

**MINUTES OF THE GRESSENHALL PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 6th AUGUST 2024 AT 7:00PM IN THE READING ROOM**

11085 Present: Councillor Beazley – Chair Councillor Melton
Councillor Day Councillor Crisp
Councillor Radford Councillor Keidan
District Councillor Atterwill

RWE Representative	Mike Waddle
RWE Representative	Sandra Bailey
RWE Representative	William Sealey
Murphy Group Representative	Victoria Crawford
Murphy Group Representative	Janet Sorley

26 members of the public

The meeting commenced with agenda item 7.

11086 RWE opened the discussion and offered information sheets, timeline of the works and images of the cabling being laid. William Sealey explained that RWE had acquired the portfolio from Vattenfall and that a Community Benefit Fund will go live next month.

Murphy Group explained the cable route will run from Happisburgh to Necton. The project is split into three sections being West, Centre and East. Ducts are normally laid between April and September but this was delayed due to the bad weather. 11km have been laid to date. This year the project is working in Gressenhall and central and east ducts will be laid next year.

Councillor Radford explained that a number of concerns were reported from residents near to the site and up to the Church area of the village. Significant low frequency noise and vibrations are the main concerns, causing some parishioners to feel very unwell. When this issue was raised by individuals they were initially told they were the only complainant and such an issue had never occurred before, causing further distress.

Members of the public prior to and during the meeting raised their concerns:

- The vibrations caused several physical symptoms both aurally (tinnitus and a feeling of sea sickness), affecting general wellbeing, including gastrointestinal disturbance, headaches, sinus pain, sleep disturbance. In one local business staff reported problems and visiting customers left without staying to make a purchase due to the noise and vibrations.
- Concerns were raised about noise and vibrations causing damage to property- air valves in one resident's loft started leaking. Older properties experienced severe rattling of windows and door frames.
- Concerns were raised about possible effects on wildlife especially birds, fish and bats whose numbers appeared to decrease during the work.
- The lack of support and disbelief when complaints were made to RWE and Murphy initially caused much distress.
- A resident who didn't know what was going on was experiencing a strange pressure in 10-15 second bursts. Murphy responded that the drills run continuously. The ground is not hard but chalky. The first hole is drilled at 150mm diameter and then larger diameters until 450mm is reached, and bentonite is used to keep the channel open.
- A resident enquired how windfarms get permission for the route. RWE explained that they go through a Development Consent Order which can take a number of years.
- A resident enquired about the soil shaking unit. Two machines are normally used but, following the complaints, only one was used to try and mitigate the situation.
- A resident enquired about the drill speed. Murphy Group were unable to answer this but would find out and inform the parish council.

- A resident asked, as the drilling is now complete, whether the equipment is moved or remain on site? The equipment will be moved in the next two weeks. A different set of equipment will move in when the duct is laid and then when the cabling is installed. Meetings with the Police will take place when moving the machinery.
- A resident asked why it had taken several weeks before Murphy visited properties experiencing distressing levels of noise and vibrations and why sound equipment was only installed at these locations towards the end of July, after they had installed sound barriers and sound wrapped machinery. Victoria Crawford relayed that it had taken them time to identify an appropriate company which led to a delay.

Councillor Keidan requested the following points be addressed:

- Given that Murphy Group state there was nothing unique about this drilling project in terms of equipment used, but parishioners in area were disturbed by vibration, we wish reassurance that the completed investigation will be published in the public domain and accessible to our parishioners. As there may be implications for similar projects worldwide, consideration should be given to publishing the investigation outcome in international engineering literature.
- Given parishioners who complained were initially told no other complaints had been received, the companies involved should provide an acknowledgement and apology to our affected parishioners plus reassurance that other communities likely to be affected will be kept better informed.
- Given concerns about wildlife, reassurance that parish council will receive a copy of the environmental impact once drilling phase in this area completed.
- It is requested that for future works, there is early communication of what is happening. RWE/Murphy Group are happy to attend Parish Council meetings or hold presentations locally.

Murphy Group explained that, in 35 years, this had never been raised as an issue before, despite there being nothing unique at this site. The representative explained that 52km of the 60km is open cut at 1.4m deep. A horizontal drill is used for rivers, railways and areas of outstanding beauty. Bentonite is required to keep the drilled channel open and the water and bentonite is extracted using on site using pumps. On receipt of complaints, expert contacts in acoustic and vibrations were sought who also had never heard of this before. Acoustic barriers were subsequently installed and equipment was evaluated to try and identify the source. The drill used is consented in the Development Consent Order which is decided by an external body. Murphy does have the power to cut woodland but chose to drill. Murphy is sorry for the distress this has caused and would like residents to know they have tried everything to eliminate the noise and vibrations. It is possible that the weather and/or topography together with frequency vibrations could have something to do with it but investigations are still being carried out.

RWE fully support what Murphy Group are doing as they are a conscientious company. RWE agreed there could have been more transparency and could have held an open day or provided videos which explained what is happening. These issues are being taken seriously and there are lots of messages and actions to take away and consider with a response being provided in time. When the studies are complete and the results understood, these will be shared.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would encapsulate all the questions and forward on to RWE and Murphy Group and look forward to a formal response.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for attending the meeting.

11087 To receive and accept apologies for absence - Councillor Reader, District Councillor Duffield, County Councillor Kiddle-Morris

11088 Declarations of interest – All Councillors in attendance (except Councillor Radford) declared an interest in The Swan Public House, Councillor Melton declared an interest in agenda item 8 'Common Drift'.

11089 To approve and sign minutes of the meeting held 2nd July 2024 – The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July were agreed and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

11090 Progress on items not on the agenda from previous meetings – None.

The meeting was opened to the public at 7:47pm.

11091 Open forum for Public Participation: an opportunity to hear from members of the public.

A resident stated the July minutes were not in the News and Views.

A resident enquired whether there was an update on the affordable housing scheme – This will be discussed later in the meeting.

A resident noted that the hedge along The Drift had been cut and that some gardens are overgrowing the fence. The resident offered to trim areas along the road, although not any residents hedges.

A resident report that some residents of Swan Drive are still depositing their garden waste into The Drift and suggested writing a letter to residents.

A resident reported that Gressenhall Post Office will close on 1st September. This is a valuable service and needed in the village. This will be discussed later in the meeting.

A resident reported that the holiday cottage on The Green needs to clear the greenery away from the front as vehicles are driving around it and potentially causing damage to the edge of The Green, which has just been repaired and resurfaced.

A resident was upset that the wrong site location plan had been submitted for the Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed play area project. The clerk apologised to the resident and informed them it was totally the Clerk's error. All residents who commented on the Planning Portal were written to by the Clerk and a copy of the correct plan was sent to them. The resident requested the apology be noted in the minutes and on the noticeboard.

A resident reported that Himalayan Balsam was seen at Old Brigg. This will be discussed later in the meeting.

A resident offered to note all pot holes in the village. The resident was thanked but this has just been completed by the Clerk and all holes logged on a spread sheet and reported to Highways.

A resident asked what effect the play area works will have on the wildlife as the proposed area is prone to flooding. The Chairman replied that careful consideration had been given to the site. It is away from houses and in a position to preserve the football/cricket ground should a team be created in the future. The resident was also concerned that the site will entice drug users. The Chairman explained that the parish council had met with Norfolk Police ASBO expert at the site who was very positive, and a few small recommendations were made which will be followed up (see below)

11092 To discuss complaints received regarding disruptive noise from Vattenfall project – Discussion noted above.

11093 Reporting of any Highways Matters including:

- To receive update on village highways defect report prepared by clerk** – Around 35 pot holes in the village have been reported to Highways.

- Update on village gateway** – The gateway still has not been installed. Councillor Kiddle-Morris will speak to the Highways Engineer when he returns from leave.

- To receive update on contractor for works on the road around The Green** – The contractor has returned and completed the outstanding work. A water leak in that area has also been reported to Anglian Water.

- To discuss and consider consultation on an application for a Modification Order proposing the addition of a restricted byway to the Definitive Map and Statement along a route known as 'Common Drift'** – Clerk to send previous correspondence regarding this to councillors so a full discussion can take place at the September meeting.

- 11094 Update on Affordable Housing scheme
The chairman explained that the delay is mainly due to Nutrient Neutrality which is stopping a number of developments in the Wensum Valley area.
- 11095 Update on the Gressenhall Community Car Scheme
A busy month with 934 miles covered. Two regular drivers are currently poorly so things are a bit stretched. It was agreed to put a request in the News and Views 'box'. Anne and her drivers were thanked for their service.
- 11096 Update on the Elmham GP Surgery
The next Patient Participation Group meeting is on 14th August. Councillor Keidan is unable to make this but the new Practice Manager is happy to have a one to one meeting. A new triage system will go live on 2nd September.
- 11097 To confirm receipt of Lawful Development Certificate- need to put for what
The certificate has been approved.
- 11098 To receive update from Play Park Project (written report submitted).
A total of £78,000 has been raised so far. A meeting took place with Norfolk Police who commented on how lucky the village was to have such a large open space. The officer positively commented on the good condition of the current equipment although did recommend CCTV on the edge of the social club to monitor. Other recommendations included a graffiti wall, two large bins and additional seating. Fund raising continues including the Family Fun Day on 11th August 2pm-7pm, a September Sports raffle (details of raffle are in the News and Views and available online) and a Halloween party on 27th October in the Social Club. A funding application has been made to Inspiring Communities. It is hoped work at the site will commence early September. A meeting will be arranged with the social club to confirm locations. The Chairman thanked everyone involved with the project.
- 11099 To discuss removal of Himalayan Balsam from the playing field
The clerk is in contact with the NCC Invasive Species Team who are trying to gather a group of volunteers to visit The Drift. As soon as a date is made, Clerk will circulate.
- 11100 To thank resident for removing pile of felled trees
The Chairman thanked the resident for removing the pile of felled trees from playing field.
- 11101 To discuss waste left on playing field after Monday auction
The reported waste following the Monday auction was cleared the next day.
- 11102 To discuss and consider adopting the following policies:
- Updated Financial Regulations – defer to September meeting.

To discuss and consider planning matters:

- 11103 NCC Planning Application – Anglian Water Services Ltd, Dereham Water Recycling Centre (WRC), Rushmeadow Road, Dereham: Erection of three new kiosk (Generator kiosk, LV switch board kiosk, and MCC kiosk) – All Councillors present had no objections to this application.

Referred to BDC Planning Committee

3PL/2022/1414/F - The Shrublands, Gressenhall Road - Proposal: Residential Development of 12no. dwellings including affordable homes and specialist housing – Application deferred.

- 11104 Report from County Councillor
No report received.

- 11105 Report from District Councillor Atterwill
With the new Government, Breckland District Council are now required to produce an additional 39% of housing equating to 917 in total houses each year. This will affect the Local Plan which will need to be revised. Councillor Atterwill agreed the CCTV at new play area is a good idea although a Data Officer will need to be appointed and policy in place to manage the recording. The Boundary Review will go to Full Council in September and any change will take place from May 2027.

Financial Matters

- 11106 To discuss and consider the deposit payment for phase one of the play area project
It was agreed to pay 30% deposit for the play equipment.
- 11107 To confirm payments for June: Clerk salary and expenses - £360.37, HMR&C - £84.20, Gressenhall Community Car scheme - £117.65, Gressenhall Community Car Scheme (Breckland) - £116.75, Mrs L Jarrett (Breckland Small Society Licence fee) - £40.00, NGF Play Limited - £27,022.32 (deposit for play equipment)

Payments were agreed by all present. It was agreed that Councillors Beazley and Crisp would authorise the bank payments.

- 11108 To confirm receipt of 50% Parish Partnership payment from NCC - £7,565.50.
Payment received.
- 11109 Reports from councillors (for information only)
Councillors discussed the closure of the Post Office from 1st September. Concerns were raised that the closure could have a detrimental effect on the shop. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to George Freeman MP to ask for his assistance. In the meantime, enquiries are to be made to see if a mobile service could be sought should the Post Office Close.
- 11110 Correspondence (for information only)
An email was received regarding an overgrown hedge on Bittering Street. The hedge has since been cut.
Emails received regarding play area site location plan. All residents were contacted and sent correct site location plan.
Emails received regarding vibrations and noise from RWE/Murphy Group site. Discussed above.
- 11111 To confirm the date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council – Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 7:00pm.

In the absence of any further business, the meeting closed at 8:40pm.

Signed: Councillor Melton

Date: 2 September 2024