touch. Some Emergency Contact Cards that SGC have printed have been sent out to us – so that members have them and know what to do – should events such as Storm Bert Flooding happen again in future. Chipping Sodbury Town Council offered to see if there was a local councillor that would be willing to be a flood warden and Cllr Jon Cheekes volunteered.

5. PLANNING MATTERS

Details of planning applications considered can be found in **Appendix 3** attached to these minutes.

Cllr Paul Hulbert also gave members a brief update on comments that had been received from Statutory Consultees to date with regards the Mousewell Solar Farm Planning Application – all these comments are in public domain and viewable via S Glos Council Planning Portal by searching Planning Reference :- P24/03001/F.

For ease comments Cllr Hulbert picked up on can be seen – Appendix 3 attached to these minutes.

6. BUSES

Following on from residents' request – matter regarding bus service for Birds / Chipping Sodbury was included on agenda. The information below is taken from First Bus website 17/3/2025.

<https://www.firstbus.co.uk/api/timetables/pdf?opco=3&service=Y1%2FY2-Y1&day=mf&date=2025-04-06&print=pdf>

The above timetable will be operational from 7/4/25 further notes below:-

Yate & Thornbury

Y1 (Bristol – Yate & Hardwicke)

- New timetable on all days to improve its punctuality and reliability.
- Buses will run slightly less frequently to give buses more time to complete their journeys, following increased traffic congestion being experienced along the route – but will still run roughly every half an hour during the main part of the day on Monday - Saturday.

New timetable coming soon.

Y2 (Bristol – Yate & Ladden Garden Village)

- New timetable on all days to improve its punctuality and reliability.
- Buses will run slightly less frequently to give buses more time to complete their journeys, following increased traffic congestion being experienced along the route – but will still run roughly every half an hour during the main part of the day on Monday - Saturday.

New timetable coming soon.

Y6 (Bristol – Southmead Hospital – Cribbs Causeway – Yate & Chipping Sodbury)

No change.

T1 (Bristol – Thornbury)

- There will be punctuality based changes to the timetable on all days to improve punctuality and reliability.
- Increased number of peak time trips in the mornings that will run Monday to Friday.

New timetable coming soon.

Cllr Chris Willmore has been keeping Parish up to date on a regular basis and item re buses is on every cabinet meeting / meeting with WECA that she attends. Over the last few weeks – energies have been put into ensuring no further cuts to services. Cllr Willmore suggested that members try and promote the Stagecoach 620 service as an alternative. (See details of this service **Appendix 4** attached to these minutes).

Clerk keen to see how members & officers of Dodington Parish Council can support ward councillors and Cllr Willmore in pushing for a change to service in future.

Cllr Paul Hulbert recollects a comment from First Bus – about Chipping Sodbury area being viewed as too ‘rural’. He doesn’t know who this came from or exact words – but given these comments – consultation below from WERN may be relevant?!?!

7. CONSULTATIONS

West of England Rural Network want to listen to rural voices – to understand community needs and build stronger support networks.....

Initially clerk was moved to recommend that this consultation wasn’t applicable to Dodington – or only to Rural South Ward – but given how some companies seem to view Chipping Sodbury / Birds – it was felt that perhaps a response was required – in order to have Dodington’s voice heard.

It was duly delegated to clerk – to respond on behalf of Dodington Parish Council – with particular attention to rural transport and bus links.

Regulation 19 – Consultation Stage for Local Plan clerk had met with Cllrs Oliver Lodge and Jean Thomas 10 days ago to start looking at how to respond. Even concentrating on area’s that Dodington had commented on previously was a huge task and needed careful consideration. As Ward Councillors and Officers have been stressing since beginning of year – this is an important consultation for future of South Gloucestershire Council.

A meeting on 31st March 2025 will be required – to ratify the comments – however – there is work required prior to this date in order to get the most out of meeting and to ensure that the deadline of 11th April 2025 is met.

After due consideration – and exploring dates / times to meet, etc. who could help it was unanimously RESOLVED to give Clerk 20 hours overtime – to draw up comments in time for meeting on 31st – with maybe more time required following that meeting.

8. BURIAL GROUND

Nothing to report at this time – regular checks being carried out – and first grass cut of the season has been undertaken along with a tidy up.

9. DODINGTON PARISH COUNCIL SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

Draft / Proofs of the Newsletter were circulated – and members given chance to review. A few minor amends were suggested, and the Newsletter was approved for printing (subject to these amends being made).

Clerk updated members on timetable for delivery of newsletter – (delivery will begin week commencing 7th April 2025).

10. PARISH HALL CAR PARK

Following on from previous P&T Committee Meeting - Clerk had managed to get a quote from company that carried out installation work of videx monitors for the barrier.

The work wouldn't be too complex, and an extension to the hall could be facilitated easily for a cost of approx. £1300.

Members reiterated what they said at previous meeting and this was they were of the opinion that Dodington PC or users of hall shouldn't be inconvenienced by barrier....the school wanted it for safety of their pupils and their convenience – and it was agreed that it wouldn't be down evenings and weekends.

Clerk stated that the bad weather affecting the barrier's function hadn't been foreseen by either party when the discussions were taking place – and that it was safer to have barrier down if winds were high and a weather warning (yellow, amber or red) for all site users. During school day / office hours this issue. However – over a weekend if hall is booked it can cause some disruption – but by having an extension to monitor – this disruption could be reduced (on occasion of high winds)

Clerk had spoken to school – and they are happy to have a meeting with members to discuss further, and it was duly agreed that Chair and Vice Chair of council along with Cllr Jean Thomas and Clerk would attend (all had been involved in the original meetings 12 months ago).

11. RISK ASSESSMENTS TO REVIEW

Clerk explained that the risk assessments aligned with Planning & Transport Committee (Burial Ground, Woodpecker Car Park – by Tern Inn and Bus Shelters) needed to be reviewed prior to Internal Audit. It was agreed that Cllrs Sandra Jee, David Fitt and Chris Zapata would undertake reviews – prior to end April 2025. Clerk to forward documents to them in advance and date to be confirmed outside of meeting.

12. FINANCE MATTERS

Members viewed the YTD spend for committee against Budget and EMR figures to end of February 2025 – all in order.

13. ITEMS TO REPORT

Cllr Paul Hulbert reported (for info) that Copse Hill Property / Land (within Westerleigh and Coalpit Heath Parish Council – just over border) was up for auction.

Cllr David Fitt questioned if there were any updates from Zurich regarding outstanding insurance claims (clerk confirmed not to date).

Cllr Chris Zapata would like to request item for future agenda regarding security of QEII playing fields – particularly once circular footpath has been installed – as recent events having seen motorcycles gain access to the site and drive around – need to be avoided.

Members were reminded that if unauthorised activity such as motorbikes within our POS are spotted that matter should be reported to the police (whether they attend or not). This way the Police can build up a picture of where issues are and further patrols could be arranged.

Cllr Sarah Hurley reported (for info) that bin on Mallard Green by ‘banana bridge’ had been set on fire (on phoning the non-emergency fire number – they were already aware).

Cllr Christine Howard is concerned about a hedge (believed to belong to Raysfield School) and the brambles that are overhanging onto the footpath. Cllr Howard will speak to school reception about this.

Clerk informed members that she will forward the following documents out for info (that have recently been received):-

- Slides from SGC regarding Pitch / site allocation for Gypsy, Travellers and Showpeople in new Local Plan
- Details of NPPF Training (offered via ALCA) PMN – Cllr David Fitt sent out
- South Glos Council E News – including off street parking charges (and the results / report following consultation on this matter)

Following on from CL&E committee meeting previous week – Clerk understands that members are keen to see movement re parking restrictions at Woodpecker Car Park given a van that seems to be parking overnight. Clerk confirmed that she is still in talks with Co-op HQ and Max as ideally wants to deal with same car park management company as them – and that until that is dealt with not worth progressing signs – as site can’t be policed. Clerk is also speaking with the new management company that have taken over from Green City Homes Ltd.

The date of the next Planning Committee meeting – Monday 2nd June 2025.

As there was no further business – the meeting was closed at 21.00pm.

Signed Committee Chair

Date2nd June2025

APPENDIX 1

Update from Cllr Chris Willmore regarding situation with Buses.....

‘As I have said every time anyone has asked me, I raise this at every discussion about bus routes with First Bus and raise this and the Sodbury / rural routes with WECA at each meeting with them about buses. Every time someone from Dodington contacts me I explain that S Glos is doing all it can.

There is nothing more I can do, as S Glos are not the transport authority, so our role is limited to lobbying, pressing, keeping it at the front of their minds. And that we keep doing.

Only this week in the context of a possible route to future restored services I had to remind people that the Birds and Sodbury, along with the rural villages were at top of the list.

We are slowly making progress, but culture change is slow. When they still refer to Yate as ‘rural’ you can see the scale of the problem.

That said, can I remind the parish council that there is a bus that links The Birds to both Yate town centre and Chipping Sodbury. It is not provided by First Bus, but I know the Parish is well aware of it. **One thing you could usefully do is to consider how you might promote the 620 to residents.**

It is not as frequent as the Y1, as it is only once every 3 hours, at 8.30, 11.30, 2.30, 5.40 and 6.40 leaving Heron Way, but it does provide a link for those people who are on strict timetables’.

APPENDIX 2

Q&As from Bristol Energy Co-operative (BEC)

1. Do you know how much the project will cost approximately and how much funding will need to be raised? When you have done similar schemes how long has funding taken to arrange? If you can't raise level required – what will happen?

The estimated capital cost of the project is £4 million. This will be raised through a combination of member shares, community bonds, and loans from ethical funders. Our member share raises typically take place over a period of, say, 3-6 months. The amount of loan finance will be flexible to ensure that the project can be funded, if member funding targets are not met initially; we would then have the option to bring in more member share capital over time if there is appetite for this.

2. Have you got agreement to connect to grid? Is this done via DNO (as per roof top schemes and other larger schemes)? What date have you been given? I ask because a solar farm that has been granted permission locally – has said that they have a connection date of 2036? I questioned this – but that is what they had been offered.

Yes, we have accepted a grid connection offer. This is with NGED, the DNO.

Because the project is being designed to require a grid connection of just below 1MW, the grid offer we have received will allow us to connect straight away once construction is complete. 1MW is currently the threshold for this kind of accelerated connection. Larger schemes are indeed being offered grid connection dates of 2035+, so the 2036 date is entirely likely. This is due to grid constraints on the higher voltage transmission network.

3. If it is made possible for energy to be distributed locally within the life of project – would this be an easy switch or not?

We don't know the detail of how this might be implemented, so it's difficult to answer this definitively, but yes, we hope so. The most likely solution would see us establish a power club, which local residents (e.g. those connected in to the same substation as the project) could join, and receive discounts off their bills when their energy consumption matches the output of the project. That is, a virtual setup operating through one or more existing

suppliers, rather than requiring any additional investment or connections. There is a proposal currently under regulatory review that would go some way towards enabling this approach, so it is very much a live issue.

4. Regarding the Community Benefit Fund – you state that it is estimated £12k would be generated in first year – with this increasing year on year with inflation.
 1. Would the fund pay out every year for the duration of the project? YES
 2. Can you give examples of how these funds are managed / distributed with other projects you are involved with please? For our two existing solar farm projects, one provides community benefit payments directly to a local community organisation to support their activities (Ambition Lawrence Weston, in case you are familiar with them). The other provides contributions into our Megawatt Fund, along with funding from our solar rooftop assets. The Megawatt Fund is administered in partnership with the Quartet Foundation, and distributes small grants each year to a wide range of community organisations.
5. With regards decommissioning in 40 years time – you will obviously have to have monies ear marked and invested for this process? Will some of that be taken from the Community Benefit Fund?

That's right: we will set up a decommissioning fund into which money will be set aside annually during the operational life, to make sure the funds are available at the end of the project to return the site to its previous state and responsibly decommission the assets. This cost is being built into our project modeling, so it's distinct from the community benefit funding we've estimated the project will generate.

Notes from Meeting with SGC Officers / Ward Councillors and DPC re Catchpot Lane Speed Investigation

Key points from the meeting about the above:

- SGC to look to implement speed limit reduction in the hope this will work as a calming measure, rather than look to put in additional measures at this time
- It was noted parts of our lanes are very narrow and it will be difficult to put signage in, so some may be painted on the road
- There will also be measures in Old Sodbury – starting from Chapel Lane and encompassing some of our area
- Question around funding of the scheme – it may be wrapped up with the Old Sodbury lanes work or could be part of the A432 bridge closure budget, if not it will need to come under next year's capital funding programme – so it's difficult to put a timeline on this scheme. SGC to look at funding source
- Suggestion from our ward councillors that we approach Dodington estate and involve them, in the hope they could help fund part of the scheme – DPC to take a lead on this, as we have the relationship with the estates team there
- Marilyn asked about Mousewell Farm and weight restrictions on roads if this should go ahead – SGC advised this should be part of the planning conditions should approval be granted.

In attendance were Becky Romaine, Marilyn Palmer, Ben Stokes, Mark Shearman and Neil Trotter.

Appendix 3

Planning Matters

P25/00493/HH 15 Kestrel Close

Erection of single storey front and side extension to form additional living accommodation.

Deadline for comments 25 March 2025

<https://developments.southglos.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=SSCOQ2OKFY300>

After due consideration it was resolved that no issues with planning application and no comment necessary.

P25/00517/HH 100 Badgeworth Yate South Gloucestershire

Erection of a single storey rear extension to form additional living accommodation.

<https://developments.southglos.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=SSJOIWOKG4E00&activeTab=summary>

After due consideration it was resolved that no issues with planning application and no comment necessary.

P25/00565/PNH 1 Wapley Hill Cottages Wapley Hill Westerleigh South Gloucestershire BS37 8RL

The erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 5.50m, for which the maximum height would be 2.95m, and for which the height of the eaves would be 2.95m

<https://developments.southglos.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=SSP371OKGBQ00&activeTab=summary>

After due consideration it was resolved that no issues with planning application and no comment necessary.

Appendix 3

Updates on P24/03001/F – Mousewell Solar Farm Application

1. Pool Farm eastern field was being ploughed on Sat 15 March - could be preparation of land for greater diversity of species, or just getting it ready for this year's crops.

2. Recent documents on planning application:

- Environment Agency "We object to the application as submitted because the applicant has not supplied adequate information to demonstrate that the risks of pollution posed to groundwater quality can be safely managed. We recommend that planning permission should be refused on this basis." (Risk from fire at battery storage)

- Landscape - revised comments in blue - S Glos pushing for a somewhat larger local community and wildlife area to provide better visual screening from Wapley Bushes, plus improved hedgerows and conditions proposed to require detail for planting and community area

- Archaeological investigation - VERY thorough and interesting, but not many significant finds

- Drainage Officer has no objection in principle but wants much more detail "A detailed development layout showing surface water and SUDS proposals is required as part of this submission. No public surface water sewer is available" (That could be problematic, if the ground conditions are unsuitable for soakaways - we'll have to keep an eye on that aspect)

Appendix 4

Stagecoach timetables for 620 service

https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/West/2024/Stroud/620_010924.pdf

Link above will take you to timetable.