

Extraordinary Bradenham Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10th December 2024 in the Village Hall. Closed Meeting – No Public/No Press

Julian Reading, Teresa Frost, Steven Parker, Lisa Johnstone, Michael Bell, Jon Murphy and Neil Fegan with the Clerk Dee Ruppert

APOLOGIES – None

DECLARATION OF INTEREST – None

Appoint a Vice Chairman by ballot. – This was a secret ballot and Teresa Frost was voted Vice Chairman

The PC to have meetings every six weeks while High Grove Solar is being processed, revised in one year?

It was agreed to have six meetings a year but it would be reviewed after six months. The Clerk informed the PC that she may not be able to attend all. That was acceptable by the PC.

Should we join CPRE? Only a few other PCs in the area have joined at present. Out of the five questions asked only two were answered by CPRE. The cost is £5 per month. We will contact them again and then decide at the next meeting.

As per our Standing Orders 11 1.1. Agree to revisiting and revising the decision made on the 5th November re MacMullen Mitigation Plans and Report in the interests of the wider community . Sponsored by Councillor Neil Fegan and myself Julian Reading.

House of Commons Research Briefing. "Planning for Solar Farms"

https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7434/CBP-7434.pdf?fbclid=IwZXh0bGhZW0CMTEAAR37RfD0tvj7KJ6YnVbFxrnxwd4PL5xGozwXI3FlcmIM6pZMNA5Ef80aBk4_aem_ox4l6h92_PCZaH1rrENrxw

This is worth reading

Discuss the MacMullen mitigation plans

The original vote taken by the Chairman over email, voted against using the MacMullen plans. Steve stated that Julian asked if I wished to reconsider otherwise he would have exercised his casting vote as the vote stood at 2 - 2. Steve then reconsidered and voted against the MacMullens plans. Julian informed the PC that this should have been discussed at an official meeting and not via email.

The Government is very keen on Solar Farm projects but the final decision will be with the Secretary of State for Energy.

We need to do what's best for the village and for the residents that live close to the panels.

Property values will suffer. The risk of fire is very worrying. The Clerk will contact the Norfolk Fire Service asking if they could visit the village to discuss this further. Teresa will see if she can find a contact number/name.

Couple of the PC members are not keen to adopt the MacMullen's original plan

Steve advised the PC that they have formed a group at High Green and have now spoken to other PCs to cooperate in order to have a stronger voice and have more influence on the decision.

Neil commented that the Government are cancelling oil and gas contracts and if this happens Solar will have to power the country.

Pylons are being installed all around Norfolk in order to move the power to the grid. Pylons cannot be fitted next to solar farms.

Redacting paragraphs 1.4 and 3.1 covering deer management this should be the responsibility of the land owners and not embraced by the community fund.

The above is no longer on the mitigation plans

Further to this, a ballot could be held for the whole parish, one question will be asked: do we adopt the MacMullen mitigation plans for High Grove Solar Farm?, Yes/No, with the following override;

"In the event that the Inspectorate is minded to allow the RWE application against our objections Bradenham Parish Council ask that the mitigation plans by Richard and Diana MacMullen are adopted."

More solar farms are being planned in Norfolk over 34% of land will be used.

Julian gave each of the parish councillors a copy of the shorter mitigation report plus maps. The maps are very detailed and show all the areas where the solar farms/panels will go, but hopefully we can move the ones that are very close to some of the properties. A couple of residents will be very close to the panels and others have them on three sides of their property.

New accesses have been requested so heavy lorries do not go through the village.

Flooding can also be an issue. The panels will need to be kept clean. Where will all the water go?

Woodland buffer and hedge planting are all needed.

Julian will also be speaking to the other farmers that have not been approached to hear their comments of the mitigation report and maps.

We will vote on all these matters - All the PC agreed to include the shorter version of the mitigation plan and maps on the Parish website

High Grove Community Benefit Fund

£11.5 million over 40 years, divided into annual payments

£11.5 divided by 18 (17 parishes + Swaffham x 2) = £638.888 over 40 years.
Divided by 40 annual payments = £15,592.22 per year.

These would have to be applied for every year and there will be strict rules for applicants.

Steve informed the PC that Saham Toney PC draft minutes mentioned that RWE are already going back on the Community Fund being for just affected villages and opening out to everyone, Teresa queried if there was confusion to the Norfolk off shore windfarm community zone fund which has been active to apply for through Norfolk Community Foundation.

Steve also referenced there is a meeting with RWE and the local Parish Councils scheduled for 25th January, for which no formal invite had been received by Bradenham PC to attend any meeting. The Clerk confirmed that she had not yet received an invite. Steve will attend this meeting.

Michael and Julian confirmed they would attend the virtual Solar Farm steering group meeting with George Freeman on Thursday.

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 11th February 2025

MEETING ENDED: 9.40pm