

Teffont Parish Council

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Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held in Teffont Village Hall

**30th November 2023 at
18:00**

MEETING CONVENED: 18:00

Those present:

Parish Councillors: Sonia O'Donnell (Acting Chair) T. Deane. E.Worth. R.Evans. C.Bell

Also in attendance: M. Honeybourne (Parish Clerk). There were 11 members of the public present.

There were no questions or statements from the members of the public present.

MEETING MINUTES

23.08.01

Resolution to receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor Blackford (work commitments).

The Chair proposed apologies should be accepted.

Proposed: EW Seconded: SO Carried: Unanimously

Resolved: Council resolved to accept apologies from Cllr Blackford for his absence from the meeting.

23.05.02

Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations

A) Declarations: Councillor Worth declared an interest in agenda item 23.11.03

B) Dispensations: None required

Councillor Worth stated her declaration of interest to agenda item 23.11.03 and informed the Council she had participated in a feasibility study for the project.

Councillor Worth informed the meeting she would need to leave the following the presentation to prevent a conflict of interest. Councillor Deane asked if it was possible for Councillor Worth to stay to answer questions. This was refused by the Clerk

23.08.06

Planning Application PL/2023/08472

The Acting Chair suspended standing orders to allow the applicants to make a 30 minute presentation for their planning application for an 8.5mw battery storage station and to allow the participation of the members of public. The 2 applicants representing Quinbrook, were introduced by Councillor Worth. Councillor Worth explained the presentation would be followed by a Q&A session.

Quinbrook explained they were affiliate members of the project and explained they are a team of specialist product originators, developers, engineers and construction management and they facilitate Quinbrook infrastructure, who are fund managers for renewable technologies. The Applicants stated Quinbrook are an investment manager. They are not the capital holders, they manage capital on behalf of other people. They have a long extensive history in the renewable energy market and have a pride in social and environmental governance which they are always trying to improve in all their projects. The applicants explained the ever-increasing issues on energy demand and the rising risk of energy security plus an increasing supply demand across the UK puts further pressure on the national grid. The anticipated increase in electricity demand could be up by 150% by 2030 which will put a lot of pressure on our networks. By 2050 the demand could double and put increased pressure on the National Grid. There is a need for more support for the national grid. As fossil fuel power stations decommission, the reliability and security of energy becomes more uncertain, more renewables are needed to offset what we are losing. Battery storage of renewables, solar and wind becomes imperative to support energy demand. By 2035 the investigations of the grid etc. indicate we need to store 4 x times more energy than we currently do and by 2060, 6 x times more. Decommissioning fossil fuel power stations increases the risk of the grid instability. The network is ageing and renewable energy is coming on slower. Battery storage is currently inadequate to support the future network demand. Batteries offer resilience to the network and can offer stability when demand alters. Batteries can be used to support during blips in energy supply. Teffont, as a site is, in close proximity to the substation which is extremely useful and enables the battery to support the local area more easily.

The presentation paused for technical questions. There were 6 questions from members of the public based on the location and visual appearance of the site. The Acting Chair asked Councillors and the public to hold further questions until the end of the presentation. Councillor Worth attempted to leave the meeting after 21 minutes as questions had begun. The Acting Chair brought the meeting to order and Councillor Worth remained until the end of the presentation.

The members of the public questioned the Applicants on the visual appearance of the battery station and the impact this would have in a conservation village in an AONB. The meeting became unruly and Councillor Deane interjected to restore order. Councillor Worth tried to remove herself from the meeting. Councillor Worth stated she was in support of renewable energy. Councillor Worth left the meeting at 18:36. Questions continued from the public with concerns focused on the visual impact, the accuracy of the images of the site location, the landscaping, the proximity of the battery station to the substation, noise levels of the battery storage units, lighting, the possibility of enlarging the site and the direct benefits for Teffont.

The Applicants explained they have been through a pre-planning application with Wiltshire Council and adhered to all the recommendations. They have also consulted experts from the AONB, Drainage engineers, Flood risk, Highways and landscaping specialists. They have agreed to use mature planting to disguise the units. The Applicants made it very clear future expansion of the site was not permissible under this application. The height of the battery units will be the same as the current substation because the site will be excavated to drop by 1 metre.

The Applicants were very willing to answer all questions raised by the members of the public.

Standing orders were reinstated by the Acting Chair to enable the meeting to continue

	<p>without further public intervention and to enable Councillors to consider the application.</p> <p>Councillor Bell questioned the Applicants on the time it will take to connect the battery units to the grid (possibly 12 years). The applicant explained there were zombie projects clogging up the system and the likelihood was connectivity in 1 -2 years.</p> <p>Councillor Deane stated the power system for the country is fragile. In his opinion, the power system in Teffont is the same, so from the community's point of view, connecting this battery storage unit to the national grid has got to be a positive thing. The land the battery storage unit will be situated on belongs to the Teffont Estate which is rich in assets but poor in income and liquidity. Councillor Deane stated, in his opinion, the new generation of the family who own the Teffont Estate are looking for new ways to generate income and as a community we should support the initiative. Councillor Deane recognised his opinion is not shared by everyone in the community. Councillor Deane noted the use of concrete on site and permeable road surfaces and highlighted the drainage and flood issues in the area. Councillor Deane suggested excess water could be drained into the lake at Evias, therefore, minimising risk. Councillor Deane was satisfied with the construction materials to be used. He further noted concerns raised about advancing technology which may reduce the size of battery units in the future and stated technology will change and things may be adapted in the future. Councillor Deane stated visual impact was a problem and the photo montages do not demonstrate a clear view of the units in reality. He noted, the mature planting will take 4-5 years to provide adequate screening. Councillor Deane stated whilst he is aware of the substation, he never notices it as he drives passed and it has become part of the street furniture. The overall community view, and drawback, is the visual impact and he advised the applicants they may need to do more work to satisfy the community. The applicants thanked Councillor Deane for his observations.</p> <p>Councillor Evans enquired when works may begin. The applicants thought a realistic date would be 2025. Councillor Evans recommended planting of the site could start in advance of 2025. The applicants stated it would be considered. Councillor Deane wished to remind the community that Teffont Parish Council are consultees only of Wiltshire Council Planning department and they may choose to recognise the comments of Teffont Parish Council or ignore them. There is nothing mandatory that Wiltshire Council need to heed regarding Teffont Parish Council comments.</p> <p>Teffont Parish Council moved to vote on the proposal. Teffont Parish Council voted to support Planning Application PL/2023/09559 with the conditions that further full investigations into lowering the site further than the proposed 1 metre should be made and mature screening works should be made well in advance of construction works, using mature planting.</p> <p>Proposed: TD Seconded: SO Carried: Unanimously Resolved: Teffont Parish Council fully support the application and will post the comments on the Wiltshire Council planning website by the consultation deadline.</p>
23.05.10	Meeting Closed. 18:50
	<p>Items for the next Agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC
	<p>Date of next meeting: 12th December 2023 Teffont Village Hall at 18:00</p> <p>Note: The Village Hall is open for 30 minutes prior to the start of any public meeting for questions from any resident.</p>