

# Frithelstock Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 8:00pm in Frithelstock Village Hall

Councillors Present: Mr M Poole (Chairman), Mr R Hunkin (Vice-Chairman), Mr M Baker, Mr G Ball, Mr A Heard, Mr H Pettifer and Mr M Stokes.

Clerk: Mr P Blossie

Also in attendance: 20 members of the public: Lesley Ball, Charles Beer, Christopher Beer, David Beer, Sarah Beer, Paul Brown, Sarah Brown, Harry Chapman, Jill Clee, K G Clee, E Cockerill, Jennifer Dorey, Anson Gonsalves, Bridget Heard, Charlie Heckman, W R Hunkin, Richard Joseph, John Miles, Marcelle Paton-Smith and Arthur Poole.

**KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type Decisions are shown in bold red type**

98 Welcome: The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting

99 Apologies: Cllr Phil Pennington (TDC) who was attending another meeting that evening.

100 Declarations of Interest: Cllr. Hunkin in respect of item 103(a), wind turbine planning application on the grounds that his property was close to the proposed development that could present a prejudicial interest. The Chairman confirmed that he was welcome to take part in the public participation but not in the Council's deliberation or any voting.

101 Public Participation: Due to the level of public interest in the planning application for a wind turbine at Horwood Combe, the Chairman stated that there would be no time limit on this item but asked for people not to repeat points made by other speakers. He also reminded parishioners that they were not entitled to make any further comments once the Council moved on to deliberate on the item.

Marcelle Paton-Smith pointed out that the TDC and Frithelstock wind energy/turbine policies stated that turbines should not be positioned closer than 5 x the rotor diameter from the nearest power lines. This would require a minimum limit of 270 metres (5 x 54m blade diameter in plans) but the plans showed that the nearest power line was 115 metres from the site. She was also concerned that the Wardell Armstrong report states that visibility will be 'quite serious' at 1.5 kilometres and 'moderate adverse' up to 3 kilometres and that, although Frithelstock is the nearest village and lies between these distances the only photo montage taken from the village was from the cemetery.

Sarah Brown stated that she was not anti-turbines but objected to the specific location on two grounds: 1) the devaluation of her property, and 2) the effect on her health which would be adversely affected by the visual disturbance and flicker effect. She has asked the developers to consider re-siting the turbine but this had been turned down.

Paul Brown highlighted elements of Frithelstock Parish Council's wind turbine policy, in particular the requirement for turbines to be sited a minimum of 600 metres from the nearest residential properties and stated that parts of his land were closer than that. He explained that Sarah had seen a consultant who had reported that the turbine's flicker effect would "almost certainly exacerbate her symptoms". The developers had offered to reduce the height which he felt would make little difference and he preferred that the turbine should be re-sited further to

the west. He recognized that property values were not a material planning consideration but pointed out that he had received a valuation report showing a potential devaluation of 20%. He said that the turbine at East and West Ash Farm did not meet planning requirements and that this one does not either and should be turned down.

Mackie Poole read out a letter that had been received from the developer stating that moving the turbine to the west would bring it closer to the prevailing view from the Brown's property, and moving it to the south-east would increase the overall impact on the countryside but would have no conceivable effect on the Brown's property. The letter offered to reduce the height of the turbine by 10 metres.

Jenny Dorey said that she would seek to recoup any loss of property value. She would see the turbine from every window. She has a racehorse in foal and feared that they would be disturbed by the noise. She felt that reducing the height to 67 metres would make no difference because the site was already on a rise and said that there were plenty of other places which had no people living nearby.

Roger Hunkin said that the Parish Council turned down the last turbine application and should turn this one down as well for consistency. The access would be via a 3.5 metre footpath which would have to be widened to 5.5 metres and he thought that there would be uproar if anyone else proposed this.

Charlie Heckman felt that Sarah Brown's health issue was a significant one and should be taken into account.

Jenny Dorey also supported Sarah's comments and reminded the Council that she had a roost of bats.

Jill Clee said that once the turbines are in place people soon get used to them.

Harry Chapman noted that all the measurements were produced by the development company and felt there should be independent advisors. He was also concerned about infrasound and its effect on animals on its potential impact on human health.

Bridget Heard said that the turbines at Galsworthy cause an annoyance all the time.

E Cockerill felt that any decision by the Parish Council would be overruled by Torridge Council and that nobody listened to parishioners views last time or apologized for the decision reached.

Mackie Poole said that the last turbine application was objected to on a technical issue. Paul Brown said that the same applied this time.

Richard Joseph said that to comply with Frithelstock's Wind Turbine Policy the Council had no option but to object to the application.

Mackie Poole said that he had been told that if Frithelstock's policy is not in agreement with the Torridge Wind Energy Policy it should be abandoned but it had not been abandoned yet.

102 Clerk's Report: (i) The clerk presented 2 items of correspondence:

1. DCC: Agenda for the Highways Conference taking place tomorrow (17<sup>th</sup> September 2014) at Merton Village Hall (passed to Cllr Baker who is attending)
2. TDC: Notification of a Polling Districts and Polling Places Review – responses required by 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014. Notices will be posted on the notice boards

103 Planning:

- a. Application: 1/0845/2014/FUL – Land at NGR 244042 119406, Frithelstock; Erection of a single wind turbine with a tower height of up to 50m and tip height of up to 77m along with associated infrastructure.

Mackie Poole said that he was keen on renewable energy but not necessarily turbines. He said that if the Parish Council objected, Torridge might support it, and if not, it will go to appeal. It cost £200,000 for the District Council to fight the Fullerbrook appeal and no longer had the will to fight further appeals. He said that all reserve generators have been taken out of mothballs because last winter the country got within 2% of its energy reserves and another hard winter is expected this year. The whole of Yorkshire is powered by 2 nuclear plants that are past their sell-by dates and will take 20 years to replace. He was worried that the country relied on vast amounts of gas from Russia and that relationships with that country were not good, and was also concerned about the potential impact of the Scottish referendum results. He said that our only options were solar power, nuclear, fracking or power cuts.

Heathcliff Pettifer said that he was ambivalent about wind power but in favour of renewables. He said that if any councillor voted in favour he would resign.

Mike Stokes had also seen the report referred to by Marcelle Paton-Smith and that it was an unfortunate fact of life that many small villages suffered adverse effects from turbines. He felt that the Parish Council was wasting its time because the decision will be made by Torridge District. He recognized that although property values were not 'material' they were uppermost in people's minds.

Mackie Poole agreed and said that the Council had turned down the last turbine and felt there was no option but to turn this one down too.

Mike Stokes pointed out that Torridge had disagreed with Frithelstock's views over the last turbine and had also refused an application that Frithelstock had recently supported.

Andrew Heard said that the application should be objected to on safety grounds because the power lines were too close.

There was further general discussion including the alternatives of re-siting the turbine and the offer to reduce the height. The Clerk reminded members that they need to make a decision based on the plans before them taking into account the material planning considerations

Greg Ball felt that the South West was saturated with turbines and that they should not be detrimental to people's health and welfare.

**It was proposed by Heathcliff Pettifer, seconded by Mike Baker and agreed unanimously to object to the application due to the proximity of the power lines.**

104 Members' Reports:                      Nothing to report

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:50 pm**

**SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: ..... (Chair)**

**NAME: ..... DATE: .....**

<p><b>Next meeting will be held in Frithelstock Village Hall on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 7:30pm.</b></p>
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