
**MEETING OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 15th MARCH 2021 AT 7.30PM
IN THE STEYPNING CENTRE**

Cllrs Present: Cllrs Norcross {Chairman} Northam, Lloyd, Hanson, S. Sullivan, G. Sullivan, Trundle, Goldsmith, Young, Rudkin, S. Alexander, Campbell, and District Councillor Bob Platt

Speakers: From the Rampion II Windfarm Project - Mr Vaughan Weighill - Project Manager, Mr Chris Tomlinson – Stakeholder Manager and Ms Eleri Wilce – Consents & Permitting Manager

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Deputy Clerk: Hazel Roxby

Members of the Public: 22

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

MINUTES

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 18th MARCH 2019

ACTION

{Comments not always verbatim – for brevity they are occasionally in summary form}

Cllr Campbell raised a Point of Order – ‘Concerning the attachment to the draft minutes because the first three pages of that are a litany of distortion, untruths and breaches of the data protection act in which councillor Lloyd claimed falsely that there had been hundreds of FOI requests. Anyone can now go to the website and see that the truth is in fact 37 over 6 years and that there were none during the whole year of Councillor Lloyds chairmanship. So, my point of order is that some months ago when they did not like an entirely accurate statement that I made regarding the NP the majority of councillors voted that my written script of what I had said should be removed from the minutes. It was stated on the advice of the clerk that it was not appropriate to attach statements to minutes and minutes must be a self-contained summary. So that being the case in my opinion it’s not appropriate that this distorted public attack by Cllr Lloyd with its untruths and breaches of the GDPR should be attached to these minutes and so I’m asking the clerk to advise whether or not we do have a policy of not attaching scripts.

The Clerk responded: ‘Yes, the annual parish Meeting is an opportunity to receive speakers and therefore there are speeches and most of those speeches if not noted verbatim, which is different to normal council meetings, are nonetheless extensively covered in the minutes so that there is more than a flavour, there’s actual degree of clarity in terms of what was said, because the APM is meant to be very informative, also within the annual parish meeting we have the report from the Chairman which again is a report on the previous year or in this case 2 years, because we unfortunately did not have one last year, and we have always included availability for the scripts so people could understand the achievements for the last year or 2 years so it is a slightly different scenario. If we think we agree with the minutes, but we do not agree to the statement and if we want to look at that separately then that is a possibility. It is an opportunity for the chairman to make a statement on the previous year that is what the annual parish meeting is partly all about’.

Cllr Campbell – ‘Thank you very much for that explanation, John I will want to suggest a motion in a minute or two but that completes the point of order. Thank you’.

Cllr Lloyd – ‘In response to what Cllr Campbell has said, I do not believe it is a distortion of facts, this is a question that is going to be asked by a resident and I’m quite happy to respond to that and I would like to remind Cllr Campbell that we know very well that the ICO have said that any request for information should be considered as an FOI. So that’s all the point I wish to make, and I think until I justify that figure or otherwise, I believe that statement should stand’

Cllr Campbell – ‘May I just come back on that ICO point. The ICO advises not that every communication is an FOI which is Cllr Lloyd’s approach, that is how Cllr Lloyd calculated the figures. The actual FOIs are on the council’s website and as I said there were not hundreds there were 37 over 6 years and none at all during Cllr Lloyds term of office and actually in the period of the SWAB controversy when things were pretty hot Cllr Lloyd said there were 166 when in fact there were 17. Just to complete the point I was trying to make what the ICO says is that any question put to a council or any public body needs to be looked at and if appropriate treated as an FOI. It does not make every communication an FOI. And as I say that is how he came to that figure’.

Cllr Lloyd – ‘Again Cllr Campbell is putting his spin on something, It was made quite clear to me and I will have to look out the email concerned from the ICO that any request for information should be treated as an FOI and that is what we did.’

Cllr Campbell – ‘That’s exactly what I said chair’

Cllr Lloyd – ‘No you didn’t just say that all and I’m not going to sit here and argue the point I’m going to justify the figure, If I can’t, I will say so’.

Cllr Campbell – Just one final point, Cllr Lloyd was invited to justify his figure about a year ago when the true FOI table was published on the website, his response was he could not be bothered so it will be interesting if he can be bothered now.

Cllr Lloyd – Chair I’m sorry, I really think that Cllr Campbell as a man of order needs to control his language , I just don’t think its seemly for him to accuse me of something that I didn’t say and certainly then to make a further comment which is what he normally does and frankly I’m fed up with hearing about it.

Cllr Norcross - Chair – Can we move on from this as it is quite unedifying.

Cllr Campbell – I agree but can I just make one last point in response because Cllr Lloyd

Cllr Northam – Can we move on please instead of this bickering.

Cllr Campbell – Cllr Lloyd abused his position as chairman and the annual meeting 2 years ago by making a scripted attack on three of his colleagues and several members of the public in an evidence free rant which lasted for 3 pages which was a distorted litany of untruths.

Cllr Norcross – I would like to propose that we accept the minutes as they have been presented.

Cllr Campbell – I would like to **propose** a motion and to propose 2 amendments to those minutes - Page 8, Item 6 – relating to the chairman’s report. It currently says the Chairman, Cllr Lloyd, decided that instead of drawing on his recollection of last year he would talk about the whole of the current councils 4-year term that was drawing to a close, the details of the speech are attached to the minutes of the meeting. The first for the reasons I described at the beginning that the attachment should be removed and final statement sentence which says that it is attached should be deleted, so that’s proposed amendment 1 and if that is passed the statement will no longer be annexed, I’m suggesting the following wording is substituted for that sentence. “in doing so Cllr Lloyd made a scripted personal attack on three of his fellow Cllrs and several of the members of the public knowing that they would have no opportunity to respond, he also gave thanks to 4 grant giving bodies who had provided over £100,000.00 and listed his perceived achievements of the council over the 4 year term, thanked the office staff and caretakers, thanked the neighbourhood wardens and finally extended his thanks to the volunteers who help make Steyning a special place to live. This was **seconded** by Cllr S. Sullivan.

Cllr Norcross – All those in favour of Paul amendments

Cllr Campbell – Can we do them separately please chair.

Cllr Norcross – Those in favour of the first amendment - **Not Agreed, 5 for and 7 against**

Cllr Campbell – I suggest we don't need to vote on the second amendment.

Cllr Norcross – In which case, I would like to move to the motion to accept the minutes as they are.

Cllr Campbell – Chair, can I **propose** an amendment please to the wording, - to adopt the standard wording which is to agree the draft minutes as a true and fair record of the last annual parish meeting {18th March 2019}. Cllr Goldsmith **seconded**. **Agreed, 9 For, 2 against, 1 abstained**

- 2. PRESENTATION BY RAMPION OFFSHORE WIND COMPANY PUBLICITY TEAM – PROPOSED RAMPION II DEVELOPMENT.** The presentation was given by Vaughan Weighill - Project Manager, Chris Tomlinson – Stakeholder Manager and Eleri Wilce – Consents & Permitting Manager. Details of the text of the presentation plus the excellent accompanying slides are to be found via the link - <https://archive.org/details/2021-03-15-steyning-annual-parish-meeting>, and can be heard between minutes 16:50 and 38:30.

3. QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PRESENTATION FROM RAMPION

Q - Cllr Northam – On one of the slides there was a label windmill gallery, can you explain?

A - It was windmill quarry, there are no windmills proposed for that location.

Q – Cllr Lloyd - Taking in consideration the less windy days and I understand that output drops dramatically below 30 mph how many days in 2020 will the South Coast wind farm achieve its expected power output? And as there are something like 40 million vehicles on the road today and we are expected to stop buying new petrol cars in ten years' time, I was wondering what impact that will have on the number of windfarms around the UK to meet that demand?

A - The performance of the existing scheme has been met and exceeded the planned generation figures over the past year. When we assess this scheme there is a variable fluctuating energy source but that is the benefit of feeding into a grid system. When you project and predict it and we use all sorts of sophisticated computers modelling and statistical analysis, when you assess these as to how much you expect them to generate over a year, 10 years or 30 years our experience is you do tend to get a very accurate long term forecast, this is all about creating the energy over these long term periods that we are investing in to help offset other types of generation (carbon-based) would be required.

A - We beat our generation target by 15% in 2020, so we generated over 1600 gigawatt hours, we are looking at generating electricity for 350000 and last year it was 400000 homes so that's how good year it was last year.

A - Regarding Electric vehicles, - wind energy and electric vehicles really complement one another because the electric vehicles act as a giant battery in the night-time, so when we are all in bed sleeping you plug in your electric car and you have got the Economy 7 rate so its cheaper.

A - As a two-car electric household we plug our cars in overnight and enjoy a much-reduced tariff, there are also agile tariffs where you can programme your vehicles to charge when there is an excess in the grid which can help. That said there will be a requirement for increased generation going forward. They do complement each other, as it is a clean green energy, we do need to generate electricity from green sources. I think also we will look at battery storages and technologies, there are battery storage plans elsewhere in the country, plus solar and all those other technologies which go towards meeting those targets.

A - And of course when you have got a massive battery made of millions of small batteries in these cars, basically they are storing at night-time when no-one is using the power and then they are working on now how they can release it back into the grid where the demand for electricity goes up and perhaps the wind and the sun isn't as good.

Q - Mr Phil Bowell - One of the things I really tried to buy into was that any disruption of the ground, bearing in mind with Rampion 2 you're going through a huge area of the South Down National Park, you would make good – you haven't done that for rampion 1 yet under Truleigh Hill there is a large area of land you still haven't finished and it still looks nothing like it did before you started work – How can you convince the public that Rampion 2 will be different.

A - I was not involved with the specifics of Truleigh Hill - but I like to think that's an exception rather than the rule, we put a lot of work into re-instating a lot of the habitat over the chalk grasslands at Tottington. I know we have had delays at the substation end near Bolney. I had thought that had all been re-instated, I have seen reports and visuals showing before and after footage but that might be an exception that I'm not aware of.

A - We do have a commitment and a requirement to undertake a 10-year monitoring plan which is underway and where there are failures in the planting to re-instate and repair those areas – it is ongoing so we will take that away.

A - Not everything went perfectly on the original Rampion, I will acknowledge that, we did have some delays and issues with contractors which we need to manage more effectively on future projects. One of the keys things that we want to do at the end of rampion I was to take lessons learnt, not only with went right and wrong with our contractors but also involve the key statutory bodies so we had sessions with the SDNP Authority reps as well as WSCC who took the overall lead co-ordinating role on enforcing and making sure we delivered on our plan and promises so we did collate a lot of lessons learnt from that and we certainly want to improve and do the best possible job we can to make sure everything is re-instated in the event the second project would go ahead.

Q - Mr Trevor Cree - I think there's broad support for offshore wind farms what was said earlier about exceeding the targets in 2020, I haven't actually seen the figures myself even since rampion 1 came into play. But in 2015 I raised the point that the Rampion 1 route is very concerning because the Rampion 1 route went to Steepdown - the highest point above Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding, then it did a reverse track back over the river Adur then up to the highest point of Truleigh Hill. Its totally illogical and then it came down Tottingham Manor – a hugely steep slope and there was absolutely no need for that route, if it had to go down it could of gone Botolphs across the river and up the South Downs Way. Now my view is the whole logic of this not in my lifetime in 15 or 20 years is to place wind turbines along the South Downs, now of course it won't be allowed in the next 5 or 10 years, but I think it's a hidden agenda which is my personal opinion.

A - I can provide assurance that we are in no way contemplating any wind turbines on the South Downs and I think I'm right in saying that in the UK with National parks that would be a strong presumption against, If I'm honest it's not an easy ride trying to justify a temporary cable project which does not have the longer lasting impact of above ground developments. Honestly what has lead the identification of the original cable route and this current one which is different and I know that raises questions and concerns why can't we at least use what we have done before, it has been led by the grid electrical criteria, available capacities on the system, looking at avoiding where possible area of environmental sensitivities and not going too close to residence properties, taking account of technical criteria's so I know it can sometimes look a bit odd on a map when you see it but at Tottingham manor it was very much dictated by the gradients and safe working so it would minimise the amount of cutting into the hillside which result in very big chalk scars if we were to do that. There was method behind the madness that may not look that obvious, but a lot of specialist technical and environmental analysis are involved with planning the routes.

A – We employed turfing methodology at Tottingham Mound – the trickiest part of the route - we used Kew gardens seed bank specialists to help with seed harvesting and redistribution and regrowth.

Q – Mr Roger Brown - That is a very interesting picture you have shown, I agree with Phil, the earlier question about the scar that is still very evident on the top of Truleigh hill. There is huge white yellowish scar right across the whole escarpment, it looks nothing like your great picture I am afraid. I'm a huge fan of the wind farm itself it's a fantastic asset to Sussex and we are quite proud of it out at sea, but the restoration does need careful attention and that scar has been there for far too long and there has been a lot of industrial work going on that site for at least two years. Last autumn in the dark you could see flashing lights and activity up there, they are digging the trench time and time again.

A - Are we sure this is Rampion, I am not aware of any extra work that is happening, there are some other infrastructure projects going through the area?

Q - Roger – there is an electricity cable going through nearer Steyning itself, its right on the line of the Rampion cable – Please have a look. Also, a more minor point but on the Annington Lane where the cable crosses the road going down to the river, the hedges both sides have been re-hedged, there is quite a nasty plastic black mesh showing and spilling onto the roadside. Its degrading and falling apart. And finally, It was very windy last weekend and I do look at the website to check the output across the whole country and the Rampion output was Zero last weekend when it was very windy. So, does the wind farm switch off when there are gales forecast?

A – Not when they are forecast as they are automated so for less than 1% of the time when we get force 9 gales then the monitor on the top of each turbine will send a message to it to try and protect it and it pitched the blades out of the wind and the sale turns round the tower so it's not facing into the wind to prevent any damage being caused. It is a very rare occurrence for the whole scheme to be taking that mode.

A – Once you get above 25 meters per second {55mph} for sustained period the turbines do temporarily feather the blades and switch off. Its 0.1% of the total energy available in the year that is lost through that, there always been a bit of cost benefit argument with turbine manufacturers you could engineer turbines even more robustly so they can operate to 26 or 27 meter per second but the addition weight and cost the balance would not work. If its above 25m per second or there are strong variable gusts its self-preservation which does not last longer than a few hours. I am surprised if it went completely down to zero because even over a certain site there is a variation of wind speed. We will ask about that.

4. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman – Cllr Norcross, thanked the Rampion representatives for their presentation, and then gave her annual report for year 2020/21, but also included a brief review from the previous year 2019/20 which due to Covid had not been reported previously as there had been no 2020 Annual Parish Meeting. The Full text of the statement is appended to these minutes and can be heard via the link - <https://archive.org/details/2021-03-15-steyning-annual-parish-meeting>, and can be heard between minutes 1:00:50 and 1:09:30.

5. QUESTION FOR THE CHAIR

None

6. RESPONSES TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON PARISH MATTERS

The Chair read out a statement handed into the office by a Steyning resident who wanted to remain anonymous – it was in support of the Clerk's office and in support of what he believed was the reasoning behind the Full Council EOM which was to take place immediately after the conclusion of this Annual Parish Meeting. This statement can be heard in Full via the video link and between minutes 1:10:35 and 1:12:10

Q – Mr Trevor Cree – “At the Annual Parish Meeting dated the 18th March 2019 the then SPC Chairman read out his Report covering the previous 4-year term of office 2015 - 2019. Within that report the SPC Chairman made a number of serious and inaccurate accusations, not least the fact that there had been ‘hundreds’ of Freedom of Information requests during the previous 4-year term.

The Minutes and audio recording of that Annual Meeting records my statement that the SPC Chair had said was a 'great exaggeration'. The SPC Chairman responded by saying that it was not an exaggeration but that he had extrapolated the figures from a log that had been kept by the Office. I responded by saying 'Isn't that a dangerous thing to do?'

*The 2021 SPC file of Freedom of Information requests that occurred between the October 2014 and August 2019 officially records, rather than 'hundreds' of Fol requests, a total of just **37**. Of that number many are related to simple requests for audio recordings and minor issues that were dealt with very quickly by the various SPC Clerks. However other Fol requests were far more significant and were fully justified because of their seriousness including the Steyning Area Youth Service Charity accumulation of over £40,000, the withholding of SWAB Housing Focus Group member register of interests for over 8 months, exceptional delays in the posting of SWAB Steering Group minutes, the withholding of the SWAB draft neighbourhood plan document from the public, the submission of a secret SPC submission to the Information Commissioner's Office that libelled and defamed 6 Steyning residents without their knowledge, and so on and so on.*

On behalf of the Steyning Parish Council will the current SPC Chair draw a line under this particular misinformation and now take the opportunity to apologise to the residents of Steyning for the gross exaggeration of the number of Freedom of Information requests that appeared in the 18th March 2019 SPC Chairman's Report and that has inflamed resident opinion ever since.

A - Cllr Norcross – My response is largely that a large part of your question was dealt with at the beginning of the meeting. I understand that Tim will probably speak on this briefly, my view is very much that we have been over this already, I am certainly not going to be making any apology or any comments at all because I do not feel that I am equipped to do so at this point in time.

A - Tim – I received this on the 11th of March, so I have not had the opportunity to interrogate any files and also because of COVID I can't get into the office. As soon as COVID is over I think we should draw a line under it. We will come up with evidence to support claim that I made at that meeting.

Q – Mr Trevor Cree – Yes. When Cllr Lloyd made his report in March 2019 the SPC submission to the ICO was confidential, it was still basically secret. Between June 2018, it took me 15 months of persistent efforts and with the help of the ICO in Sept 2019 I gained access to the SPC submission to the ICO in other words the accusations. Now as far as the supposed evidence against myself there is no evidence there is just 3 mentions that I and another of the accused mentioned 2 questions I ask in public meetings so I have been liable and defamed and people in Steyning have the opinion that I collaborated with others to bring the council down by any means it's a criminal offense accusing someone of treason so I won't draw a line under it and I will pursue this and I will hopefully have a meeting with the Chair and Vice chair as a first step so that I can gain a full retraction and apology.

A – Cllr Norcross – I would just say that I am not a lawyer but my understanding of liable and deformation is that it would have to be public for it to be libellous of defaming anybody.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 21st March 2022

8. NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING TO BE FOLLOWED BY AN EOM OF THE FULL COUNCIL AT 9PM

Signed 

Date 21st March 2022

Chairman

A Recording of this meeting can be found using the following link:

<https://archive.org/details/2021-03-15-steyning-annual-parish-meeting>