



FAIR OAK & HORTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, SO50 7GL ☎ (023) 8069 2403

✉ enquiries@fairoak-pc.gov.uk 🌐 www.fairoak-pc.gov.uk

📱 @fairoakandhortonheathparishcouncil 📺 fairoakandhortonheath

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

held on Monday 16 October 2023

at the Parish Office, 2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak

P – present, Pt – part of the meeting, Ab – absent, Ap – apologies

Pt	Cllr Anderson	Ap	Cllr Couldrey	P	Cllr Meech
P	Cllr Barrett	P	Cllr Douglas	P	Cllr Scott
P	Cllr Bird	Ap	Cllr Forfar	P	Cllr Smith
P	Cllr Broomfield	Ap	Cllr Higby	P	Cllr Stupple
Ab	Cllr Chivuchi	P	Cllr Marsh	Ap	Cllr Tennent

Officers in attendance: Mel Stephens, Clerk, Michelle Leadbitter-Allen, Deputy Clerk

Apologies: Cllrs Couldrey, Forfar Higby, and Tennent

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Stupple Minute No. 65.

58 MINUTES (PAPER A)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 18 September 2023, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record; and
- (b) That the delegated planning decisions of the week ending 3 and 22 September 2023 be noted.

59 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair wished the staff who were taking part in the Wildlife Trust Big Walk good luck and encouraged Members to support them in this activity. The Clerk was instructed to circulate the sponsorship pages to members.

The Chair reminded Members of the Remembrance Sunday Service at Fair Oak Square on the 12 November 2023.

Action: M Stephens

60 CLERKS UPDATE

The Clerk gave a general update on Parish Council activities during the previous month and forthcoming events.

The presentation was attached at **Appendix 1** to these minutes.

61 PLANNING APPLICATION:

To council considered the following planning application: -

Application No: [F/23/95844](#)

Address: Stoke Park Farm, Bishopstoke

Description: Use of agricultural land as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for recreational purposes

The Clerk had prepared a draft response, as set out below which was approved by the Council for submission to Eastleigh Borough Council: -

'First and foremost, the Parish Council supports the efforts of Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) to create green spaces that enhance the quality of life for our community members. Natural greenspaces offer numerous benefits, including improved air quality, increased biodiversity, recreational opportunities, and enhanced aesthetic appeal. As well as the importance of providing such spaces to promote the health and well-being of residents.

Notwithstanding this, the primary objective of the SANG creation, that of attracting residents away from the New Forest and South Downs Special Protection Areas (SPAs) should be at the forefront of all aspects of the project. Its imperative that the new space created is attractive enough to ensure repeat visits to the SANG rather than visiting the SPAs.

It is for these reasons that the SANG creation should take account the following considerations to ensure that it truly serves the best interests of the local community and the natural environment as well as meeting Natural England guidelines for the creation of SANGs.

Location: The Parish Council consider that the site selection for creation of a SANG is appropriate given its proximity to nearby recreational sites such as Stoke Park Woods and Upper Barn Copse, as mature woodland sites, they are able to offer visitors a more exciting visitor experience with the changing seasons. The topography of the land also has existing features such as streams, hills and picturesque views. Natural England's guidelines state that "an undulating landscape is preferred to a flat one". Being ex-agricultural land mature hedgerows and grassland also provide established habitat. The location also offers greater access opportunities for both adjoining parishes. In short, NE's guidelines that a SANG aim to replicate visitor experience of the SPA could be better met at Stoke Park Farm. However, whilst this site does offer many opportunities, there are several issues which would need due consideration to safeguard established habitats nearby, as well as support existing community infrastructure. This is set out below in more detail.

Other potential sites in the Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath local area such as land off Allington Lane, would not be supported. This is largely because this Council believes, the One Horton Heath (OHH) development, given its significant size and impact on greenfield land, should have its own nature mitigation strategy and not one that aims to offset visitations to the SPAs. Furthermore, given the significant environmental impacts the 2,500 dwelling development site will have, EBCs proposal to create a solar farm at Allington Lane, to create power to non-domestic properties on the OHH site is fully supported, to ensure that EBC reduces the energy demand and reliance on unsustainable energy sources as well as building a more sustainable community.

Statutory & Public Consultee Comments: the Council notes that to date (5 October), the application has received approximately 20 public objections to the application. The majority of these, whilst largely supportive of the SANG creation, raise concerns regarding the car park location and access via Sewall Drive. Bishopstoke Parish Council make valid representations regarding primary access via Sewell Drive, being unadopted, there is danger that the road could be used as overspill parking for the SANG with no enforcement opportunities. Furthermore, the road is narrow and has potential for health and safety issues with increased traffic, irresponsible parking causing dangerous obstructions. We note that Hampshire County Council highways also express similar concerns regarding this road.

Hampshire Highways, Hampshire Countryside and the Ramblers Association all recommend refusal on the access proposals as well as the impact on bridleway 724, with the legal right of access called into question. Has EBC's legal department made a satisfactory determination in this regard?

For these reasons, the Parish Council, requests that EBC, in consultation with key stakeholders, undertake a collaborative workshop session to explore, in greater detail, the access and car parking arrangements on the site, whilst meeting Natural England's parking requirements. Greater thought should be given to greener access to the site as well as extension of other nearby parking sites such as the nearby allotment and cemetery sites.

The lack of collaborative thinking around this issue and the minimal approach given to consultation and engagement is disappointing and rather short-sighted of the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

We note that the LPA has stated that it has widely consulted with local wildlife organisations, we query the extent of that and suggest that more extensive dialogue is also needed to resolve the concerns of the Forestry Commission and also engagement is undertaken with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Most significantly, we also note that (at time of writing) the absence of Natural England's (NE) comments on the planning portal. As NE is a key statutory consultee and expert in SANG creation, this is a crucial representation to have before any decisions are to be made by the LPA, to do so without their clear support for the scheme would be

questionable. The lack of any appraisal from NE also puts other stakeholders at a disadvantage, as NE's opinion on the suitability of the proposal or not, is not available to guide those less knowledgeable on the environmental merits or shortcomings of the proposal.

Environmental Impact Assessment: whilst environmental impact assessments to evaluate the potential consequences of the proposed SANG have been undertaken, further work is required in this regard. The Parish notes that the Forestry Commission suggests a sustainable visitor management plan to be produced to protect the ancient woodland at Stoke Park Wood. The Council supports the comments made by the Ecologist and Arboriculturist that more sporadic trees are required on the site to increase foraging and shelter opportunities for birds. We also note the Ecologists comments regarding the need for updated dormice surveys and suggest that these be undertaken in consultation with Hampshire Doormice Group.

The Parish supports precautionary mitigation measures to ensure there are no negative impacts on existing species before construction and during the operation of the SANG. It is noted that in the Landscape & Ecological Management Plan dated 15 September 2023, prepared by Eamonn Byrne Landscape Architects (EBLA) that 14 metres of existing hedgerow will be lost as part of the proposed access along Sewell Drive but 204m of new hedgerow will be provided post development. What is not made clear in this document is that the 204m hedgerow will take some time to establish and additional mitigation measures will be required to offset this whilst the hedgerows establish.

The EBLA document states that biodiversity net gain of over 59% will be created on site providing resources of nesting and foraging birds, bats and invertebrates. Given the size of the proposed SANG the Parish Council would request that a higher target is reached with particular regard to: -

- Increasing the number of proposed scattered trees on site, with a robust maintenance plan.
- Increasing wildflower swathes/meadow
- Increasing specialist habitat features

A robust maintenance and management plan(s) for the above is required.

Community/Stakeholder Engagement: It is essential to involve the local community in the planning and design process of the SANG. Public consultations including design workshops and feedback should be actively sought to ensure that the greenspace aligns with the needs and preferences of the residents. Community input can help identify potential concerns and suggest improvements that might not have been considered otherwise. The Parish wishes to express its disappointment at the lack of collaborative approach. Making decisions that do not involve stakeholder dialogue and input, but rather presenting a done deal, does not provide an equitable

approach to determining local land use. A more rigorous stakeholder consultation about what the local community would like to see and accept on the site was needed, rather than the community being presented with predetermined plans. At no point were the public invited to a workshop gathering views and creating opportunities for the codesign of the site.

The Parish also wishes to express its concerns regarding the timescales of the project. Particularly given that other SANG creation across Hampshire have taken a more detailed/robust approach. Does the LPA have confidence that it will have addressed all concerns, particularly surrounding access before May 2024?

Accessibility and Inclusivity: The greenspace should be designed to be accessible to all community members, regardless of age or physical ability. This includes well-maintained pathways, seating areas, and facilities that cater to a diverse population. Natural England in the guidelines state “the SANG should be attractive to visitors on foot” the Parish queries whether EBC have given sufficient thought to connectiveness of local footpaths and access points.

Further consultation and discussion needs to be undertaken with key stakeholders with Fair Oak Parish boundary of the site, such as the local pub, to explore the provision of car parking on this side of the wider site. This would relieve the stress and pressure on the Bishopstoke access point. Multiple access points need to be explored as a preferred option. This would meet Natural England’s guidelines on “supply of a choice of routes”.

Natural England’s guidelines also state that “SANG (must) allow for pet owners to let dogs run freely over a significant part of the walk. Access on SANG should be largely unrestricted with both people and their pets being able to freely roam”. With this in mind, and to ensure the protection of nearby protected species, the Parish requests that sufficient boundary treatment be installed to prevent dogs from disturbing other species and habitats on site.

Long-Term Maintenance Plan: A clear and sustainable plan for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the greenspace is vital to ensure its continued attractiveness and functionality. The Parish queries whether EBC have sufficient in-house resource to support the above. Security of the site also needs greater consideration. As well as restricted access to discourage unauthorised encampments and antisocial behaviour.

Other considerations: areas outside the SANG on the site. Great Crested Newts, food production, full business plan and financial feasibility statement for the site to give confidence that the site will be sustainable long-term.

In conclusion, the Parish Council supports the establishment of the SANG at Stoke Park Farm. However, it is essential that the planning process is thorough, transparent, and inclusive to address potential concerns and maximize the benefits for all residents and visitors.

The Parish Council kindly requests that the planning authority carefully consider these points during the evaluation and determination of the planning application. We also request that a more robust collaborative approach be undertaken with both Bishopstoke and Fair Oak Parish Councils in the development of the site going forward.'

The members commended the Clerk and Cllr Marsh on the comprehensive response. As such, it was: -

RESOLVED:

That the response as set out above, to the application be submitted to Eastleigh Borough Council.

Action: M Stephens

62 CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

Members considered the conclusion of the audit report completed by the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP.

Members congratulated the Finance Officer for all her hard work in preparing the audit submission.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

63 FINANCE REPORT (REPORT D)

The Council considered the finance report which highlighted the Council's latest budgetary position.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted: and
- b) That the BACs payments be approved.

Action: J Cahill

64 COMMUNITY CAFÉ LEASE

Cllr Stupple disclosed a disclosable pecuniary interest on the grounds that he was a trustee of the Fountain Cafe. He did not participate in the discussion and did not vote.

The Council considered the draft lease agreement for the community café between the Council and Fountain Café CIC as prepared by the Council's solicitor.

The lease would be for the site at Community Café, Shorts Road, Fair Oak. The lease would run for 5 years from date of commencement with a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum. The Council as Landlord would carry the full repair and maintenance obligation.

The Council agreed that the café, community space and facilities provision at New Century Park aligned with the Council's adopted corporate plan and that the Fountain Café CIC business case aligned with the overall objective of the Council.

As such, it was:-

RESOLVED:

- a) That the lease between the Council and Fountain Café CIC at the café premises at Shorts Road, Fair Oak as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed;
- b) That the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be given delegated authority to make any necessary amendments to the terms and conditions, following final negotiations with the CIC; and
- c) That the final lease be signed by two Councillors on behalf of the Council.

65 NEW EXCAVATOR PURCHASE

The Council considered the proposal for the redistribution of funds allocated to equipment purchases to allow an increase in the assigned budget from £10,000 to £11,995 for the purchase of a second-hand excavator.

The Operations Manager explained that the excavator would contribute to improved maintenance across the parish, reduce the cost to Council of hiring an excavator, and support the sustainable procurement policy, by purchasing second-hand, supporting the circular economy and increasing productivity.

The members approved the request.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That an increase of £1,995 be allocated to the budget assigned for the excavator purchase; and
- (b) That the contract award for the supply of the excavator be awarded to the recommended provider, B. Miller & Sons Commercial Dealers.

66 NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Standing Order 38, Cllr Marsh of the Climate Change Task & Finish Group, moved the following motion: -

“Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK, and around the world. The global temperature has already increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and—alongside this—the natural world has reached crisis point, with [28% of plants and animals](#) threatened with extinction. In fact, the UK is [one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world](#) as more than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline.

Climate change remains a major concern for voters with 66% of people (according to YouGov) expressing they are ‘worried about climate change and its effects’. Alongside this, the popularity of Sir David Attenborough’s *Save Our Wild Isles* initiative demonstrates public concern that UK wildlife is being destroyed at terrifying speed.

Climate & Ecology Bill

The Climate & Ecology Bill, a private member’s bill currently before the House of Commons, seeks to address the challenges that this situation poses by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature-positive future.

Based on the latest science, the Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was goal agreed to at COP15, via the [Kunming-Montreal Framework](#) (22 December 2022); and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with a fair share of the remaining global carbon budget to give the strongest chance of limiting global heating to 1.5C, which was the goal agreed to at COP21, via the [Paris Agreement](#) (12 December 2015).

By bridging the gap between the UK Government’s current delivery, and what has been agreed at international levels, Britain has a chance to be a world leader on the environment; seizing the opportunities of the clean energy transition, including green jobs and reduced energy bills; and boosting the UK’s food and energy security.

This Council noted that:-

The [Climate and Ecology Bill](#), which has been introduced in the UK Parliament on four occasions since 2020, including most recently in the House of Commons 10 May 2023. The Bill is backed by **[168]** cross-party MPs and Peers, **[237]** local authorities, alongside the support of eminent scientists, such as Sir David King; environmental NGOs, such as The Wildlife Trusts and CPRE; businesses, such as The Co-operative Bank; and 30,000 members of the public.

The Bill would require the UK Government to develop and deliver a new environmental strategy, which would include:

- 1 Delivering a joined-up environmental plan, as the crises in climate and nature are deeply intertwined, requiring a plan that considers both together;
- 2 Reducing emissions in line with 1.5°C, ensure emissions are reduced rapidly, for the best chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C;
- 3 Not only halting but also reversing the decline in nature, setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030;

- 4 Taking responsibility for our overseas footprint, both emissions and ecological;
- 5 Prioritising nature in decision-making and ending fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible.
- 6 Ensuring that no-one is left behind, by providing for retraining for people currently working in fossil fuel industries; and
- 7 Giving people a say in finding a fair way forward through an independent and temporary *Climate & Nature Assembly*, representative of the UK population, an essential tool for bringing public opinion along with the unprecedented pace of change required.

This Council is tackling Climate Change through the Climate Change Task and Finish Group, its extensive Climate Change Action Plan and Corporate Action Plan, and through the introduction of our Sustainability Policies and subsequent strategies to create a better future for our community and the planet. It is an opportunity for the council to make a difference at local, national and international levels and we must act decisively and timely to deal with the climate crisis.

Cllr Bird seconded the motion. All agreed the motion with one abstention.

As such, it was: -

RESOLVED

That the Council: -

- a) Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;
- b) Inform local residents, and local press/media of this decision;
- c) Write to **Paul Homes MP**, to inform him that this motion has been passed, urging him to sign up to support the CE Bill, or thanking them for already doing so; and
- d) **Write** to [Zero Hour](#), the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the CE Bill, expressing its support (campaign@zerohour.uk).

Due to the challenging narrative of climate change, members requested that the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Cllr Stupple collaborate on the outbound communications of the Council's support of the Climate and Ecology Bill in an effort to promote a positive message to residents. A draft of the communications would be circulated to the Chairman, Cllr Marsh and Cllr Stupple before publication for agreement.

Action: Clerk, Deputy Clerk & Cllr Stupple

67 WORK PROGRAMME

68 RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

Signed Chairman.

This was all the business and the meeting closed at 6.42 pm.

Appendix 1: Clerks Update Presentation