



Dodington Parish Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **Planning & Transport Committee** held in the Council Chambers at Dodington Parish Hall on **Monday 10th February 2025 at 7.30pm.**

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

Also present: Clerk to the Council – Hannah Saunders (Clerk for meeting) and 3 members of public (2 representing Bristol Energy Co-operative BEC– John Malone and Helen Martin)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Sarah Hurley, Louise Harris and also Ward Councillors Cheryl Kirby, Marilyn Palmer and Ben Stokes

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

Cllrs Paul Hulbert and David Fitt declared an interest in presentation that BEC were to give, they would listen but not partake in any discussion as landowner is known to them. Clerk informed members that landowner was known to council having been a former Chair back in the 1970's and 1990's. However, only Cllrs Hulbert and Fitt knew him outside of council.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Helen Martin CEO of Bristol Energy Co-operative and colleague John Malone introduced themselves, thanking council for giving them time to present a renewable energy scheme that is being investigated within the rural (South) ward of Dodington. They stressed it is very early days, and this is the beginning of community engagement process – to gauge feeling.

<https://bristolenergy.coop/about/>

The link tells you more about BEC who were founded in 2011 and develop renewable energy projects with and for the community.

Helen gave a brief history of BEC and their projects to date and John explained about the scheme they are investigating at Springs Farm near Codrington.

Introductory information / details can be found in **Appendix 1** attached to these minutes.

Following presentation there was a chance for questions from members, which Helen and John answered. These included:-

- Query / Clarification about where the energy was distributed to – how this benefited the local people.

Unless the panels are on a rooftop (and then the householder can benefit from energy) – the energy from solar farm would go back to the grid. However, the project will produce a community benefit fund. Local organisations will be able to apply for money to support community projects in the area.'

- It is hoped that in the future – energy generated from solar farms, can be used locally but this isn't currently possible.
- Was there any flexibility regarding height of solar panels – to allow for grazing, etc.
 - Potentially this could be looked into at design stage.
- Where the panels and batteries are sourced from – is the scheme truly green / environmental
 - It is difficult to guarantee where the panes come from – and this is a huge challenge for the whole renewables industry. Helen explained that buyers are asking ever better questions and seeking panel traceability.
- Question regarding length of project and what would happen at the end
 - Anticipated that length of project would be 40 years and at end of life – decommissioning would commence. Unsure what this will look like currently.

It was agreed that more technical questions would be addressed outside of the meeting or at a later date.

Helen and John thanked members for their time, and took their leave.

4.

MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 2nd DECEMBER 2024

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 4 – the meeting that Clerk had prior to Christmas with grounds maintenance contractor resulted in them carrying out all work that had been missed – in their own time / no cost.
- Item 7 – clerk confirmed that the emergency fund set up following the floods in Autumn has now been closed, monies distributed and Dodington received note of thanks (which was shared).

5. PLANNING MATTERS

Details of planning applications considered can be found in Appendix 2 attached to these minutes.

6. CONSULTATIONS

SGC Local Plan Regulation 19 Update

Clerk briefly explained that this was the next phase of the Local Plan process – to establish if document was sound. It was likely that the consultation would go live at the end of February for a period of 6 weeks and as mentioned at previous meetings – the consultation process is quite different to previous phases.

Clerk and Cllr Jean Thomas attended the Town & Parish Council Forum meeting – where Planning Officers spent 90minutes explaining process and answering questions.

It was agreed that as soon as slides from that meeting were made available – Clerk would circulate. .

In the meantime, it was requested that Clerk re-circulate the comments that Dodington submitted during Phase 3 (approx. a year ago) to refresh members. (attached Appendix 3 to these minutes).

Clerk is happy to set aside time for extra meetings – as this is an important consultation and after due consideration it was agreed that one or two dates be set aside for members to come into chambers and

look at relevant parts – and that Monday 31st March 2025 (currently no meeting) be set aside for a one item agenda meeting – to approve the council’s comments.

On Site Electrical Vehicle Charging

The consultation was duly noted – but it was agreed not to comment at this stage.

7. NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS -

- Conversation on new approach to ‘Land Use’

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-national-conversation-on-land-use>

- Planning Reform Working Paper

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-streamlining-infrastructure-planning/planning-reform-working-paper-streamlining-infrastructure-planning>

The consultations / papers were noted – but it was agreed – not applicable for council to comment on currently – but to keep eye on – in particular the approach to Land Use as this could have implications for Rural Area

8. RESULTS FOLLOWING RURAL WARD TRAFFIC / ROAD CONSULTATION

Members reviewed results (which can be viewed fully in **Appendix 4** attached to these minutes).... Clerk updated members of a meeting that she had had with ward councillor Marilyn Palmer – who has been working closely with SG Officers looking at temporary speed limits and whether these can be made permanent.

There is a meeting regarding this on 13th March 2025 – which Marilyn will be attending and representatives from Dodington Parish Council have been invited (via Teams) in order to find out about the next stages.

It was agreed that brief headlines of the results be included in Newsletter – along with statement that Ward Councillors and DPC are currently working with South Gloucestershire Council – discussing next stages.

9. BURIAL GROUND SURVEY RESULTS

Now that 31st January has passed and survey close, Clerk confirmed that **499 hard copies** had been returned and **100 questionnaires have been completed online**.

A response rate of nearly 20% of all those consulted.

599 back and just over 3000 distributed.

The Combined Results:-

78% NO – not willing to pay more to fund development of new burial facility and

22% YES – willing to pay more.....

Results confirm that parishioners don’t have a desire to see burial ground extended in the future and they definitely aren’t willing to pay towards it – and ultimately this is the only way it could be funded.

As such it was proposed by Cllr Paul Hulbert that the council draw a line under plans to extend or find land for new facility – and when such time arrives – will close the existing facility to all but re-openings and ashes. This was seconded by Cllr Oliver Lodge and all were in favour.

10. PARISH HALL CAR PARK

Clerk explained to members that when it is particularly windy (or there is a weather warning for wind) the school have been advised that the barrier to site should remain down for safety and to stop it getting damaged and bent (as it was in November following Storm Bert).

During the week / school day this isn't a problem....however of an evening (when regular users are in hall) or of a weekend when hall is booked for events – this can cause some issues and frustration.

School have said cost to repair is £700 and they don't want to be having to pay this if don't have to.

Clerk was hoping to have some answers / cost from barrier company and Videx regarding an extension to the monitor into the hall (for evening and weekend users)....however – although barrier company been in touch – meeting hasn't been facilitated yet.

Members were of the opinion that Dodington PC or users of hall shouldn't be inconvenienced by barrier....the school were after it – for safety of their pupils and their convenience – and it was agreed that it wouldn't be down evenings and weekends.

As such Clerk to continue with meeting to see what costs would be for an extension – or if there are any other options....and then Chair / Vice Chair of Council along with officers have a meeting to discuss with school. Any extra cost incurred to make it easier for parish council – should be borne by school – as barrier was for them. (extract of minutes from meetingcan be viewed as **Appendix 5** attached to these minutes – for clarification).

Cllr Chris Zapata left the meeting.

11. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN MEETING

Following decision take at Planning Meeting in December 2024 – Clerk has arranged for a Community Emergency Plan meeting between local town and parish councils. This is scheduled for Friday 14th February 2025 – in Council Chambers with Cllrs Paul Hulbert and Oliver Lodge representing Dodington.

At this stage there was nothing specific that members wanted to see on the agenda although Cllr Oliver Lodge felt that as well as 'flooding' 'severe weather' 'utilities outage' 'fire' there ought to be thought given to Civil Unrest given recent events across the country.

Members stated they will be interested in notes / outcomes following the meeting.

12. FINANCE MATTERS

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

Clerk highlighted that following decision taken – Item 9 regarding burial ground extension – some of the monies in the EMR fund – for Burial Ground Improvements / Extension can be vired elsewhere. This will be included as an Item for decision on next Full Council Meeting – 3rd March 2025.

Meeting went into Confidential Session (SO 3e) and discussion regarding item is minuted confidentially.

13. STAFFING MATTERS & TRAINING PLAN

Open session resumed.

14. ITEMS TO REPORT

Cllr Oliver Lodge reported that Citizens Advice Bureau was in the process of relocating – to new premises on Station Road.

Cllr Christine Howard stated that she had reported a very overgrown / dangerous bush to SGC Streetcare (on Merlin Way).

Clerk informed members that the APM Poster had been updated – Cllrs Chris Zapata, Adrian Hutton and Jean Thomas felt it was more suitable – and as such the event on 9th April 2025 will be advertised. Prior to P&T Committee Meeting – Cllrs Chris Zapata, Adrain Hutton and Jean Thomas had had a working group meeting regarding the Official Opening that is scheduled for the end of the month. Cllr Jean Thomas updated members – and stated that it was important that as many councillors as possible be present – for event – in order to help and to network – and promote the Parish Council and facilities.

The date of the next Planning Committee meeting – Monday 17TH March 2025.

As there was no further business – the meeting was closed at 21.15pm.

Signed Committee Chair

Date17th March2025