

GESTINGTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk / RFO: Kevin B. Money
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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 19th. June 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs D. Smith (Chairman), C. Craig (Vice-Chairman), P. Bagby, G. Carey, P. Collett, BDC Cllr D. Holland, Mr. Leslie Crumpton-Taylor (Internal Auditor) and Kevin B. Money (Parish Clerk). There were also 30 members of the public present.

058/2023 Chairman welcome. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

059/2023 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr A. Cooper

060/2023 Presentation by representative of Galliford Try on the proposed planning application 23/01469/T56.

There was No representatives present for this meeting after receiving numerous invitations

061/2023 23/01469/T56 - Land Adjacent To Delvyns Lane Gestingthorpe Essex

The installation of a 25m Cypress Tree mast complete with 6 antennas, 2 x 300mm dishes and 1 x GPS module, 3 radio equipment cabinets, a meter cabinet within a fenced compound and ancillary development works thereto.

RESOLVED:

Gestingthorpe Parish Council have given very careful consideration to all the information submitted as part of this planning application, along with the thoughts from Parishioners at the extraordinary Parish Council meeting and on social media. The extraordinary meeting was held on Monday 19th June 2023 at 7pm, and was attended by 30 members of the public, a number of whom expressed their thoughts. The general consensus at the meeting was in favour of improved communications within the parish, but there a number of concerns about siting, height and appearance of the mast were raised. Galliford Try were invited to attend the meeting to give a presentation, but they chose not to. The Parish Council's invitation is still on the table, should Galliford Try wish to engage with the community.

However, as a body the Parish Council cannot support the current application.

The Parish Council accepts that there is a need within the Village for improved 3G & 4G coverage and the principle of improving the service is welcomed.

We are of the opinion that very few of the problems of the previous refused application have been addressed. We are also of the opinion that the application does not conform to the Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the following grounds:

Despite stating that there has been engagement with the Parish Council, the applicant and agent have refused to meet the parish council and its residents on every occasion that they have been invited. There has not been any positive engagement with the Parish/Village with a view to trying to identify a site that would be acceptable, both from a visual and technical perspective.

Delvyns Lane is an attractive unmade "Byway", situated in unspoilt open countryside of high landscape value and is well used by recreational walkers and horse riders. The proposed mast will be significantly higher than anything else around it and no attempt has been made to provide any screening. The attempt to disguise the mast as a tree is deeply flawed, as there are no other trees of the same species or height anywhere near the proposed site. The existing deciduous tree next to the proposed mast is a mere 8m tall, and will be dwarfed by the 25m 'cypress tree' mast. The manufacturer of the 'tree masts' have been contacted independently by the Parish Council, and they have been unable to provide details where the same masts have been used as standalone structures, away from areas of trees. We are of the opinion that a mast of this type would be more suited to being placed near a more densely wooded area, where it would have the opportunity to blend in with the landscape.

From the Delvyns Lane junction with Church Street up to the application site there is a row of oak trees which the Parish planted to celebrate the centenary of Captain Lawrence Oates' death. They will form an impressive tree lined avenue along Delvyns Lane and provide a fitting memorial to the heroic Captain Oates. We do not wish to see them overshadowed by a mast, or damaged during construction works.

There are no details about how power or data will be provided to the site. The lane is predominantly used by

large farm machinery, and therefore any addition of new overhead power and data lines would be deeply unsuitable, as well as unsightly, when the parish fought so hard to ensure our new 'fibre-to-door' provision is underground throughout most of the village.

Like the last refused application, this application is again not supported by any ecological surveys of the site or the surrounding area. Surely, this must be a requirement for an application of this nature. Are there any reptiles, endangered/protected species or protected flora/fauna on the site or in the immediate vicinity?

There are Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings) within 300m of the proposed site and these are the properties that will be the most adversely affected by the proposal.

We also fail to understand why the proposed mast needs to be 25m high bearing in mind that the previous application, which was subsequently refused, at Hall Farm was for a 18m mast. The current proposed site is some 10/12m higher than the previous Farmyard site, and no evidence has been provided actually demonstrating the additional height.

We suggest that the way forward would be for the applicants to withdraw the current application and actively engage with the Parish Council in accordance with the Code of Practice with a view to trying to find a suitable site. If they are not prepared to engage, then we respectfully request that the application be refused.

However, should you be mindful to grant planning permission, then we respectfully request that any approval is subject to Conditions requiring full ecological surveys, flora/fauna surveys, tree survey, landscape report and a tree planting scheme, as well as a condition that any new power and data provision is by way of underground ducting.

062/2023 Closure of the Meeting

To close the Meeting having considered and determined all items of business.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 8pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

Craig

13th. July 2023

Claire Craig
Vice-Chair