

**Minutes of Mersham Parish Council**  
**Meeting held on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church**

<b>Present</b>	Melanie Wells (Chair)	Gill McBarnett
	Peter Hawkins	Stewart Ross
	Kenton Stewart	

In attendance: Cllr Bartlett and Tracey Block (Clerk)

*To be actioned by:*

**To receive a presentation from Derek Burles**

Derek Burles opened his presentation with 2 fellow group members on the “Parish Council Support Group” by stating that the group is not anti-solar but is anti solar in an unwanted location.

In this area, there is the 250 acre site applied for by EDF which is currently dormant, there is a recently consented application for battery storage, an application by Welsh Power for power transferral. Therefore, the industrialisation of Church Lane is already in place.

This additional application from EP001 Ltd is expected imminently. There was a statutory consultation last Autumn and a second consultation this summer (instigated by Ashford Borough Council). It is felt that the applicants’ legal obligations have still not been met. Ashford Borough Council has concerns over the impact on the landscape and views due to the location of the application but is only a consultee in this process.

The Parish Council Support Group has a clear realisation of tasks as circulated to the Councillors and is looking to buy itself time by looking for inadequacies in the application.

There are 4 groups in Aldington at the moment, The Save Aldington Group, The Parish Council, Stop Stonestreet Solar and the Parish Council Support Group. This is causing confusion and so the Parish Council Support group are campaigning for one voice.

Mr Burles believes that Mersham needs to belong to the group and has the following key requirements:

1. To participate as members of the group from within the Aldington and Mersham community with the necessary resource to enable the Parish Council and the community to jointly speak with ‘one voice’ in the management process that will follow the submission of EPL001’s DCO application.
2. To adopt the mandate: To oppose the Stonestreet Green Solar proposal due to its inappropriate scale, location and cumulative impact.
3. To create and deliver to each home a communications programme that will inform the community and seek their support.
4. To hold a village meeting which will aim to co-ordinate required actions and seek to gain funding to assist with the process.

94% of NSIP applications are approved. We are looking to find fault in the application process. ELP001 are chancers and we are hoping to exploit what hasn’t been properly done. So far we have looked into the inadequacy of the completion of the application process.

At the last Community Liaison Panel meeting, ELP001 said their NSIP application will be submitted in November or early 2024. They are waiting for UKPN to provide details of the power route around the railway track.

**Questions:**

*How many people are in the group?*

Only 5 people, the group is only 4 weeks old and is looking for people with expertise and time with the resources to act to the challenges ahead.

*Surely, you need to draw the separate groups in?*

<p>We are the only people organising this so, yes we do.</p> <p><i>Have you put anything out on the Social media in Mersham?</i></p> <p>No not yet.</p> <p><i>What do you want from us?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the group</li> <li>2. Hold a public meeting</li> <li>3. Agree the mandate</li> <li>4. Engage support from the community through assistance and finance</li> </ol> <p>CLlr Wells thanked Mr Burles and his 2 fellow group members for attending and opened the Parish Council Meeting.</p>	
<p><b>To receive and approve apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Murphy and Cllr Pearson. These apologies were approved.</p>	
<p><b>To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.</b></p> <p>Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site and a personal interest in the Village Hall.</p>	
<p><b>To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b></p> <p>Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.</p>	
<p><b>To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda.</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.</p>	
<p><b>To receive report from Borough Councillor</b></p> <p><b>A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website:</b>  <a href="http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/">http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/</a></p> <p>Cllr Bartlett reported that:</p> <p>-Following the parking survey in Oaklands, Cllr Bartlett is to ask ABC to resurface their owned part of the car park. The Parish Council was asked to support this request as it is a trip hazard, white lining is also requested.</p> <p>-There is some unspent development money that must be spent on footpaths in the area of J10 and J10a. The sum is £300K but is very restrictive.</p> <p>Cllr Hawkins asked Cllr Bartlett when the rest of the streetlights will be converted to LED, Cllr Bartlett explained that any lights on joint user poles are not to be repaired</p>	
<p><b>To discuss the theft of street lights and appropriate actions</b></p> <p>Cllr Bartlett has spoken to the PROW Officer about the solar lights on AE669. These are to be replaced with thicker columns and anti-vandalism spikes.</p>	
<p><b>To receive an update following the request for bins on the bridle way to the IBF.</b></p> <p>The litter bin at Sevington is well used. An additional bin has been requested for the Blind Lane end of the path. The Clerk is to chase this.</p>	

<p><b>Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item</b></p> <p>There were no public in attendance.</p>																			
<p><b>To receive any update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field/IBF</b></p> <p>There was no further update on the High Field/IBF.</p>																			
<p><b>To discuss the website</b></p> <p>The website has been updated. Cllr Hawkins is pleased with the updates.</p> <p>The Clerk is to be notified if there are any further changes required.</p>																			
<p><b>Parish Council Objectives for this administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Look at renting on a long-term rent the car park area near the shop.</b></li> </ul> <p>There have been a number of discussions. Councillors Murphy and Wells will visit the registered landowner to discuss the options for the land. Ownership must be established. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Land Registry to seek some advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Look into using the cut and cover</b></li> </ul> <p>Cllr Murphy is to discuss at the next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Create an environmental policy</b></li> </ul> <p>The Parish Council approved the Environmental Policy.</p>																			
<p><b>To receive an update on the Village Hall</b></p> <p>Cllr Wells had previously circulated an update on the Village Hall.</p>																			
<p><b>Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.</b></p> <p><b>a) The following applications required comments:</b> Application PA/2023/1349 received a no objection response</p>																			
<p><b>Financial matters:</b></p> <p><b>a) To approve the following financial documents:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. To note the Parish Council's financial position.</b></li> </ol> <p>The Parish Council has £29137.48 in the bank.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2. To authorise any payments</b></li> </ol> <table border="1" data-bbox="193 1597 1270 1821"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cheque No:</th> <th>Payee</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>OLT</td> <td>HMRC</td> <td>£ 85.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OLT</td> <td>I King (October salary)</td> <td>£ 136.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OLT</td> <td>T Block (October Salary)</td> <td>£ 359.63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OLT</td> <td>HugoFox</td> <td>£ 122.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OLT</td> <td>Mazars</td> <td>£ 252.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.</p>	Cheque No:	Payee	Amount	OLT	HMRC	£ 85.20	OLT	I King (October salary)	£ 136.50	OLT	T Block (October Salary)	£ 359.63	OLT	HugoFox	£ 122.28	OLT	Mazars	£ 252.00	
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<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>The Christmas tree is to be agreed at the November meeting. In the meantime, the Clerk will locate 20m of Christmas lights.</p>																			
<p><b>Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.</b></p>																			

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

