

## **BICKER PARISH COUNCIL**

### **DRAFT Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7pm In the Gedney Room, Bicker Village Hall**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Bateson - Chair  
Cllr Kelly – Vice Chair  
Cllr Carrott  
Cllr Pell  
Cllr Mountain  
Clerk – Alison Delaney

#### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

Cllr Bateson opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

About 15 residents were present.

A resident notified the Parish Council that a group of residents had a virtual meeting in the village hall with PACE about the Gauntlet Solar Farm and BESS. A planning application would be made soon.

The resident wanted to know how the residents could engage with the Parish Council when the planning application arrives, could the Parish Council hold an extra ordinary meeting to discuss it?

Cllr Bateson explained the Parish Council's mechanism for considering planning applications is that the Clerk emails them to Councillors when they are received and Councillors reply to the Clerk with their comments or request the application is discussed at the next meeting. When the application is received, it will be dealt with in that way. Cllr Bateson reminded the residents that the Parish Council must remain impartial and reflect the views of the whole parish.

A resident asked at what stage the Parish Council would engage with the community about the solar farm plans. Cllr Bateson said he had previously called a meeting to involve the Borough and they had involved the local MP, Richard Tyce.

The resident felt that the Parish Council needed to alert residents as to what was going on. Cllr Mountain pointed out the minutes of Parish Council meetings are on the website and notices of the meetings are on the website and the parish notice boards. She said that unless residents attend the Parish Council meetings, email the Clerk or speak to the Councillors (which some do), we do not know what residents are feeling.

Cllr Bateson said that the parish council must look at every planning application that comes in for the Bicker area. We are sent a list each week by Boston planning department. Something like the solar farm is a policy decision that is made at national and borough level, which is very difficult to impact as a Parish Council, but we have objected to applications and will continue to do so if we think they are not suitable for the village. We currently have a vacancy on the Parish Council if anyone is interested in joining us.

A resident asked if we could put information on the village Facebook page as a lot of residents did not know what was going on. Cllr Bateson said the Parish Council had decided not to have a social media presence. There are adverse posts on Facebook about the work of the Parish Council, for example the Speed Indicator Signs that we purchased last year. The residents said they were not aware the PC had purchased the signs but thought they were a good idea.

A resident said the solar farm and BESS was a seismic event for the village and we needed to fight and frustrate the developers. Cllr Carrott said this was the fifth major event the village had been through and a lot of it was beyond our control.

A resident reported that the meeting at the village hall with PACE had been attended by 30 residents. If the solar farm and BESS went ahead, he would have to sell his house and leave. He knew that other residents felt the same way too. The resident asked if there were any other developments of this kind on the Parish Council's radar. Cllr Bateson explained that the Parish Council knows about planning application at the same time as the public, we have no prior knowledge. We have held meetings with some of the developers where they have presented information to us. Cllr Kelly said we could not make any formal objections to the PACE proposals until the planning application was made.

A resident said it would have been good if members of the PC had attended the webinar meeting with PACE. Cllr Kelly confirmed she had attended the meeting online. Residents were not aware that she had been there. Other Council members said they would have attended but had been working (the meeting had been held in the afternoon).

A resident said the action group had asked for a consultation event in Bicker, PACE had refused, the resident felt they were ill informed at the webinar.

A resident said that at a Borough, County and Mayor level, objections were being raised to solar farms. James Cantwell was on side as well as the local MP. The resident hopes they can live up to their election pledges.

A resident said that through their own work, they were aware that one way to oppose was to suggest a better location somewhere else, but that just moved the issue on. Another resident said the solar farm would be right opposite their house.

Residents knew that those in Swineshead parish were also very unhappy about the proposals as it was very close to their village.

Cllr Bateson said the Parish Council understood the residents' feelings as they were all Bicker residents themselves. They did not want to let the residents down but even if we object the plans may still get passed. A resident said that on speaking to others, some felt demoralised about the issue. This group had taken the time to educate themselves about the issues and were trying to spread the word to others and raise awareness.

A resident said that objections need to be backed up by evidence, pictures, stories of people enjoying the land. Grade 1 farming land in this area.

Cllr Bateson thanked the residents for attending the meeting and sharing their views with Councillors.

The meeting ended at 7.37pm and the residents who had attended the AGM left the meeting room.

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....