

Notes of the Public Forum
5th March 2013

Mr Faulkner and Mr Mitchell attended to provide information about the planning application 13/00185/MFUL to create a solar farm on Bampton Down at Buckhayes Farm. The company, which had requested permission for wind turbines, has now surveyed a greater area, a total of 36 acres, on which it has requested permission for 25,000 solar panels. Having been previously attributed with being the windiest site available it is now officially the sunniest site available. An industrial size development is planned, surrounded by one mile of security fencing standing two metres high and fitted with cameras and possibly lighting. The site is bounded by the Old Tiverton Road, the road to Huntsham and with footpaths and bridleways on the other sides. The applicants state that the development is relevant to rural diversification. The site is good agricultural land, which the applicants, through the use of a desk-top survey, have tried to downgrade to 3B status to fit in with planning requirements. Although the report states the site would produce 6 megawatts annually it is thought that this is supposed to be the hourly production which would translate into provision for a maximum of 900 homes from this development. The Bampton Down site is visible from Exmoor, Dartmoor and the Exe Valley. The development, should it be granted, would exist for up to 25 years, and there is no exit strategy or obligation for the developers to remove redundant equipment from the site. Neither would there be provision of local employment nor any benefit to the local economy in real terms.

Cllr Tanner, as Chair observed that this was a waste of good land important to food production whereas solar panels could easily be sited on brownfield sites and roofing on industrial estates. Cllr Weston stated that the development would only exacerbate the level of flooding, already a massive issue for the surrounding area without further building. Cllr Gilmour asked Cllr Stanley to take a clear message to MDDC Planning that these applications are not appropriate. Cllr Stanley agreed and added that MDDC are in the process of developing a policy in respect of the same. It was agreed to write to the National Farmers Union through Neil Parish to ascertain their position on the matter.

Mr Alan Burton, a resident of School Close, attended with regard to the Devonshire Homes building works at School Close. Devonshire Homes had failed to fulfil a promise to create a continuous pavement to the school and the previous week two children had very nearly been run over by a truck working on the site. Neither had the school gates been relocated, again an initiative to ensure the safety of the community. The existing school gates were being closed during the day to stop trucks using the area as a turning space which had resulted in trucks reversing the length of School Close, although without reversing alarms.

The pavements and drains are now showing signs of collapse because of the weight of the trucks. The site works beginning at 7am in contravention of agreed working times further compounded the situation. Cllr Ray Stanley informed the meeting that he had already written to Devonshire Homes in response to complaints made to him, although he had received further complaints since then. Cllr Gilmour had also contacted Planning at MDDC regarding trucks accessing the site via the village when the Planning Consent obliged them to use the road from Black Cat. Both the Building Officer and Devonshire Homes are to be made aware of the situation.

Mrs Fagg attended to give an account of the Parish Paths Partnership, known as P3, which Bampton joined in 1993. Money to support the work of P3 is supplied by Devon County Council and held by BTC on behalf of the group. The local P3 group carries out an annual survey of local footpaths, bridleways and UCRs (unsurfaced county roads) as a condition of being a member of the national scheme. The objective of the group being to resolve footpath problems reported by the public and to maintain stiles and signs. The local P3 group also liaise with Devon County Council Rights of Way staff regarding problem resolution and essential training to enhance their work. Cllr Tanner thanked Mrs Fagg for her time.

**The Minutes of the Meeting of Bampton Town Council
Held on March 5th 2013.**

1. Members present were Edward Tanner (Acting Chair) Rodney Baker, Francis Stoner, Keith Pitt, Jean Pope, Rachel Gilmour, Jack Ward, William Weston. Apologies were received from Brian Smith. Councillors Polly Colthorpe and Ray Stanley were also present.
2. The minutes of the meeting held on February 5th 2013 were agreed to be a true record.
3. Matters arising from those minutes were; the dog waste bins will be installed by early April; the hedge trimming at Mr Brown's bungalow by the Millennium Green has taken place; the Ball Park is covered by Public Liability Insurance and will remain so as the Damage Policy was considered to expensive. This will be reconsidered when the policy comes up for renewal; the work required on the stream at Manor Mill and New Buildings has been carried out by Devon County Council.
4. Cllr Stanley reported that there would be no increase in the Council Tax apart from that requested by the police and fire authorities. Cllr Colthorpe informed the meeting that the County Council elections were coming up with the last round of meeting now taking place. An assessment is underway as to how many people's houses were flooded in Bampton and accurate numbers are required. Cllr Colthorpe would like people to email her directly (or through the Clerk to the Council if email is not accessible)with details.
5. Finance.
The car park takings were given as 11th February £66.71, 25th February £56.75 March 5th £31.25 with the total collected since 8th September 2012 now standing at £1,193.85.

Monies incoming for February 2013.

6 th Christmas trees	£10.00
13 th Car park	£54.00
27 th Car park	£61.45

Bank accounts at 27th February 2013.

HSBC	£11019.01
Scottish Widows	£36,457.72

Outgoings for February 2013.

MDDC (Two elections)	£5572.08
M.Morgan (Toilet cleaning)	£ 310.00
MDDC (Rates)	£ 31.00
MDDC (Rates)	£45.00
P.Beckwith (Bampton Fair)	£448.00
J.Eyre (Acting Town Clerk)	£226.00
H.Berridge (Website)	£100.00

6. Planning.

Ref: 13/00146/FULL 4 Newton Court. No objection.

Ref: 13/00243/FULL 22 Frog Street. No objection.

Mid Devon Plan. Planning permission has been granted for six industrial units at Scott's development. Wendy Lunel intends to ask the Planning meeting that permission is granted for these to operate as offices or light workshops. There is currently the possible that they may get permission for warehousing and distribution. The Town Council were happy for Mrs Lunel to represent their interests at this meeting.

7. a. Five tenders were received to re-roof the Pump House and after a considered discussion the contract was awarded to Ernie Blake; proposed by Cllr Pope and carried on a show of hands.

b. The meeting at the Millennium Green took place to discuss the next stage of the work to be carried out there. Mrs Hicks had agreed the work with the contractor prior to this meeting without reference to BTC. Once the kerbing and others works are completed, along with the re-roofing of the Pump House, the area should look very tidy.

Mrs Hicks acknowledged that the volunteers constituted a 'working group' and not a formally accepted sub-committee of the Millennium Green trust and as such were not covered by insurance when working on the site. Cllr Ward had read through the file alluding to the origins and work of the Millennium Green Trust, for which the Members of Bampton Town Council are Trustees, and recognised the need for a formally acknowledged sub-committee as the Terms of Reference do not recognise a working group to have any authority with regard to deciding how money should be spent or making decisions generally. The Councillors recognised the need for greater accountability, and the need for independent fundraising to support new initiatives, in a sub-committee with responsibility for the continued existence of the Millennium Green as a green space and play area in Bampton.

Cllr Pitt noted that a lot of the work that had been carried out had been done by volunteers and that this should be encouraged in the future whenever possible. It was also thought that all work should be agreed by BTC before any money was spent.

Proposal. Cllr Ward proposed that the Millennium Green Trust should remain as a charity with BTC as the sole Trustee. Trustees should create a sub-committee under strict terms of reference to manage the Millennium Green site. The sub-committee may have members co-opted only Bampton Town Council/Millennium Green trustees. Seconded by Jean Pope, carried by a show of hands.

c. Cllr Pitt advised the meeting that several sub-committees exist for which names had been requested and not provided. The Flood group and other sub-committees will be discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at this point to hear a report from Steve Blasby the Snow Warden.

Mr Blasby had stepped in to the role when Bampton was without a snow warden after Mr Terry Knagg stood down. Mr Blasby is now recognised as Snow Warden and chief point of contact by Devon County Council following a meeting with Steve Leigh of DCC in February, since when there have been four call-outs and many very positive responses received regarding the service.

Of the two gritting machines; the larger is kept in the Pump House and the pedestrian machine is kept in the Fruit Shop. Mr Blasby asks that this is also moved to the Pump House along with any remaining grit supply. Approximately half of the supply has been used so far and this will be topped up by DCC when it falls below 50% of the total amount. All of the salt and grit bins have been mapped.

Preparations are in-hand for the next Winter season with volunteer training and gritting plans. This may include the possibility of salt being left for individuals to grit outside their homes. The pedestrian gritter had proved difficult to use but an alternative way of working had been agreed which eased the problems.

The Chair thanked Mr Blasby for his time and commented that this service was a great asset to the town.

The meeting reopened.

d. A meeting is due to be held in the Community Hall on March 7th regarding Bampton in Bloom. Cllr Tanner asked the councillors to attend and commented that new people were needed to bring Bampton in Bloom back to life and provide even more reason for visitors to come to the town.

e. The figures for last year's Bampton Fair were given as £3,669.89 in outgoings and £3,918.82 in income, leaving a profit of £248.93 excess.

Of the excess it is usual for the Tolly, the Rotary and the Town Council to take one third each, although the Town Council have to bear all the costs. It was agreed that BTC retain this year's excess.

The Rotary's three-year contract has now expired. They are willing to continue to support the fair by annual arrangement with specific responsibilities to be agreed. The matting for the car park was a particularly great expense last year and it may prove economical to invest in this in the future.

f. A meeting had been held with Mark Sealey regarding the grass-cutting contract. It was agreed that all areas should be cut eleven times in the coming year for the same price as last year. The Millennium Green and the allotments were removed from the schedule as these are not the responsibility of BTC budget. This has reduced the overall cost by two-thirds.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday April 2nd 2013.