

**Minutes of the 773rd meeting of Toft Parish Council
on Monday 7 September 2020 at 7.00 pm
Held remotely via Zoom due to the current pandemic**

Present: Councillors: M Yeadon (Chairman), P Ellis-Evans, K Popat, E Miles, A Tall, J Wrycroft and L Borrell.

In attendance: 2 members of the public; Andy Brand (Planning Director, Abbey Group) David Mead (Architect), Andy Thompson (Planning Director, Southern Region Co-op); Tom Cooper (Account Manager, Instinctif Partners), District Cllr Grenville Chamberlain, County Cllr Lina Nieto and Mrs Gail Stoehr (Clerk).

Open public session including reports from the County and District Councillors

Representatives from Instinctif Partners and the Abbey Group attended to answer any questions about the proposed new Co-op store at Bennell Farm.

Concerns were expressed that the village shop would not survive, since as the only shop in the parish it currently enjoys a rates rebate of £15,000 and sales of £60,000 would be required to offset this loss. The shop was also a village hub where people meet. In addition, there would be financial implications for Comberton shop and this would be a loss to that community as well. Whilst the Co-op stated that they contribute to the community, it would in fact be detrimental to the village if the shop were to be lost. During the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown the shop had delivered food to customers in Comberton, Barton, Kingston and Toft. The Co-op had buying power that small shops do not have.

The developers' representative replied that he believed that the store and the village shop could co-exist and were sustainable, and that there were many similar examples. This would be covered as part of the retail impact assessment. He was not aware of any village shop which had closed because of a Co-op in the same village and the Toft shop was a long way from the proposed Co-op.

County Cllr Lina Nieto requested examples where the Co-op co-existed with village shops. The developers replied that Willingham, Gamlingay and Cottenham were considered similar in planning terms by SDCDC. This was disputed by both County Cllr Nieto and the Parish Council. A population of 1500 was required to sustain the shop and District Cllr Chamberlain explained that Toft had a population of 500 and would be concerned if SDCDC granted permission which resulted in the closure of a shop.

It was argued that Bennell Farm was considered by SDCDC as being in Comberton and the same approach had been used with the shop.

Concerns were expressed at the pedestrian and vehicle access and the size of the car park, together with the exit onto a busy road, especially when the schools were busy. The developers maintained that the transport assessment addressed how the car park was of a sufficient size and highlighted the transport assessment statement. The Co-op had experience with handling the traffic successfully.

District Cllr Chamberlain reported that he was pleased that Cllrs Yeadon and Ellis-Evans had attended the East West Rail workshop. There was a briefing next week on sites being put forward for development. He was still encouraging a northern route which would go north of Toft and a station north of Cambourne. County Cllr Nieto echoed this view. Anthony Browne MP was also looking into the route.

County Cllr Nieto reported on:

- A nature event which she hoped the Parish Council could attend. She was a trustee and was organising a parish toolkit.
- Children's return to schools and the measures put in place.
- Facebook posts informing residents how to report issues to CCC.
- Government grants for air pollution – anyone with any ideas for a project should let Cllr Nieto know.

- Cllr Nieto asked whether any private roads needed to be adopted by Highways.
- She asked what the current practice is for example there was broken glass in the road. This would be dealt with by community spirited volunteers.

A resident expressed concerns at the East West Rail route and damage to the valley, and urged the villages along the valley to group together to fight the proposal.

1. Apologies for absence and declaration of interests

1.1 To approve written apologies and reasons for absence

None.

1.2 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda

Cllr Wrycroft declared a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application for 1 Warboys Close.

1.3 To receive written requests for dispensations (if any) and to grant any dispensation as appropriate

None.

2. To approve the minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 6 July be approved by the Council. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting of 4 August be approved by the Council. (Prop MY, 2nd PEE, unanimous)

RESOLVED that the minutes are to be signed by the Chairman as soon as practically possible given the current pandemic.

On a proposition by the Chairman, the order of business was varied to take item 6.1.3 next followed by item 3.1.

6.1.3 20/03339/FUL – Land west of 80 West Street – Erection of a convenience food retail store with associated car parking

RESOLVED, following discussion, to object to the application with the following comments: (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)

“Toft Parish Council has considered the Planning Application 20/03339/ FUL | Erection of a convenience food retail store with associated car parking | Land West Of 80 West Street Toft Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB23 7DS.

The Parish Council voted to object to the application.

The Planning application makes a case for an additional food store in the area via a Retail Impact Test. The Parish Council challenges this test. Using figures from the report it states that for a store to be sustainable it needs a local customer base of c1500 people. The combined population of Toft and Comberton is c3000 people which should be able to sustain two stores. Furthermore Toft only has a population of c500 people and so Toft shop is extremely vulnerable if there is any loss of business and this would certainly be the case with a new store opening. Comberton is designated as a Minor Rural Centre and Toft as an Infill Village by the District Council. As such both the existing stores in these villages are eligible to receive a very significant business rate reduction. The loss of that, for at least Toft Shop, would render it unviable as a business and it would have to close permanently given Toft's small population, reliance on passing trade and the presence of the new Co-op store. The new store will, therefore, significantly impact the Toft shop contrary to what the application states.

Toft Shop is very important to Toft. It is a hub that enhances the quality of life to everyone living in the village. Not only is it a food store and post office but it is also the place where prescriptions are delivered from local surgeries for residents who cannot easily collect them; it is the place where people on pay-as-you-go electricity meters can top up their payments; it does whatever it can to serve local residents. This has been particularly relevant during the many months of the Coronavirus outbreak when it has gone the extra mile to serve the community and help protect its vulnerable residents. It would be a disaster if the village was to lose the shop and its Post Office.

The Parish Council is also concerned about safety issues associated with the proposed location of the new store. Its entrance is opposite the main entrance to the Comberton Village College. There is already a lot of congestion when the school opens and closes from parents' vehicles and the many school buses that serve the school. This will be further increased when the new Bennell Farm development becomes fully occupied. The new store would probably be at its busiest at these same times and it would add to the congestion. This congestion increases safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists, including pupils of the college. The road is fairly narrow at this location and there are no safe crossing places and, contrary to the information in the application, there is parking on the main road opposite the proposed location of the store which adds to the congestion problems. This will be further compounded by at least 15 large lorries and 13 smaller transit vans each week as well as various further ad hoc transit van deliveries. These will be attempting to enter and leave these premises onto a narrow road, close to a T junction and with parked vehicles opposite.

For these reasons the Parish Council objects to the application and urges the District Council to refuse permission."

The meeting was briefly adjourned at 7.52 pm during this item to seek clarification on the footpath, and re-opened at 7.53 pm.

The developers left the meeting.

- 3. To consider any matters arising from the last or a previous meeting including**
- 3.1 **(3.2) East-West Rail – to consider report on meeting and workshop and any action necessary**
 Cllr Yeadon reported on a meeting of the Cambridge Approaches Group. Toft Parish Council will receive the minutes of these meetings but will not attend. Cllr Yeadon had also attended a meeting arranged by East West Rail and on the views of those attending. Two options were proposed in a narrow corridor around Toft, neither of which had any benefit over the other. East West Rail will consult on the exact route when they have reached a decision. Concerns were expressed that there would be a noise nuisance for Toft including that from freight trains during the night.
 Given that the Cambridge Approaches Group were looking at the best route through the corridor, it was not felt that this would be the most appropriate group for Toft to join. RESOLVED to contact County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley in order to affiliate to the CamBed RailRoad group.
 RESOLVED to write to Anthony Browne MP and Combined Authority Mayor James Palmer expressing concerns about the proposed route and urging them to support an alternative route north of the A428.
 RESOLVED to write to District Cllr Chamberlain asking him to set up a discussion with other affected parish councils, to consider the way forward on this issue and to present a more co-ordinated response.
 RESOLVED to raise awareness of the East West Rail proposals with residents. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting. The Chairman is to draw attention to the Cambridge Approaches Group flyer in the current edition of Calendar. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous)
- 3.2 **(3.3) To consider report from the Play Inspection Company if received**
 The report was still awaited.
- 3.3 **(7.6) Zero Carbon Grant application – to consider report and recommendation**
 RESOLVED that Cllrs Popat and Tall should submit an application for a grant of up to £15,000 for solar studs as part of an upgrade of the cycle path from Toft to Comberton. (Prop KP, 2nd AT, unanimous)
- 3.4 **(7.7) Operation London Bridge – to consider report and recommendation**
 RESOLVED to purchase a book of condolence and photograph frame, and to change the website colour to black. (Prop MY, 2nd EM, unanimous) Other measures are still under consideration by the Working Group.
- 3.5 **To consider possible uses for the telephone kiosk**

RESOLVED to remove this item from the agenda. The kiosk is to be used for Toft 2020.

4. Consideration of correspondence

4.1 Resident request for financial support for a book on Toft Wood

RESOLVED to fund 35 copies at a cost of £365.00 from the community fund, subject to the resident returning the funds if they are able to sell the books at a cost of £10.50 per book. The funds are to be taken from the Community Fund and paid when the books are ready to print. (Prop MY, 2nd AT, unanimous)

4.2 CCC – Community Gritting Volunteers

The Chairman has contacted the resident who has the gritting machine and has asked if they are willing to continue. RESOLVED to defer this item to the next meeting pending a reply.

5. Finance and risk assessment

5.1 To consider the finance report and approve the payment of any bills

RESOLVED to receive the financial report and check the invoices and bank statements before the payments were approved. (Prop MY, 2nd PEE, unanimous)

Salaries		£260.80
E Miles	Vehicles signs	£41.70
Came and Company	Insurance	£527.10
Madingley Mulch	Play bark	£85.55
RH Landscapes	Grass cutting	£303.00

RESOLVED to note the following expenditure approved between meetings:

LGS Services	William Eversdens Charity Admin	£148.76
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge	£18.00
Opus Energy	Street light energy	£93.48
Opus Energy	Street light energy	£93.48
Salaries		£57.96

Receipt of the verges grant was noted.

The Clerk has pursued a credit note and refund from Opus Energy who charged the Council for its annual energy costs last year and has continued to take monthly amounts since then. The council has received a refund of £1158.42.

5.2 Play inspection reports

The metal signage for the play areas had been received from SCDC.

One bag of bark had been delivered and spread by Cllr Yeadon. The remaining bag has been re-ordered and delivery is awaited.

5.3 To consider any matter which is urgent because of risk or health and safety

None.

5.4 To consider appointment of Internal Auditor for FY2021

RESOLVED to appoint Canalbs Ltd as Internal Auditor for FY2021 at a cost of \$45.50 per hour and 45p per mile expenses. (Prop MY, 2nd LB, unanimous)

6. To consider any Planning or Tree works applications received

6.1 Planning Applications

6.1.1 20/03521/S73 – 55 School Lane – Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission S/4098/19/VC

RESOLVED to make no recommendation. (Prop MY, 2nd AT, unanimous)

6.1.2 20/03505/HFUL – 1 Warboys Close – Proposed first storey side, single storey rear and double front extensions, demolition of existing conservatory and front open porch and new rear roof terrace

Cllr Wrycroft, having previously declared an interest, left the meeting while this item was discussed.

RESOLVED to object on the grounds that the balcony is overlooking the adjacent properties resulting in a loss of privacy. (Prop MY, 2nd AT, carried with 6 in favour and 1 abstention)

Cllr Wrycroft re-joined the meeting at 8.42 pm.

- 6.1.3 20/03339/FUL – Land west of 80 West Street – Erection of a convenience food retail store with associated car parking
Taken earlier.
- 6.2 SCDC decisions to note
- 6.2.1 20/02439/HFUL – 64 High Street – Erection of detached garden building – Permission granted
- 6.2.2 20/1634/19 (COND3) – Bay Tree Barn, 1 Church Road – Discharge of condition 3 (Rooflights) of planning permission – Condition discharged in full
- 6.2.3 S/0351/19/NMA1 – Bennell Farm, West Street – Non-material amendment of planning permission S/0351/19/VC to amended garden boundary for Plot 1 – Permission granted
- 6.2.4 20/01622/HFUL – 6 Powell Close – Retrospective installation of patio timber decking to the rear of the house – Permission granted
- 6.2.5 20/01172/FUL – Land to the west of Hardwick Road – Development for 12 no. self build and custom dwellings, together with associate garaging, parking, public open space, landscaping, access, highways, drainage and infrastructure works – Permission refused
- 6.2.6 20/01225/FUL – Old Farm Business Centre, Church Road – Installation of a portakabin modular building to be used as an office and light laboratory space for a period of two years – Permission granted
- 6.3 Tree works applications
- 6.3.1 20/1853/TTCA – 17 Comberton Road
RESOLVED to make no comment.

RESOLVED given concerns expressed at permission being granted by SCDC for tree works before the Parish Council had had the chance to comment to send information to District Cllr Chamberlain to take up with SCDC.
- 6.4 SCDC – Request for clarification of Toft’s S106 requirements for Bennell Farm
RESOLVED to note the correspondence with James Fisher, S106 Officer clarifying the Parish Council’s response on the S106 requirements for Bennell Farm.
RESOLVED to question the green infrastructure contribution of £4500.00 and to ask for a contribution of up to £16,000, being the equivalent of the LHI bid, for improvements to the cycleway between Toft and Comberton, which will benefit both villages, particularly as the application is in Toft parish.
- 7. Members items and reports for information only unless otherwise stated**
- 7.1 Village Maintenance including report on purchase on glass panes
Cllr Tall reported that the bus shelter glass panes had been repaired.
- 7.2 Highways
Cllr Tall reported one issue was outstanding at CCC. Reports had been made to CCC online.
- 7.3 Toft People’s Hall
Nothing to report.
- 7.4 Footpaths
Nothing to report.
- 7.5 Defibrillator report
Cllr Ellis-Evans reported that the battery was due to be replaced in September 2021 and that Community Heartbeat Trust holds funds. All was in working order.
- 7.6 Climate Change Working Group report
Nothing to report. The Working Group is to look at the Local Energy Advice Partnership.
- 7.7 Operation London Bridge Working Group report – to consider if any further action is required or if this matter can now be closed
Taken earlier.
- 7.8 Proposal that the Council considers PROAS correspondence regarding drones entering Toft airspace

RESOLVED to make no response.

7.9 Proposal that the Council considers Haslingfield Parish Council’s request for financial support with East West Rail publicity

RESOLVED to make a contribution of £10 towards the costs to date. However, if they wish Toft to be part of the group and consider future funding they will need to consider the route as it affects Toft.

RESOLVED to join with Caxton, Caldecote, Comberton and Hardwick who will be affected locally.

8. Closure of meeting

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.26 pm.

SignedChairmandate.

DRAFT