

# Spaxton Parish Council – Meeting MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held at 8:00 pm on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007 at Spaxton Village Hall.

i)	Members present: The Chairman – Mr D Jeanes, Mrs D Richards, Mr B Porter, Mr M Stevens, Mr V Hughes, Mr J Edwards, Mr P Williams, Mr V Massey & Mr S Stretton.	<b>Action</b>
ii)	District Councillors present: Mr K Dyer & Mr D Joslin.	
iii)	Members of the public present: Mrs H Bevan, M Smith, P Thomas, A James, C Morton, Mrs C Thomas, Ms R Lederman, N Wills, M Roe, J Merchant, A Fear, Mrs G Roe, G Berry, T Roe, Mrs A McDonald & I McDonald.	
	<p><b>Public session:</b> The meeting opened with a public session, during which the members of the public present were invited to speak on matters of their choosing. Many were present to express concern at the planning application submitted by Cannington Cold Stores Ltd for a biogas generator and additional freezer plant on the site at Swang Farm, whilst others were there to express their support. Concerns focused on several key areas, namely noise, health &amp; safety, smell, light pollution, visual impact and appropriateness. It was considered by some to be preposterous to site such a major development in a rural area within close proximity to an AONB, when it would be far more appropriately located on an industrial estate such as Express Park in Bridgwater. There were also strong concerns that fuel for the biogas plant might eventually derive from animal waste and sewage rather than the maize fuels initially suggested.</p> <p>These concerns were dismissed by supporters of the scheme, who felt that any visual impact would be satisfactorily offset by effective planting schemes, that the risk of explosion was non-existent by virtue of the fact that methane is not an explosive gas nor will it be contained under pressure, and that the use of animal or human waste matter could not occur in what is a uniquely vegetable scheme. Feelings on both sides ran high and there was a lively debate. The public session ended at 8.35pm, when the formal meeting then began.</p>	
1.	Apologies for absence: Mr J Edney.	
2.	Declaration of member's interests: Agenda item 6 (3) – Mr J Edwards declared a prejudicial interest as a Spaxton Village Hall Committee member. Agenda item 7 (2) – Mr K Dyer declared a prejudicial interest as a close neighbour, as did Mr D Jeanes who is also a godfather to the applicant, Mr T Roe. Mr D Joslin also declared a prejudicial interest as a neighbour and as a member of Sedgemoor District Council's Planning Committee.	
3.	The minutes of the meetings held on Monday July 30 <sup>th</sup> and Monday August 20 <sup>th</sup> 2007 were read and approved.	
4.	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>i) Signage at Courtway Lane – the clerk had received confirmation from Somerset Highways that “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs will be erected at either end of Courtway Lane, Merridge, within the next 3 months. These will be on poles of raven grey colour to blend in with the AONB countryside.</p> <p>On a similar subject, Mr P Williams confirmed that signage had been erected at the junction of Charlynch Lane with the A39.</p> <p>ii) Church Path – the clerk had received an email confirmation that Church Path will be investigated following a request from a Spaxton resident.</p> <p>iii) Hedgetrimming – a response from Highways is still awaited.</p>	

	<p>At this point Mr R Adcock proposed a vote of thanks to Mr J Edwards who had kindly prepared minutes for the August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in the absence of the clerk. Mr D Jeanes also thanked Mr P Williams for taking the Chair that day.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Footpath: SALC: QHJAC: Parish Cluster Reports (as appropriate) – Mr J Edwards reported that the new Rights of Way officer will be Chris East, who will take up his post towards the end of September. Linda Neal has asked to see the Council's records in connection with the application to have various footpaths upgraded, and Mr J Edwards will be her point of contact.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Financial items:</p> <p>i) Statement of Accounts: current account £3224.85 credit, capital reserve account £18952.26 credit.</p> <p>ii) Cheque no. 412 for £204.17 in favour of SALC was approved in connection with the subscription renewal, which had inadvertently been overlooked.</p> <p>iii) Mr J Edwards left the room while the matter of the £400 allocated by Mr J Edney was discussed. No information had been forthcoming regarding cricket nets, and this option was therefore discounted. Mrs D Richards had ascertained that replacement windows for the Village Hall would cost £413 each, and this option was therefore too costly overall, as was the replacement of the small swings in the childrens' playground, at £1500 plus VAT. Mr V Hughes had brought with him a sample notice board from Ashley Gold in Bishops Lydeard and, at £300 plus VAT this seemed to be the preferred option. A vote was held, and as 6 members were in favour of purchasing a noticeboard, that option was carried. Mr J Edwards then returned to the room, at 8.50pm.</p> <p>iv) Annual Audit Return – the internal auditor had completed his assessment and had no comments to make. The public inspection period will now begin, with the Return being submitted on September 18<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>v) Messrs Porter and Williams explained that they had already submitted their Election Expenses Returns, and requested that duplicate forms be obtained from SDC as these appeared to have been lost.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">SF</div>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Planning items:</p> <p>i) Applications decided since last meeting: As per the agenda</p> <p>ii) New Applications: <b>45/07/00022/BAK</b> – Cannington Cold Stores Ltd, erection of buildings &amp; plant for refrigeration buildings and associated biogas plant to produce electricity at Swang Farm, Cannington.</p> <p>At 8.55pm Messrs Jeanes, Dyer and Joslin left the room, and Mr P Williams took the Chair. He then asked members of the Council whether they wished to speak regarding this application. Mr V Hughes spoke eloquently, offering sympathy to those neighbours who had not been notified of this application upon submission. He felt that the applicants would naturally wish to reveal the advantages of the scheme, rather than any disadvantages, but his concerns lay more with the increased size of the refrigeration plant than with the biogas generator itself. He expressed the view that the biogas plant was being offered as a means of gaining permission for massive industrial refrigeration units “by the back door”, allowing the applicants to fly in the face of policy under an eco-friendly banner. He further felt that what we were seeing was a prime example of planning “creep” whereby further and further development is permitted over a number of years, without apparent censure.</p> <p>Mr J Edwards expressed concern that the proposed screening might be inadequate to prevent visual impact and noise, especially at night time when background noise levels are low.</p> <p>Mr S Stretton explained that his initial reaction had been to question the size of the entire development, but he had then realized that certain local farmers' agricultural</p>	

	<p>sheds are at least as big – causing him to query whether an objection on the grounds of size was indeed valid. He too felt, however, that screening with mature trees was paramount.</p> <p>There being no further comments, the acting Chairman then moved to a vote. Six members wished to support the application, and three were against, meaning that the support was carried. However, the clerk was asked to ensure that certain provisos were detailed in the Council’s response with regard to fuel materials, screening and noise- and light pollution.</p> <p>Messrs Jeanes and Dyer then returned to the room at 9.25pm and Mr D Jeanes resumed the Chair. Mr D Joslin did not return.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<p>Correspondence received: circulated at the meeting other than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Quantock Deer Forum – either Mr J Edwards or Mr V Massey will attend.</li> <li>ii) SALC AGM – Mr J Edwards will attend, possibly also Mr V Hughes.</li> <li>iii) Community Council AGM – there were no volunteers to attend.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.</b>	<p>Matters of report &amp; items for the next meeting: it was felt that a discussion regarding the effectiveness of the pre-consultation process with regard to Cannington Cold Stores would be useful, particularly as Spaxton were “guinea pigs” for the entire South West!</p> <p>The matter of the storage of old minute books etc was raised – it might be appropriate now to send them to the Somerset Records Office, for example.</p> <p>Mr J Merchant reported the sad death of Lynette Burland that afternoon, and members expressed their condolences to Lynette’s family.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p>Date &amp; time of next meeting: Monday October 1<sup>st</sup> at Aisholt Village Hall, and Monday November 5<sup>th</sup> at Spaxton.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 9.35pm.</p>	